

# Moving Beyond Sectarianism

## A resource for Adult Education

Irish School of Ecumenics (Trinity College Dublin)

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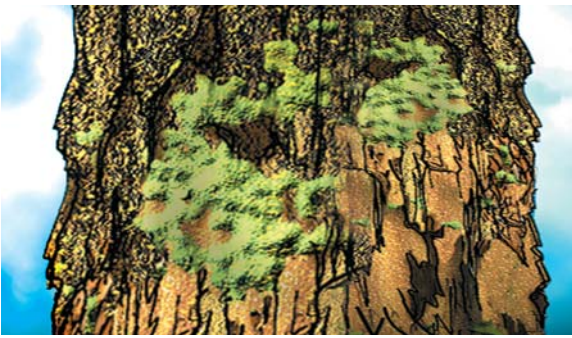

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|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| Introduction  | Introduction<br>Acknowledgements   | 2<br>4  |
| Using the Resource  | - Roots , Trunk and Branches, Leaves<br>- Facilitating Groups and Experiential Learning<br>- Structure of Activities<br>- Suggested Pathways<br>- Activities Guide 14  | 6<br>7<br>9<br>10   |
| Background Reading For Facilitators   | A summary of the underpinning theory relating to each topic.   | 18  |
| Group Work Tips   | A short selection of useful tips for working with groups.  | 56  |
|   | <b>SECTION 1: ROOTS</b><br><br>- Intro to Identity<br>- Historical Roots 72  | <b>67</b><br><br>68   |
|  | <b>SECTION 2: TRUNK &amp; BRANCHES</b><br><br>Understanding Sectarianism<br>- Definition<br>- Destructive Patterns of Relating<br>- Sectarianism as a System<br>- The Pyramid of Participation and Benign Apartheid<br>- Intentions and Consequences<br>- Dynamics and Varieties of Sectarianism | <b>85</b><br><br>87<br>88<br>91<br>102<br>109<br>119<br>127 |
|  | <b>SECTION 3: THE LEAVES</b><br><br>- Dealing with difference<br>- Identifying and transforming sectarianism<br>- Ancestral Voices and When is a Religious Idea Sectarian?   | <b>137</b><br><br>138<br>164<br>173                         |
| Biblical Reflections and Worship Materials  | Ideas for basic biblical and spiritual exploration.  | 190   |
| Other Resources   | Lists of other resources and organisations.  | 208   |





## Why this Resource?

This resource is based on six years of action research carried out by Dr Cecelia Clegg and Dr Joseph Liechty, of the Irish School of Ecumenics (Trinity College Dublin), for the Moving Beyond Sectarianism project. You can read more about their findings in their book, *Moving Beyond Sectarianism*, published by Columba Press in Dublin.



In Northern Ireland, few interventions can raise the emotional temperature of a conversation so sharply as bringing up the topic of sectarianism. It is a harsh word, expressing a harsh reality and often hurled as an accusing, condemning weapon. In fact, maintaining civil conversation usually means not discussing sectarianism at all, especially in mixed settings. Between these extremes of accusation and avoidance, people have painfully few tools for getting to grips with the problem of sectarianism in a constructive way.

Sectarianism arises as a **distorted** expression of **positive** human needs such as belonging, identity and the freedom to be different. These distorted expressions are expressed in destructive ways of relating. Because sectarianism involves positive human needs, moving beyond sectarianism must be sought by transforming or redeeming sectarianism, not smashing it.



The purpose of this resource is to raise awareness, increase understanding and stir to action. We hope that those using the resource will gain a new understanding of the extent and ways of the sectarian system and see ways in which they and their communities may have been implicated even though in all likelihood never intending or desiring it. We hope too, that they will come away with the will, alongside constructive ideas, with which to address sectarianism in all its manifestations, but especially those closest to home.



In a deeply divided society such as Northern Ireland, understanding and challenging sectarianism is essential in moving beyond destructive patterns of relating. But the relevance of this resource goes beyond sectarianism. The models and tools presented in the following pages offer new ways of responding to difference and of understanding our identities, beliefs, actions and attitudes.



## The particular strengths of the resource

- It is flexible and usable in a variety of situations e.g.

- Single identity groups
- Inter-church groups
- Ecumenical groups
- Community Groups/Businesses etc.

The resource materials can provide the basis for a programme or be used to complement or follow up an existing programme.

## Who Might Use The Resource?

We hope that the resources will be used by a wide range of people e.g. ministers, group workers, trainers etc. The exercises have been designed with this in mind, and the chapter titled Suggested Pathways offers advice on how to combine the material to form different programmes. The section titled Background Reading for Facilitators gives a synopsis of the book on which the resource is based. We recommend reading this section in order to familiarise yourself with the central concepts. For further information, you may wish to read the book Moving Beyond Sectarianism, referred to above.

Different people will have different levels of skill and experience and will feel more comfortable with some types of material than others. A selection of exercises is given for each topic. The Group Work section offers some guidelines and techniques for using the materials with groups and a list of organizations that may be able to offer help and/or further training is given in the reference section.

For further information about the Irish School of Ecumenics (Trinity College Dublin) you can contact the following website: [www.iol.ie/~ise](http://www.iol.ie/~ise)





# Acknowledgements



Although it has been my task over the last year to develop, write and edit materials for this MBS Adult Education resource pack it simply would not have been possible without all those organisations and people who entered into the process with me. Thank you.

Special thanks to Dr Cecelia Clegg and Dr Joseph Liechty, whose research and writing this resource is based on and who gave me support and guidance along the way. Thanks to my colleague Yvonne Naylor (who developed and edited the MBS resources for Youth Work and Schools) for your support and friendship. Thanks also to Kenneth Kearon (Director), the staff and management of the Irish School of Ecumenics (Trinity College Dublin) for their advice and encouragement.



A number of organisations and people were involved in the Steering Group that met repeatedly over the course of the resource development to discuss the material and offer encouragement and advice. This was a very important part of the process and I would like to thank the following for their support and time: Cathy Curran (Corrymeela Community), Rev Mercia Malcolm (Church of Ireland Chaplain, University Of Ulster, Jordanstown), Linda Gould (ECONI), Denis Anderson (ISE Adult Education Team), Kerry Nicholson (Lisburn Inter-church Project), Rev Andrew McNally , Ronan Browne (St Clements Retreat Centre), Rev Charlie Leeke (Think Again (Reconciliation), Church of Ireland Diocese of Down and Dromore), Anne Marie McKinley (Pax Works).



Another important part of the process was the 'testing'/ 'piloting' of the materials with a range of groups. I would like to thank all those people who took part in the pilot groups and particularly those individuals who volunteered to facilitate, or allowed me to do so. These include: Rev Lesley Carroll and the Fortwilliam (North Belfast) area group, Joe Topping and the Lisburn Inter-church group, Johnny Clarke and YWAM Discipleship Training School, Dr Cecelia Clegg and Rev Doug Baker who allowed me to work with the Skills For Transformation group, Cathy Curran (Corrymeela Community) and Olive Bell (Edgehill Theological College) who allowed me to work with the Steering Group for the Methodist Youth and Children's Work Department, the Zero:28 Project, Anne Marie McKinley (Pax Works: Anne Marie worked with a number of community groups using different elements of the resource). Thank you to all the team members involved in the planning of the TREE training event including Niall McNally of Cast Ministries.



Finally I would like to thank all those funding agencies without whom the production of this resource pack would not have been possible:-

The Christendom Trust, The Community Bridges Programme of the International Fund for Ireland, The Joseph Rank Benevolent Fund, The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust and a private donor.



## Copyright Acknowledgement

The following activities and/or material have been used or adapted for this resource.

### The Music Exercise (Page 74)

Tara Records Ltd has kindly given their permission to refer to 'The Relief of Derry Symphony' by Shaun Davey.

### 'Greeting Difference' activity (Page 147)

Based on an exercise of the same name from the Publication 'Ireland: All Different All Equal' (1995)

Permission to adapt this exercise was kindly given by:  
Development Education For Youth (DEFY),

### The YARD Project

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### 'Dividing Walls' activity (Page 169)

Adapted with the kind permission of Doug Baker

## Biblical Reflections and Worship Material Section:

Poem: Cross Border Peace Talks By Kathy Galloway

A Liturgy for Laying Down and Letting Go by Kate McIlhagga

From 'Pushing the Boat Out' (Ed) Kathy Galloway Copyright © The authors 1995 Wild Goose Publications Unit 15 Harmony Row, Glasgow G51 3BA with permission.



# Using The Resource



Sectarianism is a system in which processes act on and within individuals, groups and institutions similar to those operating on and within a tree. Also a tree has different sections from the roots to the leaves, as have this resource.

The image of the tree has been used to provide users with a visual guide to the different sections. The model of the tree has also been used to explain some of the dynamics of sectarianism. Like all models it has its limitations and some may find it more helpful than others. Hopefully, it will assist you and your group to find quickly and easily, the most appropriate activities for your needs.



## ROOTS

The roots of a tree have two main functions:

They absorb things necessary for a tree's sustenance and growth

- They anchor the tree
- In the same way it is important for us to have roots in order to:
  - absorb those aspects of our being which give us an identity
  - give us stability, belonging, and a place around which we have boundaries
  - give us our story of who we are



Much of this is absorbed, the 'good' and the 'bad', positive and negative alike, without our being aware of it.

The suggested activities in this section are aimed to help us examine our own positive human need for identity/belonging/ free expression of difference.

This section is useful if a group is just beginning and people want to get to know each other better. The emphasis should be on listening to each other's experiences, acknowledging differences as well as similarities.



Areas to be examined:

- Influences on our identities
- History

## TRUNK AND BRANCHES

The form of the trunk and branches are determined by its habitat. When the habitat is bad and the elements supplied to the tree are toxic we end up with an unhealthy tree and toxic fruit and leaves.

The Trunk and Branches represent the structure of our lives, how we operate in society at individual, communal and institutional level.





The main aim of the section is to help increase our understanding of sectarianism and how it affects us individually and collectively.

Areas to be examined:

- Defining sectarianism
- Understanding the consequences of Sectarianism in terms of Destructive Patterns of Relating
- Understanding Sectarianism as a system and how it involves me
- The Pyramid Model of sectarian participation
- Understanding Intentions and Consequences
- Understanding Dynamics and Varieties of Sectarianism



## LEAVES

'and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations' (Rev. 22 v 2)

The leaves are the food factories of the tree. Photosynthesis is the process used to produce food from the sunlight and air around them, and the water and nutrients absorbed from the soil through their roots.

When they fall in the autumn, the nutrients trapped in them are carried to the ground to be absorbed again by the roots.

The focus of this section is on looking forward BEYOND SECTARIANISM: how this may be done, and what it may look like i.e. what leaves do we want? How can we create the conditions for them to flourish?

Areas to be examined:

- Dealing with difference
- Identifying sectarianism in our setting and dealing with it



## BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES AND WORSHIP MATERIAL

This section provides biblical perspectives and reflections that can be used in conjunction with different sections and topics.

## Facilitating Groups and Experiential Learning:

### Facilitation

A number of styles may be employed to facilitate a learning experience, including one, or a mixture, of the following:

- Exploration: asking questions, encouraging people to express their experiences and ideas.
- Giving information



# Using The Resource



- Delegation: assigning tasks, roles etc.
- Experience based: the focus is on a simulated experience.

The style could depend on the facilitator's skills, experience, personality, expectations etc as well as the type of group and their goals, expectations, skills etc.

In this resource a number of learning activities are suggested for each topic. Different activities lean towards different facilitation styles but generally there is a mix of the above.

## Participative and Experience Based Styles:



A number of the activities in this resource involve what some may consider 'games' e.g. simulation games, role-plays, creative or physical tasks etc. There can be some resistance to using these activities, e.g.

- They may be seen as silly or not important
- Facilitators or group members may feel embarrassed

Although these are valid concerns they can often be overcome if the group and facilitator have an understanding and agreement about what they expect and why these particular activities are used. Once it is explained what the exercise is about, people of all ages can generally have fun, while at the same time exploring profound issues.

These activities offer an actual experience from which discussion can develop and learning points raised. They seldom fail to stimulate discussion and ideas and can be a very powerful tool for learning. Sometimes, long after the content of a lecture has been forgotten, people who took part will remember the activity.

There is a well-known saying that explains the importance of experience-based learning:

- What I hear I forget
- What I see I remember
- What I do I learn



Participative and experience-based activities rely on the resources of the group e.g. participation, what the people involved experience during the activity, their ideas, their previous experiences etc. Therefore the facilitator needs to provide a framework for allowing these resources to be utilised.

The following is a list of possible techniques/headings to keep in mind:

- Assess the groups' ability to participate
- Provide appropriate background information at the start
- Use appropriate questioning
- Provide a feedback structure and establish volunteers for feedback
- Make links to our own experience/situation
- De-brief/end the experience in a way that deals with negative energy and volatile emotions
- Give an appropriate summary at the end



## Group Dynamics

Because the experience relies on the dynamics created by the group it is important to monitor the process (see Group-work tips). A safe environment needs to be established so people:

- are not exposed to too much vulnerability i.e. they should not be emotionally scared or traumatised because of the experience or be exposed to another's deep trauma unless the facilitator is trained to deal with this and both the participants and facilitator expect it.
- do not feel silly in participating or have been forced to do more than that with which they have felt comfortable.
- are not scapegoated for sharing their beliefs and feelings.
- do enjoy the experience.
- do take responsibility for their decision to participate or not.

Although some activities may seem like 'games' but they can actually prove to be very powerful in raising real feelings. None of the activities should be taken lightly even if they are used as a warm-up or as 'fun' alternatives. Their potential is too great to be ignored at any time.

## Important Recommendations:

For facilitators using this material we recommend the following:

- Familiarize yourself with the material.
- Work with someone else. (It is particularly good to have a female, male mix and a Catholic, Protestant mix).
- The Group Work section in this resource offers some useful tips for facilitators but it is best used as a reminder of skills already studied and experienced.

## The Structure of the Activities

Within the three sections there are a number of different topics/chapters. These topics have **SUGGESTED EXERCISES/ACTIVITIES** that can be used to communicate the ideas and models. Often there are a variety of activities from which to choose that may suit different situations. Sometimes the activities relate to each other e.g. one can be used to lay the foundation for a more in-depth, complex exploration of the themes.

You may wish to adapt activities and material with which you are familiar to the topics contained in these resources.

Each exercise has a basic format for description:

**The Title:** Gives some idea as to the nature of the activity



# Using The Resource

**Aim:** Gives some idea as to the purpose of the activity.

**Time:** A guide to the time needed to carry out the activity. A total is given as well as times for each part. These times may vary depending on how much discussion the facilitator wants, the participation of the group, variations used etc. As far as possible the suggested times are realistic; however, you may find that unless you are ruthless with managing the time the activity will take longer.  
A selection of activities is usually offered for each topic. Often, different activities offer different time spans.

**Groups:** This provides tips on the type of group suited to the activity and of what to be particularly aware of.

**Resources:** This explains what particular resources you will need.  
NB: Although not usually listed under this heading a flipchart is necessary for most cases.

**Method:** Provides a description as detailed as possible of the activity from start to finish. You may wish to adjust this to suit your style but be careful of losing the plot/focus/learning points.

**Variations:** Occasionally variations on the activity are suggested that may better suit the needs of certain groups.

**Learning Points:** This refers to the main points of learning in an exercise that are important to raise/summarise if the group does not do so themselves.  
- Often the topic's accompanying Introduction is referred to for ideas on what should be the learning points.

Most of the activities in this resource suggest that some sort of feedback should take place. It is wise to plan what sort of structure you want for this feedback and to make sure that any volunteers know what is expected of them.

## Suggested Pathways

Suggested Pathways are the ways in which these resources can be used to form a complete programme. This depends on:

- The type of group (Backgrounds, size, etc.)
- What the group has done before
- Where the group wants to 'go'
- What time scale the group has
- What other demands, needs, interests there are for the members
- What other resources/programmes might help
- The preferences of the facilitator
- Guidelines already decided by the group





## Introduction to the Pilot Process:

Throughout the development of this resource Pilot Groups (8 in total) were used to test the materials and to see how they could best be organised to meet the needs of various groups. Different types of groups and different formats were used including:

- North Belfast group: a three week programme involving approximately 12 people from a mixture of faith backgrounds (Catholic and Protestant).
- Lisburn Inter-church group: a four-week programme involving approximately 12 people from a mixture of faith backgrounds (Catholic and Protestant).
- YWAM Discipleship Training School: a one-off session based on Dealing with Difference and exploring dynamics of Northern Irish society. The content of this training was adapted for an international mission orientated group.
- Skills For Transformation: a one-off session with an inter-church facilitators training programme. Topics covered: Defining Sectarianism, Sectarianism as a system, The Pyramid Model and Benign Apartheid
- The Steering Group for the Methodist Youth and Children's Work Department: a one-off session. Topics covered: Sectarianism as a System and Destructive Patterns of Relating.
- The Zero:28 Project. A one-off session, topics covered: the Pyramid Model and Challenges for the Church.
- Anne Marie McKinley (Pax Works; Anne Marie worked with a number of community groups using different elements of the resource).
- TREE training event planning team: The team consisted of seven people who volunteered to develop a training day programme based on the MBS resources.

Lessons learned from these experiences have helped form the following broad suggestions for how to apply this resource. They are only suggestions.

Each topic heading mentioned below is listed in the Content Guide. There are usually a number of activities to choose from for each topic heading. The decision of which activity to use is best left up to the group's facilitator(s). (see the Activities Guide for details of each activity).

In each of the following situations the facilitator(s) should decide if it is appropriate to factor in time for Biblical Reflection and/or Worship.





## ONE-OFF SESSIONS

One-off sessions usually last no more than 2.5 hours. It is impossible to cover all of the material in this resource in that amount of time.

If the group expects to focus on sectarianism then a programme structure could look something like:

|                                     |             |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1. Intro, warm-ups, guidelines etc. | 10 min      |
| 2. Defining Sectarianism            | 20 – 45 min |
| 3. Destructive Patterns of relating | 30 min      |
| 4. Sectarianism as a System         | 30 min      |

Alternatively you could substitute or combine other topics with 3. and 4. e.g.

- Relationship Between Intentions and Consequences
- The Pyramid of Sectarian Participation
- History

If the group is more interested in looking at sectarianism in terms of how to deal with difference then the programme structure could look something like:

|   |               |
|---|---------------|
| 1. Intro, warm-up etc.                    | 10 min        |
| 2. Defining Sectarianism (Quick Exercise) | 20 min        |
| 3. Dealing with Difference                | 30 min – 1 hr |
| 4. Dynamics and Varieties of Sectarianism | 30 min – 1 hr |

If the group is more interested in examining what they can do about sectarianism then:

|   |               |
|---|---------------|
| 1. Intro, warm-up etc.                          | 10 min        |
| 2. Defining Sectarianism (Quick exercise)       | 20 min        |
| 3. Identifying Sectarianism or Ancestral Voices | 30 min – 1 hr |
| 4. What can I do?                               | 30 min – 1 hr |

## A PROGRAMME SERIES

This usually involves a series of evenings. It gives a lot more time for covering different material and building relationships in the group. The ideal period would be 6 sessions e.g. one session per week for 6 weeks.

Week 1

- Intro, warm-up etc.
- Identity
- History



## Week 2

- Intro, warm-ups etc.
- Defining Sectarianism
- Destructive Patterns of relating
- Hope exercise

## Week 3

- Intro, warm-ups etc.
- Sectarianism as a System
- The Pyramid of Sectarian Participation and/or Relationship Between Intentions and Consequences

## Week 4

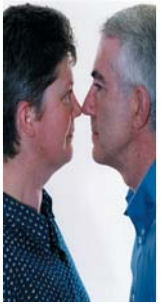
- Intro, warm-up etc.
- Dynamics and Varieties of Sectarianism
- Dealing with Difference and Bi-focal vision

## Week 5

- Intro, warm-up etc.
- Ancestral voices
- Identifying Sectarianism

## Week 6

- Intro, warm-up etc.
- What can I do?



## A DAY EVENT

A day event offers a little more time than a one off session. It might be more appropriate for church based groups who wish to examine sectarianism as part of a retreat, training day etc.

### Morning:

- Intro, warm-ups, guidelines etc.
- Defining Sectarianism
- Destructive Patterns of relating
- Sectarianism as a System and/or Pyramid Model +Relationship Between Intentions and Consequences

### Afternoon:

- Dynamics of sectarianism
- Dealing with Difference, Bifocal Vision
- What can I/we do?

Or

- Ancestral Voices and/or Identifying Sectarianism
- What Can I/we do?





## Activities Guide

The following is a list of the different suggested exercises/activities and their aims.

### ROOTS

#### Identity:

##### *Hand-prints:*

Aim: To begin to examine how we spend our time and what is important to us.  
To promote conversation in groups and 'getting to know people'.

##### *Rivers:*

Aim: To facilitate the sharing of stories about our identities.

#### Sectarianism in Irish History:

##### *Music:*

Aim: To examine and compare our responses to history through music.

##### *History Spaghetti Quiz:*

Aim: To help us explore more about our political and religious roots  
To have fun finding out how much we do and/or don't know  
To encourage co-operation and team building

### TRUNK & BRANCHES

#### Defining Sectarianism:

##### *Defining Sectarianism*

Aim: People who are about to embark on a journey examining sectarianism may benefit from spending some time reflecting on how they perceive/ understand sectarianism to begin with. A quick alternative is included.

#### Destructive Patterns of relating:

##### *Line of Sectarianism:*

Aim: To examine examples of destructive patterns of relating and begin to categorize and understand them.

##### *Personal Experiences*

Aim: To reflect on our own experiences of sectarianism and to share these with others.

##### *Case Studies*

Aim: To examine examples of destructive ways of relating from different points of view and to start to identify our own responses to sectarianism.

*A Quick, Flipchart exercise to explore Destructive Patterns of Relating is included.*



## Sectarianism as a System:

### *The Tree Model:*

Aim: To examine and discuss elements of the system.  
(A Variation is offered that is more relevant for cross-community groups)

### *Walls:*

Aim: To examine what the sectarian system looks like.

### *Guided Reflection:*

Aim: To help people to personally reflect on how sectarianism affects their own lives.



## The Pyramid Of Sectarian Participation:

### *Jenga:*

Aim: To help us experience how we can participate in a destructive process at different levels all of which are important to the ultimate destructive outcomes.  
To show how we can 'scapegoat' those of us who participate at the more blatantly destructive levels.

### *Paper Tower Model:*

Aim: To illustrate the Pyramid of Participation model (Quick Variation included).

### *Examples of Participation:*

Aim: To help people begin to recognize different levels and how they can relate.



## Relationship Between Intentions and Consequences:

### *Stories:*

Aim: To examine how intentions can be distorted.

### *The Field Play*

Aim: To examine a situation involving intentions and outcomes in a Sectarian System.

### *Discussion*

Aim: To explore elements of identity that can be distorted by the sectarian system.



## Hope exercises:

Aim: To help us get beyond resignation that the situation is hopeless when examining sectarianism.





# Using The Resource



## Dynamics and Varieties of Sectarianism

### *Stereotypes*

Aim: To create trust by being open with one another about each other's stereotypes.

### *What we share, what separates us*

Aim: To examine the concept of identities in opposition in order to explore dynamics involved in magnifying and minimizing difference.

### *Within-group exercise*

Aim: To explore what we find positive and what we find negative about our own groups.

### *Where do I stand?*

Aim: To examine our relationships within and between broad traditions.

### *When do I feel excluded?*

Aim: To examine experiences of exclusion and feelings surrounding this.



## LEAVES

### Dealing With Difference:

#### *Reaching Out*

Aim: The aim of this exercise is to help us examine what we mean by 'reaching out' and what we are trying to achieve. The model for dealing with difference can be introduced here.

#### *Greeting Difference*

Aim: Exploring the encounter of difference in a fun, simple way. It will probably work best as a 'warm up' or introductory exercise.

#### *Weaving Identities*

Aim: To assist people in exploring and sharing about diversity of culture in Northern Ireland.

#### *Mana Simulation Game*

Aim: To explore feelings and experiences relating to reaching out and to introduce the model for Dealing with Difference.

#### *Case Studies*

Aim: To stimulate exploration of the process of dealing with difference.

#### *The Woman at the well*

Aim: To examine an example of dealing with difference and to practice empathy.

#### *Discussing experiences of difference*

Aim: To examine our own experiences of encountering difference.





## Identifying Sectarianism:

### *Our own*

Aim: To identify sectarianism in our own cultures.

### *Mapping Sectarianism*

Aim: To help us explore the level of sectarianism for a particular setting.

### *The Dividing walls*

Aim: To examine a different situation involving a level of sectarianism in order to examine sectarianism as we may find it in our context.

## Ancestral Voices:

### *Coat of Identity*

Aim: To promote exploration and discussion regarding what beliefs, practices and values are important to us.

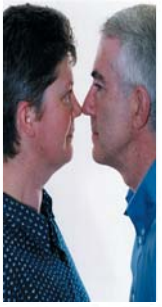
### *Case studies*

Aim: To explore the processes (e.g. Mitigation and Negotiation) involved in dealing with Ancestral Voices.

## Moving Beyond Sectarianism:

*A summary of ideas for transforming sectarianism, including:*

- Process
- How can I start?
- What is possible?
- Sustainability
- Equity, Diversity, Interdependence



## SECTARIANISM IN IRISH HISTORY

### History and Communal Memory

Ways of approaching the past can be represented as a continuum with personal identity at one end, communal memory in the middle and formal academic history at the other end.

Personal identity ----- Communal memory----- Academic history

In Ireland, the three points on the continuum are more closely related than in most Western societies today. In fact, certain emotive events and issues can effectively collapse the continuum into a single point, so that a challenge to how a person interprets history, or to how his community understands it, is received as an attack on personal identity.

***No topic is more likely to trigger the collapse of the boundary between past and present than sectarianism***

This collapse is also the collapse of the boundary between past and present. No topic is more likely to trigger the collapse of the boundary between past and present than sectarianism because its central themes are popularly understood as constants in Irish history; the same today as in the past.

These dynamics leave a tension between how historians understand history and how the past is remembered by communities. Communal memory corresponds with myth, neither of which should be disregarded. Their primary function is to embody in story form truths that help us understand who we are as a community, where we came from and where we stand in relationship to other groups. What matters then is less the literal factual truth and more the way a community understands the story, the meaning they take from it.

The more nearly one approaches the epicentre of conflict in Northern Ireland, the more likely one is to find these difficult dynamics concerning history and the boundary between past and present. A change in a view of the past or even allowing for the past to be left in the past requires work that is at least as much pastoral and political as it is historical.

### Identities in Opposition

In the 1600's the churches spent much of their energy defining their beliefs in terms of what they were not or why others were wrong. This is a distortion of positive human needs such as belonging and the ability to feel free to be different. It can be termed 'Identity in opposition'.

Identities in Opposition = the process of defining or affirming our identity using the difference of a group outside of our own to describe what we are not.

e.g. Theology in the context of the reformation era depended on knowing what beliefs one rejected as much as on what one accepted:

- Patrick Corish *'To be Catholic now was to know why he was not a protestant'*



- Alan Falconer *"The role of the churches in the situation of conflict in Ireland has been to reinforce the alienation of the different communities by developing theologies in opposition"*

Although this form of identity may be based on the positive need for belonging and the freedom to be different, there may be a pressure for 'members' of a group to conform in order not to 'let the side down'.

