

WAYS OUT OF CONFLICT

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RESOURCES FOR COMMUNITY RELATIONS WORK

➤ DUNCAN MORROW & DERICK WILSON

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DEDICATION

This text was initiated by three people. Most regretfully our friend and colleague Frank Wright died before it was completed.

Frank gained the University Prize in Politics at Trinity College, Oxford in 1969 and First Class Honours there in 1970 in Politics, Philosophy and Economics. He was a Research Fellow at New College, Oxford (1970-1973) and a Political Science Lecturer in Queen's University Belfast (1973-1992). In 1987 he became half-time to undertake community work commitments and was a founder member of the 'Understanding Conflict... and Finding Ways Out Of It' project. He worked half-time for the project until 1992 and was also a member of the Corrymeela Community. In April 1992 he was appointed Professor of Peace and Co-operation Studies in the University of Limerick. Very shortly after, he became ill and died on 10th February 1993.

This text is dedicated to his memory.

SPECIAL THANKS:

The group work practice developed in this study pack owes much to the theoretical work and practical supervision of Roel Kaptein who lives in Hengelo, Holland. We have worked together in Northern Ireland since 1980. We offer some pages from a text by Roel Kaptein by way of introducing the importance of understanding the relationships people are part of and the choices people do and can make. The full text is published by Columba Press, Dublin and reproduced here with the permission of Roel Kaptein.

We wish to thank the following for their assistance in the early work on these materials.

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DUNCAN MORROW & DERICK WILSON January 1996.

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INTRODUCTORY NOTES



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BACKGROUND

THE MATERIALS

This set of nine adult education texts has evolved out of our work with groups from many diverse traditions and interests in Northern Ireland over the past fifteen years.

These materials are self evidently not a comprehensive overview of different ways of understanding and analysing conflict or a compendium of ways out of conflict. They are themes which have evolved out of much discussion with people and this is an attempt to put some structure on them after the event.

The nine topics below were chosen as a representative group from a larger set of topics we have prepared from our work with groups. It is hoped to offer further materials as an addition to this set in due course. The nine are ordered loosely into three broader themes:

UNDERSTANDING STABLE AND DIVIDED SOCIETIES.

Sharing a Place
The Symbols of Division
Policing in Divided Societies
Transcendence

COPING WITH CONFLICT.

The Fascination of Violence and the Role of Ritual
Scapegoats
The Best of a Bad Job

FINDING WAYS OUT

Making a Change
Different Approaches in Different Places

The initial grant support from the resources of The Lawlor Foundation, The Understanding Conflict Trust and the Central Community Relations Unit allowed us to pilot these materials with a number of local facilitators. These early drafts were reviewed in the light of comments from group members. We also had a local reference group representative of a wide range of adult education providers and the assistance of the Community Education Department of the Open University.



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The group work we have developed, usually with adults from mixed traditions and backgrounds, has demonstrated that the contentious and difficult issues associated with life in 'Northern Ireland' or the 'North of Ireland' can be addressed together.

THE CROSS-COMMUNITY ADULT EDUCATION CONTEXT

Northern Ireland or the North of Ireland is a contested place. This is reflected in the different titles people use about it. (e.g. Ulster, the Six Counties). Such contested places are the product of forces associated with settlement and colonisation where the historically defined native and settler groups are in relatively balanced proportions vis a vis each other. Here each group is unable to finally dominate the other and such peace as exists equals an uneasy tranquillity. Living in the one place we face a predicament; there is nowhere else to go and we can therefore continue to confront each other or meet each other, seeking ways forward, beyond the present conflict.

When people do meet together we have identified a number of recurring themes.

THERE IS A LACK OF 'COMMON SENSE' BETWEEN US

There are few commonly agreed facts about the society. "All learning about conflict in Northern Ireland must start from a paradoxical point. In the first instance, everybody is sure what the true facts are. At the same time nobody agrees on what these facts are. What we have learned very profoundly is that so-called facts depend for their reality on the relationships in which they exist. In our context facts are very often fuel to the fire, memories which ... choose different histories, different things to remember."

DEGREES OF LOYALTY AND IDENTIFICATION WITH STATE INSTITUTIONS

At various times in groups people speak about the varying degrees to which they feel free to seek assistance and help from state bodies. This depends on historical factors as well as the events within the community at the time. This is not only associated with any one tradition.

THE LAW IN A CONFLICT

People often speak about their uncertainty about the law and its operation in the midst of this conflict. They have spoken about situations where the violence 'done to' them by 'the others' is inexcusable whereas that done 'in their name' to 'others' can be understandable. People talk of situations where they have become partial about the law and how it should act.

THE ACCEPTABILITY OF THE POLICE BY ALL

Policing is a central theme in a contested society. At different times some groups see the police as

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being partial and so the capability of the law to efficiently stop the urge to retaliation and revenge when someone is wronged is lost. When all become afraid the emergence of tit-for-tat killings and local vigilante operations have been more readily tolerated and even approved of.

EQUITY OF TREATMENT

The need for equity of treatment in access to education, housing and employment in such contested areas means that these areas of social concern can readily become arenas of conflict too. Each side knows much about majority and minority feelings and fears but not much about the hopes and aspirations of other people.

THE PLACE OF RELIGION, LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL TRADITIONS IN THE CONFLICT

A feature of many conflicts is the place religious tradition plays. Religion can come to be used as an unbargainable, a focal point of identity. Cultural traditions too are often used in this way, as can language. The symbols associated with cultural traditions, language and religious identity are often interwoven.

In meetings with people in mixed tradition groups the emotions associated with aspects of the conflict can prevent many issues being discussed in a dispassionate way. This continually erodes fresh beginnings being made. These materials are developed with the hope that people will more openly discuss contentious issues with those they are different from. We hope they will assist people understand their own situation better and find some ways forward, together.

THE EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND TO THIS INITIATIVE

Various experiences inform the evolution of these materials. Facilitators could reflect on these themes in preparation for the group meetings.

I. OUR PERSONAL LIFE HISTORY SHAPES OUR INVOLVEMENT IN COMMUNITY RELATIONS ACTIVITY

Many people are involved in community relations work because of some personal experience.

"Sixteen years ago my uncle was killed. One year ago the man who killed my uncle walked into a police station and gave himself up. My family always believed that people can change their ways and now we believe it even more strongly".

"A sixth form boy who had been mocked by some girls for being quiet in the group came and said 'You see that question on the list we all put up about boys finding it harder to come on community relations programmes? Well, I agree with it. If I had listened to my father, my brother and my mates I would never have come. But I believe that this just has to change, I know Catholic lads and we are friends. I just can't go along with all that my mates would have me do.'"

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We have heard many moving stories of people who have changed their ways, meetings and events where people have been moved to new responses. Hearing and telling such stories group members hear about the breadth of each other's experience and can feel less alone.

2. THE PACE OF CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT DIFFERS FROM PERSON TO PERSON

Young people can be less burdened than adults with life experience. When the atmosphere of a group is supportive usually they move more quickly into meeting. Any prejudicial ideas they have are more commonly received from others than rooted in a lifetime of negative relationships and so they can respond more quickly to the experience of meeting together than adults. Adults have much more experience of living and coping with life. They, like ourselves, have pushed many experiences and hurts away, denying them.

In many meetings people begin by asking questions which reveal a need to defend, eg. "Why do all Catholics support extremists?" "Why do all Protestants condone discrimination?". Working with many adult groups we find we are working over and through the same problems in many different guises. Yet, working patiently, we have been in adult groups where people have decided to follow new ways together.

3. THE REALITY OF FREEDOM GIVES SPACE

Many people come to groups expressing their confusion about all that is happening in life and their difficulty in seeing any ways forward.

A young adult came to a community relations event primed by her family to repeat their traditional line. She found herself in an environment where she felt at home, trusted. She was confused.

We find that in a supportive group, when people begin to unravel the conflictual ways in which we all so often live, choices open to them. It is our experience now that creating space within which people can think about options and new choices is a necessary part of the educational task here.

People tell stories of feeling powerless, intimidated or humiliated in the places they live in and work. Yet many also want to continue to live and work where they are. As people come to understand together how societies built upon unacknowledged mistrust paralyse people, they see spaces in which they can be truly together. They find opportunities to live more fully.

4. THE NEED TO DEVELOP A MORE SYSTEMATIC UNDERSTANDING OF CONFLICT

The educational task for facilitators is to illuminate the dynamics of all forms of conflict and violence and, together, to seek ways out.

As people share within these meetings our task is to assist each person to develop a more systematic understanding of the nature of conflict. In the process we hope this will illuminate the nature of



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"the troubles" in Northern Ireland and troubles or conflicts they find themselves in elsewhere. This is more possible when people from different traditions, professions or backgrounds are together. Then the elements of the different and competing interpretations are brought into meeting together, they are not stated only when "the other" is absent, which usually happens in day to day life.

5. A RECURRING THEME IN OUR WORK IS THE SILENCE ABOUT CONTENTIOUS ISSUES

In all cultures people avoid talking about things that would make life difficult. There are secrets, themes which are not talked about and forgotten.

In Northern Ireland there has never been what we would call a secure culture. At best we have had a pact between groups. Insecurity and anxiety have lain very close to the surface and our secrets are much less hidden.

As fears rise the old secrets come to the surface and disturb us. These secrets, that maybe once secured the old ways, need to be talked about together in order that we might find new ways to live and that our fears may lessen.

In groups where professional and business people have been members many have spoken of how, when Protestants and Catholics have been with each other, a norm of not talking about contentious issues around religious traditions and political beliefs has been established.

Experienced teachers on a residential course spoke of how they had not met people from other traditions in depth before. Hearing about the life experiences of some brought up in the other tradition was completely new for them, a silence had been broken.

When we hear one another sharing these secrets a new reality comes between us. We begin to marvel at the separated lives we often lead here. We have talked about how we live a so called "normal life" in the midst of "a troubled society".

6. "ALL MEETINGS OF THIS KIND INVOLVE RISK TAKING AND TRUST"

Trusting is not an attitude but an experience with another.

It is not clear to many Protestants whom they can trust. One of the aspects of this is that Britain and the various instruments of government they have trusted over time often seem to desert them. Some Catholics are in the same predicament in that they do not know how far they can trust the Republic.

Neither Protestant nor Catholic sometimes feel sure about the government they wish to belong to.

Trusting each other is not a day-to-day experience between the traditions here and so people are often not free to meet. Giving trust in Northern Ireland always involves risks. It is never known for certain that things told in groups remain in the group. Nevertheless, in spite of this, we have had many wonderful experiences of trust given and received in the groups of people we have met with.



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7. MEETING TOGETHER CAN BE A FUNDAMENTALLY DIFFERENT EXPERIENCE

Meeting together in groups with people of both major traditions can bring a fundamentally different experience of speaking and listening to one another.

When people choose to come to such meetings we establish the ground rules of 'only speaking for yourself' and 'not interrupting others'. We have found that when we start with people sharing their own experiences and questions then others hear what they say. Everybody who is listening to the other is challenged as they listen. The meeting is lost if we are allowed to challenge the validity of the other's experience.

Where trust is established the stories of each person sit alongside the others, unchallengeable. In our experience, as people listen differentiation and individualisation grow. As people tell their names, their stories and ask their questions many previously unknown connections, things we have in common and differences too, grow between each of us as human beings.

Meeting together is at the centre of our work. Meeting together it is possible for people to hear one another's story. As people hear one another's name and story, differences grow and become points of reflection, recall and readjustment for others.

Meeting together offers space, a place where, within an atmosphere of trust, ways can be found to understand and handle difficulties that emerge between people and groups here. Meeting together gives the possibility to find ways, frameworks, within which new ways forward together are possible.

Here, in this place, enforced meetings do not add to freedom. The wish to meet, the openness of volunteering to take the risk is central. This work is about seeking an educational approach to deal with the issues at the centre of a contested society in such a way that the people who meet together both understand their situation better and have more choices open to them.

8. THE LANGUAGE OF MEETING TOGETHER

We are seeking to use language that speaks about human relationships rather than seeing life in mechanistic terms. For example we use: "meeting together" rather than "interaction", "talking together with" rather than "discussion", "seeing clearly" rather than "identifying".

Part of this form of meeting together includes looking for a language that is about people and relationships. The dominance of fear in relationships within divided situations is often reflected in the language used daily. In meeting together we are seeking space to meet and think again about daily life in ways that are not driven by fear and so we try to use a language which assists this. In such meetings we have experienced that when personal narratives are told they trigger memories and responses that remind and recall people to earlier experiences of healing, forgiveness, acceptance and surprise. In that moment it is a reality, a new experience. These stories are being told in mixed company. Outside the meeting these stories could be termed "insignificant", "unimportant" and "ineffective" and yet it is the meeting together that involves us and changes us.



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In meeting the outcomes are not known. Meeting in trust people can hear one another in ways that break previous understandings. Our way of working offers a possibility for people to experience such meetings. It will often not appear to have “any visible thread or continuity, but will look rather like a series of tangents intersecting the history of antagonism.”