## The role of religion in: conflict, violence and catastrophe

The following quotes offer insights into the historic mixing of religion and politics in Ireland:-

- 1575 Earl of Kildare *"They, his followers would kill all the English churles and throw them into the sea"*
- 1574 Ulster Military Campaign *"how godly a deed it is to overthrow so wicked a race the world may judge : for my part I think there cannot be a greater sacrifice to God"* - English officer.
- 1579 James Fitzmaurice Fitzgerald expedition *"partook more of the nature of a religious crusade than any other Irish movement of the century."* The only object of his military campaign was to secure the administration of Christ's sacraments to a Catholic people in a Catholic rite. 700 soldiers were paid for by Pope Gregory X111 and granted the same plenary indulgence and remission of sins as those who fought the Turks for the Holy Land. War against the heretical Protestants was couched in the concepts of the crusades.

The 1641 Rising, the Williamite wars, the Penal laws and the Plantation provided more links between religion and violence; hatred and oppression:

- 1645 Cornelius O'Mahony, a Jesuit, urged forces to *'kill your heretic adversaries'*.
- 1649 Oliver Cromwell slaughters Catholics at Drogheda and Wexford, victims include clergy, women and children.
- 1662 The Protestant Irish parliament makes 23 October, the day of a failed Catholic attempt to seize Dublin at the outset of the Rising in 1641, an annual Holy Day. Sermons were preached on why Catholics could not be trusted.

Protestants remembered 1641, Catholics 1649; neither remembered the other.  
A divided society produces divided memories.

## Conversion

In Ireland the sixteenth-century Protestant reformation was almost entirely a STATE phenomenon. It became another English method for subjugating and civilizing Ireland. Occasional conflict between the political needs of the state and the religious needs of the reformation were always resolved in favour of the state. For the most part, however, the established church, the Church of Ireland, saw little problem with allowing their conversion efforts to be connected with social order, state control and other political power issues.





# Background Reading



Through much of post-reformation Irish history, the state sought to subjugate Catholics, or otherwise make them loyal, but the established Protestant church had so great a task just maintaining itself that little effort was put into converting Catholics to Protestantism. Neither the Protestant ideal of converting Catholics nor the state's need to make Catholics loyal went away, however.

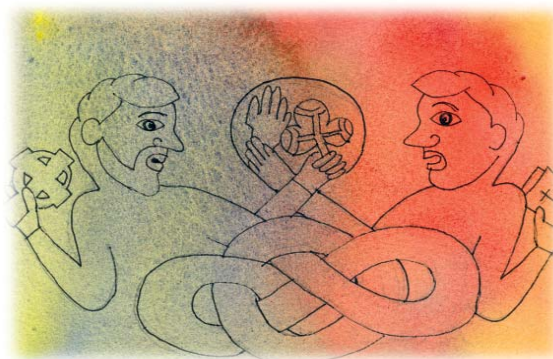
By the late 1700s, penal laws against Catholics no longer seemed justifiable to many people. At the founding of the Evangelical Society of Ulster in 1798, George Hamilton preached from Luke 14.23: 'Compel them to come in.' He argued, however, that 'Gospel compulsion' could only mean evangelism and conversion, never state power or any other use of coercion.

At the same time, the state continued to see Catholics as a political threat to a peaceful Ireland, and the church saw them as religiously wrong, so attempting to convert Catholics seemed to many an excellent way to deal with both problems. Once again, conversion was linked to the political control of Catholics.

One result was the nineteenth-century evangelistic campaigns, sometimes called the Second Reformation or Protestant Crusade. In this period conversion efforts became highly visible and contentious. Stories of conversion were the lifeblood of the Protestant efforts. Denying the stories was essential for the morale of Catholics, who dismissed conversions as insincere and motivated by greed—to live a Protestant and die a Catholic was the best of both worlds, they thought.

Evangelistic efforts to convert Catholics coincided with the Irish Famine (1845-39) to tragic effect, summed up in the idea of 'souperism': the hard to prove and hard to deny allegation that some Protestants offered food (usually soup, hence 'souperism') to desperate Catholics only on the condition that they meet some religious obligation, perhaps attending a bible class or worship service.

The census of 1861 demonstrated that Protestant conversion efforts had failed to alter the religious demography of Ireland, but religious conflict was now a feature of Irish public life and conversion more contentious than ever.



## Separation

Sectarianism both creates and requires separation, to which the Christian churches have contributed greatly; marriage and family life being one main area:-

eg. Pope Pius X's *Ne Temere* decree of 1907, which led to a situation in which 'Catholic clergy would not officiate unless both parties had promised that all the children would be Catholic.' One study concluded that as a result of *Ne Temere* the Protestant population of the Republic of Ireland fell at a rate of 1% per year between 1946 and 1961. In 1970, the papal decree *Matrimonia Mixta* removed the requirement that the Protestant partner promise to rear the children within the context of the Catholic faith and tradition.



This and other religion-inspired practices that result in separation are not *intended* to be sectarian (rather their design is to build strong communities) and indeed are not necessarily so. In a society plagued by sectarianism, however, such practices can easily reinforce and further it.

## Sacred Violence, Politics as religion

The intersection of religion and politics can be both constructive and destructive.

No matter how we may define our religion or lack of it, *our effective religion* is the thing we give our highest priority, in particular those things we hold as non-negotiable, which we will not or cannot compromise. Political scientist Frank Wright argues that 'nationalisms are not merely 'like religions- they are religions.' In Christian terms this is idolatrous, i.e., it supplants loyalty to God.

Both Catholic and Protestant beliefs and paradigms have, respectively, shaped political events in Ireland, both directly and indirectly.

e.g.

-1912: The religious nature of the Solemn League and Covenant for Ulster and the the Protestant churches' support for the Covenant's absolute rejection of Home Rule "*By all means which may be found necessary.*"

-The religious nature of Patrick Pearse's *oath-prayer* and the heavy religious overtones of his brand of Irish Nationalism. On Easter 1916 Pearse's fusion of Christ's sacrifice and national sacrifice was most seductive.

-There is a similarity between Eamonn De Valera's statement that "*the people have never a right to do wrong*" and the doctrine of 'error has no right' (see the section below on 'Theological Roots of Sectarianism').





## UNDERSTANDING SECTARIANISM

### SECTARIANISM EXISTS:

- In the hearts and minds of individuals
- In the kind of structures we create in society
- In our attitudes to one another
- In what we say and do
- In the things we leave undone/unsaid
- In negative judgments about someone else's behaviour

**It is rarely a label we apply to ourselves, as our own sectarianism is the hardest to see**

### Sectarianism involves:

- Religion (Religion as a form of Ethnicity and as our structures for devotional faith)
- Ethnicity and nationality
- Politics
- Religion and politics

- In our judgment 'sectarian' and 'sectarianism' are clearer and more useful when used in negative terms and this will be our practice.
- If Christians wish to save 'religion' from disrepute the way to do it is not to deny the relationship between sectarianism and religion but to recognise the link and to change accordingly.
- Reconciliation is the CORNERSTONE of our understanding of the main goal and dynamics of moving beyond sectarianism.
- We have worked at developing a rigorous notion of reconciliation built on the interlocking dynamics of forgiveness, repentance and justice.
- We also recognise that not all differences can be reconciled, so we hope to develop ways of dealing with difference, short of reconciliation.

### Reductionism

Sectarianism continually seeks to reduce everything to the lowest common denominator. Because either/or logic prevails one misses some of the interesting questions a both/and approach might inspire. For example describing a particular event as either religious or political, when in fact, it is more likely to be both.

There are four varieties of reductionism:-

1. Either/or reasoning: the reductionism of false choices. In the logic of sectarianism, every question has one answer, a 'yes' or 'no' answer; black and white are the only shades of opinion allowed; every decision is either/or. In sectarianism, maybe, grey, and both/and hardly exist, but reality is more complex.



2. Reducing religion to doctrine. But religion is much more than doctrine. Thinking clearly about the role of religion means taking seriously: religion as shaper of individual and communal worldview; religion as church institutions; religion as a community-building dynamic and as communities; religion as a social institution and agent of socialisation; religion as a source of moral formation.

3. The reductionism of dismissing religion as a mere boundary marker. Religion is just one possible boundary marker from a group which includes at least: race, language, nationality, ethnicity, and ideology. To varying degrees these boundary markers are not mere boundaries; they have content.

4. The reductionism of seeking the fundamental. There are two forms of seeking the fundamental, legitimate and illegitimate. The legitimate form argues that a particular factor in a conflict may be understood as fundamental, but that does not mean that the other factors are insignificant. The illegitimate form falsely believes that if one factor in a conflict has been established as fundamental it can become the focus- to the exclusion of every other factor because they are then regarded as insignificant.

Every attempt at single-cause explanation—political, religious, cultural or any other—will fail to account for the complex actions of individuals and societies. Sectarianism involves religion and politics and economics and a host of other factors. Only approaches that can take in this whole range stand a chance of understanding sectarianism and moving beyond it.





## DEFINITION OF SECTARIANISM

The working definition we have presented is comprehensive and therefore also general. In fact it could work, at least in a rough way, as a definition of nearly all negative 'isms'. Only the line about religion gives the definition clear specificity. If we were to substitute a line about gender or race, for example, we might have a reasonable definition of sexism or racism. In addition to refining this general definition, therefore, we have worked at identifying and analysing the varieties and dynamics of sectarianism, the different ways that sectarianism is expressed in particular instances.



### Sectarianism is....

**a system of attitudes, actions beliefs and structures:**  
*at personal, communal and institutional levels*  
*which always involves religion and typically involves a negative mixing of religion and politics...*

**Which arises as a distorted expression of positive, human needs especially for belonging, identity and the free expression of difference...**

### and is expressed in destructive patterns of relating:

- *hardening the boundaries between groups*
  - *overlooking others*
- *belittling, dehumanizing or demonizing others*
- *justifying or collaborating in the domination of others*
- *physically or verbally intimidating or attacking others*



It is a system...



The most difficult thing to grasp about sectarianism is that it is a system and that therefore all our actions are interdependent. It suits the sectarian system that the majority of us should feel ourselves to be powerless and locked into 'opposing camps' without choice. Fear of our own side is sometimes greater than fear of others, diffusing creative energy.

It arises as a distorted expression of positive human needs especially for belonging, identity and the free expression of difference.



We view sectarianism as a distorted expression of aspects of humanness that are essentially positive – the path beyond sectarianism must be one of transforming or redeeming, not smashing it because we risk damaging the good along with the evil.

The term 'distorted expression' can cover all behaviour on a spectrum from the mildest antipathy to murderous rage. We distort identity by expressing it negatively over and against the other. The impact of negative identity is to create a situation where we require a threatening 'other' in order to maintain this identity or sense of who we are. Any move to change the status of the 'other' from threatening to friendly precipitates some form of identity crisis for us. Strong positive identity in one or more shared areas may allow people to transcend negative identity and to form creative alliances.



It is expressed in destructive patterns of relating:

hardening the boundaries between groups

Physical boundaries include:-

- painted kerb stones.
- murals and slogans on gable walls. Murals are not just folk artefacts but a crucial factor in the politicisation of the community. The problem is their content, a potent means of hardening the boundaries.
- asking for barriers to be erected.



Emotional boundaries include:-

- pushing different groups apart, creating a vacuum of knowledge.
- cutting off groups from one another and setting up deeper tensions.
- acting to impede those reaching out across the divide, perhaps by ostracising or threatening them.
- unspoken messages people give one another e.g. 'with whom is it acceptable to associate with?'
- inducing the suspension of normal rational thought ( don't ask questions).
- myths and rumours – them and us. Rumours and fear combine to seal off the two communities from one another more effectively than any number of physical barriers.



Conceptual boundaries include:

- language, e.g. black protestants, Sinn Fein/IRA.



*overlooking others*

To overlook is simply to ignore the existence, needs, rights or aspirations of the other. The politeness of overlooking masks its enormous potential for destroying personal, communal and group relationships through:

- language, e.g. 'the people of Ulster' ignores Catholic/Nationalists, while 'the Irish people' either overlooks Protestant/Unionists or subsumes them into the Irish nation.
- turning off the TV, radio.
- prayer, the form of which excludes those not familiar with it.
- the way in which the churches write about what they believe (does it make assumptions and/or unfair judgments about another group or expression of faith?).
- feeding into the well established system of antagonized division.



*belittling or demonising others*

In its most aggressive form belittling involves caricaturing and making fun of or mocking another's tradition or personal experience. The more gross the expression of Sectarianism the easier it is to identify and to attract support for tackling it. Much more difficult to tackle are the more 'acceptable' forms.





# Background Reading



'Demonising' overlaps with 'belittling' in the process of caricaturing the other. In demonising it is aimed primarily at inducing fear and hatred of, or shock at the tradition, practices, representations or beliefs of the other. It is too easy even for those of us who are willing to acknowledge some personal responsibility, to point our fingers at them.

## *justifying or collaborating in the domination of others*

This includes any behaviour that supports, or actively has a hand in suppressing, dominating or discriminating against the other or their tradition on the basis of their political or religious allegiance. This is a classical abuse of power. For example, elements of the denial of rights and the suppression of the culture of others are exemplified in any dispute over parading. The paramount dynamic here is to enforce our will over and against their will. The Orange Order needs to make the transition from their image of traditional power holders. The 'residents' need to make the transition from their image of themselves as second-class citizens. The role and power of some paramilitary groups in local areas is perhaps the best example of the type of within-tradition domination spawned by the conflict – what began as necessary protection has developed an economic aspect in extortion etc.



## *physically intimidating or attacking others*

The bottom line in destructive relationships is the total breakdown of trust and respect, which is evidenced in physical violence or in the threat of physical violence. The need to organize our lives around violence, or the threat of it, means we have developed patterns that actually contribute to maintaining the sectarian system. Assimilation means that you are allowed to go on living with our group as long as you give up your identity and become totally like us.

Any move beyond sectarianism will require that we expose and change these patterns.



## Sectarianism as a System

A system involves different parts that relate to/affect each other in some way and maintain certain processes.

Central to the work of MBS is the concept that sectarianism can exist and operate at individual, communal and institutional level. These different 'parts' all have a role in maintaining the processes involved in sectarianism. Therefore individuals who 'do not have a sectarian bone in their body' can still be part of the sectarian system simply because they live within it. I may not feel sectarian but my actions, beliefs, attitudes etc can be distorted to produce sectarian outcomes. E.g. *A violent experience may prompt me to move from a mixed area to a 'safer' area with 'my own kind'. This 'separation' is a product of sectarianism and can also further support it. Where I live has become part of the sectarian system.*



***In fact sectarianism does not really require any direct, active response at all from most of us; simply that we do nothing about it.***

Even when our intentions have positive potential or are based on good reasons, they can never the less be distorted by the sectarian system and result in destructive outcomes.

E.g. The things people do to build strong communities and strong congregations are well meant and have positive outcomes, but at the same time they can also serve to exclude others and harden boundaries between groups.

In fact sectarianism does not really require any direct, active response at all from most of us; it simply requires that we do nothing about it.

In the beginning sectarianism fed on 'Big Hate, Big Violence, Gross Injustice' e.g. The Elizabethan Wars in Ireland, The Plantation periods, the 1641 Rising, Cromwell, The Williamite Wars, The Penal laws, etc. Now that sectarianism has been long established, it no longer requires large amounts of violence. Just an occasional act will suffice because the sectarian system disposes us to judge others by the worst actions of their community.

Because sectarianism is so well established and such a 'successful' system it will need to be challenged in a range of creative ways for a long time to come if we are to move beyond it.



## THE PYRAMID OF SECTARIAN PARTICIPATION

The model was first developed by the Working Party on Sectarianism (WPS), 1991-1993.

It aims to provide an image of how one could participate in sectarianism without intending to, and how sectarianism is supported by, and related at a number of levels and groups.

The WPS drew out two main defining features of the Pyramid:

- *People at each level, when it comes to the crunch, disclaim responsibility for the words and action of the layer above.*
- *Each level grows out of the one below and could not exist without support or permission from below.*

The implication, therefore, is that we disown the layers above us at times and yet we provide support and permission. Ambivalence and inability to act are factors in this.

But why such ambivalence, without which the sectarian pyramid ought to crumble when people disown the layer above? To understand this ambivalence, it is helpful to change the image from a pyramid to a tent held up by a centre pole, representing the dominant, basic division in society between Catholic-nationalist and Protestant-unionist. The centre pole of division keeps the tent standing because, much as people may dislike, disdain, oppose and fear 'their' paramilitaries and some of their politicians and community leaders, people cannot dismiss the fear that these paramilitaries and leaders may, in some crisis, be all that stands between them and the threat emanating from the other side of that centre pole.

Without this 'centre pole' cross-community abhorrence of some sectarian actions just might collapse the sectarian tent.

- All acts of sectarianism from the obvious to the subtle are related.
- Many people who regard themselves as innocent of sectarianism are in fact implicated.
- The best of intentions can lead to sectarian consequences.
- The pyramid gives people an image that reveals how one can be complicit in sectarianism even without intention.
- Opting out of the pyramid is not really possible. Although each level of the pyramid disowns the one above it, each level also depends on the one below it, for support.
- All sectarianism is connected within a single framework.
- It is the tension between the two sides that keeps the pyramid from collapsing.



Psychotic Killers, at the peak of the pyramid, commit acts of violence that seem to have little rationale beyond creating sectarian terror.

Paramilitaries whilst not admitting to sectarianism, have had their violence exposed as one of the most effective purveyors of sectarianism.

Leaders (political; religious and other) sometimes use platform, pulpit or the pages of the press to express bigoted or inflammatory statements.

Ordinary, decent people encourage by vote, religious view and private opinion the attitudes, justification etc. of the layer above them. They may participate in organizations that have taken a sectarian stance or acted in sectarian ways. By doing nothing we allow the sectarian system to carry on unhindered. Even those whose work is directed against sectarianism find themselves ironically dependent on sectarianism for future employment.

### Implications

When it comes to the crunch people at each level disclaim responsibility for the words and actions for the layer above. Yet each level grows out of the one below and could not exist without support or permission from below. The dynamics running between the levels are shown to be as important as the boundaries separating them. Most people would be horrified to be told they are connected with the violence at the top of the pyramid, yet it is not hard to see how each individual stone supports the total structure.

*"It is too easy to scapegoat, and scapegoating is a widespread middle class practice in Northern Ireland, including good church goers"*

Johnston McMaster, Churches on the Edge (Catalyst 2000)

What is the worst form of sectarianism?

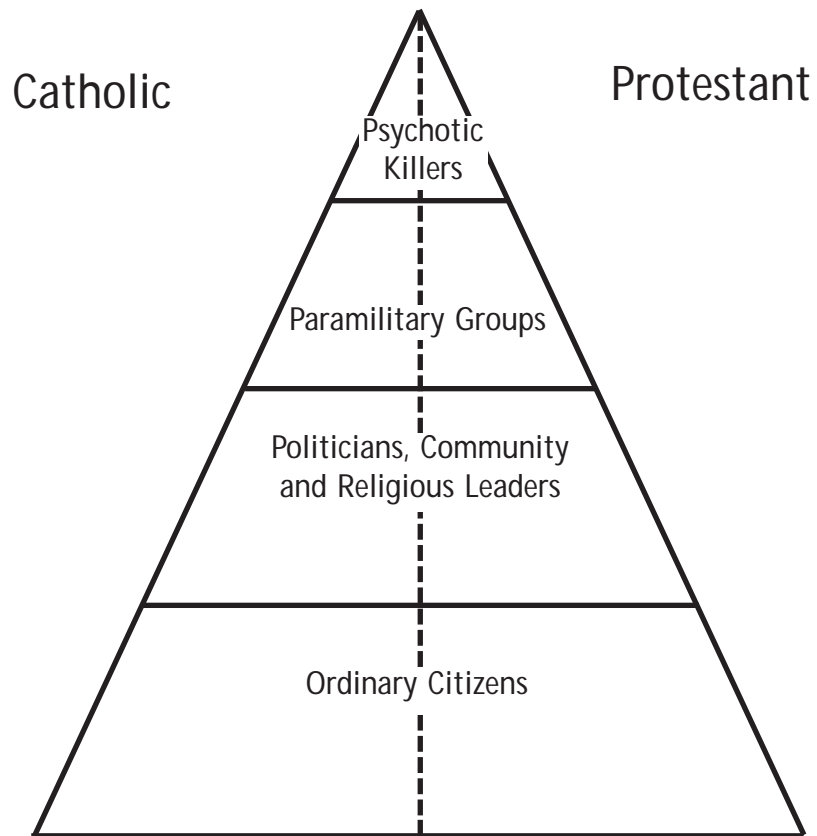
Firstly, that which involves violence and secondly, our own sectarianism because it is the one about which we can do something.







## The Pyramid



Each level depends on the one below it for support e.g. doing nothing of real substance to challenge, rhetoric that lends support etc.

The structure remains in place because of the tension between the two sides.



## THE FALSE ALLURE OF BENIGN APARTHEID

Our purpose here is to warn against understandings of peace that fall short of reconciliation, settling instead for what we call benign apartheid; simple co-existence of communities as separate as ever, but living without violence.

Benign Apartheid can look attractive for a number of reasons:

- The simple desire for safety.
- The disdain, distaste or just lack of interest in the other community.
- Conflict weariness and supposed political realism leading to the conviction that no more than peaceful co-existence is possible in Northern Ireland and therefore the pursuit of something more is a waste of time and possibly counter-productive.
- The contentment of church members who are fully and happily occupied with life in their own church community, their vision extending no further.

The alternative vision for Benign Apartheid is that of RECONCILIATION.

Reconciliation is a key biblical concept. It has to do with the loving and life-giving relationship of God with humanity and with positive relationships between people and within the whole of creation. In terms of reconciled human relationships, the key to this vision is in following a strand of biblical teaching on how to relate to neighbours, even when those neighbours are pagans, oppressors or enemies. This kind of reconciliation is based on recognising that our welfare is bound up with the welfare of others and depends on seeking what is good for all those among whom we live. Jesus directly commands 'Love your enemies'. The circle of neighbours extends even to those from whom we are most alienated and includes practical service, even to those who have treated us badly. To call someone a neighbour is essentially reconciling logic because a neighbour is someone whose well being, present and future, is tied up with ours. When the circle of neighbours embraces enemies as well our welfare is immediately tied to everyone with whom we co-exist. The call for former enemies to be reconciled in Christ and in the church is fundamentally incompatible with apartheid, benign or otherwise. Benign apartheid can only be accepted as a temporary arrangement, preferable to active antagonism, on the way to a more authentic reconciled peace.

The allure of benign apartheid is false and deceiving. Some political form of reconciliation, accompanied and undergirded by a broader religious, cultural and social reconciliation, offers us the best hope of sustainable peace – political pragmatism and Christian principle press us in the same direction.



## RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTENTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES

A claim of purity of intent does not protect us from being judged to be acting or speaking in a sectarian way. There can be sectarian outcomes of speech, actions, omissions or decisions, which were not intended by us. We can do, say, or decide things with one set of intentions in mind that are, in our terms, wholly good, justifiable, and possibly even necessary. Yet our action, speech or decision can have a sectarian outcome. For example:

- Moving yourself and your family out of a mixed residential area to live in one that is exclusively your own. The intention is good, for the safety of your family, and who could be faulted for doing so?

However, the corporate effect of such individually sensible and blameless movements is to reinforce sectarianism still further. Sectarianism—as a system that can maintain itself by feeding on logical responses to situations it has created—is a wonder of adaptation.

One way to gauge whether or not speech, an event, an action or a decision can be judged to be sectarian, is to look, not only at the intention of the person or group involved, but also at the outcome or potential outcome of the speech, event, action or decision, in so far as this can be foreseen. If the outcome entails developing or augmenting one or more destructive patterns of relating, then the action or event can be judged to be sectarian. The most potent destructive patterns of relating which we have identified are: hardening the boundaries between groups; overlooking others; belittling or demonising others; justifying or collaborating in the domination of others and physically attacking or intimidating others. The importance of the distinction between intentions and consequences is that it allows us to expose the operation of the sectarian system at a point where it is most subtle. This point is the distortion of the good intentions of any person or group, in particular those who are actively committed to pursuing peace and reconciliation.

There can be actions, however, which in one context take on sectarian overtones, but in another context would be deemed more or less benign or at least irrelevant. For example, large Orange parades in Co. Donegal each year pass off virtually without incident, because the Catholic/Nationalist population, who are the majority in their jurisdiction, feel no threat from the parade. The context in Donegal allows a degree of toleration, which is not possible in the contested atmosphere of Northern Ireland without some measure of dialogue and negotiation.

We are aware that one of the dangers with this type of distinction of intentions and consequences is a risk that people could use it negatively, by claiming destructive outcomes, in order to prevent others from taking actions. For example, when organising a socio-political panel discussion we find that some invitees refuse to take part if certain other parties are going to be present. We are then faced with choices. We can decide not to invite those whose presence is contentious; in this case we can rightly be accused of being sectarian by overlooking them. Alternatively, we can invite them anyway and accept that others will absent themselves and that therefore voices will not be heard. In this latter case, we might be tempted to say that this was their choice; they opted to exclude themselves. It is also true that in fact we set up the situation in a way that overlooked their concerns. The issue of whether or not we agree with their concerns is secondary. Here we are dealing primarily with the implications of destructive patterns of relating and, in this instance, it appears that there is no way to avoid a sectarian outcome, other than to cancel the event or to hold two separate panels.





Whilst we are arguing that the assessment of outcome is key to judging whether or not an action is sectarian, we also want to affirm that in the short term it may sometimes be necessary to make decisions or to take actions which have explicitly sectarian outcomes in order, or in the hope that, in the longer term, other choices may become possible. What is crucial here is to know that we are choosing a sectarian option, to know why we deem it to be so important that it is not to be avoided, and what we hope will be the movement that will make this type of choice redundant in the long term.

Understanding the complex relationship between intentions and consequences then is, in our opinion, crucial to understanding how to judge whether speech, actions or decisions are potentially or actually sectarian in nature. A claim that we had no intention of being sectarian cannot immunise any of us from responsibility for sectarian outcomes of our speech, actions or decisions. Moreover, to claim purity of intent, whilst persisting in behaviour which has sectarian outcomes, is to strengthen and lend legitimacy to the sectarian system.

## WHEN IS A RELIGIOUS IDEA SECTARIAN?

Our intent is not to dismiss truth claims but rather to take them very seriously and to ask: Can we make truth claims without being sectarian? Which religious ideas are inherently sectarian and which are not?

On the one hand, attempts to dismiss all religious truths as inherently sectarian are misguided and false. On the other hand we, recognize that religious ideas can and do contribute to sectarianism. We intend to show the compatibility of religious truth claims with ecumenical and reconciling perspectives.

A sectarian religious idea is likely to fall under one of three headings:-

- It hardens boundaries between groups
- It dehumanises another group; or
- It imposes on another group.

1. Hardening boundaries – Education segregated on a religious basis, and practiced in a sectarian society, can easily harden boundaries and therefore reinforce the sectarian system. What can reasonably be expected of people is to be alert to unintended consequences and to mitigate them as far as possible.
2. Dehumanising – When a group has been judged incapable of change they have been dehumanised in a fundamental way. Dehumanising has no positive purpose and therefore needs to be eliminated from our moral practice not merely mitigated.
3. Imposing combines sectarian intent and will with the power to do something about it. Like dehumanising, it has no positive function and therefore must be eliminated. Imposing is sectarianism in its most acute form. When the other imposes on us what we could previously dismiss as their problem it becomes our problem as well. For much of their history the Christian churches have been only too happy to employ coercive imposition in its strongest crudest form, state imposition. Imposition has no basis in Christianity's original teachings and early development, as recorded in the Bible.