THE FOCUS OF THE MATERIALS

1. DIVIDED PAST

Over the past few years within this project we have been training and researching ways in which we can meet each other, with our differences, in a new atmosphere. It is our experience that it is possible to have meetings where people from different traditions come together and speak about those issues. It is possible to train local people to facilitate this. A focus of the training we do is to look at the ways in which we are brought up.

THE PRIMACY OF FEAR DRIVES ALL RELATIONSHIPS IN A DIVIDED SOCIETY

When opposing traditions here feel fearful of each other they have traditionally sought to deter each other. They have done this either through each side seeking support from outside allies or threatening that their extremists will act against the other. Out of this history of deterrence, patterns of social organisation have been laid down communally which allow people from the different traditions to avoid meeting together to address the issues between them. Each tradition has a degree of self sufficiency.

The inability, so far, to trust each other and to develop political and social structures which carry such trusting relationships and joint agreements means that such mixed adult educational meetings are central to whether new ways forward are found.

THE WAYS WE COPE

We have communal ways of politely avoiding contentious issues between us. We often, understandably, avoid meetings which might channel the emotions that threaten to engulf us because we do not have confidence in these forms of meeting with the “other person”. In a society which has competing traditions within it there is a mutual antagonism that feeds how we act and react in day to day life. People speak about being swept along in the emotion of the moment, their emotions and feelings lead them to contemplate violent responses in retaliation. Such strong emotions need understood.

2. SURPRISES

Some people, many who are relatives of people who have been assassinated in the conflict, sometimes speak with other voices. They act as a contrast to the emotions of others, they wish no retaliation and hope for new ways out of this conflict. These ways surprise us and sometimes we still reject them.



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UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE OF SURPRISES IN THE MIDST OF CONFLICT

There is a considerable history of groups and organisations which have grown up in the midst of this conflict with a reconciling function. A terrorised society is one where there is little sense of order at times, it does not seem to work in understandable ways. It too throws up responses in contrast to the terror, sometimes surprising and not immediately understandable, sometimes a block on everything dissolving into fear, a control on things going too close to the abyss.

3. SEEKING UNDERSTANDING, NEW STRUCTURES AND AGREEMENTS

In a changing situation the feelings associated with the traditional forms of avoidance and politeness are not adequate. Although they have often kept the lid on situations these ways are no preparation for the new openness that is required if people and groups are to find and agree places for each other, a place where each belongs and where no one is threatened or experienced as a threat to the other.

For us, teaching and learning about conflict and violence in this context has become a way of learning together what the nature of our relationships are in order that we might see a little more clearly what might or might not take us forward in a less violent way.



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GENERAL POINTS FOR FACILITATORS

THE MEETING PLACE

In a divided society or a place where emotions are running high the facilitator has the task of being sensitive to the location and approaches to the place where the group is meeting for the first time.

Look around you, what indicators about the traditions and loyalties of the area, the proprietors of the hall or building will already be 'in the air' as people come to the group?

What are the elements you will feel able to use?

What are the ones you feel shy to mention or people in your group may find unfamiliar?

Are there symbols around the hall or room which include some of the people who will come to the group, are there symbols which exclude people?

THE LAYOUT OF THE ROOM

Our preference is for people to meet in an open circle with no chairs or furniture between them. This may be the first time people have been in such an informal atmosphere and some may initially feel uncomfortable. In our experience any initial discomfort is short-lived as the advantages accruing from an open plan and an open working style begin to accumulate. Using comfortable chairs or floor cushions with younger groups works well.

Some people prefer structure so that they feel safe - this is one reason why many groups meet around tables. If you still feel more comfortable within this structure, please do so.

THE FACILITATOR'S PREPARATION

HOW IS THE TEXT BEING USED?

Prior to the meeting you need to read the text for yourself and think through ways you feel able to use the text.

"Has it been read prior to coming?"

"Is it a basis for group discussion 'on the night'?"

"Having met together in a group discussion led by you will it be given out at the end of the session for people to read?"

Part of the openness of this material is for facilitators to explore the ways people find it appropriate, so experiment!



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ACKNOWLEDGING YOUR OWN HISTORY AND EXPERIENCE

We stay away from facilitators using tricks, poses or set pieces where people are manipulated or where facilitators take up positions “just to keep the group going”. The task of the facilitator is to assist the group explore the topics, themes and issues which arise in ways which enable them to become clearer about their own understanding. There are no points of belief which must be adhered to within the materials.

In order to work in this manner we suggest that the material is reflected on by you, as a facilitator, prior to the meetings. You might even work through them with another person who is not part of the group. In this way the facilitator seeks to become clearer in their own mind about the themes which emerge for them and any difficulties posed by the material. Having done so you are then free to be with group members and to assist them meet together around themes which are important for them.

You are not being asked to strike positions or act in ways outside your experience or wishes. We suggest that you indicate this to the group at the beginning. Your experience of life, all of it, is part of who you are. It is this which you bring to the group meeting.

THE WAY THE MATERIALS ARE USED

The way the materials are used is your decision, we do not have "a way". Every group is different and every time a group meets together what they wish to discuss will be different. We are not prescribing what has to occur.

The needs of group members are all different. In the pilot stages of using this material we have had feedback from meetings in formal situations, such as schools and organisational committees and informal situations such as adult education groups, groups of women, groups of men, church groups and community groups.

You are the person with your group, you have to make decisions as you go forward together with them, the material is an outline structure.

THE LENGTH OF TIME FOR A GROUP MEETING

The time people have may be set by time table, transport arrangements, the normal culture associated with organisations or group choice. The leaflets are written to be developed in whatever ways people feel appropriate.

We have used the materials in one hour sessions, some have developed into two hours and in some cases the same material has been spread over several meetings. It depends on the style of the class or group and the level of personal discussion with which you and they wish to explore the material.

INTRODUCING THE THEMES TO GROUP MEMBERS

The task of the facilitator in meetings between people from different traditions.



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When people meet together all their experiences are potentially available to enrich the others, if the relationships are supportive and if they wish to speak about them.

The meetings are to help us all look at how different people live in one place and, perhaps, increase the freedom and choices we have together. Meeting together around this material people will bring different experiences of confusion, conflict and freedom to each meeting.

Your task is to be free to meet with people from all traditions. You are encouraged to acknowledge your own traditions and upbringing within the group discussion, as appropriate.

You are asked to assist people in the group reflect on those aspects they wish to, while ensuring that no one feels pressure to disclose anything they do not wish.

The task of the facilitator is to guard the boundaries of the group in order that the group members speak together in the most inclusive way possible. Speaking with one another without taking time to really listen and hear one another destroys new possibilities together. If one person really feels hurt, abused or put down by language, this is the verbal equivalent of being beaten and driven out. Language in our groups should accept the form and expression of 'the other'. Meeting together in such a manner may enable new choices to open up.

THE MEETING: GETTING STARTED - THE WAYS FACILITATORS WORK

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE FACILITATOR IN THE MEETING

- (i) The facilitator is never any better than any member of the group. They are expected to do their job. They are sure that the life experiences of the members of the group are another reality to theirs. There is no reason to estimate their own experience higher than anyone else's. A facilitator must be humble, if only because the worker recognises that the people who take part in the group, sometimes, give the facilitator a living.
- (ii) A facilitator has to be free in their work with the group. This means, for example:
 - (a) The facilitator never rivals with the group or with the group members for power over the group.
 - (b) The facilitator never rivals with member(s) of the group about knowledge, life experiences or power.
 - (c) The facilitator accepts all the members of the group equally, not having regard, special sympathy or antipathy for any member of the group.
 - (d) The facilitator accepts that the group follows its own path. What is important is what the group members wish.
 - (e) If the facilitator loses their freedom in the group, becomes afraid of the group or of someone in the group or feels awkward or anxious, they should say so. This may mean asking the



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group, if possible, to clarify the source of their difficulty.

- (f) The facilitator always leaves the group members free in their decisions, always showing them that they decide what they wish to do. Our group work only takes place so that people can find better possibilities to take whatever decisions are necessary for them, eventually.
- (g) To meet others from different traditions is more often, initially, an experience in emotion rather than in logic and rationality. The central task of the facilitator is to assist group members explore whether there are ways in which these emotions can be understood and relationships developed; ways in which the emotions, fears and uncertainties can be channelled, without dismissing the other person or denying them a place.
- (h) One educational task in a group meeting is to legitimise different feelings being shared, explored and understood in some manner, even within the midst of a communal conflict.

INTRODUCTIONS

This should be enjoyable and fun. Facilitators do not need to know any detailed background about the members of the group prior to their coming to the meeting. To know more could mean making alliances with the organisation or person who has initiated the course or to be seen as for or against particular people or positions. In so doing it would not be an open 'meeting'.

After being introduced in a simple way by the course organiser, the facilitator could ask, for example, "Does everyone know each other, do people want to know names?" or in a group that is continuing from a previous session, the facilitator might ask people to share any piece of news they have about themselves since they last met. This is in order to bring them out of prior involvements and into meeting together again.

FORMS OF INTRODUCTION

In a group coming together for the first time it is important that the facilitator's background does not come between the members. It is questionable whether the facilitator should give any personal background at all, except as detail which is relevant within the course of the session. If they do give detail, then it probably should be at the end of a time where people are sharing "who we are" and "where we come from". If the facilitator does it first, it can be experienced as a power game between the facilitator and members.

NAMES ARE AN IMPORTANT STARTING POINT FOR EXPERIENCING DIFFERENCE AND SIMILARITY

When people meet together in a contested society and tell each other their names, they begin this experience of meeting difference. They are sometimes in the presence of people whom they have been brought up to understand are different from them.

In such a contested places the very names people have carry a cultural message or evoke cultural images. Particular names have become associated with different cultural groups and traditions, although there are always exceptions - to meet a Billy who is Catholic is a rare occurrence, to meet a Brigid who is Protestant is equally rare, though both exist. Out of the relationships and cultural history each person has, hearing these names can diminish the meeting. Each name has to be spoken and acknowledged without weight being attached to one more than the other.



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In facilitating work, great care is taken to spell and pronounce the different names in the manner people say them and use them. Here, at the very beginning of a group meeting, is one way to give people space; one way for differences to be experienced and valued. In the very moment that names are said, pronounced and spelt if necessary, some people from 'the other tradition' will experience feelings associated with that name and the culture which is associated with it. This situation, in mixed company can, itself, be a new experience.

For example, the use by Catholics/Nationalists of Irish names has become more common in the North of Ireland as previously Anglicised versions of names are dropped. Dealing with this change is a new experience for people from the Protestant/Unionist culture. Some people may be dismissive, others may feel awkward and others may be interested. For some, until now, they may have been unable to speak with a member of the different tradition about their names and culture. For members of the Catholic/Nationalist tradition, they too may be uncertain or anxious about using their Irish names in mixed company out of previous experiences of being mocked or dismissed or out of not wishing their names to identify them with a particular political orientation.

There have been groups where names which are associated with a strong Protestant culture were examined too. For many people from the Catholic tradition to hear how a Billy or William, an Elizabeth or Anne, have been named and the significance of the name to their family tradition is a new experience.

It is often of interest for people in groups to understand more of the traditions associated with the other person's family upbringing and the significance of their names in that tradition. At a very basic level, names are a sign of difference and the manner in which names are given are important starting points for discovering similarity.

Giving people some space to say how they were named and their feelings about the way they were either given, or denied, a place in the groups into which they were born is an important aspect in creating space for differences to be experienced and acknowledged. Giving other people opportunities to hear these different experiences in mixed company is also a new space. By sharing the meaning and history of different cultural names and traditions associated with family naming practices, the differences and similarities in family life in different cultures are present in the group and explored. They bring people right into the heart of the issue at the centre of a contested society: are there ways for people, regardless of tradition, to have an equal place together?

In taking care of the group atmosphere at the very beginning the facilitators are seeking to create a structure within which differences are appreciated and given a place.

In a discussion around names there are additional space giving functions. Names are one of the deepest foundations in people. People remember how their names have been said by others, the tones used and how these tones have been associated with particular relationships, people and situations. In names, there is already a deep memory of relationships in which people felt either diminished, accepted or enlivened. Listening together to each other's names at the beginning of a group, people recall the times and relationships where their name was used in particular and different ways. This sharing too is space giving. In such moments, people come to a concrete experience of how they are the product of so many relationships.



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HANDLING EXPERIENCES OF ASYMMETRY

In the small examples above concerning names being shared in mixed groups, there may be an experience of asymmetry. For example, Protestant fears of Catholic names may be greater than Catholic fears of Protestant names. There are other experiences, sometimes associated with the state institutions such as the law, where the fears of some Catholics are greater than those of Protestants.

It is the nature of an ethnic frontier that people from all major traditions will have times and situations where they are at ease, and times and situations where they are not. These experiences can even change in a meeting. This project acknowledges this dynamic movement. It is a dimension we try to be conscious of and which makes some aspects of the work possible. (Wright,1991)

If people do not experience having a place in the form of the welcome and introduction they receive, they will generate it at the expense of others as the group progresses. In such a scenario, as each person is describing what they are doing, the others who do not feel accepted compete to equal what someone else said, or to even better it. In such a charged atmosphere, many people quickly become isolated and vulnerable.

At these initial stages, if the facilitator feels uncertain they should admit it. By phrases, such as “I hope it will get better if we begin, let's begin”, the facilitator seeks to stay with their own feelings and acknowledge them. Uncertainty should be acknowledged, not hidden. In such ways group members who may also be uncertain, can acknowledge their uncertainty and come together into the structure of the meeting, more or less on a level, not competing. In doing this the facilitator says that they are uncertain and the group begins from common ground.

In these meetings, people are initially seeking simple elements, such as names, through which they can meet. These building blocks are steps on the way; important experiences, as people reach forward to seek new, transcending, community and political frameworks.

SOME GROUND RULES FOR DISCUSSION ARE ESTABLISHED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE MEETING

When the facilitator agrees to work with a group ground rules for the meeting are suggested. These suggestions are made in order to enable the meeting to talk about people's real experiences in life. They are made in such a way that each person's experience cannot be challenged, each person having their place.

Some of these rules are agreed at the beginning, as part of a contract

1. At the beginning of a group, the facilitator states that apart from saying who people are, there is no pressure on people to speak unless they choose to. There is to be no attempt to read people's silence; silence is in order.
2. The facilitator also asks that people do not interrupt others, and that, if people question each other, the person questioned has the right to ask the questioner what their personal interest in their question is. After hearing this reply, they can still choose not to answer this question. This is to stop people using questions in power plays with others, a feature in groups where people are not feeling very secure. When people are asked questions in the group, it usually is important that the

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facilitator, at least initially, reminds them that they do not need to answer the question, and that they have a right to know what the interest of the other is in the question.

3. The facilitator also asks people to agree that who said what will not be divulged in other company. Other boundaries are established as the discussion grows. These are outlined below.

4. Speaking about 'others' who are in the group.

Within the group, if people refer to others present, the facilitator asks them to look at the person and speak to them in a personal way. e.g. "What you have just said ..." not "what Roger has just said..." In this manner people acknowledge each other in the group and stay in relationship with one another.

5. Speaking about 'others' who are outside the group

The facilitators are continually alert to scapegoating. Speaking of public figures in derogatory terms denies these very people their human attributes. Although the facilitator, too, may have deep feelings about certain public figures, they know that to assist such a derogatory atmosphere to grow only adds to the old circles of abuse. This takes people out of relationship with each other in the group. When people are referring to those outside the group, the facilitator asks them to use their proper name. e.g; Ian Paisley, John Hume, David Trimble, Gerry Adams, John Alderdice, John Bruton, John Major, etc..

This basic ground rule, in itself, establishes that different and sometimes competing traditions and views are given an equal place in a group. In a group which contains people with strongly divergent views and traditions, this prevents the group being aligned with one position. The experience of speaking about people in these human ways may, for some, be a completely new experience, quite at odds with the norm within the groups to which they belong.

STAYING WITH THE REALITIES OF GROUP MEMBERS' EXPERIENCE

As people share within the group, differences in experience emerge. People also recognise similarities between their own experiences and those illustrated in the stories of others. In sharing differences and recognising similarities, space is created together. When people share experiences about the relationships they are part of other people can come with them, making connections in their own lives and vice versa.

It is important when the facilitator invites people to speak in a group that they do not interrupt them by saying what they think they might be thinking. If facilitators do this a barrier is created for the person in the group. Such actions would mean that groups, which are about growth and freedom, would have these very principles denied by the facilitator. Through such experiences people can be diminished. The rule of not interrupting while others speak is important for both facilitators and group members, it gives people space.

When people ask questions in the group, it is usually important that the facilitator first invites them to say more about their own question. To do so keeps the personal involvement in the questions of the person asking them; it cuts any rivalrous intent on the part of the questioner; and it prevents the question spinning around the group, making people uncertain whether they need to answer it or not.



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It is also important that the facilitator does not evoke other rivalries. For example “Could you tell me something about your question” is different from “I would like you to tell us something”. To say the latter is asking two questions of the other person. Firstly, the person has to consider whether they would like to do what the facilitator says, and secondly, only then, consider what they wish to say. In this example people are brought into rivalry and, in the meantime, everything changes. What they were going to say originally may be lost and, if the person does decide to speak eventually, the nuances in the original question are possibly missed. If not, the person is shut up with their thoughts, those of the facilitator and the fact that they did not wish what the facilitator wished.

The skill of the facilitator is in framing invitations which assist the meeting and which do not increase barriers or place additional hurdles in peoples way. In this way, each person seeks their own way to understand different situations and choose their own responses. As this becomes normal practice group members will do this for the facilitator when he or she asks questions too. In such collaborative ways the experience of the group grows. People may experience space opening up for them, and others, in the meeting. By modelling such experiences in a group the confidence of group members in other situations may multiply.

THE FACILITATOR'S TASK IS TO HELP PEOPLE TO SPEAK FREELY IN THE GROUP

As a facilitator, some forms of language are understood to work against people speaking freely in the group. Some of these key phrases the facilitators are alert to are :

1. *I do not wish to be provocative but...*”

This indicates that the person is in rivalry with someone who has spoken or some idea which has been put forward. The use of the word "but" in this situation builds a wall to hide behind. In the course of a meeting the facilitator would gently bring such phrases to people's attention, assisting people to speak their views without being false or patronising to others by prefacing their remarks in this manner.

2. *Why are you doing that?*”

The use of the word “why” can sow many seeds of confusion in a group meeting. Many of the reasons why people do things in day to day life belong to long forgotten relationships and experiences. There are many times when people cannot answer such a question. People, in this form of group work, can honestly say they do not know.

Other people can use the word “why” as a prelude to devastating others with their own views, and so it is used in rivalry. When developing this form of group work a facilitator was asked in a school group “why do you think these meetings will make a difference?” In a matter of minutes, as people answered, there were many arguments and counter arguments, all very theoretical and impersonal, all drawing people into different and opposing camps.

3. *Another barrier is to order questions for convenience*

A basic ground rule in this work is that each question a person asks stands on its own, free for people



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to make their own varied connections with it, often totally unexpectedly. For the facilitator to order questions that people ask is to drive out aspects of personal meaning that may have been in their questions. Such acts are subjective. The facilitator imposes a possibly false structure since they do not see the question as the questioner does.

To categorise is to encourage people to speak generally, rather than personally and concretely. Categorising questions belongs to teaching; ordering the questions drives out the personal narrative, which is at the base of this work with groups. The facilitator cannot take over ownership and responsibility for people's questions and themes.

REMAINING OPEN TO THE DIFFERENCES EACH PERSON BRINGS TO EACH MEETING

There have been particular schools and colleges where the facilitators have been asked, on an annual basis, to work with a particular year group. In each group the staff are likely to be the same as in previous years while the students are different. In annual work the title of the meetings may be the same yet the questions or different, according to the life experiences of the students and the different social and political climate pertaining at the time. The great trap staff and facilitators can fall into is to rival with previous good experiences. Expressions such as "I hope it is as good as the last time", or questions from students, such as "Are we as good as last years group?" are debilitating examples of freedom being driven out of the meeting. Such examples can involve those who facilitate and those who organise the events. They close down possibilities for those who come to these experiences for the first time.

FACILITATORS HAVE EXPERIENCES TO SHARE, NOT PRESCRIPTIONS FOR LIFE

The facilitator emphasises being with people, where they are, in their emotions, tasks and cares. Their task is to assist all to learn and relearn that trying to get out of rivalry is a delight. The facilitators are not interested in promoting approaches which prescribe choices and actions for others or which lessen people's choices and make them more dependent on others.

THE FACILITATOR PROTECTS THE BOUNDARIES OF TIME IN A GROUP

The facilitator protects agreed boundaries, including agreed time limits. On a residential experience, with 30 youth workers, the facilitators came into difficulties as they went over the time previously agreed as the finishing time. Several people, who were part of the organising group, became highly involved in a deep difference of view and the facilitator was unwilling to stop them when the agreed time limit was reached.

Allowing the session to go on, without checking if they had permission to do so from the group members, meant that some people were still interested, whilst there were others who had other matters to attend to and who wished to stop. The discussion became more and more intense for some, while others became more and more disinterested. The meeting ceased to be a group meeting.

In such a situation, the facilitator has the task of protecting previously agreed time boundaries and only permitting the discussion to continue, if all are agreed. To give in to pressures, to recognise some people as being more important (in this case the organising group) or to break agreements



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previously made and not unanimously renegotiated, is to destroy the group structure for future meetings together.

THE FACILITATOR LIVES WITH DISCUSSION APPEARING UNTIDY

In a tense discussion which continues right up to the last moment, it is important that the group, and not only the facilitator, faces the decision, "How do we handle the conclusion of this experience together?". When the boundaries around time are held to be important, the meeting stops and people are asked to accept together this emotional state in which nothing is tidied up. This can be a very realistic situation.

The need to have things tidy from a teaching point of view is not important. The need to learn and experience how to find agreement and cohesion, even when meetings have to be ended arbitrarily, leaving themes in the air, is more important.

The facilitator cannot descend into scapegoating, otherwise no new ways are learned. In such a tense situation, there is the temptation for the facilitators to put themselves outside the group experience. To do so, is to put themselves outside the group and the group agreements and to deny the reality of the discussion and the feelings shared together.

To devalue the discussion by saying things such as "this is an extremely inopportune moment to stop", means scapegoating the organisers of the meeting. This tactic says "I am not to blame. I put myself outside the group". There also is the possibility, if the facilitator becomes uncertain, that the group will blame the facilitator for what has happened. The task of the facilitator is to assist people to understand scapegoating mechanisms better in daily life. It is not to present group members with an experience of group meetings being done efficiently, at no cost to the facilitator.



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INTRODUCING THEMES IN THE MATERIAL TO GROUP MEMBERS

AN INITIAL MEETING TO INTRODUCE THE PROJECT

We invite you to meet together as a group for an introductory session where the group members are introduced to each other. This meeting should be relaxed, informal and fun.

At this time people might be asked to share something of their experiences in the community and their wishes for the group meeting.

At this meeting the programme for the group discussion can be introduced and group members invited to ask questions about the material and the form of the group meeting.

THE WAYS PEOPLE MEET TOGETHER

It is valuable for the facilitator to remind group members, from time to time, that they are seeking to be together in a manner which assists acceptance and freedom grow with one another.

It is important to establish that knowledge within a group is about seeking insights about how not to repeat destructive ways of living and acting. It is not about giving tailor made solutions but finding ways forward, beyond distrust and conflict, which people are open to taking.

In the following notes we offer a broad preparation framework for each group meeting.

These are grouped under the following headings:

1. THE POSSIBLE LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR EACH GROUP MEETING
2. BEGINNING THE MEETING
INITIAL EXERCISES WHICH MAY BE DEVELOPED
3. THE CENTRAL ACTIVITY AROUND THE THEME
4. CONCLUSION



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TOPIC GUIDELINES

THEME: UNDERSTANDING STABLE AND DIVIDED SOCIETIES

TOPIC: "SHARING A PLACE"

The purpose of this session is for people to get to know each other better. It assumes people have spent some prior time being introduced to the series, sharing their names and interests and clarifying the ground rules of confidentiality and people not having to speak unless they wish.

POSSIBLE LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR THIS ARE:

1. to relate participants own experiences to the dynamics of life in stable and divided societies.
2. to recall people, places, circumstances, groups, institutions where:
 - it was possible to feel secure because you had a place.
 - it was likely that you were uncertain or had to struggle for a place.
3. to identify experiences common to all people across the divisions of society.
4. to acknowledge the diversity of experiences people from different cultures have, when seeking a place in the midst of others.

BEGINNING

Our preference is that no matter how the material is explored, people stay with their own experiences.

This text lends itself to a variety of approaches. You might wish the group to enter the material gradually, leaving the reflection exercise to the mid-point of the time available. Some facilitators, who are at ease with the material, may feel able to start with this immediately.

INITIAL EXERCISES FOR CONSIDERATION

In this text we are inviting people to think about the communities they have lived in and consider the extent to which they experienced them as being divided or stable.

- (a) We suggest that to introduce this facilitators might think about ways of introducing people to images of space in day to day life:
 - 'physical space' where as a child or adult we enjoyed uncluttered freedom eg running in an empty field, on an empty beach:
 - 'emotional space' where we were with people we trusted and all seemed possible.
- (b) Another way could be to ask people to recall images of 'Safety' and 'Danger' from their early days.



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(c) People could be given a small stone. Meanwhile a large stone is placed in the centre of the circle or group. The centre is named as representing “my home”; “my family”; “my school”; “my neighbours”; “my place of religion”; “my place of work”; “my local community” and so on. Without having to explain themselves, people are invited to place the stone as close or far from the named centre as they feel now or felt in the past.