# Background Reading



A spirit of imposition is closely linked to a stunted and distorted expression of two basic and complementary human needs: the need to belong and the need for freedom to be different. Healthy expressions of these needs require groups to engage in a process of observing, constructing and negotiating difference. We want to note at least three stages we regard as essential.

- The first stage involves the linked activities of observation, discernment, evaluation and judgment, applied both externally to other groups and internally to our own group. What is crucial is that identity is necessarily formed in relationship, however minimal, to others. We need to know: we are not you; how we are not you; and why we are not you.
- This leads to a second stage of informal negotiation with others, out of which arises our understanding of our own identity, other's difference, and the relation between them.
- A third stage involves agreement –probably informal and even unspoken- with others about where the boundaries of difference and similarity between us lie.

Clarification: negotiation in the second stage and agreement in the third can be informal, implicit and minimal practices.

Note that identity continues to rely on relationship at every stage. A spirit of imposition arises when a person or group attempts to cut out the necessary element of relationship. It not only does an injustice to the party being judged, it fundamentally distorts the judgment involved and therefore damages the group doing the judging.

- To prevent the possibility of truth claims having destructive consequences, they are best made in the context of relationship. In general the greater the extent and quality of the relationship, the less likely it is that a truth claim will have sectarian consequences.
- Concerning sectarianism, the most basic question that must be asked of a truth claim is, Does the idea contain within it a logic that inherently hardens boundaries, dehumanises or imposes? If the idea is shown somehow to have inherently destructive consequences, three basic questions must be considered.
  - Can the idea be **discarded**?
  - Can it be **altered** in a way that removes those consequences?
  - Can the negative consequences be **mitigated** in any way?

If a group cannot or will not discard, alter, or mitigate, then their intention to deal with sectarianism is at least called into question.

- Building community means building bridges as well as walls. This work requires a vision of peace and the perseverance and patience to pursue it.



- People who have been abused or perceive themselves to have been abused will have difficulty hearing the abuser. A context of sectarian conflict shapes how we hear and receive every communication – including religious truth claims – especially when it comes from those with whom we are in conflict.

There are many different kinds of religious ideas and truth claims:

1. **We are different, we believe differently.** Sectarianism characteristically approaches difference, especially religious and political difference with suspicion and in judgment. In a sectarian society, handling difference well can mean that the simplest observations about difference need to be made sensitively and perhaps accompanied by disclaimers. They need to be received with a generous spirit, slow to take offence. Religious difference is not inherently sectarian, just as the need for freedom to be different is the necessary compliment of the human need to belong.

2. **We are right.**

3. **We are right and you are wrong.** These express the human need to understand what is true and right, intellectually and morally. The connected needs to know what is true and what is right are inescapable aspects of being human. Defenders of religious truth claims need to justify rather than merely assert their convictions.

4. **'You are a less adequate version of what we are'** is a potentially sectarian statement. It could cause hardening of boundaries and dehumanising and allow or smooth the way for imposition, but it is not inherently sectarian if the statement is made in the context of a relationship of genuine mutual respect.

5. **You are not what you say you are.**

6. **We are in fact what you say you are.** If statements 5 and 6 are not to be sectarian, those making them must make a fine but crucial distinction between claiming the right to say you are not what you say you are but nonetheless recognising the right of the other party to define themselves as they wish, even if the party making the judgment objects.

7. **What you are doing is evil** is an inherently sectarian statement because given its radical nature it will inevitably harden boundaries and it could dehumanise and allow imposition. At the same, it is an extreme but necessary part of any repertoire of moral discernment. Mitigation will be crucially important if the moral benefits are to outweigh the sectarian consequences.

8. **You are so wrong that you forfeit ordinary rights** corresponds to the classical formulation 'error has no right' and to imposition, so this is sectarianism in a strong form.

9. **You are less than human.**

10. **You are evil.**





## 11. You are demonic.

Our three final statements are grouped as they are all inherently sectarian in much the same way. Each hardens boundaries; each dehumanises; each could allow imposition and provide a rationale for it. People may do evil but they do not become evil. We find no circumstances in which these are necessary or useful.

## Theological roots of sectarianism

The churches (around and after 1500s and 1600s), in a struggle for ascendancy and survival, shared a combination of three doctrines:

### 1. *Providence*

This is the simple, basic teaching that God is at work in the world and that the faithful Christian can discern God's will and purpose by reading the signs of the times.

### 2. *One true church, outside of which is no salvation*

### 3. *Error has no right*

This doctrine was developed in the fourth and fifth centuries by St. Augustine to justify the use of state coercion to suppress heretical opponents: because they are radically in error, they have no right to express or hold their beliefs.

This doctrine has been the principle behind every use of coercion, especially state coercion, for religious purposes.

### Dangerous Combinations:

The first two could be problematic but need not be; they are more problematic when combined. The third, error has no right, is inherently sectarian, however, and combines disastrously with the others.

#### One true church + providence

Easily reduced to 'God is on our side.'

#### One true church + providence + error has no right

Add 'God is on our side' to 'error has no right' and the implication is 'God wants us to suppress others.'

#### One true church + error has no right:

If your church is the one true church and error has no right, then it is your duty to see that error is suppressed by whatever means necessary. From this viewpoint tolerance is no virtue—tolerance is a deadly vice.

These doctrines did not emerge on the fringe, they were shared by the three main churches (Catholic, Church of Ireland, Presbyterian). Thus sectarianism is rooted in the Irish mainstream, not the fringe. They represent principles that would cause oppression regardless of who was in power.

These elements are best placed in the European context of reformation/counter-reformation conflict and in the violence and catastrophe which marred the 16th and 17th centuries in Ireland (see history section).



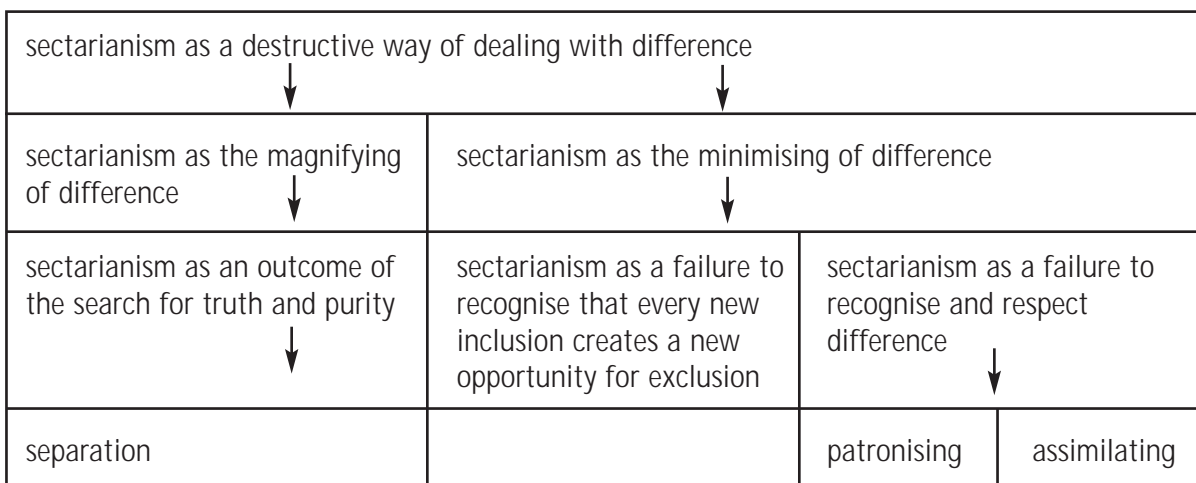


## DYNAMICS AND VARIETIES OF SECTARIANISM

The hardest type of sectarianism to see is one's own.  
 What others identify as sectarian in us, we see as loyalty to truth, justice, and community.

For our current purposes, we confine our examination of varieties to religious forms of sectarianism. The dynamics apply much more widely, of course, but because our work has been with a largely church-based constituency, we have less experience applying them to the main political orientations in Northern Ireland, and still less to state and secular liberal sectarianism.

At this point, we have not chosen to abandon identifying sectarianism with groups, but to make this approach secondary to identifying varieties by their core dynamic, how they characteristically work. We are currently working with nine themes and sub-themes. All sectarianism can be understood as *a destructive way of dealing with difference*, and this works in two main ways, by magnifying *difference* and by *minimising difference*. Magnifying difference often takes the form of a *search for truth and purity*, which typically results in *separation*. Minimising difference, on the other hand, has two main variants, *failing to recognise that every new inclusion creates a new opportunity for exclusion* and *failing to recognise and respect difference*, the latter having *patronising* and *assimilating* variants.





## Sectarianism as the magnification of difference

E.g. Magnifying difference takes both fundamentalist Protestant and conservative Catholic form.

### Fundamentalist Protestant:

Anxiety to maintain the pure orthodox truth by being separate from those who disagree: "Come ye out from among them". "Touch not the unclean thing." The separation may not be absolute, only a superficiality where contact exists.

We are not saying that the doctrine of separation is bad theology or unbiblical, although we believe it to be severely limited theology and that it ignores huge and central aspects of the Bible. Rather we are saying this doctrine is prone to sectarianism because it causes, in terms of our definition, destructive patterns of relating through hardening of boundaries and demonizing. If people wish to maintain it, this is their privilege, but they must recognize that they may well be choosing sectarianism along with separation.

It is the fact of separation as much as the cause of separation that allows for distorted stereotypes.

### Conservative Catholic:

Based on a sense of being the one true church, or at least the most true church, and in practice largely a mirror image of fundamentalist Protestant sectarianism. The primary points of maintaining separation include communion, marriage, and education.

Perhaps the suffering of the potent sectarianism of the Stormont regime (1921-72) makes it difficult to see.

## Sectarianism as the minimizing of difference

Most often practiced by liberals who are likely to understand themselves as opposing sectarianism. Measured by consequences rather than intentions, however, minimizing difference is marked as sectarian by hardening boundaries, overlooking others and belittling, even demonizing.

### *Every new inclusion creates a new opportunity for exclusion*

e.g. Ecumenical sectarianism – it is possible that by alliances, creative response, progress away from separation etc we can threaten or exclude other groups. This can be almost impossible to avoid and indeed should not become a paralyzing fear. At least the worst effects can be mitigated by thoughtful, creative responses.

### *Failure to recognize and respect differences*

We can minimize difference by failing to recognize it. Not all difference can or should be reconciled and people may need to feel at least that this is acknowledged.



*Patronising*- e.g. (ecumenical, evangelical, and Catholic sectarianism):

- Those long experienced in dealing with sectarianism may be of real benefit to the newcomer only if they avoid 'been there, done that' assumptions and respect differing starting points, contexts and beliefs.
- Evangelical confidence in pronouncing what is or is not 'Christian'.
- Catholic dissolving of different Protestant groups into the category of 'non-Catholics', i.e. 'not us'.

*Assimilation* – e.g.(liberal sectarianism, especially liberal Catholic):

The rush to inclusion could feel presumptuous or imperialistic to those who are acutely aware of what divides us. The intention to include could have the effect of repelling.

## Intra-tradition sectarianism

Significant tensions and conflict can exist within groups. Groups can feel that they should be united even though they are not and they may feel let down when someone dissents.

It can be useful to look at types of sectarianism in terms of groups as matching pairs occupying opposite ends of a continuum, based on groupings that share similar elements:

To illustrate some of the dynamics involved in intra-tradition sectarianism, we have organised types of sectarianism, understood in terms of groups rather than themes, as matching pairs occupying opposite ends of a continuum, with both poles claiming to be the more authentic heirs of a shared legacy.

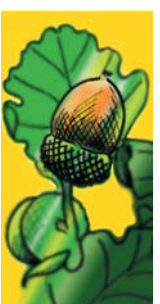
This works best with the main political and religious forms of sectarianism, but less well with ecumenical, state, and secular liberal sectarianism.

We do not observe within the ecumenical movement the dynamics characteristic of the other continua, perhaps because ecumenism is a comparatively recent phenomenon and so has had less time to develop such patterns. Ecumenism may also be different, however, by virtue of having little concept of formal membership, by drawing participants from other traditions without removing them from those traditions, and not least because of its principled, central commitment to unity.

State sectarianism simply does not fit the categories we develop here, because the state does not have a comparable internal dynamic.

Secular liberalism might be paired with a category like 'religious' or 'traditional' to yield at least a weak version of the dynamics we describe, but the pairing would not constitute a tradition in anything like the sense of the other four we use.

Fundamentalism and evangelicalism have not disappeared from the scheme as we present it here. They have been subsumed under the general category conservative Protestantism, of which they are different expressions.



# Background Reading



| Religious               |                       | Political |             |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Conservative Protestant | Conservative Catholic | Loyalist  | Republican  |
| ↕                       | ↕                     | ↕         | ↕           |
| Liberal Protestant      | Liberal Catholic      | Unionist  | Nationalist |

Those situated at the bottom of the continua are likely to regard their end as 'moderate' and to criticise the other end as 'extreme'; alternatively, they might identify themselves as 'progressive' and the others as 'reactionary' or 'fundamentalist'. Those located at the top, however, are likely to regard themselves, whether or not they use these exact words, as 'traditional' or 'pure', while the other end is 'compromised' or 'sold-out'.

For our immediate purposes, and without really resolving the issues at stake, we are going to describe the upper end of the two religious continua as 'traditional' and the lower end as 'moderate' on the grounds that these terms would be agreeable to those being described. Moderates are not necessarily any less committed to the tradition than are people at the traditional end; they simply disagree with the way the traditionalist relate to the tradition and advocate another way. Even so, moderates are unlikely to describe themselves as traditional, whereas those at traditional end would readily accept this description of themselves.



## APPROACHES TO DEALING WITH DIFFERENCE

We are not describing anything that people do not already know, but are putting it into a framework that helps them to understand better their relationship with the various types of difference.

- Sectarianism breeds a type of binary logic, which suggests that if I cannot agree with you then I must reject you.
- Rejection means not simply to disagree but a whole range of actions on a scale- dismiss, ignore, be antagonistic towards, dehumanise, demonise or to attack.
- Sectarianism typically works through stages from being suspicious of, to magnifying and then rejecting difference. The liberal counter to such a process is to seek to cherish diversity.
- How do we prevent ourselves falling into rejection of the person or group, even while radically disagreeing with them?
- For Christians there is an added complication because we are called by Christ to love all people including our enemies.
- Only when we can be very honest with ourselves about where we are, in the process of dealing with difference that we find troubling, are we in a position to recognize the need to change our attitudes and approach.

### Dealing with difference in our own group

Learning to deal positively with diversity within single tradition groups can be almost more difficult than between groups. Two major elements are at work:

- Facing diversity opens up a process of questioning the 'certainties' that many people thought they had about their own tradition- what is the truth?
- The unity of the group is one of the chief sources of security for members in a situation of threat. It is easier to deal with the 'other' side that you expect to be different, than to face family, neighbours, friends and people with whom you have worked or worshipped for years.





## A MODEL FOR DEALING WITH DIFFERENCE

There are two keys in the process of helping people to deal with difference:

- To help them grasp that agreement and acceptance are not the same.
- To help them to identify other positive ways of relating such as toleration and empathy which stop short of acceptance.

Rejection:-

Contrary to popular perception rejection is not a state of no relationship. It is possible to agree with some of the attitudes or positions of those we reject within the framework of an overall destructive and oppositional relationship.

- Rejection expresses itself in patterns that can broadly be described as either 'ignoring' or as 'antagonism'.
- Rejection as Ignoring – In this mode we behave as if the other does not exist or impinge on our world.
- Rejection as antagonism – In its active form, this is most readily recognised in all forms of attack whether physical or verbal. In its passive form, it is expressed in a rigidity of view and a refusal to engage even when the other seeks or offers engagement.

Resignation:-

The mode in which we view the present state of difference leading to conflict and division as the way the world is. We believe that the present situation cannot be changed, so trying is a waste of energy, and we must learn to live with it.

- It leads easily to a justification for adopting benign apartheid as a means of resolving the situation.
- Resignation is a downward spiral that tends to accentuate the need for unity and conformity within our own group.
- It is a very difficult position out of which to break because it saps the creative energy and hope needed for envisaging another way forward.



## Dealing with Difference Process

### Toleration

- Toleration is the state in which a person or group can just about stomach the other's view as a possible way of looking at the world. It is a barely positive concept, and has nothing to do with the positive virtue of being a tolerant person.

### Empathy

- Empathy is the ability to put ourselves into the shoes of another, to see the world from their standpoint, to understand their feelings and the logic of their way of being or acting, and to be able to communicate that understanding to them.
- For most of us this is an uncomfortable place to be especially when we are trying to empathise with people who have hurt or offended us.
- It is only when we can empathise with someone that we can really challenge him or her in a positive and constructive rather than destructive way.

### Acceptance

- Acceptance is a positive relationship between individuals or groups in that they can acknowledge differences and disagreements, even serious divergences, yet sustain them within a continuing state of mutual respect and esteem.
- The development of acceptance demands ongoing relationship, generosity of interpretation and a deepening empathy for the other.
- It requires a willingness to accept the other's story of 'how things are' as genuine and coherent within itself, even when it differs substantially from our version of 'how things are'.

### Agreement

- Agreement is common understanding of and assent to a particular approach or approaches to a specific issue or issues.

### Identification

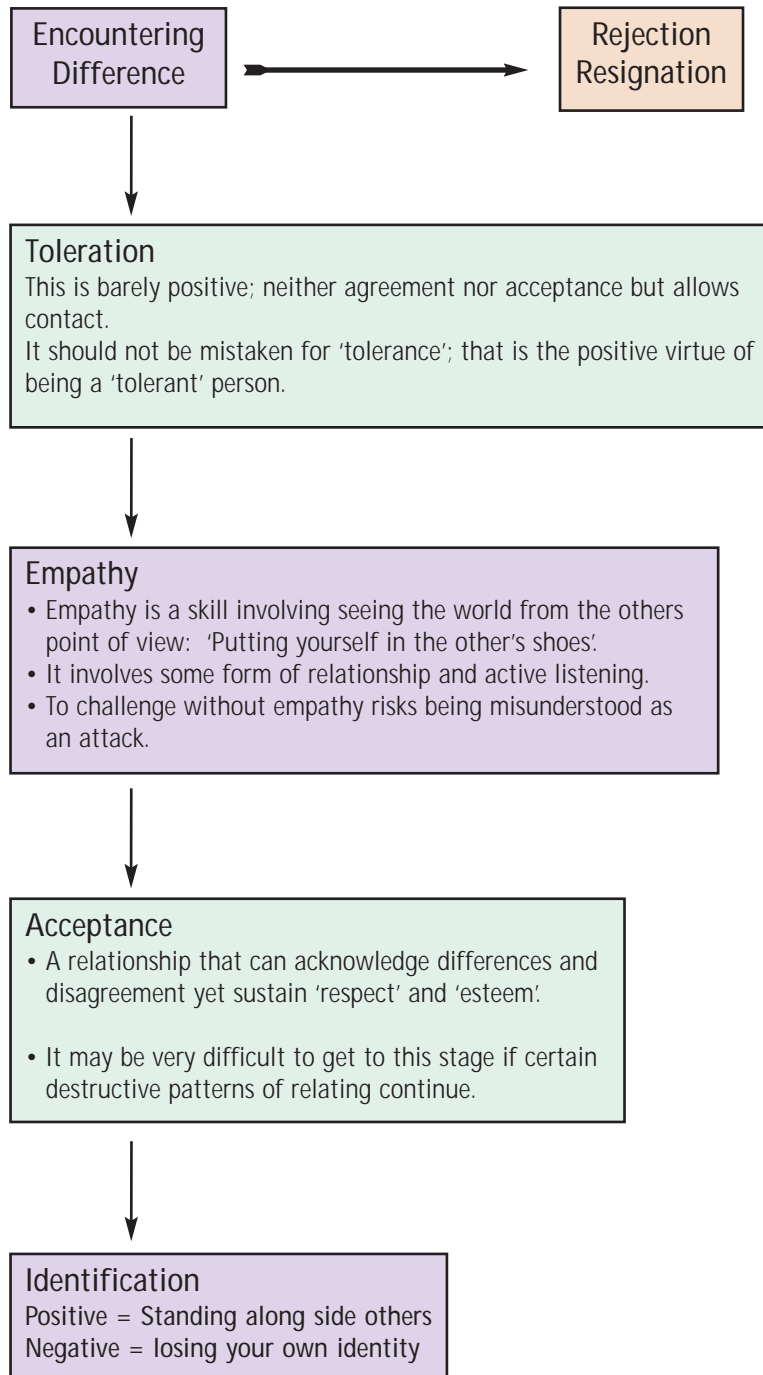
- The level of identification has two poles one of which is positive ie 'standing alongside the other'. Standing alongside the other can help people to become more themselves and more true to their tradition, not less.
- The negative pole is 'losing one's own identity'. The twin tendencies to demonise one's own tradition and to unrealistically glorify the other tradition is the sectarian dynamic applied in reverse.

### Conclusion

The purpose and importance of this model is to debunk the lie that to accept is to agree and that to disagree is to reject.



## Dealing with Difference Process Model



Progress away from resignation and rejection requires:

- Some commitment to better relationships.
- Discussion on appropriate ways of relating to each other.
- Neither minimizing nor magnifying differences. If real differences exist then they need not be acknowledged and their potential destructive outcomes need to be 'mitigated'.

Conditions that encourage people to move out of rejection and resignation modes:-

- Changes such as the Belfast Agreement or changes in personal circumstances.
- Recognising negative consequences.
- Seeing positive gain.
- Support that minimises the risks involved in encountering the other.



## Understanding Reconciliation

Positive needs for belonging, identity and the free expression of difference are basic to our humanness; that we distort these things by expressing them negatively over and against the 'other' is the problem.

Difference is not always bad. How we deal with difference is important; whether or not we are prepared to take responsibility for the consequences of our actions/ lack of action, beliefs and attitudes, is important.

The point of positively dealing with difference is so that we can move towards reconciliation. One way to describe reconciliation, in Christian terms, is as the processes and structures necessary to bring all the elements of the cosmos into positive and life-giving relationship with God and with one another.

Some approaches to sectarianism:

- Focusing too exclusively on immediate practical manifestations at the expense of addressing the more long-term question of tackling its roots.
- Demonising those seen to be acting in an obviously sectarian manner allowing the majority to pretend they are not implicated.
- The non-sectarian approach – 'sectarian free zones'. Simply by being 'inclusive', and putting a non-sectarian policy in place, ignores the pervasiveness of sectarianism as a system and the need to challenge those of us who think we are non-sectarian, to name and face our responsibility for contributing to the system.



Calling people BIGOTS is just another negative label in a society full of them. A better way of responding could be to say that 'I think the person is supporting sectarianism by...'

The path of moving beyond sectarianism must be one of transforming or redeeming not smashing.





## THE LEVEL

The Level might in any given situation tell us things like:

- Where we may shop and where we ought to shop
- What we can talk about with our own
- What we may talk about with others
- What it means to join a different church
- Which sports are mixed and which are separate
- Where we should live
- To whom we may sell land

- The Level represents a certain community equilibrium. It sets limits people rarely talk about and that are not consciously taught, but that everybody knows and most people usually accept and observe.
- The Level will include some understanding of what are the costs or penalties incurred by violating it.
- The Level sets the point one does not go beyond in sectarian terms, and also sets limits beneath which we should not fall (what destructive patterns of relating are acceptable and unacceptable). When tainted by sectarianism the Level stifles growth, nurtures sectarianism and persuades us that a low level is a tolerable level, maybe even the best we can achieve or the best we ought to desire. The Level needs to be exposed, named, identified and understood.
- The Level can resist efforts to lower it as well as to raise it. More established folk in a town sometimes talk regretfully about new people moving in who will not understand or live by the local level.
- The Level is a local phenomenon. Some features are characteristic almost anywhere, e.g. few Catholics join the RUC, few Protestants join the GAA. However different towns have different levels e.g. in some locations Catholic and Protestant children hardly play together at all, whereas in other settings they do.
- Many of the local variations in the Level seem to have no rationale beyond arbitrary custom. The local nature of the Level is further indicated by the way it resists outsiders and outside pressures.
- The Level depends on stable communities that intuitively know the limits and boundaries.
- The Level hinders increased contact and cooperation.

The Level is brittle and does not always cope with all the pressures put upon it.



## ANCESTRAL VOICES

*"And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far  
Ancestral voices prophesying war!"*

*'Kubla Kahn' - Samuel Taylor Coleridge*

The ancestral voices of which Coleridge speaks are not only prophesy war, they exult in conflict and call their heirs to sacrifice for the ancestral cause. Ancestral voices are those memories, symbols, beliefs, actions etc. from our past that affect how we experience our world now. They are often so well integrated into our present identities and cultures that we may not be aware of them.

Such voices sound most powerfully in times of crisis. This has been one of the dynamics of confrontation at Drumcree especially in 1996 when ancestral voices got a hearing that may have surprised both others and themselves.

People who want to resist the ancestral voices do so in several ways:

- Some flee to the opposite pole and then ignore or oppose the ancestral voices, rendering themselves an object of suspicion and contempt, a Lundy.
- Some voices finally only disappear with the extinction of the community.
- They can also be countered, contained, diminished, and finally left all but powerless. What is required is to re-tune our ears to alternative voices. What is far more constructive is for a community to learn to hear its own ancestral voices anew. Other ancestral voices emanating from the very same source, offer healthier alternatives, sometimes an antidote to their poisonous counterparts.

Constructive ancestral voices can silence destructive ones.

We see it most strikingly in Sinn Fein and ECONI (Evangelical Contribution on Northern Ireland), groups we mean to equate only in terms of the structure of change in which they are currently engaged.

The ancestral voices of Republicans call their heirs to fight until the last body drops for an all-Ireland republic. Republicans now accept that a united Ireland can only come about by consent not by violence. This means that a united Ireland may never come into being, and if it does no one can say when. Sinn Fein, in moving from physical force to constitutional politics, has probably brought with it a higher percentage of Republicans than in any parallel situation in Irish history.

The ancestral voices that challenge ECONI are both hard and soft. The hard one upholds a virulent anti-Catholicism; the more elusive voice calls evangelicals to stay away from the concerns of the world and say little about them, leading lives individually and collectively of little public impact. ECONI has confronted these voices, and its significance is that it is challenging the sectarianism of conservative Protestantism, while remaining evangelical and by employing evangelical logic. They are challenging the bigoted ancestral voices by calling forth the best of the ancestral voices.



## MITIGATION

In any conflict situation a capacity to compromise is a vital skill. People give up things they desire and value as the necessary cost of peace. In the absence of some ability to compromise, conflict is all but inevitable and likely to be destructive.

Some ideas and commitments may be effectively non-negotiable, beyond the reach of compromise. Abandoning these beliefs is too high a price for peace because it is at the cost of our integrity, identity and allegiance. Mitigation is the scheme we want to propose for dealing constructively with situations where conflicting non-negotiables lead to sectarianism and yet cannot be compromised.

By mitigation we mean the capacity to lessen or eliminate possible negative outcomes of a belief, commitment or action. Negotiation works by neglecting, rejecting, changing or working around a problematic belief or practice, while mitigation maintains the belief or practice in question, but seeks to nullify destructive consequences. What cannot be negotiated can sometimes be mitigated.