THE CENTRAL ACTIVITY AROUND THIS THEME

A core element in this unit is the reflection exercise.

To help people relax and be open to their memories, one group member might read the text, leaving pauses where the dots (...) are. This is so people have time to remember events and the feelings that went with them.

People may react differently to this activity.

Some people find it absorbing and enjoyable. They may be eager to talk and share their memories.

Some people enjoy it but want to keep their memories private.

Some people can't see the point of it. They may need time to say this.

Some people take longer to return from their memories than others. They want to be silent at first.

Some people find it distressing. They recover unhappy memories.

Some may wish to share these feelings. Others may wish to keep them private.

It is important to respect whatever responses people have. They are all valid.

CONCLUSION

A central theme in the series is the importance of relationships and structures in which people experience acceptance, where movements to destructive feelings and actions are cut, channelled, regulated or dissolved.

In a divided community or society people may have settled to stay apart. We wish to raise the issue of whether people are open to risk meeting those they are different from in this situation. We also wish to understand how, for many people, it is understandably difficult and even dangerous.



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TOPIC GUIDELINES

THEME: UNDERSTANDING STABLE AND DIVIDED SOCIETIES

TOPIC: "THE SYMBOLS OF DIVISION"

THE PURPOSE OF THIS SESSION

Symbols are of many different types and have many meanings. Often the feelings associated with them are intense because of the circumstances around their history or the particular situation we find ourselves in. When we are uncertain they take on a more intense association for us. This session explores what symbols mean for us in situations where people are divided.

POSSIBLE LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR THIS ARE:

1. to identify membership of any groups that make people feel different or set apart.
2. to identify the symbols that represent these groups.
3. to share with other group members the feelings that these arouse.
4. to reflect on the importance of history to these groups.
5. to understand the effect of symbols on the relationships between groups in conflict.
6. to consider how symbols identify with or transcend international boundaries.

BEGINNING

Our preference is that whatever way the material is explored people stay with their own experiences.

This text lends itself to a variety of approaches. Among these are the following models. The common feature of these approaches is that the atmosphere of the meeting should be in the midst of colour and variety associated with differences and cultures. The concrete presence of symbols around people and in their midst is important.

APPROACH 1

SYMBOLS ARE ALREADY PLACED IN THE GROUP AS THEY ARRIVE

This may be an approach where group members are at ease and definite traditions and group loyalties have been stated as being important to members.

The participants come into a room where there are a variety of symbols familiar and unfamiliar to them laid out in the centre of the circle of chairs. These are both varied and balanced to ensure that the various traditions people come from are present and do not cause offense to those who identify with them.



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APPROACH 2

SYMBOLS ARE BROUGHT BY GROUP MEMBERS

A way which ensures that each person has something familiar to them in the circle is to invite each group member to bring one or two symbols from the traditions they come from and place them in their midst. Here we get breadth and diversity as each person has something associated with their tradition in front of them and in the midst of the group.

APPROACH 3

SYMBOLS ARE PLACED IN THE GROUP AFTER PEOPLE ARE INTRODUCED TO THE THEME

This may be an approach where the group is uncertain or taking time to settle with each other or where there are a wide range of traditions and loyalties present in the membership. It may lend itself to an exploration of symbols of class, social and cultural background and international themes.

Some people may feel that the symbols in the midst of the meeting place as people arrive is threatening and would prefer a more gentle introduction. Symbols in the midst of some groups could dominate the proceedings, making it difficult to talk.

At the end of the previous group people can be invited to bring one or two symbols from the traditions they belong to the next group. There may be some discussion then among members about the items in other traditions people would be keen to see and speak about.

After an introductory game or cameo of the theme from the facilitator people could be invited to place their symbols in the midst of the group.

THE CENTRAL ACTIVITY AROUND THIS THEME

After looking at the symbols people are invited to take time and speak about their symbols and what they mean to them. This would be heard by all in turn, equal time being given to each person.

Then, if it is appropriate in the different cultures, people might be asked to hold the items and ask questions for clarification of those who identify with the symbol and/or brought them.

To be close to a symbol associated with another side, to touch or hold it can be a powerful experience in the presence of others whom we have been brought up to see as being different. To explore symbols in the presence of the others, where each deals with the symbols in a respectful way can be new too.

To hear others speak of what their symbol means to them can be an invitation to reflect and even reconsider prior views. It is important to allow time for this. There are no teaching points you have to get through.

At all times it is important that we allow people to explore the symbols in the ways they wish to, as gently or deeply as people wish. Symbols do not have meanings that are given lightly. Symbols also have many and different associations, according to where people were brought up and where they find themselves now.



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CONCLUSION

Here the title can be used to allow people to explore feelings.

It may be that this meeting evoked many feelings, some associated with it being the first time people were with “others” whom they had seen as being different. We would suggest that this is important, more important than moving quickly into understanding the issues with the head.

It is necessary to ask people at the conclusion "If anything new has occurred to them since doing the session?" Here the text is available for the members at the conclusion of this group discussion and you might invite people to read it and reflect on their experiences in the group discussion. Here the text may assist people order their experience.

BACKGROUND

Symbols for one group or tradition are often associated with some other tradition being denied, beaten or driven away. In secure places the others are not seen or, if present, they are not disturbing.

In divided societies “the others” are ever present, they are seen and associated with emotions, disturbance or threats of upheaval. In this form of meeting there could be symbols which evoke deep feelings in people who, up to now, felt they were balanced. This is associated with the symbol bringing those they were apart from into their midst. Being distant from “the others” symbols gives space and some freedom, to be ‘in their midst’ is something different.

In this experience we are seeking to understand how different symbols are experienced by us and to what extent we are locked into deep emotions or free from them.



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TOPIC GUIDELINES

THEME: UNDERSTANDING STABLE AND DIVIDED SOCIETIES

TOPIC: "POLICING IN DIVIDED SOCIETIES"

THE PURPOSE OF THIS SESSION

Policing is a theme which people take for granted as long as all around them is secure and yet, at the slightest upset, the issue of policing has the ability to dominate public discussion to the surprise of many. In this unit we are inviting people to look at the task of policing a society.

What are the assumptions on which good policing is based, for the citizens and police alike?

What are the particular issues around policing and being policed when societies are divided?

POSSIBLE OBJECTIVES FOR THIS ARE:

1. to assist people understand the place of the law and policing in cultures.
2. to explore how people experience structure through their experiences of the law.
3. to understand how the law can be undermined.
4. to understand how people can become ambivalent about the law in a divided society.
5. to examine paradoxes in group attitudes to the police and private needs for protection.

BEGINNING

We have found this theme to be most productive and, at times, surprising. In our experience the theme can be taken at considerable depth with people from very diverse backgrounds and experiences. It requires the facilitator to be confident in their relationships with people in the group. It also requires that the initial contract about confidentiality, only speaking if you wish to and not interrupting, being redefined and agreed prior to this session.

THE CENTRAL ACTIVITY AROUND THIS THEME

Following a similar approach to the unit on Scapegoats, we suggest a starting point is to invite people to share their early experiences and images of the police and then to consider what experiences have led them to the way they look at policing now. Within a one or two hour discussion we would not wish to be any more prescriptive.

If the discussion is difficult to start the text can be discussed, it is a structure in itself. If there are differences in experience of policing and being policed the sharing of individual experiences will more than fill the time.



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At the centre of this approach we understand that when people with different life experiences meet and share in a trusting and open relationship people move and respond, often in unexpected ways. This form of meeting cannot be prescriptive nor need it be tidy and neatly finished. Hearing different experiences which people living in the same place may have about policing and law is at the centre of the study theme.

CONCLUSION

In writing this material we hope that people can find ways to acknowledge the need to find ways out of conflict and to seek relationships and structures within which people from different traditions can have confidence. There is no blueprint. If people find that very different experiences of the law do exist that, in itself, means that the unanimity of support which the legal and policing systems assume is being eroded or has never existed and needs attention. In divided societies this is a very sharply focussed issue.



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TOPIC GUIDELINES

THEME: UNDERSTANDING STABLE AND DIVIDED SOCIETIES

TOPIC: "TRANSCENDENCE"

THE PURPOSE OF THIS SESSION

Modern day experience is such that although many people may still have friendships with people who share their tradition and culture we are, at least, more aware of 'others' around us who have different traditions. When 'others' lived in 'another place' we could be aware of difference without having to meet 'them' as equals in 'our place'.

In a contested society 'the others' of each tradition meet in the one place. In what ways can people who are from different traditions, and who live in one place, experience a 'common sense'? What are the elements, if any, in a divided society, spoken and unspoken, which people from both traditions will stand together under, gather around or allow their actions to be guided by, even for a short time?

What are the common values, principles and institutions which transcend people in a secure society? To what extent are they known and understood as such?

POSSIBLE LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR THIS ARE:

1. to explore relationships and structures in which people who are different can enrich, not threaten, each other.
2. to examine how an agreed transcendence gives differences a place.
3. to examine the importance of transcending beliefs in political life, secular life and religion.
4. to consider the ways people see a final authority as being essential in ordering societal life.
5. to examine what occurs in conflict when various transcendences clash or are used against each other.

BEGINNING

Some people will have the experience of living within a tradition or group for important aspects of their lives. Outside the work situation it is likely that many people will spend most of their leisure time within a group, culture or tradition where common values and beliefs are assumed. To reflect on this might be the first time that some people realise this structure in their lives.

In a divided society the work place may be the place where, spoken or unspoken, people meet different values and traditions. In many societies, divided and secure, there now are legal instruments which make it illegal for people from different cultural traditions to be discriminated against.



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Facilitating such experiences as this may move from objective facts towards deep emotions and deep feelings. In divided societies the discussion of social facts are conditioned by the context in which people experience fear and threat.

It is seeking out the particular local codes and the limitations on them that we can enter this theme eg: “all people are the same..”; “anyone who is a friend of theirs is a friend of ours”. It is by seeking the basic expectations by which people were deemed to belong together eg: “their family and ours has always helped each other out, even though we come from different traditions”.

Thinking about the local and national beliefs in the area of home, community, culture and work under which different people are deemed to belong is a valuable way to begin the exploration of transcendence.

THE CENTRAL ACTIVITY AROUND THIS THEME

The central problem is where to go with transcendence once it disappears. This material is not an appeal for some kind of common value to be found and imposed on people. Such an approach would be a new form of authoritarianism. Transcendences can never be imposed.

Our goal in this section is to try to show that final authorities have, in the past, been crucial to living together. Some such final authorities have been created by authoritarian orders and have had scapegoats. eg: Slaves, Jews, Lepers, Muslims, Christians, Native Americans etc. The waning of common authorities in modern societies give rise to new problems as to how people live in peace together.

CONCLUSION

The extent to which modern society can be a place within which differences in tradition and culture are acknowledged depends on the extent to which there are some transcendent elements within it under which all people stand, equally and together.

It is the case that each time the law does not acknowledge proven miscarriages of judgment there is a diminution in the transcendent properties of the law.

It is the case that when people are seen to be different and others seek to discriminate against them, that the place of both, as citizens in the one state, is weakened. In order to feel secure in a mixed society we need some common elements of transcendence so that differences will have a place.

In divided situations people may not only need to consciously seek together what these elements are. The very relationships within which these searches are undertaken may themselves offer the key transcending ingredient, trust. In such relationships some new structures could be developed by agreement, and even legally. These forms could be expressed in social, economic, religious, cultural and political life.

At their best when meetings between people from different traditions become places and relationships where trust is experienced these are the seeds of transcending experience. This is why such an adult education approach is central to us finding some ways out of conflict!



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TOPIC GUIDELINES

THEME: UNDERSTANDING STABLE AND DIVIDED SOCIETIES

TOPIC: "COPING WITH CONFLICT"

THE FASCINATION OF VIOLENCE AND THE ROLE OF RITUALS

THE PURPOSE OF THIS SESSION

In the midst of a conflict, violence acts as a focal point for people. Violence fascinates people and this fascination is often further fed by all the attendant interest of the crowds and the media. As people become fascinated, apparently completely focussed on a person or on an event to the exclusion of all else, they lose a wider view of the situation and of their place in it.

POSSIBLE LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR THIS ARE:

1. to find out how fascinated and preoccupied we are with violence and disorder.
2. to understand how we ritualise important feelings.
3. to understand when societal and institutional rituals control violence or unleash it.

BEGINNING

A useful, and humourous way, into the theme of fascination is to invite people to look back on situations where they were totally fascinated by someone else, oblivious to all else. These may have been adolescent relationships with people they idolised or childhood incidents where relatives still remind them how they were completely oblivious to events around them, totally spellbound with some activity.

Fascination is that experience of being totally consumed with another person, object or happening.

THE CENTRAL ACTIVITY AROUND THIS THEME

The text begins with an exercise inviting people to examine the extent to which dates and places associated with violent events are imprinted on their memory. These events can also be associated with particular rituals.

There are many rituals we take part in without even thinking of them as being such. Rituals are one way in which we bring order and structure into daily life. Rituals are also associated with events which, from time to time, have deep emotions around them and which can evoke deep memories and emotions.