- Mitigation is a mix of skills, habits, and mindset that is accessible to everyone.
- Mitigation is both a tool for making truth claims in a constructive way and a standard of judgment for assessing the integrity of truth claims made by others.
- A defining feature of mitigation is that it seeks to lessen destructive consequences arising from within a tradition by appealing to resources from that same tradition. By contrast, negotiation may use resources from within the tradition, but it will often apply some principle of judgment borrowed from an external source.

### Examples

**The Jewish people and the death of Jesus.** A mitigating reading of the text 'his blood be on us and our children' (Matt. 27.25) might work in at least two ways. One reads the text as specific and historical: this is a statement about what a particular mob did on a particular day and, despite their words, they have no power to call down wrath on future generations. Another mitigating strategy would interpret the text as general and universal: readers should not assign blame to a particular group, but recognise that the mob in question, those religious leaders, even that Roman ruler, could have been us. This is not a story about a particular group of Jews, it is a story about us all- a story about universal human failure and responsibility.

**Anti-Catholicism** One of the mitigating resources available within conservative Protestantism is a distinction between religious separation and social separation. This distinction allows at least neighbourly relations and potential cooperation in various enterprises without a religious element. Acting on their freedom to relate to, and work with Catholics outside the explicitly religious sphere has involved evangelicals in some important cross-community initiatives with Catholics.

Read by any Christian with a mitigating spirit, the Bible, and especially the teaching and example of Jesus, is revealed as a rich source of mitigating principles. Loving enemies is about behaviour as much as attitude. Forgiveness is always a form of love and practiced in hard cases it is especially the love of enemies. Forgiving enemies has been an important form of mitigation in Northern Ireland.





## BI-FOCAL VISION

Bi-Focal vision is a tool for helping us to move beyond sectarianism, with its over-simplified yes/no, /black/white, either/or habits of thought.

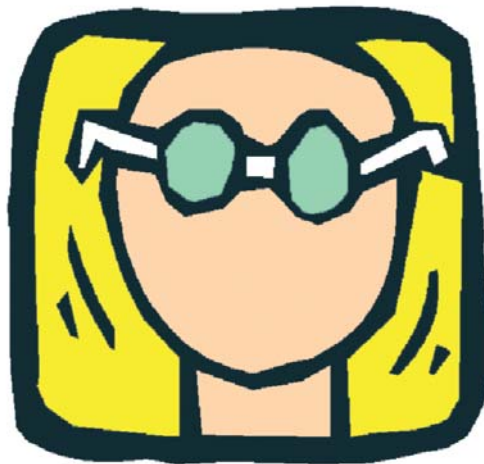
Some opponents of sectarianism try to respond to it by simple contradiction: whatever sectarianism does, they will do the opposite. But the opposite of an over-simplification is often an over-simplification itself.

Challenging sectarianism requires not contradiction but 'bifocal vision', the practice of seeing two things at the same time.

Bifocal vision requires not so much brain-power as a new framework of thinking. Intelligence never protected anyone from accepting the sectarian framework, they just thought within it and applied it in a more sophisticated way.

Anyone can adopt the framework of bifocal vision. It is having the capacity to keep several things in focus at once, what James Joyce called having two thinks at the same time.

The table gives examples of how it might work





## Bifocal Vision

| SECTARIANISM   | BIFOCAL VISION  |
|--|---|
| sectarianism is out there, it is someone else's responsibility                 | sectarianism is out there<br>sectarianism is our responsibility   |
| sectarianism is a matter of intentions   | sectarianism is a matter of intentions<br>sectarianism is a matter of consequences  |
| diversity is a threat to be rejected   | diversity is potentially enriching<br>we have a range of strategies for dealing constructively with expressions of diversity that we cannot accept as enriching |
| difference cuts all the way down—we are 'opposite religions', we share nothing | difference is real<br>there are always shared qualities beneath difference  |
| maximise difference  | difference is real<br>sharing is real   |
| minimise difference  | sharing is real<br>difference is real   |
| exclusion  | inclusion<br>recognition that every new inclusion creates the possibility of a new exclusion  |
| false either/or choices  | both/and reasoning<br>either/or reasoning   |
| our enemy is a demon   | we have enemies<br>our enemy is a human being, made in the image of God   |
| truth claims   | truth claims are good and necessary<br>some truth claims are dangerous and must be mitigated  |



## Redeeming Identity and Belonging

### Introduction

To produce an adequate theological investigation of sectarianism would require several volumes. Joe and Cecelia's approach to sectarianism is based on the belief that it involves a distortion of human needs for belonging and identity. Since a Christian's primary belonging and identity is expressed through membership of a Church or faith community, they have concentrated their theological reflections on what it means to be church in a society riven by religious and political antagonism. They begin with a reflection on what it means to be church in general and then they look at how the churches and faith communities in Northern Ireland have lived up to their calling to be 'Church.'

### What it means to be Church

There are four traditional marks of the church, it is: one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. It is **one** because the one God, who is creator and redeemer, calls the Church into being. It is **holy** because God has sanctified it through the Holy Spirit. It is **catholic** in the sense that it is called to bring the Word of God to the whole world. It is **apostolic** in that it bears witness to Jesus and has a Christ-centred mission to all people.

According to a recent study by the World Council of Churches (WCC) the nature of church is koinonia or communion. In other words, the Christian church as a whole, and each particular church or faith community in particular, is called to live deep, authentic, just and loving relationships both within their own group and with those who are not members. This understanding of Church as communion can be traced back through history to the apostle Paul.

The mission of the Church is to bring all things together under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. (Eph 1:9-10) It is, therefore, a mission of reconciliation, understood as a movement to bring all things into life-giving relationship with God and with one another. Reconciliation involves the whole of the created world and not just human beings.

The model of 'Church' that they develop, with its vision of the nature of Church as 'communion' (koinonia) and its mission as 'reconciliation,' is one in which relationship is fundamental: relationship to self, relationship to God, relationship to others within the faith community and to those outside it. In the service of those relationships, the call to Christian discipleship, as individuals and as Church, is radical in terms of the attitudes of openness, and inclusivity that it demands and the boundary crossing that it entails. At the same time, this inclusivity and boundary crossing are not indiscriminate; they are to be exercised with discernment based on criteria drawn from the ministry of reconciliation of Jesus Christ whose mission the Church shares. Central to these criteria is the truth that in the life and death of Jesus, God has given priority to grace over justice, and this, therefore, must be a primary stance for all Christian faith communities.

### Distorted Identity and Distorted Belonging

In the course of the research they have identified a number of characteristics to do with the identity and belonging of faith communities in Northern Ireland that have become distorted into a pattern of relationship negatively 'over against' others that is recognisable as sectarian or tending





towards sectarianism. Of the possible candidates for inclusion in this section, they focus on just three: religious-national nature of churches, separation, and superiority and self-righteousness.

## The Religious National Nature of Churches

Churches have carried well and willingly a heavy pastoral burden during the Troubles and have acted largely as a restraining influence on the violence. The late Frank Wright, a political scientist, observed that religious communities in Northern Ireland are also national communities. Cecelia and Joe argue that churches have engaged in idolatrous shifts of loyalty by allowing loyalty to nation or to nationalism to subvert their being and mission as Church. Churches have developed a concept of successful ministry, which entails working for their own, with their own, on behalf of their own in order to build up their own; this behaviour is counter to an understanding of church as communion and its reconciling mission. They name this as religious-political tribalism and argue that sometimes ministers have become nothing more than chaplains to the tribes. Moreover, their research has shown that many ministers are not well equipped at initial or ongoing formation to deal with ministry in a society riven by antagonised religious and political division. Some ministers are also hampered by despairing resignation about the situation, by fear of attack from their own if they reach out to the other community, or by 'overload' of work that diminishes time and energy for cross tradition activities. A few ministers preach and act as if their faith community was co-terminous with their national community and as if God blesses and ordains their social and political philosophy. Joe and Cecelia criticise the churches for accepting the oppositional political system instead of using the concepts of communion and reconciliation to critique it and to move towards a more co-operative model.

## Separation

They argue that churches and faith communities have allowed the healthy boundary maintenance of distinct groups to develop into divisive separation that can fuel antagonised division. Four dynamics of divisive separation are identified. Firstly fear, fear of contamination by those who are religiously other, fear of being absorbed by the other or fear for physical safety. In this dynamic people are treating others as lepers to be avoided or allowing the vulnerable to be persecuted or allowing the stranger to be driven from their midst. These actions directly contradict Jesus' relationship with lepers, Peter's insistence that God shows no partiality and the biblical injunction to welcome the stranger. Secondly self-absorption, people find life within their community so satisfying that they feel no need to reach out to any group beyond their boundary, especially if it might be uncomfortable to relate with those groups. Communion only with their own group contradicts the biblical imperative to cross boundaries that is evident for example in the story of the Good Samaritan. Self-absorbed inertia, even for reason of doing other good works, is not an option for churches living in a society riven by religious-political division, if those churches are to be true to their calling. Thirdly disdain, people choose to keep themselves separate from a particular person, group or organisation because they dislike, disagree with, scorn or despise what they do, or say or stand for. They stop listening to what the other has to say and so cut themselves off from any reasonable opportunity to have their myths about the other debunked. The gospel challenges this perspective by repeatedly showing the need for openness, conversation and a willingness to be changed by the other. Jesus neither dismisses nor ignores people, even those who oppose him. Fourthly theological convictions, these can be divided into Roman Catholic and Protestant convictions. The Roman Catholic church's self-understanding that the unique church of Jesus Christ subsists in it, leads to a sense of self sufficiency in that church.





Self-sufficiency that is not modified by institutional commitment to reach out to the other tradition can undermine work for peace and reconciliation and can convey a sense of disdain for expressions of Protestant Christianity. Among Presbyterian, Methodist and Church of Ireland Churches there is an acceptance that the Roman Catholic Church is a Christian church even if they are uneasy with some Catholic practices that they regard as unbiblical, e.g. the place given to Tradition, the role of the Virgin Mary, the Pope etc. These churches maintain in force historical documents that contain statements, which are offensive about Roman Catholicism. Some have tried to minimise the hurtfulness of the statements but have not moved to supersede them. The inability to supersede them puts in question their commitment to positive relationship with the Roman Catholic Church and leaves in their tradition material that gives power and weight to elements that are Anti-Catholic. Among Evangelicals there are a range of convictions, which can lead to separation. Some see Roman Catholicism as irredeemably in error and want to maintain absolute purity and scrupulous separation. Others while regarding the Roman Catholic Church as in error are prepared to work with Catholics in areas that touch civic life. Some in this latter group also accept that some individual Catholics live evidently holy and Christian lives.



### Superiority and Self Righteousness

Enshrined, often unconsciously but sometimes consciously, in 'idolatrous shifts of loyalty', physical intimidation, self-absorption, disdain and theological convictions are collective understandings that one group, which is defining itself over against the other group in terms of culture or power or religious belief, is superior. In religious circles this sense of superiority can also overflow into self-righteousness. Such superiority and self righteousness is challenged by Paul's emphasis on one new humanity coming into being out of the Jewish and Gentile communities, his insistence that justification is by grace through faith, and his fundamental insight that Christianity does not nullify cultural identity but subordinates it to identity in Christ.

### Use and abuse of Scripture

This is a large and complex topic, to which they did not attempt to do justice, but gave a few illustrations of what they consider to be destructive uses of scripture that are likely to encourage or give apparent legitimacy to dynamics of sectarianism. They focussed on three: uses of Old Testament scripture which ignore the fulfilment of the old covenant by the new covenant in Christ; the use of scripture to support or give authority to political ideologies; and applying scripture out of context. A selective use of scripture is always problematic, for example, religious separatists use Old Testament injunctions such as "come ye out from among them," injunctions that were intended to separate believers from sinners, as if the New Covenant evidenced in Jesus' boundary breaking ministry to sinners had not happened. Using scripture to give authority to political ideologies mixes religion and nationalism in a way that is idolatrous, e.g., the text of Deuteronomy 7:2 on a mural alongside the motto 'For God and Ulster'. Applying evocative passages of scripture out of context can simply be a means to demonise the other, e.g. in describing the Roman Catholic Pope as 'antichrist'.







## Transforming Identity and Belonging

Only when churches recognise and own their distorted expressions of identity and belonging will they be able to begin to transform them. Such transformation is in keeping with the promise made by God in Christ to make a new creation (2 Cor 5:17-18). The task for churches and faith communities is threefold. Firstly, it means moving from a predominant hermeneutic of suspicion of others towards a hermeneutic of suspicion of their own positions and motivations. It is a movement away from beginning by blaming others to first, radically, and perhaps unilaterally, taking responsibility for their own implication in sectarianism. The key theological theme of this task is repentance. Some of the questions facing churches and faith communities are:



- in what way have we been engaged in "idolatrous shifts of loyalty?"
- in what way have we contributed to and mirrored oppositional relationships in our own communities and with others?
- in what ways have we separated ourselves from others through: not welcoming the stranger; self-absorption; disdain; or our sincerely held theological convictions?
- in what way have we been tempted into self-righteousness and assumptions about superiority?
- in what way have our models of successful ministry failed to adequately address the antagonised religious and political divide in society?
- in what ways have we used or abused scripture or tolerated or condoned its abuse?

Secondly, it means moving from a predominant hermeneutic of retrieval of all that makes them different from and superior to others towards a hermeneutic of retrieval of identity in Christ and of the boundary breaking inclusiveness lived by Jesus Christ. It is a movement away from constructing identities negatively over against others to developing identities in the kind of positive relationship that respects and leaves space for difference, without necessarily implying agreement. The key theological theme of this task is forgiveness. Some of the questions facing the churches and faith communities are:

- how can we help one another to face the cost of forgiveness and the forbearance of vengeance?
- how can we help one another to recognise that we are all both victims and perpetrators in this conflict?
- who do we need to forgive, and what do we need to make that possible?
- from whom do we need to seek forgiveness and what do we need to make that possible?
- what are the resources within our tradition that speak a theology of grace and a theology of forgiveness?
- what kind of structures and processes might we put in place, within our tradition and across traditions to help one another to let out the hurts, and to ritualise remembering, forbearance and forgiveness?
- how might we change our patterns of worship so that they more adequately convey and reflect the message of the priority of grace and of self-emptying forgiveness?



Thirdly, it means moving from a predominant hermeneutic of negative engagement with others towards a hermeneutic of positive engagement with those who are different, or who are antagonistic. It is a movement away from the type of separation that augments ignorance, fear and division to the type of engagement that brings the wisdom and the challenge of Christian discipleship to bear on differences within and between traditions. The key theological theme of this task is kenosis, self-emptying. Some of the questions facing the churches and faith communities are:

- what among our truth claims or in our way of living our confessional identity is not essential and might be modified or let go?
- which of our truth claims and ways of living our confessional identity are not negotiable? Are these expressed arrogantly or humbly? Can they be re-expressed?
- what strategies of mitigation could we put in place to ameliorate the effect of what is not negotiable?
- what are our resources and strategies for dealing with difference within our own tradition?
- what models of, or lessons about, relationship have we as churches and faith communities to offer to society? How best might these be expressed?

## CONCLUSION

It is clear that Churches and faith communities in Northern Ireland have developed distorted expressions of both identity and belonging, which contribute to and are exacerbated by sectarianism. In no small part, churches mirror the oppositional styles of relationship characteristic of sectarianism. The process of redeeming these distorted expressions is a demanding one. It entails a re-orientating or retrieval of parts of the Christian tradition and resources, the living of which have become overlaid by negative elements. It will be a radical renewal of what it means to be 'Church' called to live communion, koinonia, and to exercise a ministry of reconciliation.



The following is a short selection of useful tips for working with groups. You may wish to seek more detailed material on group work practice.



## Preparing for the Group

There are a number of elements to consider when preparing to facilitate a group:

- Time:** How long will the group have and on what dates?
- Group:** What are the likely characteristics of the group members? E.g. age, experience, likely expectations, numbers, any contracts or agreements already in place, any other significant issues that may affect the experience.
- Purpose:** What do you expect, and what do all the other 'stake holders' expect? E.g. is there a specific task to complete or issue to explore?
- Venue:** What sort of space will you have?
- Methods:** Do the organizers/participants have any particular ways of working in mind? E.g. small groups, cross-community sharing, creative methods, lecture format, etc.

Make sure the group knows what they are 'in for' and that they agree with this.





## The Facilitator's Role

The following are some of the basic roles of the facilitator:

- Objectives:** Making sure that the time the group has together will be planned in such a way as to meet the needs and purpose of the group. (you may wish to include the group in developing the plan).
- The Physical Environment:** This involves the seating + equipment arrangements, heating, creating a physical atmosphere (lighting, props etc.). The participants should be able to hear and see what is happening and be as comfortable as possible.
- 'Gathering' the group:** Welcomes, introductions, warm-ups, making sure people know what the purpose and the plan are.
- Creating a 'Safe Environment':** Helping to establish ground rules/ appropriate ways of relating, intervening if people feel under pressure or if the experience goes beyond that which the group feel comfortable with, intervening if people disclose too much etc.



## Creating a 'safe environment'

This involves the development of an atmosphere of comfort, trust and safety within the group in order to promote participation and a positive experience. The way in which this is achieved can depend on the type of group.

One method to start the process is to ask people to consider their **Hopes and Fears** for the group experience:

- People can write their hopes and fears down on different pieces of paper. Individuals should be assured that they can be as honest as they wish (especially with their fears) as they do not have to sign their names on the pieces of paper.
- Once the pieces are collected they are read out. They then **belong to the whole group**.
- Look at hopes, affirm them, ask if they are realistic, how can we achieve them?
- Look at the fears, affirm them, ask how we can help people feel more supported in these areas .

Another method for creating a 'safe environment' is to assist the group in developing agreed **'Ground Rules'**. Sometimes this is called 'contracting'. Although the ground rules need not take the form of a written 'contract' or agreement (this may be useful for more 'challenging' groups) it is a good idea to discuss with the group what ways of relating to each other will be appropriate.





# Group Work Tips



The following are some useful ground rules to introduce:

(To be discussed, negotiated etc. by everyone)

- Try to allow whoever is speaking to finish before reacting
- Facilitator- do not ask the group to do anything you would not do. It may be useful to lead the way sometimes.
- People should not feel pressured to share and should take responsibility for what they do or do not share.
- If someone does not want something in particular repeated outside the group then others should respect this. It is a good rule that names and places should not be referred to when recalling what you learned in the group even if people don't mind their story being repeated.
- Try to avoid talking on behalf of others i.e. speak personally, not for any one else e.g. "I believe that", "In my experience...", "I feel angry.." as opposed to "You make me angry...", "They believe that..." etc.



Other Elements that can help create the right environment

Warm-ups/ ice-breakers  
Getting to know each other  
Team work



Task and Process

Task = A specific outcome, activity, learning point etc. you want to achieve.  
Process = The way in which people relate to each other and experience the group along the way.

The Process can involve such things as:

- Developing a sense of trust and safety
- Bonding i.e. people relate to each other through sharing, laughing, working together.
- Excitement and 'energy'
- Conflict
- Beginnings
- Endings
- Change
- The breaking of ground rules
- Apathy
- Ignoring others
- Feelings.



There are both positive and destructive dynamics. It is important to recognize when they are present and/or when they are absent. When you can recognize the process you can begin to address the destructive aspects and develop the positives.

Ask yourself 'What processes can I observe right now?'



## Controversy/ Constructive Conflict

As a general rule do not introduce controversy without some level of bonding and safety. Don't be afraid to cut it off if you sense that it is not right or could be damaging but equally don't be afraid to introduce it if you think people are ready.

## Being Aware of Yourself

Try to be aware of how you are feeling and why. Your own internal processes can affect yours and the group's experience.

Be aware when things are going beyond your ability to deal with them, change tack or ask for help.

Be aware of what really annoys you and with what you are having difficulties at the moment.

You may decide to 'leave' your own problems outside the group and pick them up when you have the space to deal with them. Don't bring them to the group.

## Warming Up

'Warming up' is one way of creating the right atmosphere for the learning experience. It refers to the techniques used to start people talking or interacting, a kind of mental and emotional 'stretching/warm-up'. They are usually carried out at the start of a learning session, after a break, when the group's energy has dropped.

The following are a few 'warm-up' examples, you may have your own favourites.

### About My Name

Each person introduces themselves and gives one piece of information about their name (e.g. where it came from, what it means etc.)

This gets people sharing personally but to a level that they can control.

**Learning Points:** We are diverse and each of us brings our own identity to this experience.

### What do you see?

This requires the use of images that can be seen in more than one way (optical illusions) such as the famous 'Old Lady and Young Girl'. Ask people to find the two images and to help each other.

**Learning Points:** People may see things in different ways but we can help each other discover new things.

### Cartoons and Pictures

Cartoons and pictures can add a little humour to the situation. Laughing can put people at ease. They can also be used to introduce a particular theme.

A catalogue of issue based images can be accessed through:

INNATE, 16 Ravensdene Park, Belfast, BT6 0DA, Phone/fax 028 90647106

Look out in bookshops for good cartoon books, perhaps try to draw your own.

The Inter-net can be used to access a huge variety of images.





## What I do

This simply entails each person sharing with the group one thing they have done today (useful for evening meetings), or some specified time before this particular group experience.

It can show the diversity of the group as well as help people to 'leave behind' their daily concerns and focus on the group time. People can share to whatever level with which they feel comfortable. It is important to affirm what people have shared, the diversity etc. then focus people on the time together.

## My Favourite...

Ask people to share their favourite food, holiday destination, past time etc.



## Giving Input

Throughout the activity sections in this resource, information is included that may be given to the group as an introduction to the topic.

The following points are worth keeping in mind when preparing to deliver input

- Familiarise yourself with the information and have a plan for what you will and won't talk about and how it will be presented.
- Know your limits i.e. know what questions you can and can't answer, don't be afraid to say that you don't know something but you will try to find out.
- Try not to speak too long, keep it simple and clear, you don't need to get everything across in one go.
- Allow people to think about questions.
- Ask 'open ended' questions i.e. avoid questions like "Do you understand?" - a simple yes or no may be the result. Try asking "What would you like to discuss further?" or "Can you think of examples that you can share?"



## Using Small Groups

Small groups can be useful for a number of reasons:

- To facilitate sharing
- To achieve different tasks
- To help when what you are trying just isn't working in the whole group
- To provide breaks for the group and facilitator



- Be careful when separating in a cross-community setting that never is only one of any community in a group.
- Be careful to explain why you are separating into single identity groups as this could cause tension.
- Bring people back together (you may wish to use a warm up activity for this). Always check that the small groups know what they are doing and that the process is constructive.



## Taking Feedback from Small Groups

It may not always be appropriate or necessary to take feedback from the small groups but if you do it is important to remember the following:

- Give guidance on exactly what feedback you want the groups to provide (questions on a handout/on the flipchart etc.)
- How will it be provided e.g. verbally (reporter), written (feedback on emotional issues should not be written up).
- Feedback can be recorded on the flipchart (having someone else record can help the facilitator focus on the process. Only write up what people say, or ask their permission to alter their language)
- Feedback can sometimes take a long time; ask the groups to only add points not already covered by the previous groups. You may have to ask groups to only feedback on specific questions.
- If a 'reporter' is used make sure they know what they are doing and feel comfortable with their role. After their report ask the other members of the group if they want to add anything.



## Feelings Check

This may be similar to receiving feedback but the emphasis is on:

- Checking on how people are experiencing the process
- Checking if anybody has emotional issues related to the programme that need to be addressed
- Stimulating discussion about where people think they are now and where would they like to be.

This can be done at any time (e.g. as people start the programme, at the end.) The facilitator should not be trying to offer a therapy session but it may be appropriate to at least acknowledge and support the group if strong feelings surface.

Techniques:

At various points throughout the different exercises in this resource a 'feelings check' is suggested (you may think it necessary to do this at other times as well). The following are some ideas as to how this may be carried out:





# Group Work Tips



- If the individuals within a group feel comfortable with one another or the group has bonded easily you could ask outright how people are feeling, perhaps you are aware of something happening in the group, a 'temperature' change. You could ask if particular feelings are being experienced. Then allow people to discuss (this can cause people to feel vulnerable so offer them plenty of verbal support, thanks etc.)

- The use of clay can help people express their feelings in a 'safer' way. The clay can be shaped by each person in a circle to match his or her feelings and then passed silently to the next. At the end have a moments silence to 'uphold' these feelings.

- The 'Blob Tree' or 'Feeling Faces' can be used as a prompt for discussion about how people are feeling. (see diagrams). Simply ask people to identify where they would place themselves on the tree, what face they relate to and why.



## Closing and Evaluation

It is important to help people experience an ending to a programme so they can better begin the process of integrating what they have learned into their own lives. It may be as simple as saying thanks or asking everybody to share what they have gained from the experience or what they want to do next etc.

Exercises used for a feelings check can be adapted for this purpose.

It is also good to do something that encourages or affirms each other e.g. sharing presents or cards, a certificate presentation, photo collage of the time together etc. (if the group has bonded particularly well).