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In a ritual such as a funeral, a party or a presentation, the feelings associated with death, with time passing or with people leaving can be channelled in ways which allow life to move on, while recognising that things have changed.

(a) This theme can be explored through using the experiences of group members and the rituals they are familiar with and those they are not. People can be invited to share one ritual they take part in and speak about its importance for them. The other members are asked to listen to this without interruption.

(b) The theme can then be developed by people asking one another about those aspects of the ritual they did not understand. Again the same rules of listening without interrupting apply.

CONCLUSION

A central theme is that becoming fascinated limits people's freedom. To remain fascinated with violence is to lose the freedom to be in relationships where ways out can be found.

Many rituals in divided societies are not able to run true without emotions spilling over into other areas of life. It is difficult to imagine rituals which can unify all of the people.

People living in more secure societies may approach this theme through sharing their experiences of family and group rituals where they are together with others who do not agree with them.



WAYS OUT OF CONFLICT

TOPIC GUIDELINES

THEME: COPING WITH CONFLICT

TOPIC: "SCAPEGOATS"

Scapegoats are people who are held accountable if something goes wrong. Scapegoats are people who are no more responsible than the others and yet they are randomly chosen by some as being to blame. Scapegoats are not people who willingly take responsibility for someone or something.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS SESSION

In this session we invite people to recall the emotions associated with being blamed by others when we were no more responsible than each of the others. This is usually quite easy to remember but not always easy to speak about. The initial section could be used to acknowledge these incidents privately.

In the section "Blaming others" a more difficult aspect is to acknowledge actions we have taken where we have sought out others to blame. Many of us are introduced to this way of dealing with difficulty at an early age in family, street and community. The material recalls a variety of situations where people seek others to blame through subtle ways which allow us to feel superior to those who are different in our midst.

POSSIBLE LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR THIS ARE:

- 1 to reflect on experiences of being blamed and of blaming others.
- 2 to examine the experiences of family and community life which introduce people to scapegoating as a way of securing order.
- 3 to look at the ways we are bound to scapegoating in daily life.
- 4 to recall relationships where difficulties were dealt with without scapegoating others.
- 5 to consider relationships and events where we had freedom to choose other ways.

BEGINNING

This is a very personal theme and requires the facilitator to prepare a supportive and reflective atmosphere. This unit might be given out to people prior to the meeting on this topic with the request that people think about the situations they are in and seek examples in day to day life.

After checking that people have no further themes carrying over from the previous meeting the facilitator could start the group session by inviting people to share, perhaps leading with a short and personal example. There may be an initial reluctance to speak as people wonder at what depth others are prepared to speak. Wait patiently, if your own example has been open and personal, other experiences will come.



WAYS OUT OF CONFLICT

TOPIC GUIDELINES

If no experiences are shared you can invite people to speak about their difficulty with the theme. This theme is difficult for everyone to acknowledge as it is very deeply ingrained in most people's experience.

If this proves too difficult, move to inviting the group to speak about their reaction to the examples in the text. This will allow people to speak about the theme in a detached way.

THE CENTRAL ACTIVITY AROUND THIS THEME

The central theme is to distinguish how scapegoats are always random. Scapegoats are no more responsible than others. In situations where all is becoming uncertain, where order itself seems to be disappearing, there is a movement to secure a kind of order, usually at the expense of others who are no more responsible than we ourselves.

Through the experiences of one person reflecting on their upbringing in the midst of differences, some of which were threatening, this unit invites people to find experiences which resonate with these. We are seeking the important ways people were, and are, taught to deal with differences in family, street and community cultures; the ways by which they coped and cope with those who threaten them and the ways which are described as being tolerant and intolerant.

CONCLUSION

We are suggesting that, in the absence of relationships and structures within which people and their differences are given a place, scapegoating actions were, and are, ways of coping with feelings that appear to overwhelm us.

We hope that people begin to think about the different relationships and structures they belong to. We hope people will consider ways in which these assist them move beyond scapegoating those who are seen to be threatening them and their traditions.



WAYS OUT OF CONFLICT

TOPIC GUIDELINES

THEME: COPING WITH CONFLICT

TOPIC: "THE BEST OF A BAD JOB"

THE PURPOSE OF THIS SESSION

Where there are people from different traditions and cultures living in one place it is possible that they will not share common membership of organisations or participate in common festivals. In such circumstances people often develop ways of coping and containing their fears and uncertainties or denying them altogether.

This is quite understandable and yet, as the differences remain, this is not a very stable base for future relationships together. This session invites us to see if these ways apply in any aspect of our daily life. We are invited to examine the particular ways in which public and cultural institutions allow us to deal with and/or avoid conflict.

POSSIBLE LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR THIS ARE:

1. to examine a variety of ways people cope with conflict in daily life.
2. to look at how these are acutely important in a divided society.
3. to understand the unsatisfactory nature of avoidance in coping with issues which are, by their very nature, long lasting.
4. to consider if people can choose to move, in trust, beyond these coping ways.

BEGINNING

Ideas

In some groups each person can be invited to offer names associated with their tradition, culture or group which seems to them to be distinct. The other people in the group are asked to identify where and how they first met this name, if at all, and how they responded.

THE CENTRAL ACTIVITY AROUND THIS THEME

The central theme is to assist a personal discussion around how avoidance, coping politely and denying their identity have been, and perhaps are, part of daily life.

In the material people are asked to explore what ways they may have experienced these actions and whether these actions dominate their life today or not.

The facilitator's task is to ensure that the time is equitably distributed between these themes and to assist the discussion within this framework.



WAYS OUT OF CONFLICT

TOPIC GUIDELINES

CONCLUSION

These forms of coping are ways people seek to live with upheaval, fear and threat. Each person has to make their own way. We are suggesting that these ways do not bring people forward into new possibilities, they do not lessen the fear.

This faces us with a question about whether we are prepared to risk making new relationships with those we see as being different to us.

Are the fears too deep in us to permit this?

Are there any structures which assist people to meet in new ways?

Is there any history of people we know doing this and not feeling threatened?

The group members can be invited to share stories of such experiences with each other and to remain in the atmosphere of these stories. In such ways the session will have contrasting experiences sitting alongside each other. That possibility is all we seek at this time.



WAYS OUT OF CONFLICT

TOPIC GUIDELINES

THEME: FINDING WAYS OUT

TOPIC: "DIFFERENT APPROACHES IN DIFFERENT PLACES"

THE PURPOSE OF THIS SESSION

In this unit we wish to explore the importance of individual actions in the search for new relationships and structures where people from different traditions and loyalties can live equitably.

Conflict can easily overwhelm us and make every aspect of our lives uncertain. At times, when there is conflict within organisations or communities we belong to, we can easily wonder if there is any point in holding on, or continuing to hope, for things to be different. Personal actions are important in such situations, even though this may not occur to us at the time.

The nature of conflict is that everyone can become drawn into its orbit and debilitated with fear and hurt. People cease taking small steps with those they are in the midst of and different to.

The small actions people take, to meet those whom they are brought up to see as being different to them, bring fresh opportunities for understanding into the midst of a conflict. Without these actions nothing new can happen between people.

POSSIBLE LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR THIS ARE:

1. to examine the importance of small actions in a divided society
2. to consider what people have done in different circumstances of 'hopelessness'
3. to examine how people find freedom in the midst of fear.
4. to consider the importance of relationships in seeking ways forward.

BEGINNING

This unit invites people to share their feelings and thoughts around the value of individual actions in the midst of conflict. At such times people find it easier to seek out those they are like rather than move towards those who are different to them. It is a fact also that some people have broken out of these ways.

People have experiences in their lives where others, at times of upheaval, have simply continued to live on, without giving in to fear. People have acted in astonishing ways, ways which have affirmed life in the midst of trauma. These experiences are around us, sometimes forgotten or not accepted.

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TOPIC GUIDELINES

THE CENTRAL ACTIVITY AROUND THIS THEME

This text is, we think, best read prior to a group meeting. When at home, we would invite people to take some time to quietly think back to situations where they have been with people who have faced conflict in their personal, family or community life and whose actions have meant something to them. They may not know these people, it may have been a story in a newspaper, on TV or a story others told them and which remains with them to this day. This follows the structure outlined on the back page activity.

The text invites people within the group meeting to either start with the stories referred to or with the stories the participants have recalled. The facilitator is in the best position to make this judgment with the group. If in doubt say and go with what the group wishes.

The session is all about speaking and listening together, in a group, to stories of small and important actions.

CONCLUSION

This whole text does not avoid the need for structural change in situations of political conflict or in organisations where there is a history of disagreement or conflict. It also says that in such situations people themselves can become incapacitated, unable to act with others, unwilling to seek new ways. This is a human cost of conflict, no matter what new structures are sought.

Sharing stories of human action is an important educational method in the midst of a conflict, if people from different traditions and groups are willing to meet together.



WAYS OUT OF CONFLICT

TOPIC GUIDELINES

THEME: FINDING WAYS OUT

TOPIC: "MAKING A CHANGE"

This unit is self explanatory and brings together two aspects developed within the series.

One is the invitation to hear the stories about the other people and how they have acted.

The second is to invite people to respond to the actions others have taken to find "Ways out of Conflict".

People are invited to respond when they feel able, with the people they are with and with the structures they find themselves in.

There is an option to role play one of the stories. This might be another way to approach the topic if the group members wish.



WAYS OUT OF CONFLICT

RESOURCES FOR COMMUNITY RELATIONS WORK

SUPPORTING MATERIAL
FOR FURTHER
REFLECTION/STUDY



UNDERSTANDING
CONFLICT TRUST

WAYS OUT OF CONFLICT

BACKGROUND PAPER FOR FACILITATORS

THE IMPORTANCE OF INFORMAL ADULT EDUCATION AND RECONCILIATION

There are distinct limits to the ways in which the formal education system within an ‘ethnic frontier’ (Wright, 1987) can be expected to yield new forms of community relationships between people from mutually antagonistic traditions. Understandably, out of historical and present day fears, the formal educational systems within the frontier area are identified with the interests of the competing traditions and, primarily, reproduce their cultural values and beliefs. The task of cultural reproduction dominates the task of reconstruction. Reconstructing a society which is marked by trusting relationships and jointly owned and managed structures is desirable for the educator assisting change and growth in pupils, yet it is culturally difficult for them to do.

It is unfair of the adult community to ask these professionals and children to solely undertake this task for adult society. (Wilson, 1994). However, there still may be an opportunity for new meetings, relationships and structures to develop in such areas. One such place is when adults choose to come together in informal education programmes and training, outside the formal statutory education system. Drawing on the experiences of “The Understanding Conflict...and Finding Ways Out of it” project in Northern Ireland, (Morrow, 1991, pp 119-128) such meetings can occur when the initiative for successful experiments comes from the participants. Personal choice is the central element in developing informal education approaches. It stands in contrast to the legal requirements on pupils to attend the formal statutory education system and teachers to teach a required curriculum. It is possible when a base of reconciliation work (Wilson, 1994, op. cit.) has evolved within the situation. (Hinds, 1994)

The central idea under examination here is whether people from the different traditions in Northern Ireland can meet together and speak together constructively about the themes which interest and affect them most in daily life. We are especially interested in examining ways in which the emotionally laden themes and fears around living in a contested place can be examined within mixed company. (Morrow, Wilson & Wright, 1994) Although directly focussed on Northern Ireland, the approach has been used with people from other societies. (Wilson, op. cit., 1994; & Understanding Conflict..., 1993, p 5)

1.1 THE POSSIBILITIES OF INFORMAL RECONCILIATION WORK WITH ADULTS

The context in which the approach has been developed

This model of adult education aims to facilitate people from the different traditions in an ethnic frontier learn with each other. It takes account of the influences and characteristics associated with contested societies.

The participants specifically focus their meetings around the difficult issues and realities in personal, communal, cultural, religious and political life within an ethnic frontier. It draws on something of the spirit of Dewey, who saw the person as having “no existence by him (her) self. He (she) lives in, for, and by society, just as society has no existence except in and through the individuals who constitute it”. (Dewey, 1910, pp 22-23)



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One of the central educational tasks associated with reconciliation is to assist meetings between people from different traditions to take place. In these meetings people should have the possibility to experience trust and begin to share and understand the relationships which assist and maintain separation, distrust and fear. The atmosphere of these meetings is conveyed in the following statement by a founder member of the project when discussing whether Education for Mutual Understanding heralded a new era of 're-education' in Northern Ireland.

“New histories will only take root ... if they grow out of new relationships which give them meaning. If we explore our histories together with people whose experience is of the opposite side of the deterrence relationships, then new history may eventually flourish.” (Wright, 1990, p 30)

Such meetings are often new experiences for many people who initially may feel strange meeting people from traditions other than their own. In the ethnic frontier the traditions do not prepare their members to be comfortable in the presence of the 'others'.

The task of the project is the creation of new forms of meeting together within a shared format. It is sponsored by people who have been brought up within both major traditions in Northern Ireland. In these meetings people can experience being with others from different traditions, having a place as of right and having their experiences valued. The opportunity informal voluntary groups offer is that people choose to come, people only speak if they wish to and groups are not forced into a prescribed curriculum; people are making choices as adults.

The nature of law and order is an important parameter which any informal adult educational work in an ethnic frontier area must acknowledge. On a number of community relations courses, when people spoke together about their experiences of dealing with the state and the law, the experiences of participants were very different. They were coloured by the traditions they had grown up in and the specific encounters they had, and continued to have, with the police in everyday situations. (Wilson, op. cit.,1994)

From these meetings it becomes clearer that people from each tradition had very asymmetrical relationships to the state and to the police. (Wright, 1991a) Central to this groupwork is the differing relationship of people and traditions to the state in an ethnic frontier. In an ethnic frontier each tradition has their own view and sense of loyalty. (Wright, 1991b). Different groups of people do not share the same meaning, even though they share the same events. The facts about every communal incident are not unanimously agreed with; people do not share a transcending identity. In such situations people do not speak with one voice. There are ambivalences about what constitutes criminal activities and how to react to the actions of the police and the army.

One example which highlighted this was the differing responses of people from both major traditions in a mixed group to the Gibraltar shooting of terrorist suspects by the SAS. (1988) Such a theme has been spoken about with great emotion in mixed groups facilitated by the project. Some ways of teaching these controversial events in recent history are now being developed by the Understanding Conflict Project with History teachers in a pilot project in 1994-95 supported by the Northern Ireland Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment. When people share their reactions to such incidents they experience how deeply the cultural triggers within their own history cause them to view the one incident in very different ways.

This problem, the nature of the law and how it is perceived, is at the heart of the educational



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approach used in working with mixed tradition groups. The model also acknowledges that, in the complex dynamics of an ethnic frontier, people from different traditions have very different experiences even though, economically and socially, they appear to come from a comparable background. Furthermore, people living even within one geographical area may well have very different experiences socially and economically. (see Hoare, 1981, pp 152-175) These variations can of course also be within the traditions - the way middle-class professionals experience the state and the police can be very different from their working class co-traditionalists' experiences. Wright's ethnic frontier model hypothesises that differences within as well as between the traditions will be crucial. (Morrow, 1994)

1.2 THE FRONTIER DYNAMICS THE ADULT EDUCATION MODEL ACKNOWLEDGES

THE MEETING TOGETHER MODEL

In an ethnic frontier deterrence is a central form of relationship. (see Wright, 1988) From this flows some basic dynamics which then influence how, and what, people learn in mixed groups.

(A) THE DEFINING POINTS OF DIFFERENCE ARE UNDERSTOOD TO BE UNBARGAINABLES

The model accepts that, for the time being, the defining points of difference will remain around the religious and political labels which stem ultimately from how the fault line of distrust was initially laid down in the frontier area. For convenience, and ease of clarity, these labels are accepted and used. These points of difference are the great unbargainables of identity for each side, to a greater extent than ethnicity or language. These terms also define who 'the others' are, they are ever present.

(B) IDENTITY IS IMPORTANT IN A FRONTIER AREA, THE PROXIMITY OF A HEARTLAND IS AN INFLUENCE

The presence of a heartland area with which people identify, and feel sure they will get support from, shapes how the different frontier 'peoples' see themselves. (see Darby, 1986, pp 148-166) Thus the history of the Protestant tradition was deeply imbued with the British heartland over the Irish Sea although, currently, this may be undergoing change. (McAuley, 1994, pp 151-153) The Catholic/Nationalist tradition has been historically identified with the Irish Republic heartland although, now, there is also some discussion about whether this is as strong as it was, at least in the view of one commentator. (O'Connor, 1993, pp 223-271)

For the Protestant the physical distance and separation from Britain was not fear-producing when the major political power in the Northern Ireland state was integrated with the powerful political power in the United Kingdom. Protestants also remember the time when the contribution of Ulster to the war effort was still in the awareness of the people in the centre of that state. In past years there has been a weakening of these formal and emotive links and the position of the Protestant tradition has become less secure - for example when the Unionist party broke away from the Conservative and Unionist group in Westminster over the abolition of Stormont in 1972.

For the Catholics in Northern Ireland the Irish heartland is physically close, contiguous with them physically and temporally. The identity of the Catholic community has been integrally linked with this land continuity and that of the Protestants to a rather less solid 'sea bridge' to Britain.

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The birth rates (Compton & Coward, 1989) and projections of Catholic population within the school system has always been watched by Protestants anxiously. (Compton, 1982, p 102) Even though the evidence has been hotly debated and interpretations of it have varied these fears have weakened Protestant security in their position. The old siege mentality, deep in the Protestant psyche, has erupted from time to time. "Ulster Unionists opposing the Home Rule Bills of 1886, 1893 and 1912 used to say that their society had been permanently under siege since its settlement colonial origins in the 17th century." (Wright, 1994) This continual sense of siege has been recognised by historians as the central reality of Northern Protestant society. Wright argues that

"In the interpretations of David Miller (Miller, 1978) and A.T.Q. Stewart (Stewart, 1977) the Protestant population is shown to have had a continuous preoccupation with the Catholics in their midst and uncertainty about how far they could rely upon British power to support them." (Wright, 1994, op. cit.).

More recently these fears have been more publicly acknowledged. For example the majority tradition has seen itself become a minority in some local councils previously under unionist control. (Knox, Hughes, Birrell & McCready, 1993, p 55 for councils and voting balances) The emergence of a new debate about community development in Protestant areas is another aspect of this change. (C.D.P.A., 1991) There also have been a number of meetings between people from Protestant areas and academics from 1991 until early 1994 in an attempt to explore the changes in Protestant self-understanding.

In this single identity movement there are some currents which resonate with earlier times exemplified in Wright's comment on Protestant perceptions, "all the major gains of Northern Catholics seemed to come from the growing power of the rest of Catholic Ireland, but that also meant that such gains were a threat to Northern Protestants". (Wright, 1987) However there are other small seeds of change too. These are evidenced in Protestant people establishing meetings with Catholic people (Springfield I.C.D.P., 1993) to find new relationships in which there is trust. These actions resonate with an earlier historical strand, too. (Wright, 1996)

(C) THE FEARS OF EACH TRADITION ARE SHAPED BY THEIR VIEW OF AND EXPERIENCE WITH THE OTHER

An important feature of meetings is the actual experience of the two dominant cultures and histories always being present in the group. When people speak openly in each other's presence, those from one tradition, often, simply do not understand why the others feel as they do. They come from two different cultures and histories; they are shaped by different views of each other's heartlands. Within this, several confusions run through each other - for example the language of colonialism is often used about the whole island whereas the experience of colonisation was different in the southern part of the island compared with the north. The distinct demography of the North means that the ethnic frontier nature is more characteristic.

To apply the language of 'colony' to the North, as a single uniform category, is misleading and blurs important differences which are central to the modern predicament. Such actions oversimplify the situation and do not encourage a critical and fresh look in which the present can be understood. Also, the language of Nationalism and Unionism is often used with little appreciation of the variation of positions and views subsumed within those umbrella terms. When this is explored in some groups it leads to animated discussion.



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(D) THERE IS A COMMON HISTORY OF SEPARATED LIFE IN THE MIDST OF EACH OTHER

Two themes - separation from each other and an inability to acknowledge each other freely and openly when people are together are central. In a recent joint meeting on the theme, "Being Together", between members of different churches in a rural area forty one people turned up. Twenty-one were from the Protestant churches in the area and twenty from the local Catholic parish. At the tea break a man from a Protestant church said, "it's very good so far but we're skirting around the point". Asking him what he meant by the statement he responded, "Well, its like this, I like these people here but there are some things I could not bring myself to talk about. You never know who they will speak to and my wife is in the police force!" (Inter-Church Friendship Group)

Thus the attempt to make fresh beginnings can be continually eroded. The foundation blocks of fear, being ill at ease and suspicious of the other continually strengthen separation and apartness. In meeting together the emotions and feelings associated with aspects of the conflict can prevent many issues being discussed unless facilitators and group members have the time and the security, with each other, to move beyond this point.

Experiences of meeting together in an ethnic frontier can be minimal. Murray suggests this in connection with schooling,

"Segregation tends to be so rigid and exclusive that few, if any, individuals have the opportunity to experience the ethos of schools which serve a culture other than their own." (Murray, 1985, p 9)

Farren, too, explores this theme of how people view meeting each other and being at ease with each other. In a recent study on student teachers within the three teacher training institutions in Northern Ireland he and his colleagues found:-

"there are limits to the kind of contact which are acceptable and that these limits are functions of a wider group solidarity, a solidarity which seems to intensify over the years of teacher education." (Farren et al, 1992, pp 135-136)

There is a symmetry in the experiences of both major traditions when it comes to separation, and this, as Murray highlights, is reinforced "in the experiences undergone by Catholic and Protestant children within their denominational schools". (Murray, 1985, p 9)

(E) CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT MUTUALLY INFLUENCE EACH OTHERS ACTIONS WITHIN A CIRCLE OF DISTRUST

Wright criticises the work of Miller (1978), Stewart (1977) and his own earlier studies for missing the essential inter-relationship between Protestant reactions to Catholic action and Catholic response to Protestant provocation. It

"is that they sometimes abstract the Protestant fears from the relationship with the Catholics who are being feared. They do not see any system in the Catholic response to being feared. The whole in fact becomes a circular relationship. Once the reciprocal aspect of the relationship is grasped then we are looking at a circle of fear and distrust." (Wright, 1994.)

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He accepts the reality that, in the history of this place, as well as in the patterns of relationships laid down within communities and carried by the different institutions, “the continuity in the relationship between Protestant and Catholic...is being stressed” (Wright, 1996), and argues that

“to understand this society, we must first abandon all assumptions about social tranquillity which come naturally to people who live in societies with normal judicial order. Otherwise the human reality of life in this society is certain to be misunderstood.” (Wright, 1996)

The Stewart and Miller theses

“familiarise their readers with a sense of encirclement experienced by Protestants in the North of Ireland; but they lose sight of the reciprocal element in the relationship. The missing element in Stewart's and Miller's histories of the North of Ireland are the Northern Catholics. To omit them is not only to omit them, but also to make the story of Liberalism in the North only partly intelligible.” (Wright, 1996)

The sectarian relationship is crucial for Wright. It is at the centre of the “Meeting Together” model being used.

(F) MEETINGS BETWEEN PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT TRADITIONS CAN EASILY BE UNDERMINED, THIS IS ACKNOWLEDGED BUT NOT INEVITABLE

A continual theme in cross-community meetings is the fear that liberal actions can always be undermined by the next atrocity or the hint of intimidation. People who wish to seek new ways together are often in the vicinity of this fear and, while some bravely go on, others can find themselves already backpedalling or preparing for failure before they start.

The work of this project is informed by a knowledge that, although the sectarian split seems to be all pervasive, there is a contrasting knowledge in history in the experiences of community reconciliation groups and in the experiences of the facilitators that people can and do use the political space they had and have. Here, in history, there is a strand of contrasting practice to the sectarian one. Wright suggests “many of the better hopes that are about today were also there in the past”. (Wright, 1996)

The model understands the need for a theory to underpin such actions, a philosophy of reconciling actions which acknowledges the possibility of the old ways regaining their dominance and yet which does not see this as absolutely inevitable. People doing this work need to know through their experience the ability, but not the inevitability, of traditional fears of the ‘other’ to draw people back from experiencing new ways together.

(G) TRADITIONAL MAJORITY-MINORITY POWER BALANCES ARE CHANGING

“As Catholic society in the North became more able to replicate the behaviour of Protestant society, the rivalry between them became more reciprocal and threatening.” (Wright, 1996, summary)

In the evolution from colonial settlement structures this rivalry emerges in all levels. This is unsettling for a people who once thought they were secure. In the new priority on ‘equity’ (Osborne et al, 1991) in government policy, (C.C.R.U., 1992) Protestants have had to examine how they



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appear to have been sheltered. For example, in the education system, Gallagher (Gallagher, 1993) suggests, using earlier research, (Cormack, Gallagher & Osborne, 1991) that the funding of Catholic schools was “ a financial and administrative burden on the authorities in Catholic schools in Northern Ireland” which probably “impacted on the educational delivery of the schools and hence contributed to the attainment gap between leavers from Protestant and Catholic schools”. The existence of this advantage to Protestants is reinforced by further research, which shows that there was “an unexpected differential in per capita recurrent funding levels for Protestant and Catholic schools, to the disadvantage of the latter ” (Osborne, Cormack & Gallagher, 1993, p 187). The researchers also said that, “there was no evidence of direct discrimination against Catholic schools in the determination of funding levels”. (Ibid., p187)

As the links with the centre of the state weaken or diminish for the Protestant tradition the Catholic tradition’s sense of being securely linked to a heartland grows. Additionally, concrete measures such as the Anglo-Irish Agreement cement the status of these relationships. While Protestants become vulnerable these same measures give the Catholic community an additional route for political access to the British government through the nationalist links with the Republic’s government. The Republic have formal Anglo-Irish structures and European Union structures with the United Kingdom government.