## Evaluation

This can be helpful to the facilitator in many ways:

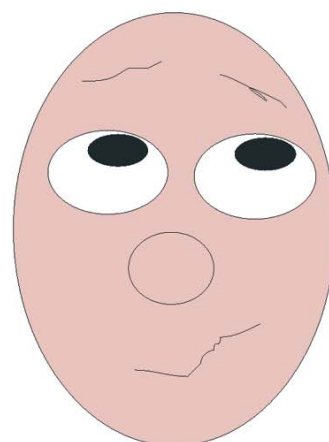
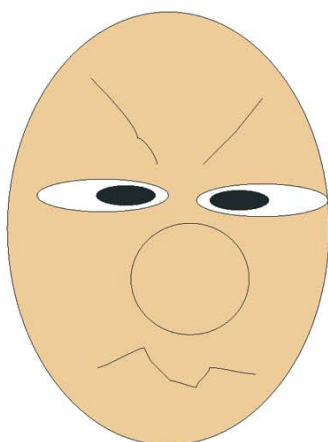
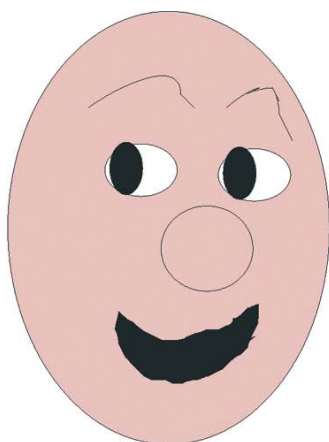
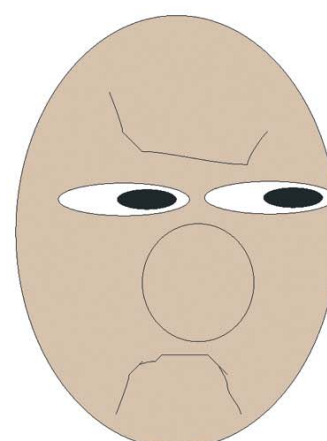
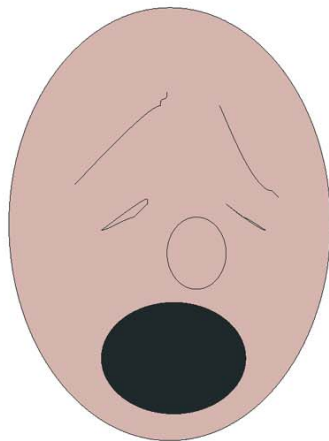
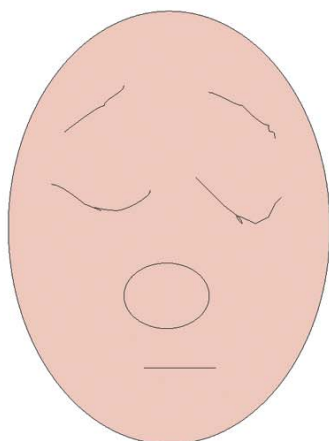
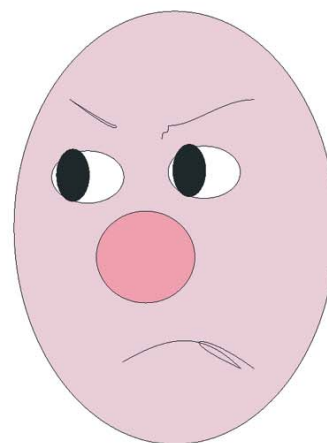
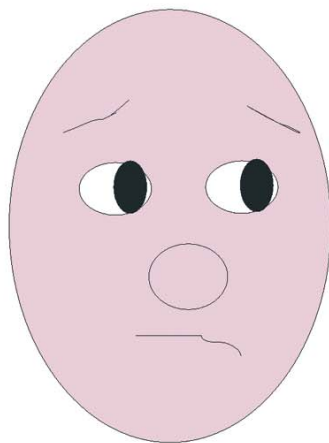
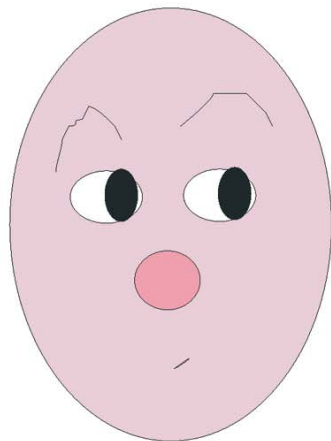
- It can help you find out what worked and what could be changed
- It can help prepare the next experience
- It can be used to assess the usefulness of the programme

The following are just two examples of possible frameworks for evaluation

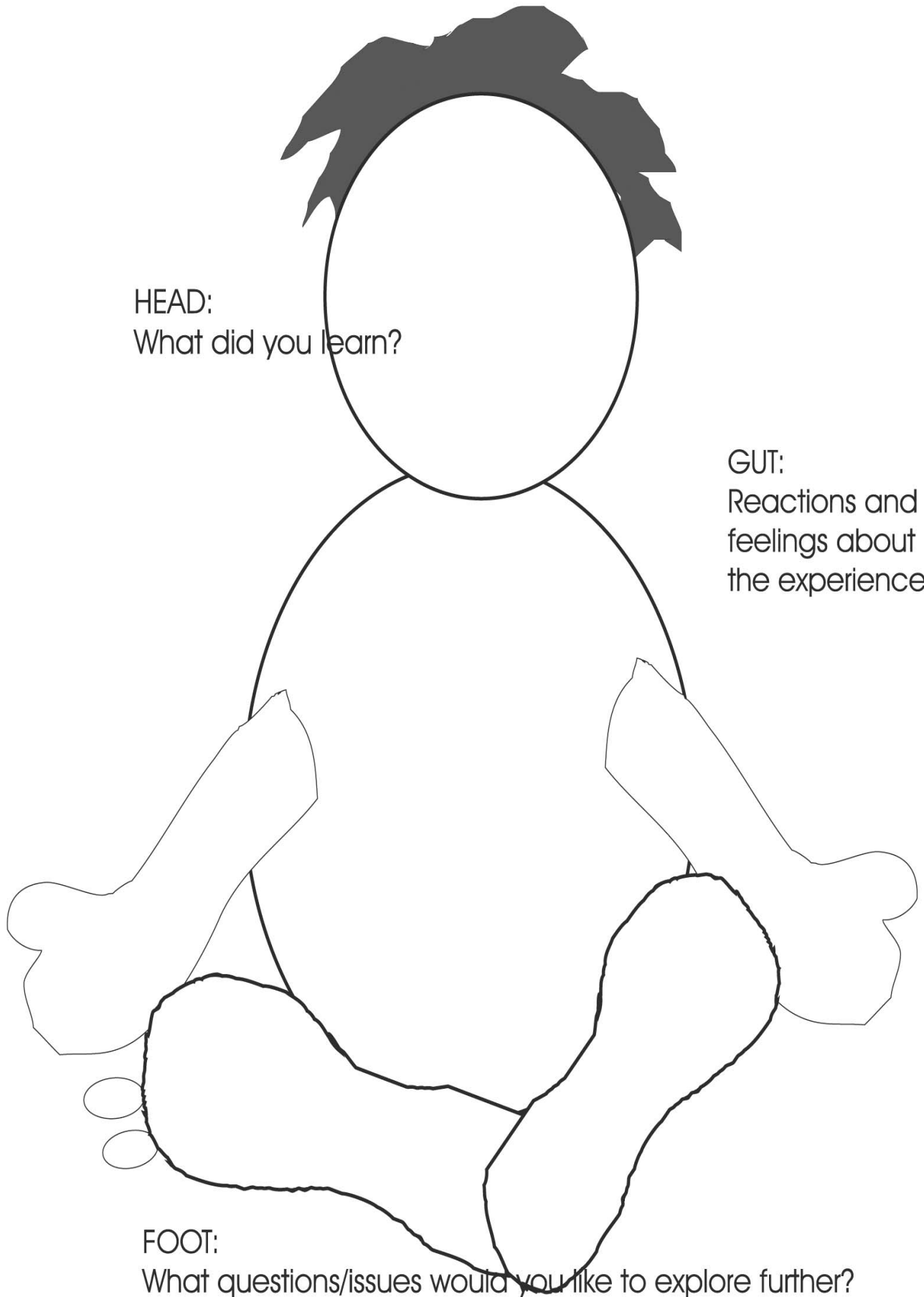




## Feeling Faces

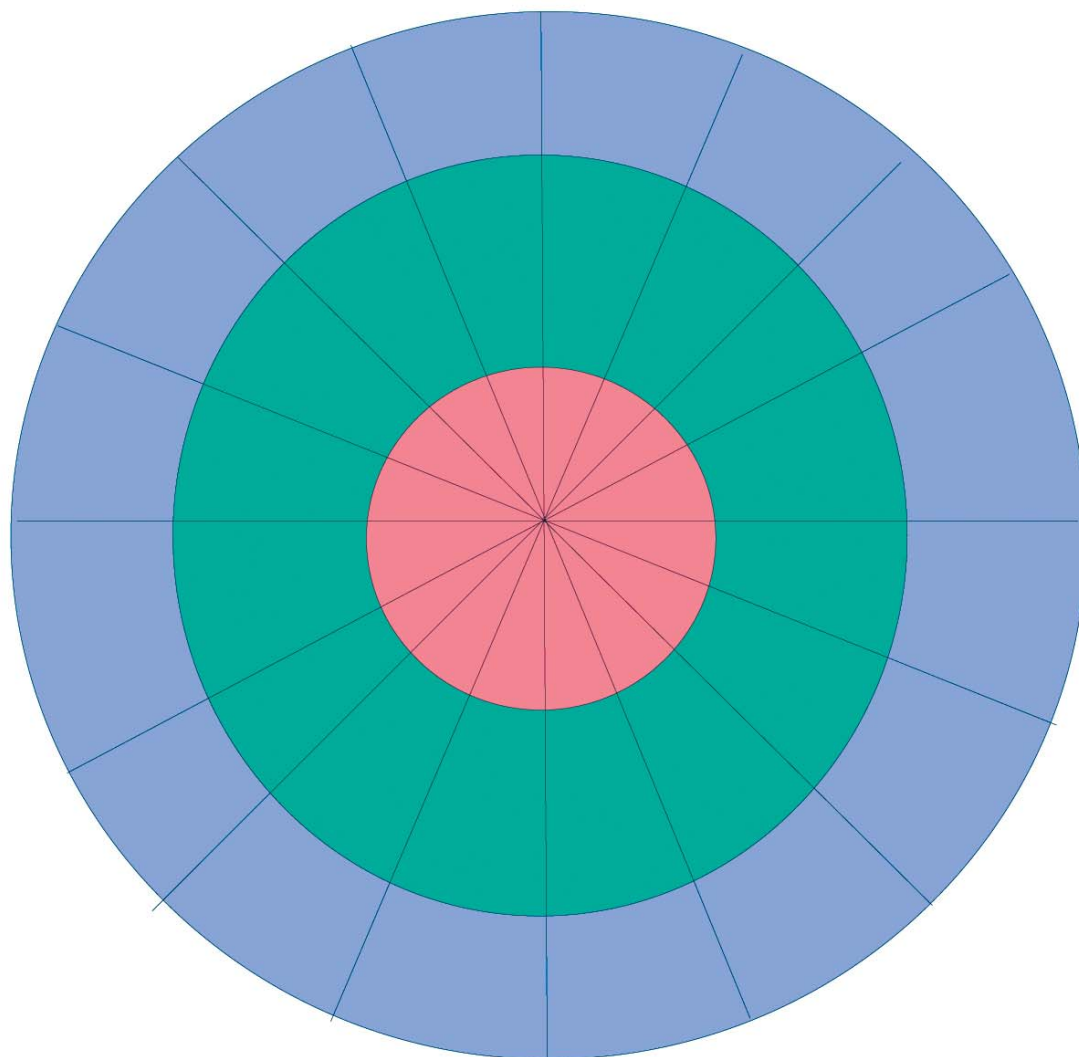


# Course Evaluation Sheet









## Dartboard Evaluation



Value of activity

-  Really good
-  OK
-  Not great

 Each wedge represents an activity







## INTRODUCTION

The roots of a tree are hidden and have three main functions:

- They absorb things necessary for a tree's sustenance and growth
- They anchor the tree
- They store the food
- In the same way it is important for us to have roots in order to:
  - absorb those aspects of our being which give us an identity
  - give us stability, belonging, and a place around which we have boundaries
  - give us our story of who we are



Much of this is absorbed, the 'good' and the 'bad', positive and negative alike, without our being aware of it, like the process of osmosis where the tree absorbs water and nutrients or pollutants from the soil. These roots are also interconnected and this is the hope - that no matter how different our churches, homes, families, and communities we are drawing from the same soil/earth.

### Aim of Roots Section

The following is an excerpt from the wider definition of sectarianism used in these resources: "Sectarianism is...

a system of attitudes, actions, beliefs and structures:

- at personal, communal and institutional levels
- which always involves religion and typically involves a negative mixing of religion and politics...

which arises as a distorted expression of positive human needs especially for belonging, identity and the free expression of difference..."



The suggested activities in this section are aimed to help us examine our own positive human needs i.e. identities/belonging/ free expression of difference.

This section is useful if a group is just beginning and people want to get to know each other better. The emphasis should be on listening to each other's experiences, acknowledging differences as well as similarities.



Developing an understanding of the complexity of our own identities can help us to view them in the light of understanding sectarianism.





## Suggested activities

### HAND PRINTS: OUR PERSONAL IDENTITIES (SHARING WITH OTHERS)

- Aim(s):**
- To begin to examine elements that influence our identity.
  - To promote conversation in groups and 'getting to know people'.
- Intro:**
- Like finger prints everybody has different hand prints and in this exercise people will share about their experience and things that are important to them that help make them the unique person they are.
  - The palm is the warmest place and is most protected
  - Hands can be used in many ways e.g. make a fist, welcome people, point the finger.



- Time:**
- Total: 30 min
  - 10 min for activity
  - 10 min discussion in groups
  - 10 min group feedback/support

**Groups:** This may work best with groups who wish to get to know each other a little better.

**Resources:** A4 paper (recycled or reused if possible), markers/pens

- Method:**
- Read the aims of the activity and the intro
  - Give an example of the exercise (on flipchart or as a handout) for people to follow
  - Each person gets a piece of paper and a marker/pen
  - Place hand on the paper and then trace around it
  - Fill in the handprint answering the following questions, to whatever depth you feel comfortable, by writing them on the hand in the appropriate area.

i.e Palm = What relationships and values do you consider as being very important to you?







Thumb = What activities do you do most often/regularly?

Fingers = What other things do you do?

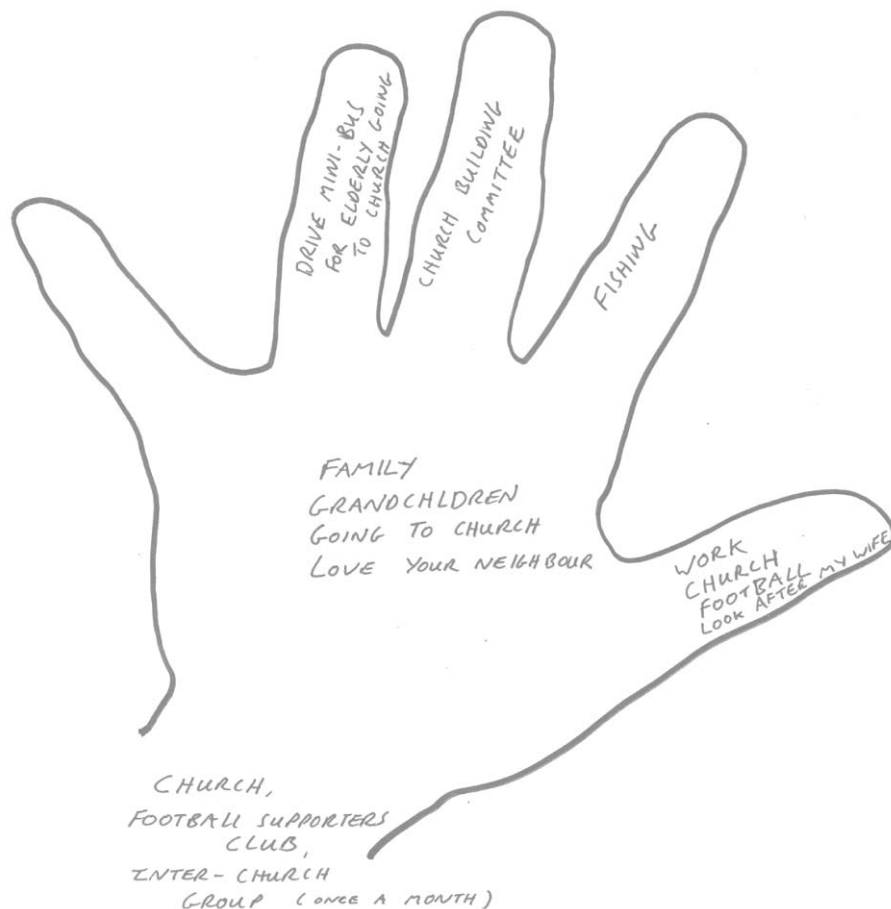
Wrist = What groups/organizations would you describe yourself as being part of?

- Spend time discussing each others hands in the small groups
- Report back as a large group and ask if anyone would like to share:
  - What sort of things did people learn about each other?
  - Are there things that people have in common?

Learning Points:

- We have both similarities and differences between us
- Many different elements influence our identity

Variations: A small group in which people feel comfortable with each other may like to try to guess whose hand belongs to whom.



## RIVERS

**Aim:** To facilitate the sharing of personal stories about our identities.

**Groups:** This can be carried out by groups that want to examine their shared identity e.g. 'the journey of our church' or by groups who want to about each others' 'stories'.

**Resources :** People willing to share their stories, paper, pens, coloured markers etc.

**Time:** Total: 40 min (longer if you want more time to draw and discuss)

- Drawings 15 min, Discussion – 15 min, Feedback - 10min

**Method:**

- Individuals draw a 'RIVER' with a main flow and different contributing rivers.
- The main flow represents your personal/spiritual life.
- The contributories represent significant events, relationships and groups that have made a contribution to your 'journey'.
- Along the banks you can represent places where you have lived or places of 'rest'
- These *rivers* can then be discussed in small groups (3 people, 5 minutes each).

**Feedback:**

- How important are our stories to us?
- Do you think that you have to agree with the content in order to listen to someone's stories?

**Learning Points:**

- Our lives are made up of a number of different influences.
- The differences between us are real but there are things we share.
- Stories can communicate a lot about our identity.





## SECTARIANISM IN IRISH HISTORY

In the beginning Sectarianism fed on 'Big Hate, Big Violence, Gross Injustice' e.g. The Elizabethan Wars in Ireland, The Plantation periods, the 1641 Rising, Cromwell, The Williamite Wars, The Penal laws etc. Now that it has been long established it no longer requires large amounts of violence. Just an occasional act will do, because the sectarian system disposes us to judge others by the worst actions of their community.

## HISTORY AND COMMUNAL MEMORY

Ways of approaching the past can be represented as a continuum with personal identity at one end, communal memory in the middle and formal academic history at the other end.

Personal identity ----- Communal memory----- Academic history

In Ireland, the three points on the continuum are more closely related than in most Western societies today. In fact, certain emotive events and issues can effectively collapse the continuum into a single point, so that a challenge to how a person interprets history, or to how his community understands it, is received as an attack on personal identity.

This collapse is also the collapse of the boundary between past and present. No topic is more likely to trigger the collapse of the boundary between past and present than sectarianism because its central themes are popularly understood as constants in Irish history; the same today as in the past.

These dynamics leave a tension between how historians understand history and how the past is remembered by communities. Communal memory corresponds with myth, neither of which should be disregarded. Their primary function is to embody in story form truths that help us understand who we are as a community, where we came from and where we stand in relationship to other groups. What matters then is less the literal factual truth and more the way a community understands the story, the meaning they take from it.

The more nearly one approaches the epicentre of conflict in Northern Ireland, the more likely one is to find these difficult dynamics concerning history and the boundary between past and present. A change in a view of the past or even allowing for the past to be left in the past requires work that is at least as much pastoral and political as it is historical.



## Sectarianism Required Certain actions.

For example, sectarianism required that:

- An English Protestant officer reflecting on a 16th century military campaign in Ulster used these terms: "how godly a deed it is to overthrow so wicked a race [as the Irish] the world may judge: for my part I think there cannot be a greater sacrifice to God".
- James Fitzmaurice Fitzgerald returning to Ireland in 1579 to mount a campaign against the English crown declaring that the "only object" of his campaign was to "secure the administration of Christ's sacraments to a Catholic people in a Catholic rite" and his landing party should be led by two Franciscans bearing a banner blessed by the pope then by a bishop in full regalia, then by seven hundred soldiers paid for by the pope.
- Catholic, Presbyterian, and Anglican churches in the 17th century should each regard themselves as the one true church, that each should align itself with a political cause and that each should, under the shared conviction that error has no right, seek victory and dominance over the others.
- Protestant resistance to home rule, sealed in the 1912 Solemn League and Covenant, should involve the church-blessed threat of violent resistance.
- The two new states created by the partition of Ireland should function to a large extent as a Protestant state and a Catholic state.
- Cardinal MacRory announcing in the 1930s that the Protestant traditions really are not Christian churches at all.
- Discrimination against Catholics in Northern Ireland, with Protestants turning a blind eye or supporting it.







## Suggested Activities

### Music Exercise

**Aim:** To examine and compare our responses to history using music. This is one example of how you can use music to stimulate this type of discussion. You may know of another relevant piece that you would like to use in a similar way.

**Groups:** This is an exercise for groups who want to examine history. It takes some imaginative thinking.

**Time:** Total 40 min      10 min per movement for listening and questions.

**Resources:** The CD or Tape of the piece of music, a sound system to play the music, the description of the music.

This example is based on 'The Relief of Derry Symphony' by Shaun Davey. (Tara Records Ltd) It was commissioned by Derry City Council to commemorate the Tercentenary of the Siege of Derry and was recorded live in the Derry Guildhall in May 1990

#### Method:

- You will not have time to listen to all the music in each movement so select an appropriate piece beforehand.
- Introduce the piece.
- Ask people to make themselves comfortable and prepare to 'experience' the music (use their imagination)
- Play a selected amount of the movement and then discuss the questions.

#### Learning Points:

See the Introduction to Sectarianism in Irish History.



**The first movement** builds up to a fanfare that increases in intensity to the point where the city gates are closed, contrasting periodically with moments of foreboding. The arrival outside the walls of the catholic militia of the Earl of Antrim, nicknamed the 'Redshanks', is represented by the pipe band which arrives towards the close of the movement at the doors of the concert hall.

### Questions

- How do you feel as the pipe band comes closer and closer towards the walls of a city inside which you were shut?
- Does this scene have similarities (e.g. feelings, emotions, sieges) to modern times for both of the broad traditions?



**The second movement** conveys the sounds of bombardment and siege in general, in which an estimated 15,000 people were to lose their lives. The arrival of King James is greeted with cries of 'no surrender' and massive artillery and musket-fire from the city walls. Thereafter follows a protracted battle sequence broken only by a period of side- drumming representing the truce to bury the dead.

### Questions

- How do you feel listening to the sounds of conflict?
- Have we learnt any lessons from the past?



**The third movement** falls into two halves. The first features uilleann pipes and could perhaps be subtitled 'Inside the walls of Derry'. The second half is a song 'The White Horse'. It deals with a vision that according to eye witness accounts, appeared nightly over the city at the height of the siege, when the defenders were suffering from disease and famine, and which was said to have given much comfort. The ships from England sent to relieve the city were for many weeks visible from the city walls, but were prevented from proceeding by the boom placed across the river by the besieging forces and the unsuitability of the wind.

### Questions

- What emotions does this music rouse?
- Can you draw any parallels between the frustration expressed in the song at the waiting, and the waiting we are doing at present?



**The fourth movement** begins with the portrayal of a light breeze for in reality a favourable wind was the key to Derry's relief. As the wind brings the three relieving ships upriver, the music reaches a series of climaxes corresponding with the cannonade, the successful negotiation of the boom, and the bombardment from the batteries. The sound of church bells heralds the relief of Derry as the ships arrive alongside the city quay. The saxophone leads the orchestra in a final air intended to express a city's thanks for deliverance, and at the same time a present day hope for peace and goodwill.

### Questions

- What feelings do these pieces of music arouse, for example how do you feel when the church bells ring?
- What sort of music is associated with a hope for a peaceful future? How does it contrast with the battle music?
- Which movement was your favourite?





## QUIZ

- Aims:**
- To help us explore more about our political and religious histories
  - To have fun finding out how much we do and/or don't know
  - To encourage co-operation and team building within each small group

**Time:** (depends on how many rounds you want) 30min – 1 hr

**Groups:** Useful for large groups who have expressed a desire to examine history or as a warm up to examining Understanding Sectarianism. If you don't have much time just select the rounds you want to play and leave the others out.



## Spaghetti Quiz

**Aim:**

- To introduce a bit more *equity* into the competition between each small group, try a spaghetti quiz (see below)

**Resources:** Answer sheets, pens, symbols sheet, appropriate music for the music round, questions, a pot, wool.

**Method:**

- You will need a large saucepan and a ball of wool cut up into different lengths of 'spaghetti'- from 3" to 23" and any length in between.
- Arrange the pieces in the pot with the ends hanging over the side, so that when you put the lid on, they all look the same length.
- When a team gets an answer right, someone is appointed to choose a piece of 'spaghetti' for their team.
- The pieces are all joined together, and at the end all the teams compare their lengths of wool.
- The team with the longest piece of wool 'wins'. The chance element keeps the suspense going and everyone interested.

**Learning Points:**  
See: Sectarianism in Irish History intro



## Rounds

- Start with getting the large group into smaller teams.
- Ask the teams to choose a name by which they will be known
- Ask each team a question in turn. If they get it right, let one of them choose a piece of 'spaghetti'. If they get it wrong offer a bonus to the next team.



Try to mix the rounds. The following is a possible order:

1 History round 1 - 7 questions

2 Symbol round (Cultural History) - use either the pictures or, if available, badges of identity.

- With the symbols round let the team complete the answers on the piece of paper, and ask each team to name the symbol in turn. Again, a piece of spaghetti is awarded for each right answer.



3 History round 2

4 Modern Politics round

- You may have questions, symbols etc. that are more relevant for your group. As long as different points of view are represented these can be used.
- Finish by asking the teams to join up all their pieces of 'spaghetti' and compare the lengths to find out who has 'won'. Award prizes as appropriate.



## Music Round

Both Protestant and Catholic Identities share much in their historical and contemporary music traditions. There also exist many differences between traditions. These differences and similarities can be explored by including a music round. You can use the inter-net to find appropriate music or visit 'cultural' shops for different traditions.







## History Round

1. Who is the 'Hound of Ulster'?
  - a. Cuchulainn
  - b. Brian Boru
  - c. Brian Kennedy

Answer:        b.        Cuchulainn is an important character in the eighth century 'Ulster Cycle' of heroic tales. During the great cattle raid by the queen and king of Connacht he resisted the invaders single-handed while Ulster's warriors lay sick.



2. What was Finn Mac Cool's 'job'? (may include more than one below)
  - a. A construction worker on the giant's causeway
  - b. The Captain of Ancient Ireland's 'Home Guard'
  - c. He bred and trained hounds.

Answer: All have elements of truth:

- The legend of Finn Mac Cool is based on the stories of his exploits as Captain of the mighty war-band, the Fianna, whose main job was to protect Ireland.
- The mythology depicting Finn as a Giant building the Causeway between Ireland and Scotland belongs to a later period and is popularly known today.
- Of all his many hounds Finn was very fond of his two most famous: Bran and Sceolan.



3. What was 'The Flight of the Earls'?
  - a. The Royal Family Holiday
  - b. The ousting of the last Gaelic landlords
  - c. The end of direct rule from England in Ireland

Answer:        b.        In 1607 Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone, and Hugh O'Donnell, Earl of Tyrconnell, left Ireland for Spain after a rebellion that was defeated by the Elizabethans. This paved the way for a more intense plantation of the North of Ireland.



4. Match the following dates and events

1641 and 1649:

- The Ulster rebellion in which Protestant planters were murdered
- Cromwell's massacre at Drogheda

Answer:        1641 = The Ulster Rebellion  
                   1649 = Cromwell's massacre



These dates are significant in the history of sectarianism. Protestant people tend to remember 1641 while Catholic people tend to remember 1649.



5. The Williamite wars:

These involved a two-year battle for the supremacy of the British Isles between James 11 and William 111 of Orange in the late 1600s. It is now one of the most well known pieces of history in Northern Ireland. James was Catholic and William Protestant.

Where was William born?:

- a. The South Of France
- b. The Netherlands
- c. Belfast
- d. Just outside Cookstown

Answer: a. William was born in the once-Roman Village of Orange, near Avignon, France.



6. What relation was William to James? (Could be more than one below)

- a. Nephew
- b. Son-in-law
- c. Cousin

Answer: a. and b. William was James' sister's son. William married his own cousin who was the daughter of James.



7. Who did the Pope at the time support?:

- a. James 11
- b. William 111
- c. Neither

Answer: b. The Pope asked for the Te Dium to be sung in every church in Austria to celebrate William's victory. James was a threat to the Pope because of his alignment with the Popes enemy Louis X1V of France.



8. The Penal laws introduced in the 1700s disadvantaged what groups? (Could be more than one below)

- a. Catholics
- b. Presbyterians
- c. Church of Ireland

Answer: a. and b. Catholics and Presbyterians were excluded from many aspects of civil and military life. Catholics were not allowed to buy land or hold it on lease for more than 31 years. Although not always enforced the laws raised tensions not least by causing feelings of discrimination and religious persecution.





9. The United Irishmen Rebellion of 1798 was led by Wolfe Tone (among others). Was Wolfe Tone from a:

- Catholic background
- Presbyterian background
- Anglican background
- Brethren background

Answer: c.



10. The 'Act of Union in 1801 did what?

- Merge Ireland into Great Britain
- Merge Ulster with the rest of Ireland
- Merge Northern Ireland with Great Britain

Answer: a.



11. The Famine in Ireland (1845-49) reduced the population by millions through death and immigration. At this time who were known as 'Soupers'?

- People who gave soup to the starving
- People who changed their religious loyalty in order to receive soup
- People who had enough to eat

Answer: b.



12. What event did not happen in 1912?

- The sinking of the Titanic
- The signing of the Solemn League and Covenant against Home Rule in Ireland
- The death of Leonardo De Caprio

Answer: c.

13. Which of the following would have been important to people living in Ireland in 1916?

- The Easter Raising
- The Battle of the Somme
- Working Conditions

Answer: All would have been important although Catholics tend to remember The Easter Raising and Protestants the Battle of the Somme.



14. When was the Republic of Ireland formed?

- 1916
- 1921
- 1949

Answer: c. Although The Republic was declared in 1916 it was not formed until 1949. N. Ire was separated from the South in 1921 (Partition).



## Modern Politics

1. In what year can what we call 'The Troubles' be said to have begun?

- a. 1969
- b. 1974
- c. 1990

Answer: a. Some people may say that the current run of troubles started a year earlier with disputes centered around certain Civil Rights marches in Northern Ireland. The British Government suspended the Northern Ireland government and took control in March 1972.



2. What did Unionists organize to protest against the 1974 Power Sharing Executive?

- a. A re-signing of 'Ulster's Solemn League and Covenant'
- b. A general strike
- c. A 'sit-in' at Stormont

Answer: b.



3. In what year was the Downing Street Declaration made?

- a. 1985
- b. 1994
- c. 1993

Answer: 1993 The British and Irish Prime Ministers made the declaration jointly. It combined intentions from Westminster and Dublin that became foundations for reaching the 'Good Friday Agreement'.

1985 = the failed Anglo Irish Agreement  
1994 = the IRA cease-fire



4. In the year 2000 a Loyalist feud was fought between the UDA and UVF.

Which of these groups identifies itself with the force founded to fight against home rule in 1912?

Answer: The UVF

Bonus: In what decade was the UDA formed?

Answer: early 1970s



5. Northern Ireland now has a Human Rights Commission. How many rights are listed in the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human rights?

- a. 5
- b. 30
- c. 100

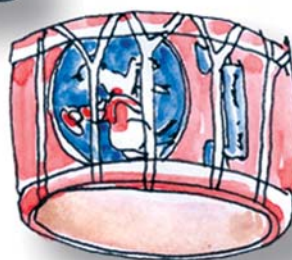
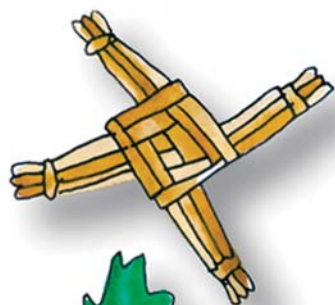
Answer: b. These rights were formed by the United Nations but countries do not have to follow them. They range from the right to a fair trial to the right to rest from our work and to relax. Not many countries in the world uphold all the rights listed in the declaration.





## SYMBOLS ROUND

Name the symbols.  
Are they: Catholic, Protestant, Mixed, Other?



## Symbols Round Answers

**St. Brigid's Cross = Debatable:** St. Brigid is one of the 3 most important Saints in Ireland (the others being St. Patrick and St. Columille). Just like St. Patrick St Brigit may be considered as significant by both Protestant and Catholic Christians.

**Celtic Cross = Debatable:** May be considered as significant to Protestant and Catholic Christians in Ireland.

**Bowler Hat = Protestant/Orange:** Part of traditional attire for members of the Orange Order or Black preceptories. It may have other associations outside of N.Ire.

**Lambeg Drum = Protestant/Orange:** Said to be introduced to Ireland by William of Orange's soldiers. This makes it a highly significant instrument in the cultural history of Ireland and, later, Northern Ireland.

**Poppy = Debatable:** Although mostly associated with Protestant identities there are many exceptions.

**Claddagh Ring = Debatable:** A ring associated with Irish folklore. May be associated more with Catholic Identities.

**Red Hand and Crown = Protestant/Unionist:** It links the traditional symbol of the Province of Ulster with the Crown of England and is found on the 6 county Northern Irish flag.

**Pink Ribbon = Mixed:** For breast cancer awareness

**Easter Lily = Catholic/Republican:** Symbol of the Easter Rising of 1916

**Orange Lily = Protestant/Orange:** Symbol of Orangism.

**Rosary Ring = Catholic**

**Red Hand = Debatable:** The Red Hand is the symbol of the Province of Ulster which includes the traditional counties now based in the Republic of Ireland (Monaghan, Cavan, Donegal). It is also used on Northern Irish Loyalist/Unionist flags.

**Pioneer Pin = Catholic:** The badge displays the Sacred Heart of Jesus and is worn by Catholics who have pledged to abstain from alcohol.

**The Shamrock = Debatable:** The shamrock is connected to the Patron Saint of Ireland, Patrick, with whom both traditions may identify.

**Scripture Union Badge = Protestant:** The scripture union is a young peoples based Christian education movement most often associated with Christians from Protestant backgrounds.





## Trips

There are a number of venues groups may wish to visit that explore cultural traditions and history. This takes time however (e.g. weekend days, whole evenings). If the majority of people in a group decide that they want to do it then they should commit to making it work. It can provide time for people to socialize as well as an opportunity to invite others to the group (e.g. family and friends.)

The following are just some examples:

- The Ulster Folk and Transport/ Ulster American / Ulster Museum's exhibits and events, O'Doherty Tower (Derry/Londonderry), Plantation Museum (Draperstown) as well as a number of other museums and education centers.
- A cultural performance/play/movie (you may wish to check the suitability of the content)
- If you phone the Education Departments connected with organizations that offer the above and explain your situation and needs they may be able to help you.

## Reflection on the visit

Consider:

- What did the experience feel like?
- What did you like, what did you not like?
- What did you learn?











## INTRODUCTION

The form of the trunk and branches are determined by its habitat. When our habitat is bad and the elements supplied to the tree are toxic we end up with an unhealthy tree and toxic fruit and leaves.

The Trunk and Branches represent the structure of our lives, how we operate and function in society at individual, communal and institutional level. In this section we examine how sectarianism can affect us and the consequences for relating to others.

### Aims of this section:

The main aim is to increase our understanding of sectarianism and how it affects our identities, society etc in order to better equip ourselves to move beyond it.

The following areas will be examined:

- Defining sectarianism
- Understanding the consequences of Sectarianism in terms of Destructive Patterns of Relating
- Understanding Sectarianism as a system and how it involves me
- The Pyramid Model of sectarian participation
- Understanding Intentions and Consequences
- Understanding Dynamics and Varieties of Sectarianism



## WHAT IS SECTARIANISM?

### SECTARIANISM EXISTS:

- In the hearts and minds of individuals
- In the kind of structures we create in society
- In our attitudes to one another
- In what we say and do
- In the things we leave undone/unsaid
- In negative judgments about someone else's behaviour

Since it is sectarianism, not just any division, it requires a religious contribution. It is rarely a label we apply to ourselves as our own sectarianism is the hardest to recognise.

### Sectarianism involves:

- Religion (Religion as a form of Ethnicity and as our structures for devotional faith)
- Ethnicity and nationality
- Politics
- Religion and politics





## DEFINITION OF SECTARIANISM

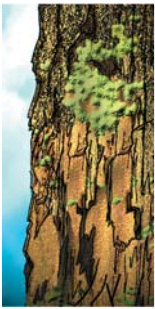
Sectarianism is...  
a system of attitudes, actions, beliefs and structures:

- at personal, communal and institutional levels
- which always involves religion and typically involves a negative mixing of religion and politics...

which arises as a distorted expression of positive human needs especially for belonging, identity and the free expression of difference...

and is expressed in destructive patterns of relating:

- *hardening the boundaries* between groups
- *overlooking others*
- *belittling, dehumanizing or demonizing* others
- justifying or collaborating in the *domination* of others
- physically or verbally *intimidating* or *attacking* others



## DEFINING SECTARIANISM

### Suggested Activities

## DEFINING SECTARIANISM

**Aim:** People who are about to embark on a journey examining sectarianism may benefit from spending some time reflecting on how they perceive/ understand sectarianism to begin with. The definition used in this resource may not necessarily be the one with which people agree with or relate to straight away.

**Total Time:** 45 min - 1 hr

**Groups:** This activity is useful for all groups and is a starting point for examining sectarianism. It introduces the complex definition of sectarianism gradually but more importantly it begins where the participants knowledge and abilities are based.

**Method:** a. Spend 10 min. individually considering:

What does sectarianism mean to you?

The following questions may be useful in stimulating thoughts:

- What images, statements, slogans, events, beliefs, values come to mind when you hear the word 'Sectarianism'?
- Do any of these have positive associations?
- Do any of these have negative associations?

b. In groups of 3-4 30 min

- Share each others personal reflections (on the above) (2 min. each), make a list of different elements of sectarianism
- Write 3 sentences, each of which begin with the words 'Sectarianism is...'
- Feedback definitions to the wider group.

**NB:** Writing definitions is not easy and these definitions do not need to be perfect. Try your best within the limitations of time.

c. Briefly examine the research definition as a handout/ overhead 10 min

- Make a comparison with the feedback definitions:
- What do they have in common?
- What do you find helpful about the definition?
- Of what would we like further explanation?

### Learning Points

- In our society sectarianism operates as a system and therefore affects a wide variety of issues and relationships even without our awareness. If we ignore it then we may end up participating in the destructive consequences by default.





# Trunk & Branches

- Our intentions need to be considered in terms of what this system can do to them.

## Quick Definition Exercises

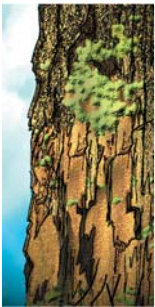
**Aim:** To briefly explore peoples ideas regarding sectarianism

**Time:** 15- 20 min

**Group:** Works with a relatively small group who are able to articulate themselves easily

**Method:**

- Ask people to say what they associate with sectarianism (place on flip-chart)
- Highlight that there can be both obvious, violent expressions of sectarianism as well as more subtle ones.
- Hand out the definition and read it out. After each sentence pause and give people a chance to ask questions, give further examples etc.



## DESTRUCTIVE PATTERNS OF RELATING

Sectarianism is expressed in destructive patterns of relating. There are five basic categories. The Following are listed in ascending order of destructiveness.

### 1. Hardening the boundaries between groups:-

- physical
- emotional
- conceptual

#### *Physical manifestations:*

These are usually between different broad traditions although there are exceptions e.g. UDA and UVF.

#### Examples:

Painted curb-stones, murals, 'peace' walls, flags etc.

#### *Emotional ways of hardening boundaries:*

- pushing different groups apart, creating a vacuum of knowledge
- cutting off groups from one another
- acting to impede those reaching out across the divide
- unspoken messages people give one another
- inducing the suspension of normal rational thought ( don't ask questions)
- myths and rumours – them and us. Rumours and fear combine to seal off the two communities from one another more effectively than any number of physical barriers

#### *Conceptual boundaries include:*

language, e.g. black protestants, Sinn Fein/IRA

### 2. Overlooking others:

This could be termed a polite or acceptable form of sectarianism.

To overlook is simply to ignore the existence, needs, rights or aspirations of the other.

In some ways it is harder to address as it uses social convention, with regard to politeness and acceptability of exclusion, to mask its power.

The destructive power lies in the framing of our lives, as if the other, with his, her concerns, does not exist and therefore is of no account.

Moving beyond this can best come about when we strive to positively accommodate difference to the point where we respond automatically to include and be open to those we consider to be the other.



# Trunk & Branches

## 3. Belittling or Demonising others:-

### Belittling:

*Least aggressive form* - suggesting the other side is somehow less than us

*Most aggressive* - caricaturing and mocking another tradition or experience

### Demonising:

Also involves caricaturing but is aimed at inducing fear, and hatred of, or shock at, the tradition, practices, representatives or beliefs of the other.

- allows us to *project our fears and hatred* onto another person or group  
E.g. The demonizing of DUP leader Dr Ian Paisley or of Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams.
- allows us to *project blame* on to others whilst somehow pretending we are blameless.  
E.g. in the Drumcree situation the Orange Order, the Resident Coalition, the RUC and the Church of Ireland have all been demonised for their part in the conflict.

## 4. Justifying or collaborating in the Domination of others:

This includes any activity which supports or actively has a hand in suppressing, dominating or discriminating against the other or their tradition.

Can be expressed in many ways:

- discrimination and harassment
- denial of rights
- suppression of aspects of the other's life and culture



Moving beyond Sectarianism will involve a transition to *positions of co-equal and co-responsible citizens*.



## Within-tradition domination:

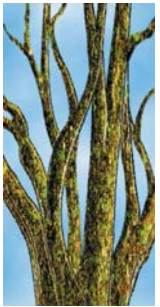
Domination can exist between traditions as well as within a tradition.

e.g. Paramilitary groups and their control over 'their own' communities.

Domination can become an entire culture. This culture is kept in place by the willingness of ordinary decent citizens to remain inert, to resign themselves to the situation and to accept violent methodologies to ensure peace.

## 5. Physically intimidating or attacking others:

It destroys and damages relationships and promotes fear and mistrust to the point that people willingly, and understandably, move apart, stay apart and are reluctant to come together again. It means that people have to use energy just 'staying safe,' energy that in other circumstances could be directed to building positive relationships.







## DESTRUCTIVE PATTERNS OF RELATING

### Suggested Activities

#### LINE OF SECTARIANISM

**Aim:** To examine examples of destructive patterns of relating and begin to categorize and understand them.

**Time:** Depends on the number of examples examined  
Total 15 – 20 min

**Groups:** If the group is large then smaller groups could be formed to decide on where they would place the examples. All the groups can then negotiate together as to where to place the examples on the line.

**Resources:** Flipchart or space for people to make the line with bodies.

#### Method:

- Introduce the 5 categories for destructive patterns of relating
- Establish a 'line of sectarianism' i.e. a continuum with one end representing the most destructive ways of relating to the less destructive ways of relating.

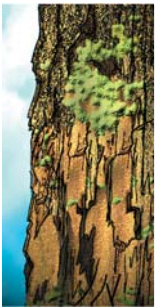
most destructive

less destructive



This line can be made physically using the people present or drawn on a flipchart.

- Pick an example out of the 'hat' (see list) and read it out
- The task is for everyone to negotiate where the example should be placed on the line.



## EXAMPLES OF DESTRUCTIVE PATTERNS OF RELATING

- Ignoring sectarianism
- Not caring if what you say, do or believe threatens or hurts others
- Condoning the painting of kerb-stones
- Painting kerb-stones
- Painting aggressive slogans on walls
- Allowing aggressive slogans to stay on walls
- Perpetuating stereotypes about the other side e.g. Catholics worship Mary, Protestants aren't creative, Catholics are poor, Protestants are wealthy.
- Not considering other churches in your area when planning outreach work.
- Refusing to attend an event where people from another denomination may pray with you
- Blaming Ian Paisley, Gerry Adams, David Trimble, the British Government etc. for what is wrong in our society
- Blaming the:
  - Orange Order
  - Resident's coalition
  - The Church Of Irelandfor the Drumcree situation.
- Pointing the finger at another tradition before examining your own
- Making jokes at work about 'the other side' when there is a minority of the 'other side' working with you
- Refusing to talk to work colleagues from 'the other side'
- Refusing to hire people from the 'other side'
- Trying to turn people with whom you share an identity against the 'other side'.
- Stopping others from sharing power
- Preventing the 'others' from receiving promotion
- Accepting and supporting political domination
- Accepting the absence of legislation regarding race/gender/religious discrimination
- Making no effort to address the hurt you or your tradition have caused to others
- Psychologically intimidating someone to force them out of their job
- Joining a paramilitary organization
- Forcing someone to leave their home
- Driving a car that carries a punishment beating squad
- Participating in or supporting one side in the UDA vs. UVF feud
- Throwing a pipe bomb
- Shooting someone



# Trunk & Branches



## Personal experience of destructive patterns of relating:

**Aim:** To reflect on our own experiences of sectarianism and to share these with others.

|                      |              |           |
|----------------------|--------------|-----------|
| <b>Time:</b>         | <b>Total</b> | 40-45 min |
| Personal reflection: |              | 10 min    |
| Group discussion     |              | 20 min    |
| Feedback             |              | 10 min    |

### Groups:

This activity depends on whether or not the members of the group feel comfortable enough with each other/ trust each other enough to share more deeply about their personal experiences. The time will depend on the depth of discussion.

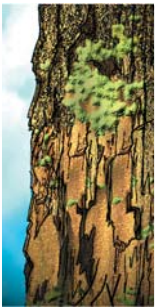
Participants should agree before hand to listen to each other's stories and not dismiss or argue about them.

**Resources:** Pens, paper

### Method:

- Introduce destructive patterns of relating categories
- Individually:
  - think of one example with which you are familiar of a destructive pattern of relating and make a note of it.

- Form groups to discuss these to whatever level people feel comfortable. Make sure that people are given time to share i.e. the groups should be no more than 4 and each person should have 5 minutes to share their reflections making a total of 20 minutes.
- Come back to the main group for a 'feelings check'
- What sorts of examples were shared? (Without repeating the entire story)



## CASE STUDY ROLES

**Aim:** To examine examples of destructive ways of relating from different points of view.

**Time:** Total 50 min – 1 hr

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| Intros and identification of sides involved | 15 min     |
| Group tasks                                 | 15 min     |
| Feedback                                    | 15- 20 min |
| Conclusion/Learning Points                  | 5-10 min   |

### Groups:

Some of the case studies can prove contentious. The group must be ready and able to deal with a degree of difference and possible conflict.

### Resources:

Case Study Handout Sheets (There are 4 case studies provided here, they are based on events that actually happened)

### Method:

- Introduce the destructive ways of relating categories.
  - Read out one of the case studies (whichever you think is most appropriate)
  - Identify the main 'sides' or groups of people involved in the relationship in the case study.
  - Form 'clusters' of three groups (approx 4 people in each group)
  - Two of the groups will examine and represent the 'opposing' sides of a particular example.
  - The third group will act as the observer.
- The Two 'opposing' groups consider the following questions from the point of view of the 'side' you will be representing.
    - What concerns you most about the other side?
  - Third group discuss:
    - What Destructive Patterns of Relating are evident?
  - Elect a spokesperson to represent your group

### Back In the 'main' group:

- One group presents their answers while the other two listen then the next group has an opportunity to feedback and so on.

### Learning Points:

- It is part of the process for positively dealing with difference to start to identify destructive patterns of relating and to listen to each other.







## Case Study 1 Separation

The following story is based on an actual experience of the MBS team.

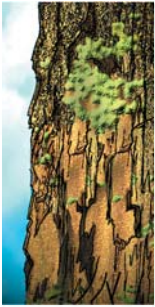
You are doing a series of interviews about sectarianism. You are concerned to understand why some conservative Protestants judge the Catholic church so harshly and why they refuse to worship with Catholics, so you interview a conservative Protestant minister. He tells you that he believes that some of the teachings of the Catholic Church- he mentions the role of Mary, the doctrine of purgatory, and the Catholic understanding of the Eucharist, among others-are so out of line with what he understands as the Biblical understanding of faith that he cannot accept that the Catholic is Christian. Quoting two Biblical passages- 'Touch not the unclean thing' and 'Come ye out from among them'- he argues that true Christians must therefore keep themselves strictly separate from Catholics.



You ask 'How far must this separation go? Can you talk to Catholics? Can you live in the same neighborhood? What are the limits?'

He responds, 'I'll give you an example. When abortion referral clinics were being introduced to Northern Ireland, our Church was against them.'

We believe that human life, from the moment of conception, is the gift of God. As often as not we would be marching along with our signs when along come a Catholic priest or some nuns and some ordinary Catholics, and they would join us.'



'So that degree of cooperation wouldn't bother you?'

'Well I wouldn't want to call it cooperation. It's not that we planned it together, it's just that we didn't feel any need to leave simply because some Catholics joined the picket. And of course you have to realize we were there for different reasons.'



'What do you mean?'

'As Protestant fundamentalists we were there because we understand all abortion as the destruction of God's gift of life, as I said earlier. For their part, however, Catholics would tend to be against abortion because they are afraid abortion will reduce their numbers.'



## Case Study 2 The Boycott

In the aftermath of Drumcree, tensions are very high. You are a radio interviewer sent to do a story on the Catholic boycott of Protestant businesses in a small town. You have interviewed a series of people about the boycott and go to talk to the local Catholic Priest.

You put it to him that as a person of influence within the Catholic community you would expect him to be doing something to try to stop the boycott and to encourage his parishioners to support local traders regardless of their religious beliefs.



He replies that it is not his place as a priest to tell his parishioners where to shop and that in regard to his own choice of where to spend his money he chooses to support local Catholic traders because they are his parishioners and they are the ones who are contributing to the upkeep of the church.



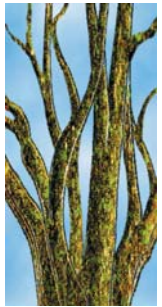
## Case study 3 At a Catholic and Protestant Wedding

You are on your way to attend the wedding of your friends, John, a Protestant, and Mary, a Catholic, who are being married in the Catholic Church in which Mary grew up, although she moved away to go to college some years before.



When you arrive before the wedding, there is a bit of a buzz among the guests, and you are quickly told the story.

It seems that the previous night at the wedding rehearsal, the Catholic Priest who is conducting the service said something that assumed that communion would be part of the service. Mary and John hadn't actually planned that the ceremony would involve communion, but the priest persuaded them that Mary's mother really wanted it this way, so they consented. When the Protestant minister asked about the Protestant wedding guests taking communion, the priest said he was sorry, but that wouldn't be possible.



Because this story had made the rounds of the wedding guests, when the communion was offered, the Protestant guests, mostly John's relatives, didn't go forward. But somehow John's mother, an elderly woman with a physical disability, hadn't heard that Protestants were not to go up for communion.

She made her way very slowly and painfully to the front of the church, but when she arrived, the priest turned her away, and she limped back to her place, the whole congregation watching her.



NB: Separated communion is not the issue here, rather the way in which things were handled and the likely affect on relationships between Catholics and Protestants.

## Case Study 4 Negotiation at the barricades

It is the evening of the 11th of July. You are a paramedic on duty with a 999 ambulance team. You are called to attend an elderly woman with a suspected heart attack. On the way to the house you get through a barricade at the end of the road where the woman lives. It is a middle-class mixed area.



You take some time at the woman's house to stabilize her in the ambulance. The woman's daughter travels with her in the ambulance. When you start back towards the Hospital Orange protesters at the barricade want to know who you are carrying. You explain that a woman is very ill and you must get her to hospital.



# Trunk & Branches



The daughter gets out to talk with them because she recognises some of them as her neighbours. The woman and her daughter are Catholics. Those on the barricades do not want to let the ambulance pass and start making comments about 'Fenian Bastards'. The daughter is distraught pleading with the protesters to let her mother through, reminding them that they have been good, friendly neighbours for years. You intervene again and say that the woman's condition is deteriorating. Eventually and reluctantly they let you through and you get her to the hospital.



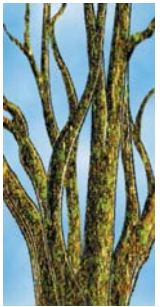
## QUICK EXERCISE TO EXPLORE DESTRUCTIVE PATTERNS OF RELATING

Time: 15- 20 min

Group: Works with a relatively small group who are able to articulate themselves easily

Method:

- Write each heading for the Destructive Patterns of Relating on a flipchart, one at a time and give examples.
- Ask the group for other examples.





## SECTARIANISM AS A SYSTEM

A system involves different parts that relate to/affect each other in some way and maintain certain processes.

Central to the work of MBS is the concept that sectarianism can exist and operate at individual, communal and institutional level. These different 'parts' all have a role in maintaining the processes involved in sectarianism. Therefore individuals who 'do not have a sectarian bone in their body' can still be part of the sectarian system simply because they live within it. I may not feel sectarian but my actions, beliefs, attitudes etc can be distorted to produce sectarian outcomes.

E.g. *A violent experience may prompt me to move from a mixed area to a 'safer' area with 'my own kind'. This 'separation' is a product of sectarianism and can also further support it. Where I live has become part of the sectarian system.*

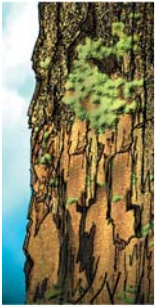
Even when our intentions have positive potential or are based on good reasons, they can never the less be distorted by the sectarian system and result in destructive outcomes. E.g.

- The things people do to build strong communities and strong congregations are well meant and have positive outcomes, but at the same time they can serve to exclude others and harden boundaries between groups.

In fact sectarianism does not really require any direct, active response at all from most of us; it simply requires that we do nothing about it.

In the beginning sectarianism fed on 'Big Hate, Big Violence, Gross Injustice' e.g. The Elizabethan Wars in Ireland, The Plantation periods, the 1641 Rising, Cromwell, The Williamite Wars, The Penal laws, etc. Now that sectarianism has been long established, it no longer requires large amounts of violence. Just an occasional act will suffice because the sectarian system disposes us to judge others by the worst actions of their community.

Because sectarianism is so well established and such a 'successful' system it will need to be challenged in a range of creative ways for a long time to come if we are to move beyond it.



## THE TREE MODEL

### The Roots

The roots represent those elements that give us our sense of identity, belonging etc e.g. history, family, community, work, church.

### The Trunk and Branches

The trunk and branches represent how our society/communities operate, how we do things, how we participate, the structures and institutions that affect us.

### Fruit and Leaves

These represent the products of our society /communities e.g. relationships.

### Sectarianism as a System

The tree gets its nourishment from the soil. If the tree is set in bad soil, with toxins of sectarianism, the whole tree's structure will be affected.

### Intentions and Consequences

There are nutrients (good intentions) present in the soil that are there to 'build up' the tree.

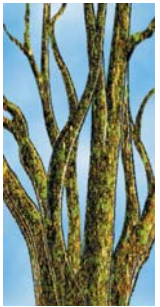
There are also toxins (destructive patterns of relating) in the soil. The more toxins there are, the more bad fruit and leaves (sectarian consequences) there will be.

The toxins can even distort nutrients (good intentions).

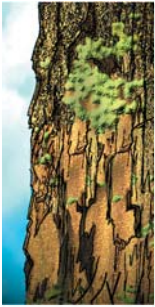
The bad fruit and leaves in turn fall and are absorbed into the soil as further toxins. The sectarian system can therefore create the conditions that sustain it.

### Moving Beyond Sectarianism

We need nutrients that both 'build up' the tree and that heal the toxic sectarianism.