The dynamics of majority-minority relationships in a frontier area means that when formerly secure balances become unstable, the former majority becomes frightened. The challenge is whether the old balance returns with a new group in control, or whether people find new structures and relationships in which people move beyond the majority-minority balances which can dominate a frontier area.

(H) THE PRIMACY OF THE DETERRENCE RELATIONSHIP

Wright’s work on the deterrence relationship between the traditions here “places the experience of the North of Ireland alongside that of other older European settlement colonisations”. (Wright, 1996) He argues that

“the economic inequalities between Protestant and Catholic in the North of Ireland were substantial in the 19th century but, on their own, quite insufficient to explain the primacy of the sectarian relationship. That could only be explained by looking at the threatened force or deterrence relationships between sectarian sub-societies, and the way these were woven round their relationships with state power.. The sectarian conflict became a conflict between national communities...In the 19th century when modern states were coming to monopolise the use of legitimate force, the ongoing sectarian relationship in the North of Ireland compromised this severely and with momentous consequences. It is a central part of my story to look at the way in which any possibility of normal liberal order was aborted in the North of Ireland, although many knew that it was the only possibility of a better future.” (Wright, 1996)

Where there have been histories of discriminating behaviours they have often been accompanied by a wide range of practices, understood but often unspoken, associated with majority group membership. Appropriate behaviours, through which minority group members have survived in the one place have grown up as cultural wisdom and these too have been, and are, passed on. Each side knows much about their own majority or minority feelings and fears but not much about the hopes and fears of the other. (Darby et al, 1972, pp 132-148)

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The purpose of the meetings associated with this project, especially ones such as those with trade Unionists around the theme of 'Intimidation in the Workplace', (Wilson & Wright, 1992) is so that people might acknowledge the force fields they are often caught up in, agree to trust each other and, ultimately, trust the structures and new agreements they could put in place as a result of the meetings.

"It is important that we share our experiences of being afraid. This is part of the support we give to each other to cope with our fear. There is a value in real meetings between us today. These complement the search for just and lasting relationships in society. We need to stop pinning our hopes upon grand solutions to sectarianism and finding final antidotes to intimidation because, (i) there are none within our reach, (ii) so long as we are so vainly searching for them, we fail to get a proper appreciation of what we can do and, maybe, are doing already, (iii) looking for an overall political fix may be a way of avoiding looking at how uncomfortable anti-intimidation work can be." (Wilson & Wright, 1992)

1.3 CONCLUSION

The "Meeting Together" model works from the bases above. The model gives space for people to examine where they are and where they have been within a force field, without condemning them. It gives some people new opportunities to explore, verbally and visually, the predicament people from all traditions in the North of Ireland experience. In this situation people, themselves, can perhaps gain some new space for meeting and understanding.

It is important that informal education work acknowledges the reality of such issues. They are present in the relationships which develop when people come together into mixed groups. Wright typifies the early relationships between native and settler as being sectarian and "sectarian division between Protestant and Catholic revolved around issues of law, order and justice on one hand and education on the other." (Wright, 1994)

The two themes of law and education continually recur in contested areas. These themes play a central part in enabling people to explore and understand how the sectarian relationship can influence the ways in which they understand events and the law. The fears can be so great, and the structures so entrenched, that the formal education system finds it very difficult to initiate cross-community relationships. It would still seem, however, that there is some possibility to develop work in the informal adult sector.

THE TRANSITION TO INFORMAL EDUCATION AND WORK IN THE VOLUNTARY SECTORS

The educational approach outlined here looks at the extent to which people can experience freedom to be with those whom they understand and are culturally, religiously and politically different from. The interest is in the forms of learning that have brought, or may bring, freedom to people and the learning theory and practice which evolves from these experiences.

Adult assent to schemes of education for mutual understanding (D.E.N.I., 1987), (D.E.N.I., 1988), (N.I.C.E.D., 1988) and integrated education (Education Reform Order (N.I.), 1989) will take time and patience to evolve. It follows that, for a long time, the formal schools will be difficult places for most children to learn in a free way about the other. The formal systems of education are so identified with the history of both traditions here, that, although there is (Smith & Dunn,

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BACKGROUND PAPER FOR FACILITATORS

1990) (Smith & Robinson, 1992), and will be some high quality programmes of meeting together between people, these may well be the exception rather than the rule. (Smith & Robinson, 1994)

The search for good practice, therefore, moves much more into the informal, young adult and adult sectors of education. Here there is less association with the traditional positions and more free choice to meet.

Once a force field is created it means that all mechanisms to break it can easily be cancelled out. The antagonism between peoples who are on different ends of the force relationship becomes more fundamental than what the dominated are denied and what the dominators keep. The residual nature of the antagonism brings people into a circular pattern of violence and response, action and reaction.

One important educational task of reconciliation work is to give people the opportunity to experience meeting together, sharing their experiences of life in the one place. The assumption behind this is that, in such situations, inter-group tension and enmity is normally experienced rather than rationalised. The educational task is to create secure contexts and boundaries in order that people from different traditions can meet each other in a fundamentally new way. To meet together in this manner is to meet as suffering human beings in the one place; it can be an interruption of all previous patterns of relationships; it can be a dissolving of old distrusts and fears, even a little. To meet together in this way is to meet each other fundamentally; it can be a new reality.

"All learning about conflict in Northern Ireland must start from a paradoxical point. In the first instance, everybody is sure what the true facts are. At the same time nobody agrees on what these facts are. What we have learned very profoundly is that so-called facts depend for their reality on the relationships in which they exist. In our context facts are very often fuel to the fire, memories which ... choose different histories, different things to remember."

(Kaptein, Morrow, Wilson & Wright., 1991)

Meeting Together with adults is an attempt to get beyond this one dimensional view.



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APPENDIX: EXTRACTS FROM 'ON THE WAY OF FREEDOM'

APPENDIX: "ON THE WAY OF FREEDOM"

BY ROEL KAPTEIN

HUMAN LIFE AND HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

In the modern age, our culture*, everything which teaches us about who we are, gives us the impression that we are separate and complete individuals. The best symbol for our age is the motor car. Each car is complete with its own boundaries and shape. The impact of the person in one car on the being of a person in another is limited. Within this form, each of us has a separate existence.

Of course, there may be times when we want to signal to others about our intentions. Nevertheless, the degree of communication is limited and nothing essential happens except ageing. Each 'individual' is a clearly limited and formed being.

This view of people as separate and complete individuals has huge consequences for our lives. One of these is the desire of every person to know their 'rights' and to fight for them against intruders. A second consequence is that freedom* is seen as the freedom to escape every restriction. We all long for the freedom to do what we want, when we want, as we want. Of course, we are constantly brought up against the reality that this is not possible, and despite this each of us strives to achieve the maximum number of possibilities. Freedom is a commodity like any other. Each of us must strive to be the richest, the most powerful, the most beautiful, the cleverest, the fastest and so on. In order to achieve our goals we are tempted to, or actually do, break every rule. The fact that everybody and everything in life is being used by us as a tool to reach our own goals becomes truer all the time.

In fact this individualism is an illusion. We are not autonomous and separated, nor are we complete and unchanging. Each of us is born in a specific place, at a specific time. In the same way each of us is born into particular relationships. In the first instance, our closest relationship is to our mother, who in turn is a person who carries her own history and who has lived in many different relationships throughout her life. Through her we come into relationship with the world, both past and present. After birth, we come into relationships with other people, who each have their own relationships. Our whole life is lived in many different relationships, each with their own importance at different times in our life and all of them constantly changing.

Most of the time we are not aware of the importance of particular relationships in our lives. Mostly we do not know the influences which are shaping our actions, judgements and lives at a given moment. In our relationships we change and move, learning and following, imitating and reflecting, nearly always without consciously knowing it. We are and become in our relationships to others, changing in different ways all the time.

Change is not only a matter of consciousness. Change happens in our lives at every level, both conscious and unconscious. Most of the change in our lives happens without our control or assent and without our knowing it. In fact, the origin of all change is a much deeper reality than consciousness, which we call mimesis*¹.

* see glossary at end of text

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All relationships are characterised by mimesis*. Mimesis was originally a Greek word meaning to imitate or mimic. However, in everyday speech imitation and mimicry are conscious experiences. We use the Greek word to emphasise that change in human relationships is not primarily a matter of conscious imitation. Mimesis is between us, irrespective of whether we know it and wish it or not.

Each of us is born into, and lives in, our own particular and unique relationships. Each of us is always different from everybody else, a unique person. We do not need to worry about this. Each of us is unique and, at the same time, we always belong to everybody and everything around us, always being a part of the whole.

The fact that our personal uniqueness is only possible because we live together with so many other people turns the world of individualism upside down. This means that the nature of our relationships, the question of with whom or what we are in mimesis, is very important.

Another consequence is that we can never be really in control of our lives. By far the greatest part of our lives is given to us by others. We cannot live without others, because they are our very life.

Furthermore, the endless struggling to win in the race of modern life results in the sacrifice of all relationships, and so of the reality of our lives, for an illusory goal, which we call freedom. In fact it is the goal of winning over everybody else - the goal of control. Freedom, in the modern sense, proves to be slavery because even if we reach our goal to be the most important person or to have the most important object or characteristic we are doomed to have to defend it against our imitators and rivals forever. In the end we always lose, ultimately when we lose our rivalry with death. In fact, freedom in our modern culture is the feeling of winning in the struggles of our relationships and it always brings with it the anxiety that we may lose tomorrow.

The idea that we are formed, original, autonomous persons is a serious misunderstanding. As long as we believe ourselves to be 'formed' or 'original' we are probably making it very difficult for ourselves to change. As a result we are and remain who we are, as we are. We are even proud of the fact. Because it is unchanging, our being becomes our predicament, our permanent prison.

The central importance of our relationships turns upside down our modern ideas of independence and autonomy. Our relationships with others are the source and reality of our own being. Relationships are not within our control, they are given to us. In turn we give to others. How we 'are' crucially depends on the relationships we live in and their content. The big question for each of us is how do we find real freedom, the world and our lives being as they are?

MIMESIS

All of us are in relationships both past and present. Therefore we are always in mimesis. Mimesis is always going on between us. I do what you do because you are doing it. You do what I do because I do it, and so on. In every human culture all mimesis is the mimesis of desire. We take on and react to each others' desires to have or to get something or somebody without even knowing it. I desire what you desire because you desire it. The object of our desire can be anything: a man, a woman, a reputation, a car, a position, a house, a job and so on. Getting our desires from one

** see glossary at end of text*



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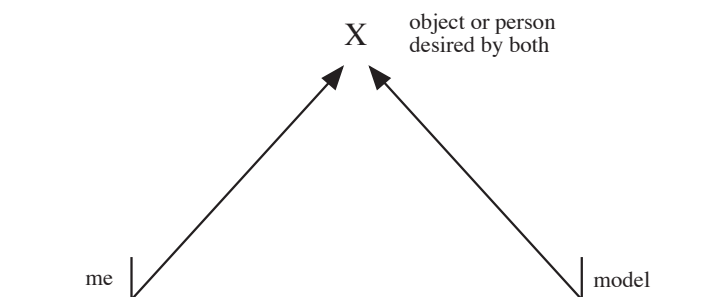
another is mimesis. Between human beings it is always the mimesis of desire. No human life is separate from the lives of others.

Of course, if we all desire the same thing, the result can only be a clash - violence. The great enigma of human experience and reality is that human life comes from, consists of, and at the same time is destroyed by mimesis. The Genesis story of Adam and Eve in Eden is an attempt to explain this.

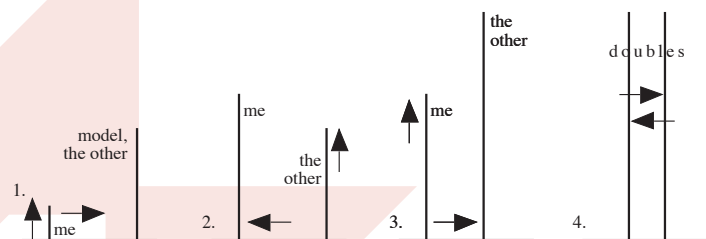
I desire what you desire because you desire it and you desire it more because I desire it. This desire is always the desire to have, to appropriate, to get. Desire is mimetic.

We usually assume that our desires arise spontaneously within us. In other words, we desire somebody or something 'simply' because we like them or it. It 'just happens'. We assume that the desire has no history outside of ourselves. In fact, every time we use words like 'simply' or 'just' we should be very suspicious. We are often hiding something, often something very important. In the case of our desires, we are wrong to think that they arise 'simply because we like something.'