# Trunk & Branches

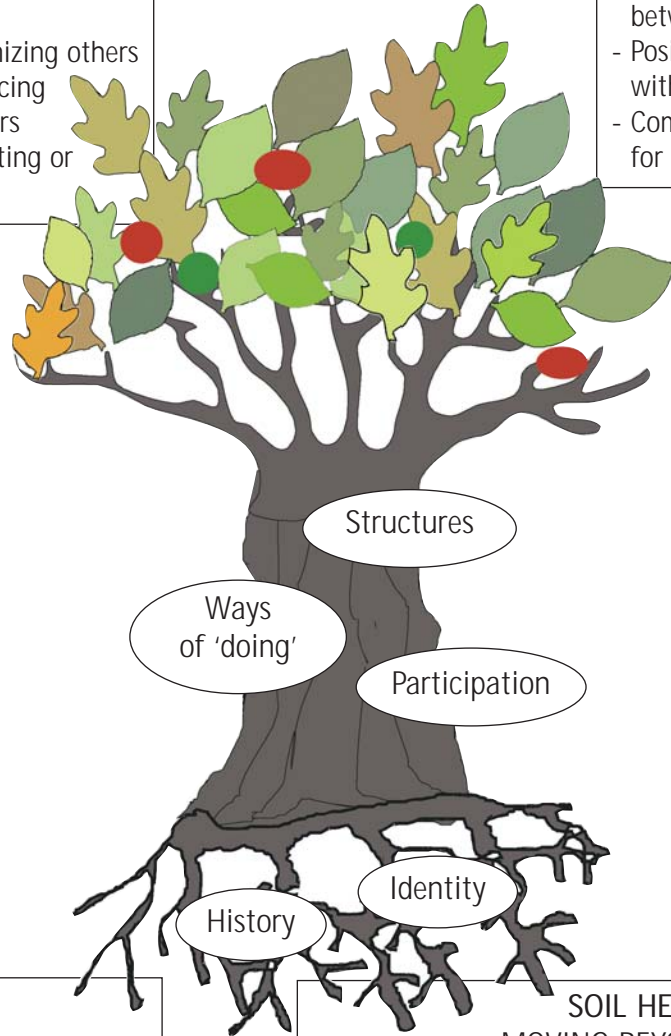


**BAD FRUIT:**

1. Hardening the barriers between groups
2. Overlooking others
3. Belittling or demonizing others
4. Justifying or practicing domination over others
5. Physically intimidating or attacking others

**GOOD FRUIT:**

- Positive identities
- Positive relationships between different groups
- Positive Relationships within groups
- Community Development for the good of all



**SOIL TOXINS:**  
**SECTARIAN ENCOUNTER WITH DIFFERENCE**

- Rejecting Difference
- Hardening the barriers between groups
- Overlooking others
- Belittling or demonizing others
- Justifying or practicing domination over others
- Physically intimidating or attacking others
- Resignation
- Separation

**SOIL HEALING NUTRIENTS:**  
**MOVING BEYOND SECTARIANISM**

- Awareness of, and sensitivity towards sectarianism
- Relationships that sustain difference
- Empathy, Acceptance, Standing Along Side Others (not necessarily agreeing)
- Checks and balances that warn about sectarian consequences
- Mitigation
- Loving, humble relationships (*see 1Cor 13:4-7*)

*between and within:*

- Individuals
- Groups
- Institutions



## SECTARIANISM AS A SYSTEM

### Suggested Activities

#### THE TREE MODEL

**Aim:** To examine and discuss elements of the system.

|              |                     |        |
|--------------|---------------------|--------|
| <b>Time:</b> | Total               | 45 min |
|              | Intro               | 5 min  |
|              | Drawing tree        | 10 min |
|              | Writing on the tree | 15 min |
|              | Feedback            | 15 min |

**Groups:** People who may benefit from a more visual model may find this activity helpful

**Resources:** Large sheets of cardboard or paper, drawing/painting materials, blue-tac

#### Method:

- Introduce the explanation of Sectarianism as a system
- Give each person a sheet of paper with a tree on it (see example) or ask them to draw their own tree (depending on time and peoples' desire to be creative)
- Ask them to write on the tree (or otherwise represent) the following on the

#### The Roots:

- what influences your identity?

#### The Soil and Leaves/Fruit:

- give examples of sectarianism
- what makes a 'good', 'healthy' community

#### The Trunk and Branches:

- what different communities and cultures make up the tree\*?

Feedback to the wider group

\*This can be done for Northern Irish society as a whole or for a particular area/community.

#### Variations

- If the group is mixed (Protestant and Catholic) then 'Within-Tradition' groups can draw a tree to represent their own community's perspective (On the tree they should examine their own community's sectarianism, not anyone else's)
  - Spend time examining each group's tree
  - Discuss as one group what people gained from the exercise and from seeing the different trees.
- After working on trees individually work together to produce one large tree.

#### Learning Points:

Present the tree model and the explanation





# Trunk & Branches



## WALLS

(see Dividing Walls exercise)

**Aim:** To examine what the sectarian system looks like.

**Resources:** Pens, paper

**Method:**

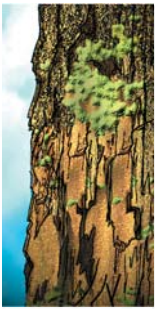
- Introduce Sectarianism as a System.
- If sectarianism could be represented as walls between groups/traditions then what bricks make up the walls? i.e. examples of sectarianism.
- Answers can be written (draw a wall on the page) and then discussed in small groups
- feedback in the main group.



**Variation**

**Resources:** Boxes, markers

- You may wish to make a small wall made up of two sides of boxes.
- Different groups/traditions examine the 'bricks' of a particular community and write them on the boxes and place them on top of each other to make a wall.
- When they have finished each side looks at the others' and compare and discuss.
- Finally discuss what small steps can you take to start to address the bricks mentioned.



**Learning Points:**

Around the wall people can be found in several positions:

- Consciously or unconsciously building up the wall by their words and actions
- Consciously seeking to break down the wall
- Hiding securely behind the wall (not going out of their way to build it but none the less comfortable with it)
- Firing at each other across the wall



## GUIDED REFLECTION

How does the system involve me?

**Aim:** To help us reflect on how sectarianism affects our own lives

**Time:** **Total 30 min**  
 Intro 5 min  
 Reflection 10 min  
 Group discussion and feedback 15 min

**Groups:** This exercise depends on participants being willing and prepared to use their imaginations and to share openly.

**Method:**

- Introduce Sectarianism as a System information
- Introduce the idea of guided reflection i.e. it is used to help us personally visualize a concept. It will involve a story in which you silently fill in the visual scenes.
- Ask people to get comfortable and to prepare to use their imagination

Read the following story and ask people to imagine what they see.

*Imagine you are walking down a street, any street, where you feel comfortable. It is a lovely sunny spring day and you can hear birds chirping.*

**Pause (all gaps denote a pause)**

*You start to walk by a school.*

*It's the school you would send your children/ grandchildren/ a child you are close to etc.*

*What religion are the children who go to this school?*

*You continue on the road and you see a mural and you stop to look. What does it look like?*

*How does it make you feel?*

*You decide to go somewhere to relax and have something to drink where you feel safe. Where do you go?*

*Why do you feel safe there?*

*You get to the place and order your drink and relax. You are safe.*

*(Leave time for people to relax you may suggest that people release any negative feelings they have experienced)*

*We have now finished the reflection so open your eyes*



# Trunk & Branches

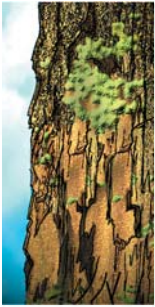


## Questions

- What is your immediate reaction to that reflection?
- What feelings were raised for you?

## Learning points:

- Sectarianism affects us all in some way even if we don't want it to
- We live in a society where sectarianism is a fact, we live in a sectarian system
  - We can ignore it and participate in it by default and do nothing to deal with it.
  - We can actively participate in sectarian acts to different degrees of destructivity.
  - We have a unique experience and opportunity. If we can acknowledge the system we have a chance to shape the future and to provide models for dealing with such a system that other humans all over the world can learn from.
  - We have the opportunity to think creatively and to show how to live with disagreement.
  - We can start with our own lives



## THE PYRAMID OF SECTARIAN PARTICIPATION

The model was first developed by the Working Party on Sectarianism (WPS), 1991-1993.

It aims to provide an image of how one could participate in sectarianism without intending to, and how sectarianism is supported by, and related at a number of levels and groups.

The WPS drew out two main defining features of the Pyramid:

- People at each level, when it comes to the crunch, disclaim responsibility for the words and action of the layer above.
- Each level grows out of the one below and could not exist without support or permission from below.

### Implications:

- All acts of sectarianism from the obvious to the subtle are related.
- Many people who regard themselves as innocent of sectarianism are in fact implicated.
- The best of intentions can lead to sectarian consequences.
- Opting out of the pyramid is not really possible. Although each level of the pyramid disowns the one above it, each level also depends on the one below it, for support.
- All sectarianism is connected.
- It is the tension between the two sides that keeps the pyramid from collapsing.

Psychotic Killers, at the peak of the pyramid – their violence seems to have little rationale beyond creating sectarian terror.

Paramilitaries whilst not admitting to sectarianism, have had their violence exposed as one of the most effective purveyors of sectarianism

Leaders (political; religious and other) frequently use platform, pulpit, or the pages of the press to express bigoted or inflammatory statements.

Ordinary decent people encourage by vote, religious view, and private opinion the attitudes, justification etc. of the layer above them. They may participate in organizations that have taken a sectarian stance or acted in sectarian ways. By doing nothing we allow the sectarian system to carry on unhindered. Even those whose work is directed against sectarianism find themselves ironically dependent on sectarianism for future employment.

" It is too easy to scapegoat, and scapegoating is a widespread middle class practice in Northern Ireland, including... good church goers."

Johnston McMaster, Churches on the Edge  
Catalyst 2000

(See the Pyramid model)





# Trunk & Branches



The following are just some examples of participants in the different levels:

- Psychotic Killers : Omagh Bombing, Michael Stone etc. These are contentious examples and need to be qualified i.e. those mentioned have been identified beyond the more 'recognized' groups as 'rogue' elements.
- Paramilitary groups: more 'recognised' groups such as PIRA, UVF, UDA
- Politicians, Community and Religious Leaders: Priests, Ministers, Community Activists, N.I Assembly, Organisations/Decision Making bodies.
- Ordinary Citizens: Different classes, different areas, different groups, different people; those of us who actively support sectarianism, those of us who do nothing to address it, and those of us who ignore it.

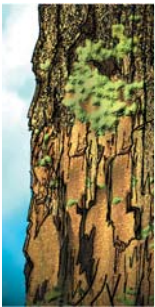
- As we go up the model the forms of sectarianism usually become more blatant and easier to point out.
- The 'centre pole' is the divide between Catholics and Protestants.

## Learning Points:

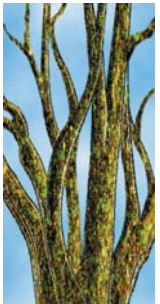
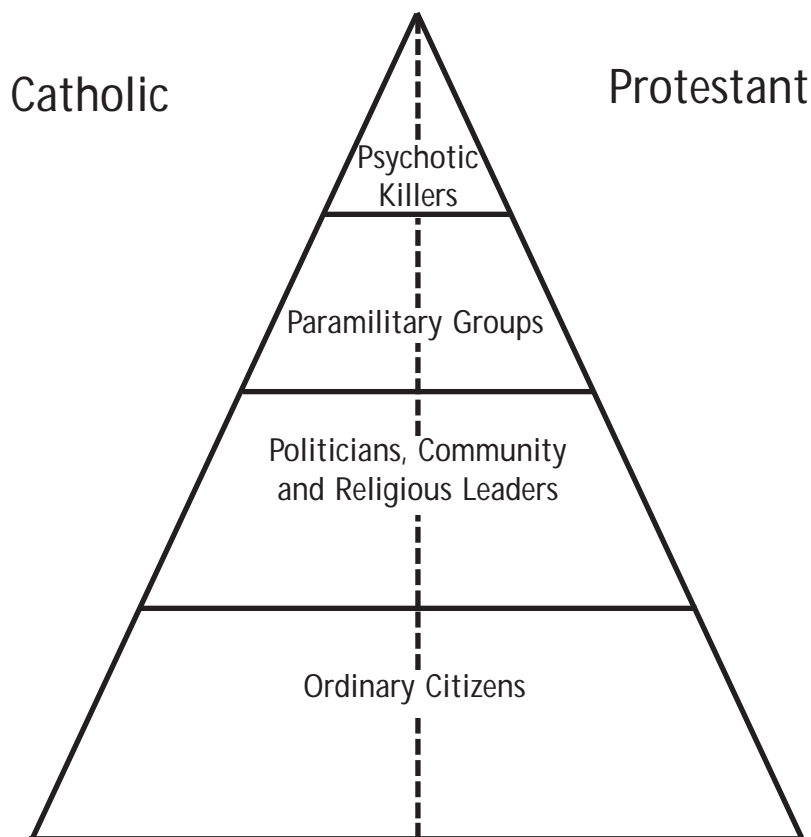
If we do nothing at all or try to ignore sectarianism then we participate by default.

- We need to be supporting and developing the positive, alternative models that already exist.
- We need many more new models and actions that challenge the Pyramid structure.
- We need sustainable relationships and new ways of working together.
- We need to be involving children and young people in the alternatives.

When the Pyramid Model of Sectarian Participation no longer fits then we are moving beyond sectarianism.



# The Pyramid



Each level depends on the one below it for support e.g. doing nothing of real substance to challenge, rhetoric that lends support etc.

The structure remains in place because of the tension between the two sides.





## THE FALSE ALLURE OF BENIGN APARTHEID

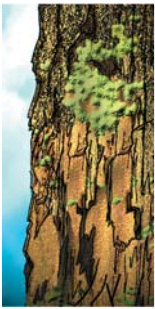
Benign Apartheid = simple co-existence of communities as separate as ever, but living without violence.

Our purpose here is to warn against understandings of peace that fall short of reconciliation, settling instead for what we call benign apartheid; simple co-existence of communities as separate as ever, but living without violence.

Benign Apartheid can look attractive for a number of reasons:

- The simple desire for safety
- The disdain, distaste or just lack of interest in the other community
- Conflict weariness and supposed political realism leading to the conviction that no more than peaceful co-existence is possible in Northern Ireland and therefore the pursuit of something more is a waste of time and possibly counter-productive.
- The contentment of church members who are fully and happily occupied with life in their own church community, their vision extending no further

The alternative vision for Benign Apartheid is that of RECONCILIATION.



## THE PYRAMID OF SECTARIAN PARTICIPATION

### Suggested Activities

#### JENGA GAME

- Aim(s)**
- To help us experience how we can participate in a destructive process at different levels all of which are important to the ultimate destructive outcomes.
  - To show how we can 'scapegoat' those of us who participate at the more blatantly destructive levels.

- Resources**
- The game of Jenga. This can be purchased for approx. £7.00 from most shops that sell toys.

- Time**
- Total: 45 min.
- Introduction of model 5-10 min
  - The average time for the game to reach the desired end is 15 min (includes introduction).
  - A basic discussion should take approximately 15-20 min

- Group:**
- This may work best with a smaller group and with people who are open to having a bit of fun.
  - As an alternative you could demonstrate the game briefly yourself and then discuss the questions.
  - With a larger group you could ask for volunteers to take part. The main requirement is that people can access the game quickly and comfortably. It may require an averagely steady hand at least at the start.
  - If small groups are used: group members take turns at representing their team.

Be careful to distinguish the Jenga tower from the Pyramid Model. The Jenga metaphor should not be taken beyond illustrating the above aims, it is not the same as the Pyramid Model.

- Method:**
- Introduce the Pyramid (see above)
  - Have the game set up in advance to avoid wasting time
  - Each player in turn takes one block from below the first three layers and places them on top to create a new layer. This continues until the structure collapses (see basic game instructions included with the Jenga game)

- To make the connection to scapegoating more real the group could decide on a sanction that will face the person who collapses the structure e.g.

- Making the tea
- Put the Jenga blocks away
- They have to apologise while standing in front of the group etc.





# Trunk & Branches



Learning points (to be read after the game):

- At the early stages people's actions are more subtle and are carried out within a relatively stable setting.
- As the game progresses people are participating in more unstable settings where the potential outcomes are more immediate.
- Eventually one person is the scapegoat for causing the destruction but this would not have been possible without all the levels of participation.

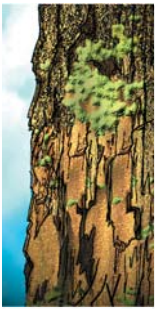
Questions:

- How did the last person feel?
- Who do we usually scapegoat when we talk about sectarianism?
- In what ways do people on the base of the pyramid support the system of sectarianism?
- In groups of 3 discuss examples from your own life or elsewhere of how this model of sectarianism has been challenged? E.g. what has helped people to act differently?

Feed back positive examples to the wider groups.

Other learning points:  
refer to:

- Information on the Pyramid Of Sectarianism Participation
- Benign Apartheid



## PAPER TOWER



**Aim(s)** • To illustrate the Pyramid of Participation model

**Time Total** 1 hr 15 min

- 5 min intro to model
- 5 min for explanation of task
- 5 min for pairs to plan their task
- 20 min for group to construct the tower
- 10 min feedback
- 15 min discussion in groups
- 15 min feedback

**Groups** :The tower building exercise may be good for groups wishing to promote relationship building and who have the time, energy, space etc. to make the towers. Some slight bending over may be involved for participants during construction.

**Resources** • Approx 2 newspapers per group, cello tape, scissors.

**Method:**

- Introduce the Pyramid
- Form pairs (preferably with people you do not know) to construct a 2 meter high tower using the materials provided. The tower should have a base no taller than half the height
- If you have a number of groups you could ask people to create towers with different bases i.e. some weak, some strong. You could do this easily by reducing the height specification of the base or raising the height specification of the tower.



# Trunk & Branches



- Questions:
- What challenges did you face in building the tower?
  - How important is the base in building the tower?

Read out the following learning points:

- the stronger the base the higher the top can go
- the top is the most volatile point but requires support from below
- the Pyramid of Sectarian Participation requires a base of support. The stronger the base the greater the destructive outcomes.

Group Questions:

Each pair should join to another pair and consider the following:

- How is the base of the Pyramid of Sectarianism made strong i.e. how do the majority of people support sectarianism?

NB this question can be more specific e.g.

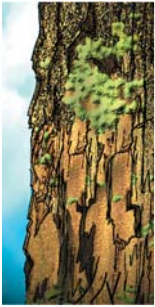
- how does your church support the pyramid?
- How do you collude in supporting the pyramid?

- Feedback answers to the wider group.

Quick Variation:

The facilitator presents a ready-made tower and learning points and then the groups discuss the questions above.

|       |   |        |        |
|-------|---|--------|--------|
| Time: | Total                                     | 40 min |        |
|       | Intro                                     |        | 5 min  |
|       | Presentation of model and learning points |        | 5 min  |
|       | Group questions                           |        | 15 min |
|       | Feedback                                  |        | 15 min |



## EXAMPLES OF PARTICIPATION

**Aim(s)** • To help people begin to recognize different levels of the Pyramid and how they may relate.

**Time**

|                      |         |
|----------------------|---------|
| Total                | 40 min  |
| • Intro              | 10 min  |
| • Sub-group task     | 15 min  |
| • Feedback questions | 15 min. |

**Resources:** Blue-tack/ cello-tape, large diagram of pyramid (flip chart or overhead projection of pyramid on wall which can have cello tape or Blue Tack placed on), small pieces of scrap paper, markers.

**Method:**

- Introduce the Pyramid model
- Draw the pyramid as large as possible on a flip chart or large piece of card or project onto the wall using an over head projector.
- Split the group into sub-groups
- The sub group task is to produce at least three statements or slogans that represent attitudes, actions and beliefs that can support the sectarian pyramid.

The sub group can work on slogans/statements in a number of ways (you choose):

- For all levels of the Pyramid
- For a particular level
- The Catholic and/or Protestant side of a level
- If the group is 'mixed' in terms of Catholic & Protestant then they could split into these groups to examine either their 'own' side or how they perceive the 'other' side.
- Some groups could examine the same level for comparison.

- A few examples can be provided e.g.

*"For God and Ulster"*

*"Tiocfaidh ar la"*

*"I don't want to get involved in all that 'political' stuff, I get on just fine with others"*

*"Oh, you don't go there"*

*"Their only crime was loyalty"*

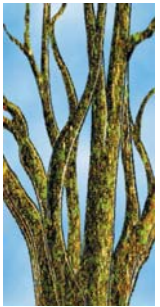
*"The Devil looks after his own"*

*"They deserved it"*

*"They are not really 'Christians'"*

*"It's the Politicians' fault"*

- The groups writes these on small, separate pieces of paper and when the task time is finished they attach them to the appropriate area of the pyramid.
- When all the statements are up, read them out.





# Trunk & Branches



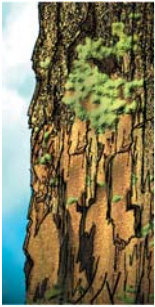
Certain areas are more difficult to summarise by statement e.g. they may more subtly support the Pyramid. This can be acknowledged and discussed e.g. **why is it difficult?**

## Questions

- Was it easy/hard for you to come up with the statements? Why?
- Did people find the slogans: offensive, recognizable, positive?
- Any other feelings people want to share?
- What strikes you about the statements for the different levels?
- Where might you (individual, group, institution) be placed?

## Learning Points:

- We all participate in the pyramid at different times and different ways (all be it unknowing and unwillingly) because we live in a sectarian system.
  - We can all do something to challenge the structure and to support the other levels to challenge the structure
- See:
- The Pyramid Learning Points



## RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTENTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES

A claim of purity of intent does not protect us from being judged to be acting or speaking in a Sectarian way. Even our best intentions can be distorted.

E.g.

- Moving yourself and your family out of a mixed residential area to live in one that is exclusively your own. The intention is good, for the safety of your family, and who could be faulted for doing so? The corporate effect of these individually sensible and blameless movements is to reinforce sectarianism. Sectarianism, as a system that can maintain itself by feeding on logical responses to situations it has created, is a wonder of adaptation.

There can be sectarian outcomes of our good intentions.





## RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTENTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES

Suggested exercises

### STORIES

Aim: To examine how intentions can be distorted

Time: Total 45 min

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| Intro and story                          | 15 min |
| Discussion                               | 10 min |
| Personal reflection and sharing in pairs | 10 min |
| Group Discussion                         | 10 min |

Method:

- Introduce Intentions and Consequences
- Read the Whale Boat story (or a story of your own)

Questions:

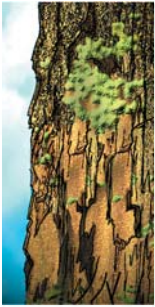
- What intentions were involved in the example?
- What were the consequences?
- What distorted the intentions?
- What information or experience could have helped those concerned act in a more constructive way?

Learning Points (for Whale boat story):

- Even though, in their own minds, the decision to stay away from the potential dangers of the unknown islands was a **LOGICAL RESPONSE**, their fear, prejudice and ignorance meant that much unnecessary damage was done.
- If the crew had had knowledge of the Society Islands through their fellow Whale Boaters or if they had explored this area themselves they would have been better placed to make decisions.
- The crew based their decision on prejudiced stereotypes of the Island people. They had never been in the position to encounter the true nature of the Polynesian peoples (some of whom did practice cannibalism, some of whom were very hospitable). In their haste to reject that which they feared they ended up acting out the worst of their fears: **cannibalism**.

- In groups consider:

- In what ways have we experienced good intentions being distorted in Northern Ireland?



## STORY

The following story is based on an actual event.

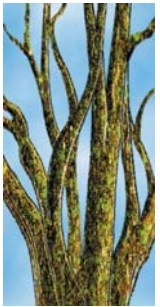
November 1820, in the middle of the South Pacific the crew of the sinking Nantucket whale ship Essex have a decision to make which will seal the fate of twenty men. Should they sail in their makeshift whaleboats towards the East and the coast of South America, which they know well, or towards the West and the unknown Society Islands?

To any modern-day sailor the choice would be obvious. The Society Islands were closer at hand and to aid their sails would be the Trade Winds blowing from the East. The coast of South America, on the other hand, lay 2000 miles further away, against the prevailing winds. To decide on this course would almost certainly mean facing unbearable suffering and more likely than not, death.

In the minds of the Captain and his Mates there could have been only one thing stopping them from choosing the later course of action. The Society Islands were shrouded in fear and prejudice for them. Not only had Nantucket whaling ships never been to the Islands before, there were rumours of 'wild' and 'savage' natives who mutilated, butchered and cannibalised visitors.

Not many years after this incident the Society Islands became known as the friendliest and most hospitable Islands in the South Pacific. The decision to head for South America was sadly distorted by the ignorance, prejudice and fears of the crew and their time and place in history. The result was the slow death and cannibalism that saw only eight men of the Essex survive. In the words of one young survivor (Thomas Nickerson):

*"I can only say there was gross ignorance or a great oversight somewhere, which cost many...fine seamen their lives."*







## THE FIELD PLAY

(see Community)

**Aim:** To explore a situation involving intentions and outcomes in a Sectarian System.

**Time:** (Depends on the writing of a court room ending)

|                      |        |
|----------------------|--------|
| Intro:               | 5 min  |
| Play                 | 15 min |
| Discussion           | 15 min |
| Small group exercise | 15 min |
| Feedback             | 10 min |
| Total                | 1 hr   |

**Groups:** For groups interested in acting/drama/having a bit of fun. Can work with large or small groups as long as people are prepared to participate and you have the actors prepared well before hand.

**Resources:** Actors, copies of the play

**Method:**

- Introduce Intentions and Consequences
- Introduce the play
- Actors play their parts
- When they are finished yell 'CUT'

**Discussion:**

- How did the actors feel
- Did this story or some of the sectarian statements remind you of a story of your own or ones you have heard before?
- Did you identify with any of the characters in the story?
- Did you think the characters were true to life?

**In small groups:**

- What are the intentions of each character?
- What are the consequences of their actions?

Feedback answers to the wider group?

**Next Stage Option:** So Billy and Cormac bring their case to court.

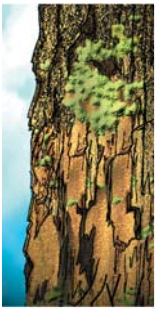
**Time:** 30 min

- Form groups of 3-4 to write the court scene ending involving Billy, Cormac, a Judge, and some sheep.

**Feedback:**

- Read the court scenes
- Why did your group arrive at this ending?

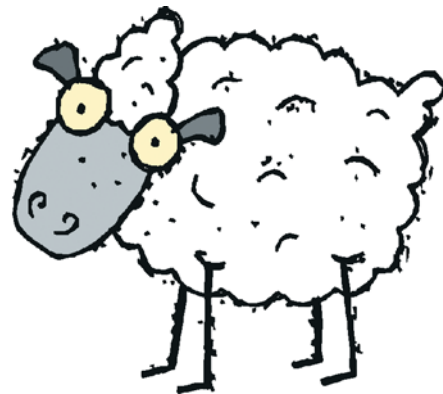
**Learning Points:** • See Intentions and Consequences and Sectarianism as a System



## Short play: The Field

**Characters:** Billy, a Protestant farmer; Cormac, a neighbouring Catholic farmer; some sheep; and the judge

This play is set somewhere in County Antrim, on a farm. Billy is taking his sheep down the hill to graze on his land and as usual wants as a short cut to go through a field belonging to a neighbouring farmer called Cahal. Cahal's son Cormac has recently inherited the farm as his father has retired. Cormac has decided to make a few changes.