Desire is never a simple relationship between the desiring person and the desired object. Our desire always involves somebody else. Our desire is always triangular, involving three not two points; the other who is already desiring, ourselves and the desired person or object. The other in each case is an important person for us, for whatever reason. For example, the other might be our father or mother, they might look like one of them or they might be somebody we regard as successful. In fact they could be anybody. The other is always somebody whom we envy. In a diagram it would look like this:



From the diagram, we can see that we are both desiring the same object and automatically we have become each other's rivals. We fight with each other, escalating the fight, building up against each other.



In the course of the fight the other - our rival - becomes more and more important. We forget about the original issue of the conflict, the original object of desire. In fact it eventually disappears. The fight becomes only a matter of power between the two rivals. In fighting, everything outside

* see glossary at end of text



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the fight becomes less and less important. Our world shrinks and we become more and more like one another. Eventually we become doubles, exactly the same. Ultimately, everything ends up in chaos.

Increasingly, this situation is the reality of modern life, for people in their private lives, for groups and for nations. Life, for each person, for nations and for the world is permanently in turmoil, close to possible or actual violence.

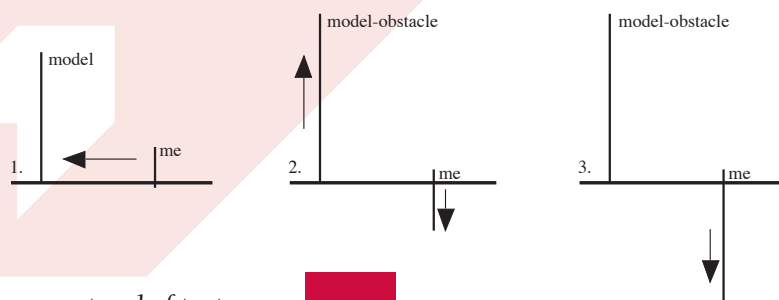
There are so many examples. In relationships, two men fight one another over a woman until they become absolutely fascinated with one another, doubles. In companies, employees rival with one another for the attention of the boss. Unless the rivalry ends, they may end up sacrificing their career in order to destroy their rival. In Northern Ireland, two groups rival with one another, both sure that they are completely different from one another and yet, for people outside, they become ever more similar. Ultimately the fight is about nothing, with the permanent threat that the whole place could end up in absolute chaos, as actually happened at times in the Lebanon or Yugoslavia. All of us are in model-rival* relationships and as a result we become more and more identical. For forty years the Cold War threatened to destroy all differences between the West and the East, with the potential that it could end in the absolute destruction of both groups.

As we become more identical, we rival with one another more easily. This in itself provokes further chaos. Because we are alike, we all desire to be the only person with this or that quality, to have specific 'objects' or 'qualities'. In fact we are all striving to be different. But because we are all fighting in mimesis with one another, we end up with what we want to avoid. The fight to be different means more rivalry. In our fighting we become more and more alike.

There is another possible relationship arising from the mimesis of desire. Instead of struggling rivals, we become absolute obstacles for one another. In the model-obstacle* relationship, I seek a model who is so great that I can never win. No matter how hard I rival with my model, I always lose. The attraction of this model is that were I to win, I would in a sense conquer the whole world. The very unreachable height of my model is what makes him or her attractive. If I could succeed in overcoming an obstacle of such enormity, then I could feel more or less like a god. However, the fact that I choose such a big obstacle means that I will always lose. As a result of my endless losing, I become depressed, and have the feeling that it is senseless.

Anybody or anything might become an obstacle for me. My model-obstacle might be another person, whom I admire, or some kind of ideal. It might be a wish to be totally pure, to be like Christ, or the wish to be stronger than an enemy who is clearly stronger than I am. In fact, all striving which is doomed to failure brings us into the model-obstacle relationship.

The objects of model-obstacle relationship often appear to be very beautiful, very worthwhile, very lofty things. The desire to be like Christ might be an example. But because it is impossible it throws us deeper and deeper into a pit of depression. We become obsessed by our ideal, our goal and destroy ourselves in the process. In a model we can try to show this.



* see glossary at end of text

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Very often we experience rivalry as simply exciting or enjoyable. At first it involves playing, teasing, trying our hardest, trying to 'achieve'. But all the time there is the possibility that, unexpectedly, violence will erupt between the players, whether the players are two people in their personal lives or superpowers risking the whole world. Alternatively, because of the rivalry, we might be very depressed. Ultimately it can result in hysterical behaviour or schizophrenia.

The 'model-obstacle' relationship, like the model-rival' relationship, is very common in our culture'. There are numerous examples. A professor might become a model-obstacle for a student. The student strives to become a more important scholar than their professor and makes the professor much more important than they are, because only a great model is worth striving to overcome. At the same time, the student becomes so paralysed that they can't pass their basic exams. The student makes the professor an absolute obstacle. It can also happen the other way round if a professor wants to be an extremely important person with many disciples and yet none finish their doctorates. In fact, the professor makes himself an absolute obstacle for the students.

In the model-obstacle relationship there is always fascination* with the model. This fascination can be very beautiful. However, deep down, though it is often hidden, there is depression. In one way or another we know that the goal is unreachable, even though we don't want to know it and avoid admitting it.

On the other hand, model-obstacle relationships sometimes lead to compulsive, obsessive behaviour. We continually make attempts to reach our goal even though we never get away from the start. Our attempts are characterised by a deep desperation. Deep down there is great violence in the rivalry with the obstacle which could erupt at any time, even killing the obstacle which we ourselves chose. This is the background to crimes of passion where the girl who did not desire the man is killed, or the man kills himself. Living in a model-obstacle relationship (which comes to be the meaning of our whole life) is in a sense a form of slow death. Ultimately it might result in some kind of psychosis.

Even though people use the word freedom so often, we are very unclear as to what it means. What is freedom? Let us begin by saying what we mean.: Freedom means to be out of the mimesis of desire, out of model-rival relationships and model-obstacle relationships.

Culture provided the possibility to live within a kind of freedom. By its structures and laws, and through its prohibitions and rules, it made it possible for people to be themselves, not constantly at odds with everybody and everything. It was a restricted freedom in that it was founded on the scapegoat* mechanism. We are free within culture because the scapegoats are carrying parts of us. They carry those possibilities within ourselves with which we cannot cope, our violence and our guilt. Their existence carried and carry our problems away for us.

In culture you found freedom if you stuck to your place, took no more rights than you were given and fulfilled your duties. In accepting your human task you had the possibility to be yourself and to be at peace. As long as hypocrisy was an overall cultural phenomenon and you were oblivious to it, it was objective hypocrisy. Cultural freedom meant that you gave the others freedom to live provided that they were not the scapegoats. Freedom was possible if everyone stuck to their boundaries.

* see glossary at end of text



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Structure* and law are fading away. Ironically, we usually assume that we are now more free than ever just because of this disappearance. As long as we succeed in the endless fight for the position of top-dog, in which we participate even though we often do not acknowledge it, we can appear reasonably happy with our situation. As soon as we end up one-down, whether personally, or as a group or nation, things deteriorate. We become unhappy and depressed, finding ourselves in a labyrinth without escape. Our freedom always depends on making others less free.

Yet one freedom remains: We can always choose differently. Mostly we do not choose for long, or at most we choose within the context of our daily lives, being reasonably sure of what will happen. Nevertheless the choice remains a possibility. We can choose to do our duty whatever the costs may be or we can choose to follow an ideal which we have had for a long time. In both cases, as long as we stay true to this choice, we are not in rivalry with the people around us, or, at the very least it is less direct. We may act foolishly but at least we choose and are free in our choosing.

The great problem with choices, even small choices, is that they entail risk. We never know what the consequences are in advance. These are choices which have to do with our whole lives. We are free to make the choice and we have to take the risks. Only after the event will we know what happens to us because of that choice.

This scenario sometimes makes us so afraid that we mostly think that we have no possibility to exercise our choice at all. Here we reveal something of a paradox: we only choose because we trust and we trust because we choose.

Modern freedom means being able to do what we want, when we want, as we want. It is an illusion.

A central theme in this work is that people explore with whom and with what they are mimetic - with people or human realities with which people rival or with which people live in freedom.

In this work we are seeking to free ourselves and others to exercise real choices, knowing that there are consequences. These choices bring trust into relationships and structures between different people, these choices cut the cost of rivalry and scapegoating others or, at least, begin to lessen this human cost.

A SHORT GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED:

Culture: The possibility found by human beings to live together instead of disappearing into violence, chaos and random murder.

Freedom: Being free of the mimesis of desire and thus being free of all rivalry. We are free with the people around us, free of apprehensions, of anxiety and fear, having space to live in real trust for the future.

Mimesis: I am feeling, thinking, doing as you are doing without knowing that I am imitating you, without being conscious of it. Mimesis happens before we think. It is not imitation. Mimesis is the



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condition of our human life together. We are always in mimesis, for the whole of our lives

Model-rival relationships: A model-rival is a person or human reality with whom we rival, trying to have what the other has. In the end we are only trying to win in the rivalry.

Model-obstacle relationships: A model-obstacle is a model over whom, or which, we certainly can never win. Being in a model-obstacle relationship means we are totally imprisoned by the relationship. We are totally elated and extremely unhappy alternately.

Model-model relationships: This is when we are not in rivalry with our model. A model has their place and we have our different place as well. These are the structures where real learning between different people can take place.

Scapegoat: The scapegoat is the random victim of a group in deep trouble. A group in deep trouble cannot, and does not, find rational possibilities to solve its problems. A random member of the group is chosen to be the culprit and driven out. After the ejection, for a time, there is 'peace'.

Structure: Structure is the order in culture, in society, which developed through a very long process in order to keep peace in society. Peace is only possible when people are different, each having their own place, a place which everyone respects. In structure model-model relationships are possible. When structure disappears all relationships become model-rival and model-obstacle relationships.



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“ FUTURE WAYS - A PROGRAMME SUPPORTIVE OF COMMUNITY UNDERSTANDING.”

This new initiative grows out of nine years' intensive training work with a wide range of community relations projects and programmes, mainly within Northern Ireland but including North-South groups, British-Irish projects and international training events about reconciliation work. This work was initially sponsored by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust and the Foundation Charles Veillon (85-89) and, latterly, by a local cross-community charitable trust, The Understanding Conflict Trust, mainly funded from independent sources such as The Lawlor Foundation. (89-95)

In 1995, with grant aid support from the International Fund for Ireland and a bridging grant from the Lawlor Foundation, the Understanding Conflict Trust initiated a partnership with the University of Ulster to develop specific initiatives in community relations training; to support practical reconciliation programmes; to assist community relations policies and practice develop within public institutions, the private sector and the workplace.

The initiative has been welcomed by the Central Community Relations Unit and the Department of Education for Northern Ireland and will establish:

1. **Training Courses** in community understanding at qualifying, post qualifying and post graduate levels.
2. **A Community Support Unit** for local reconciliation groups within Higher Education.
3. **Short course provision** for the public sector, the private sector and trade union organisations, building on existing work.

There are five interconnected strands of work :

- (a) **Community Relations Training within Professional Qualifying courses:**
 - i. Professional Qualifications now requiring Community Relations elements:
e.g Community Youth Workers, Teachers.
 - ii. Professional Qualifications where community understanding is integral to the work of people such as Social Workers, Planning Officers, Community Relations Officers.
- (b) **Training for reconciliation groups.**
The establishment of training and support networks associated with local reconciliation initiatives.
- (c) **Community Relations Training through short courses for the public and private sectors.**
In-service Provision where community understanding would enhance job performance, e.g Action Team Staff, the Voluntary Sector, District Councils, Personnel Departments.
- (d) **Community understanding programmes associated with the workforce.**
- (e) **Training Research which supports practical training provision.**

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DUNCAN MORROW

Duncan Morrow is a lecturer in politics at the University of Ulster and a graduate of Oxford and Edinburgh Universities. He studied in Linz as an Austrian Foreign Student Scholar. He has written widely on community relations issues and is the author of *The Churches and Inter-Community Relationships* (1991), when research officer at the Centre for the Study of Conflict, and co-editor of *Northern Ireland Politics* (1996) in his present position.

For the last nine years Duncan Morrow has been a member of a project entitled 'Understanding Conflict... and finding ways out of it', initially supported by the Lawlor Foundation and secured locally by The Understanding Conflict Trust. This project developed group work with community relations groups, research on community relations themes and study materials. He is currently a member of the Community Relations Council and the Corrymeela Community.

DERICK WILSON

Derick Wilson is senior lecturer in community relations at the University of Ulster and directs the Future Ways project. He is a graduate of Queens, Swansea, and Ulster Universities and has been active in the areas of youthwork, community relations and community development in Northern Ireland for 30 years. A youth and community worker and teacher, he helped to establish the first professional courses for youth and community workers in Northern Ireland and was Director of the Corrymeela Centre in Ballycastle for seven years. For nine years he was research fellow in the Centre for the Study of Conflict and was a member of the Understanding Conflict... and finding ways out of it project.

He chaired the Youth Committee for Northern Ireland (1987-89) on a half-time basis with support from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (1985-89) and was a member of the ad-hoc group which successfully sought the creation of the Northern Ireland Community Relations Council. He is a member of the Corrymeela Community.



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