**Billy:** What's this? The gate's closed, chained and padlocked? What is going on? I'll have to find out about this.

**Cormac:** Hello there, is there a problem?

**Billy:** There certainly is. I need to get my sheep to the field and this gate's locked and I can't get through.

**Cormac:** This field I'm standing in belongs to me and is not a thoroughfare for every Tom Dick or Harry who wants to come through.

**Billy:** Now, wait a wee minute. You know who you're talking to ye wee scamp. Your father and I have known each other for years and have an understanding.

**Cormac:** My father is not in charge here now. I am, and you're trespassing if you come through that gate.

**Billy:** Look son my field is just at the end of yours. It'll take me five minutes to walk to it and I'd be there and back in the length of time its taking us to have this conversation.

**Cormac:** First of all, I'm not your son. Secondly the sooner you get walking up that road again and round to your field the proper way by the regular route the quicker your sheep will get to their pasture.

**Billy:** Now come on if I have to walk all the way round there with my sheep they won't be fit for the pasture. And have you thought about all the weight they're going to lose on the way with all this extra walking – sure they won't be worth a ha'penny at the market.

**Cormac:** That has nothing to do with me. Those oul sheep of yours have been rampaging down this field for years now. You never took control of them and my father was just taken advantage of. I don't want my sheep to be intimidated, and frightened twice every day by yours. I only know this field is mine and you're not getting on it any more.



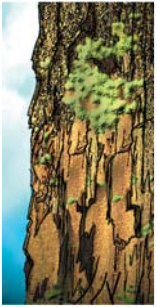
# Trunk & Branches



**Billy:** That's nonsense an' you know it. Sure our fathers and our grandfathers agreed on this, and the sheep were happy enough. What's all this about your sheep being intimidated? They've been getting on all right. Why all the fuss now?

**Cormac:** Look I'm not arguing with you. Things are different now. There's nothing more to say.

**Billy:** And you're not going to get away with this ye boy – I'll see you in court.



## Discussion

**Aim:** To explore elements of identity that can be distorted by the sectarian system

|              |                 |               |
|--------------|-----------------|---------------|
| <b>Time:</b> | <b>Total:</b>   | <b>40 min</b> |
|              | <b>Intro:</b>   | <b>10 min</b> |
|              | <b>Task</b>     | <b>15 min</b> |
|              | <b>Feedback</b> | <b>15 min</b> |

### Method:

- Intro Intentions and Consequences
- In small groups decide on a form of identity that has both Protestant and Catholic expressions e.g. church, sports, culture (language, music, traditional dance etc)
- Think of as many ways that this identity is usually built-up, kept going, maintained (record these for feedback)

### Feedback Questions:

- What were the groups you identified?
- What sort of things build-up these groups?
- Of the ways you have listed which ones involve, or actively consider, the concerns of the other side of the division in Northern Ireland?
- Can you think of examples of positive intentions that do actively consider the 'other side'?

### Learning points:

- Review Intentions and Consequences
- Examine Bi-focal vision







## HOPE EXERCISES

What does a community/ society that is reconciling look like?

**Aim:** To help us move beyond resignation, i.e. that the situation is hopeless, when examining sectarianism.

**Group:** When there is a danger that the learning experience is becoming too depressing and demotivating it may help to try the following.

**Time:** 15-30 min (you may wish to use only some parts of this exercise)

**Method:**

- In small groups (3-4 each) discuss what sort of community you would like to have in 10 years time.
- Feedback in the wider group

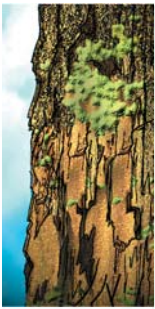
- In small groups: Think of examples of major change that have occurred throughout the world e.g.

- End of South African Apartheid,
- European Union after two world wars,
- End of the 'Cold War'

- Discuss examples of change that you find encouraging in Northern Ireland  
And/or

Share what has helped you personally to deal with sectarianism in your own life

- Feedback what you gained from the discussions.



## DYNAMICS AND VARIETIES OF SECTARIANISM

The hardest type of sectarianism to see is one's own.  
 What others identify as sectarian in us, we see as loyalty to truth, justice, and community.

Sectarianism as a destructive way of dealing with difference.  
 Two major categories:

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| ① sectarianism as the magnifying of difference<br>▼                | ② sectarianism as the minimising of difference<br>▼   |  |
| sectarianism as an outcome of the search for truth and purity<br>▼ | sectarianism as a failure to recognise that every new inclusion creates a new opportunity for exclusion | sectarianism as a failure to recognise and respect difference<br>▼ |
| Separation   |   | patronising   assimilating   |

The groupings largely keep people within their range. Communication with different traditions can sometimes be easier.





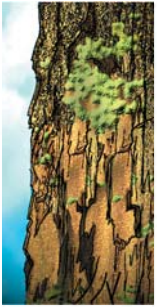
## Intra-tradition sectarianism

Significant tensions and conflict can exist within groups.

It can be useful to look at types of sectarianism in terms of groups as matching pairs occupying opposite ends of a continuum, based on groupings that share similar elements:

| Religious               |                       | Political |             |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Conservative Protestant | Conservative Catholic | Loyalist  | Republican  |
| ↕                       | ↕                     | ↕         | ↕           |
| Liberal Protestant      | Liberal Catholic      | Unionist  | Nationalist |

The two ends pull towards themselves (magnetized) and therefore pull on people in the middle.



## DYNAMICS AND VARIETIES OF SECTARIANISM

### Suggested Activities

#### STEREOTYPES

**Aim:**

- To create trust by being open with one another about each other's stereotypes.

**Groups:**

Although this activity does not focus directly on varieties of sectarianism it can be a useful activity for cross-community groups to work through in order for them to prepare to discuss differences at a deeper and more personal, emotive level.

**Time:**

30 minutes

**Materials:**

Flipchart and markers

**Method:**

- Tell the members of the group that we are going to draw a Protestant and a Catholic. Give them names eg. Billy and Seamus or Rosie and Sinead.
- Ask for volunteers from either community to come one by one to draw the head, or the body, the clothes, the props eg. flags, symbols, badges, tattoos etc. of the character of their choice.
- When complete ask people if they are happy about the characters. If anyone isn't happy allow them to discuss how they would adjust, re-draw etc.

Assure people that as they continue with the group they can leave their 'stereotypes' in the safe keeping of Billy and Seamus, or Rosie and Sinead. This helps us to interact in groups without suspicion and without denying elements of our identity, which have been brought out into the open and been generally acknowledged and accepted by both groups.

**Questions:**

How did people feel?  
How did they choose which character to draw?

**Discussion/Learning Points:**

- Discussion will focus on the fact that we have a lot to learn about the perceptions of each other.
- We can agree or disagree with the stereotypes and nevertheless they sometimes identify a particular community.
- Certain labels may be very important to us. This needs to be acknowledged and respected.







## WHAT WE SHARE, WHAT SEPARATES US

*Even though we share many things we exist in a situation that divides us.  
This is not unique, it happens all over the world.*

**Aim:** To examine the concept of identities in opposition as well as what we share and what separates us in Northern Ireland.

**Time:** a. 15 min  
b. 30 min (Task 15 min, Feedback Discussion 15 min)

**Groups:** Activities a., and b. can be done together or separately, depending on time restrictions. If the group is very large then people could discuss their answers to activity b. in small groups.

**Resources:** Handouts of the Worksheets

**Method:** a.  
Use the handout with identities from different areas around the world:  
• Match by drawing an arrow between what you think are the identities in opposition.

**Learning Points:**

- When identities are in opposition they are often vulnerable to conflict situations and destructive systems such as sectarianism.

- We can share identities with others (e.g. work, clubs etc) but when opposing identities are raised conflict can be brought close to the surface. We may often avoid raising these parts of our identity. This can lead to further separation.

b.

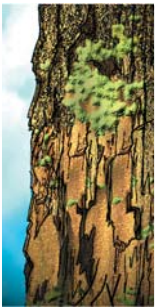
- Use the 'What We Share, What Separates us' Handout.
- Fill in the spaces (if you can) on the handout with: events, symbols, identities, activities etc associated with the subject for each of the headings.
- This can be done individually or in small groups.
- Feedback answers in the main group.

**Feedback Questions:**

- Did people find this exercise difficult? Why?
- How are these differences important and/or not important to you?
- What sort of things are shared?

**Learning Points:**

- Our differences can be important to us and cannot always be hidden or 'fudged'.
- Although we share many things with those who belong to opposing identities, when conflict arises or there is the potential for it to arise we may pull away from them or avoid contentious subjects.
- Contentious subjects are usually those that are most important to us.
- See: the Two Major Categories of Sectarianism in the intro to this chapter.



## IDENTITIES IN OPPOSITION

ISRAELI

HUTU

INDIAN

BOER

SERBIAN

CANADIAN

N.IRE PROTESTANT

ETHNIC ALBANIAN

TSUTSI

PALESTINIAN

SOUTH AFRICAN

N.IRE CATHOLIC

FRENCH CANADIAN

PAKISTANI

JEW

GENTILE



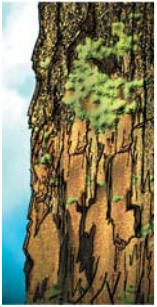
CAN YOU THINK OF ANY OTHERS?



# Trunk & Branches

## WHAT WE SHARE, WHAT'S DIFFERENT

| SUBJECT              | SHARED                  | Specifically<br>PROTESTANT | Specifically<br>CATHOLIC | OTHER                                       |
|----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Example<br>Transport | <i>Public Transport</i> | <i>School Buses</i>        | <i>School Buses</i>      | <i>Wealthier People<br/>are more mobile</i> |
| Summer<br>Time       |                         |                            |                          |   |
| Roads                |                         |                            |                          |   |
| The Color<br>Black   |                         |                            |                          |   |
| Sundays              |                         |                            |                          |   |
| 1916                 |                         |                            |                          |   |
| A Funeral            |                         |                            |                          |   |
| A Marriage           |                         |                            |                          |   |
| Wealth               |                         |                            |                          |   |
| St Patrick's<br>Day  |                         |                            |                          |   |
| Sports               |                         |                            |                          |   |



## WITHIN-GROUP EXERCISE

**Aim:** To explore what we find positive and what we find negative about our own groups.

**Time:** 45 min

**Groups:**

- For 'cross-community' groups (although it could be adapted for other differences).
- The group must be ready and able to deal with a degree of difference and possible conflict.
- The separation of Protestants and Catholics could cause people to feel uncomfortable, this may need acknowledgement.
- If people do not want to identify themselves as Catholic or Protestant ask them to form another group, they must identify themselves as a group in some other way, then carry out the same process.

**Method:**

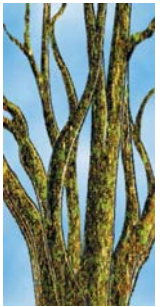
- Form different identity groups e.g. Catholic and Protestant.
- Each group:
- Individuals think of 3 things that you find positive about your identity group and 3 things you would like to change, discuss and develop a group list.
- Present a list back to the wider group.

**Feedback Questions:**

- What was each group's experience of discussing and making the list?
- How did it feel to be represented in this way?

**Learning Points:**

- We do not always agree with those with whom we share a broad tradition with.
- See: Intra-Tradition Sectarianism in the introduction to this chapter.





# Trunk & Branches



## WHERE DO I STAND?

**Aim:** To examine our relationships within and between broad traditions.

### Group:

This exercise can be done in two ways:

- If the group is ready to get personal then they situate themselves according to how they personally feel about the character/statement.
- If this level of 'realness' is too much then each person can pick a character/statement out of the hat before hand and then represent this role in the exercise.

**Time:** 30 min – 1hr (depends on how many examples are examined and the level of debate)

### Method:

- Someone volunteers to situate themselves somewhere in the room and reads out their character/statement (picked out of a hat then and there or given before hand- see above)
- Others in the group situate themselves according to how much they can 'relate' to this character or how comfortable they are with the character or statement.
- Discuss the reaction to the character using the questions below.
- Repeat with another character.

### Questions:

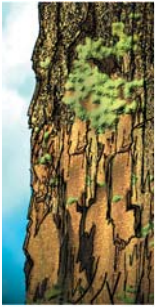
- Why did you stand where you did?
- How does the person representing the character feel?

### De-brief:

- What: feelings, behaviour, relationships, issues did this activity raise?
- Carry out a 'feelings' exercise if needed.

### Learning Points:

- We respond to differences in different ways. This may depend on our background, our experiences etc.
- We do not always agree with those whom we share a broad tradition with.



## List of Characters/statements:

- UDA member
- UVF member
- Sinn Fein Assembly member
- Member of the Real IRA
- IRA member
- A Unionist Assembly member
- A 'traditional' Presbyterian Minister
- A Unionist scientist
- A Loyalist factory worker
- A 'traditional' 'Catholic' Priest
- A Conservative, Catholic lawyer
- A 'Non-denominational' policewoman
- An Ecumenical member of a female religious order
- A Protestant farmer
- A Catholic farmer
- An ecumenical Methodist
- An unemployed Nationalist
- An ex-member of the security forces

"Where I live in the inner-city there is a strong community but a lot of violence."

"Where I live people get on together just fine, we keep to ourselves mostly and sectarianism isn't a problem."

"Where I live there is little or no transport and I feel quite isolated."

"We have a real 'heart' for the people of this area."

"We feel very strongly that people are turning their back on God."

"I am interested in Moving Beyond Sectarianism but I do not want to be ecumenical."

"I want to help them move beyond their sectarianism."



# Trunk & Branches



## WHEN DO I FEEL EXCLUDED?

**Aim:** To explore a time when we have felt excluded and to discuss the feelings involved.

**Time:**

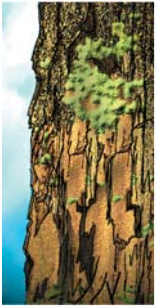
|                       |        |
|-----------------------|--------|
| <b>Total:</b>         | 30 min |
| Individual reflection | 5 min  |
| Sharing in pairs      | 10 min |
| Main group discussion | 15 min |

**Groups:** Works best with a small group. This allows for more manageable discussion and flip-chart work.

**Resources:** Pens, paper

**Method:**

- Individually think of a time when you have felt excluded. Make a note of this, - How did you feel?
- Share this with another person.
- Back in the main group share the sort of feelings associated with exclusion.
- Introduce the Two main types of Sectarianism (see Topic Intro).









## INTRODUCTION

**'and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations'** (Rev. 22 v 2)

The leaves are the food factories of the tree. Photosynthesis is the process used to produce food from the sunlight and air around them, and the water and nutrients absorbed from the soil through their roots.

When they fall in the autumn, the nutrients trapped in them are carried to the ground to be absorbed again by the roots.

**Aim of this section:**

The focus of this section is on looking forward BEYOND SECTARIANISM: how this may be done, and what it may look like.

i.e. What leaves do we want? And how can we create the conditions for them to flourish?

**Areas to be examined:**

- Dealing with difference
- Identifying sectarianism and dealing with it



## DEALING WITH DIFFERENCE

This chapter examines other dynamics involved in sectarianism, such as:

- Reaching out and encountering difference
- Dealing with difference

The destructive patterns of relating mentioned earlier in this resource can be contrasted with the Model for Dealing With Difference.

This section is not meant to point the finger at any particular group. It is about helping us all to see how sectarianism may operate so that we can be aware of when and how it is affecting us. This can assist us in finding more positive ways of relating.

## Understanding Reconciliation

Positive needs for belonging, identity and the free expression of difference are basic to our humanness; that we distort these things by expressing them negatively over and against the 'other' is the problem.

Difference is not always bad. How we deal with difference is important; whether or not we are prepared to take responsibility for the consequences of our actions/ lack of action, beliefs and attitudes, is important.



The point of positively dealing with difference is so that we can move towards reconciliation. One way to describe reconciliation, in Christian terms, is as the processes and structures necessary to bring all the elements of the cosmos into positive and life-giving relationship with God and with one another.

Some approaches to sectarianism:

- Focusing too exclusively on immediate practical manifestations at the expense of addressing the more long-term question of tackling its roots.
- Demonising those seen to be acting in an obviously sectarian manner allowing the majority to pretend they are not implicated.
- The non-sectarian approach – ‘sectarian free zones’. Simply by being ‘inclusive’, and putting a non-sectarian policy in place, ignores the pervasiveness of sectarianism as a system and the need to challenge those of us who think we are non-sectarian, to name and face our responsibility for contributing to the system.

Calling people BIGOTS is just another negative label in a society full of them. A better way of responding could be to say that ‘I think the person is supporting sectarianism by...’

The path of moving beyond sectarianism must be one of transforming or redeeming not smashing.

## A MODEL FOR DEALING WITH DIFFERENCE

There are two keys in the process of helping people to deal with difference:

- To help them grasp that agreement and acceptance are not the same.
- To help them to identify other positive ways of relating such as toleration and empathy which stop short of acceptance.

Rejection:-

Contrary to popular perception rejection is not a state of no relationship. It is possible to agree with some of the attitudes or positions of those we reject within the framework of an overall destructive and oppositional relationship.

- Rejection expresses itself in patterns that can broadly be described as either ‘ignoring’ or as ‘antagonism’.
- Rejection as Ignoring – In this mode we behave as if the other does not exist or impinge on our world.
- Rejection as antagonism – In its active form, this is most readily recognised in all forms of attack whether physical or verbal. In its passive form, it is expressed in a rigidity of view and a refusal to engage even when the other seeks or offers engagement.





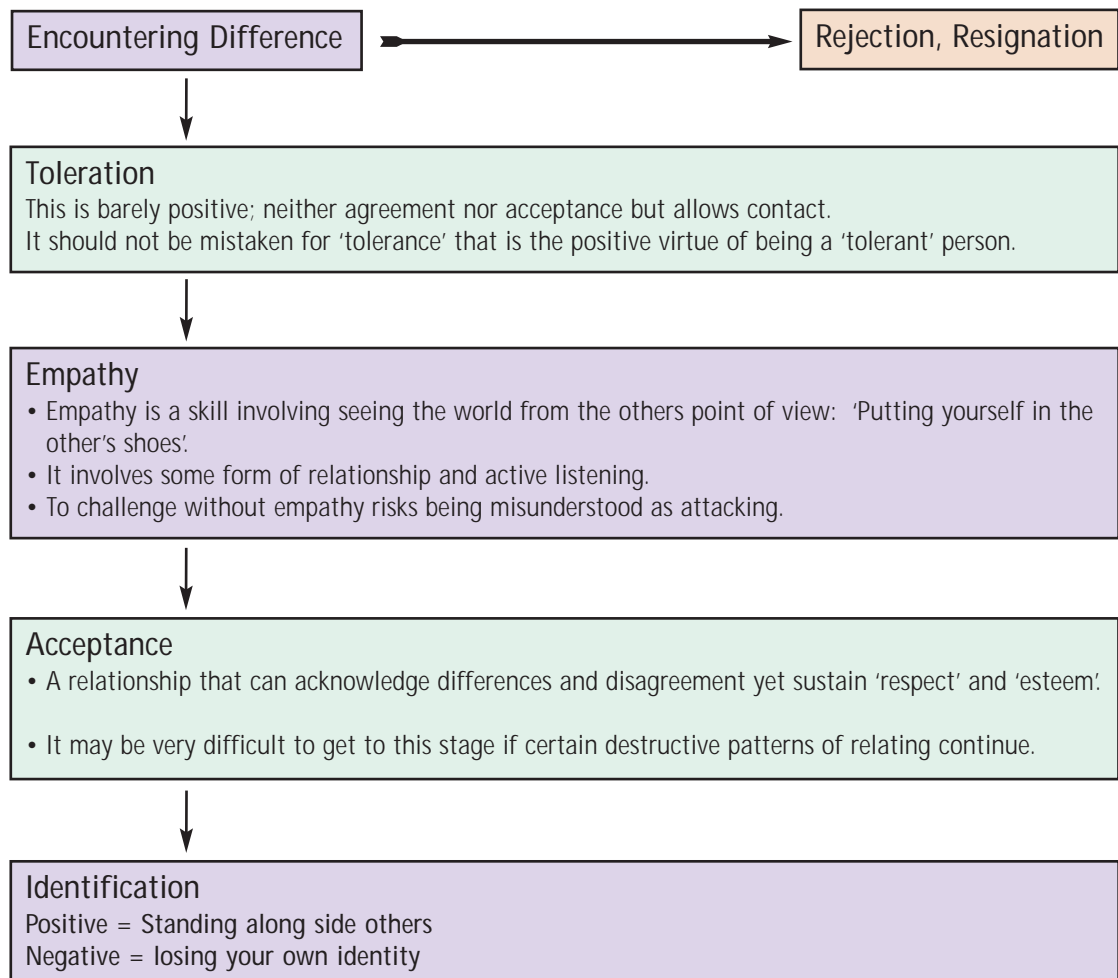
### Resignation:-

The mode in which we view the present state of difference leading to conflict and division as the way the world is. We believe that the present situation cannot be changed, so trying is a waste of energy, and we must learn to live with it.

- It leads easily to a justification for adopting benign apartheid as a means of resolving the situation.
- Resignation is a downward spiral that tends to accentuate the need for unity and conformity within our own group.
- It is a very difficult position out of which to break because it saps the creative energy and hope needed for envisaging another way forward.



## Dealing with Difference Process Model



Progress away from resignation and rejection requires:-

- Some commitment to better relationships.
- Discussion on appropriate ways of relating to each other.
- Neither minimizing nor magnifying differences. If real differences exist then they need not be acknowledged and their potential destructive outcomes need to be 'mitigated'.

Conditions that encourage people to move out of rejection and resignation modes:-

- Changes such as the Belfast Agreement or changes in personal circumstances.
- Recognising negative consequences.
- Seeing positive gain.
- Support that minimises the risks involved in encountering the other.



## NEGOTIATION and MITIGATION

Difficulties in relationships or in cooperation can arise when people encounter elements in another's tradition which are offensive or hurtful to them, but which are deemed by the other to be elements that cannot be changed, compromised or given up. The question then is how can we proceed to develop positive relationships?

### NEGOTIATION

Negotiation is agreeing a shared way to proceed that involves all parties compromising on their positions and giving up things that are valuable to them for the sake of agreement.

Negotiation can be very positive and necessary for establishing better ways of relating. For some people, however, any negotiation could be too difficult, because certain things are considered non-negotiable, i.e., they are considered too important to lose, change or compromise. Mitigation may be the only option.

### MITIGATION

Mitigation is the scheme we want to propose for dealing constructively with situations where conflicting non-negotiables lead to sectarian consequences and yet cannot be compromised.

Mitigation maintains the problematic belief or practice but seeks creative ways to reduce the destructive consequences.

A defining feature of mitigation is that it seeks to lessen destructive consequences arising from within a tradition by appealing to resources from that same tradition. By contrast negotiation typically works by applying some principle of judgment that is external to and higher than the tradition.

Possibilities for dealing with non-negotiables :

- What appeared non-negotiable is not – NEGOTIATION is possible.
- Compromise is impossible – MITIGATION is needed

Making negotiables into non-negotiables can be described in Christian terms as Idolatry.







## BI-FOCAL VISION

Bi-Focal vision is a tool for helping us to move beyond sectarianism, with its over-simplified yes/no, /black/white, either/or habits of thought.

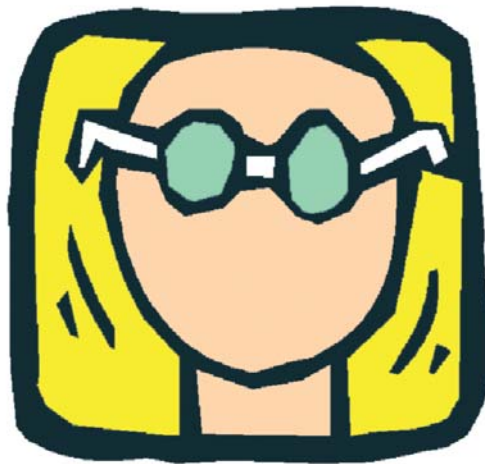
Some opponents of sectarianism try to respond to it by simple contradiction: whatever sectarianism does, they will do the opposite. But the opposite of an over-simplification is often an over-simplification itself.

Challenging sectarianism requires not contradiction but 'bifocal vision', the practice of seeing two things at the same time.

Bifocal vision requires not so much brain-power as a new framework of thinking. Intelligence never protected anyone from accepting the sectarian framework, they just thought within it and applied it in a more sophisticated way.

Anyone can adopt the framework of bifocal vision. It is having the capacity to keep several things in focus at once, what James Joyce called having two thinks at the same time.

The table gives examples of how it might work



## Bifocal Vision

| SECTARIANISM   | BIFOCAL VISION  |
|--|---|
| sectarianism is out there, it is someone else's responsibility                 | sectarianism is out there<br>sectarianism is our responsibility   |
| sectarianism is a matter of intentions   | sectarianism is a matter of intentions<br>sectarianism is a matter of consequences  |
| diversity is a threat to be rejected   | diversity is potentially enriching<br>we have a range of strategies for dealing constructively with expressions of diversity that we cannot accept as enriching |
| difference cuts all the way down—we are 'opposite religions', we share nothing | difference is real<br>there are always shared qualities beneath difference  |
| maximise difference  | difference is real<br>sharing is real   |
| minimise difference  | sharing is real<br>difference is real   |
| Exclusion  | inclusion<br>recognition that every new inclusion creates the possibility of a new exclusion  |
| false either/or choices  | both/and reasoning<br>either/or reasoning   |
| our enemy is a demon   | we have enemies<br>our enemy is a human being, made in the image of God   |
| truth claims   | truth claims are good and necessary<br>some truth claims are dangerous and must be mitigated  |





## DEALING WITH DIFFERENCE

### Suggested Activities

#### REACHING OUT

##### Intro:

There is significance in linking the idea of 'reaching out to others' and 'dealing with difference'.

- Firstly, as individuals we are all different and as we reach out beyond ourselves we will immediately encounter other people's difference.
- Reaching out happens in a context (e.g. sectarianism in Northern Ireland) and this context brings its own challenges.



How we deal with difference when it is encountered is one of the backbones of the Bible experience. Jesus often encountered differences or presented differences to his own community and religious culture.

#### REACHING OUT IN THE CONTEXT OF NORTHERN IRELAND

Whether we like it or not we live in Northern Ireland: a deeply divided society. Even if we can separate ourselves from the day- to -day obvious signs of the divisions- our lives, communities, cultures and identity are shaped in part by our:

- Histories
- Society
- Cultures

Reaching out also takes place in this context and to ignore it means to ignore a significant element of our lives and the strong feelings which can so quickly come to the surface when we encounter controversy, competition, difference.



#### 'Reaching out' (consists of two exercises: a. and b.)

Groups: For groups who have a particular interest in 'reaching out'

##### a.

**Aim:** The aim of this exercise is to help us examine what we mean by 'reaching out' and what we are trying to achieve.

**Time:** 15- 30 min (depending on whether small group discussions take place)

**Method:**

**NB:** The questions can be directed towards general concerns or for specific situations depending on the group needs and make-up.



• Introduction (see previous page)

• Ask:

What do I think of when I hear the term 'Reaching Out'?

Some examples include:

- Bringing people to our church
- Bringing people to faith in God and Jesus
- Including people
- Meeting the different needs of people
- Meeting people who are different to me
- Keeping our group 'alive'

- What particular concepts are important to me? (Why?)

- Are there any particular groups that we (as groups or individuals) wish to reach out to?

b.

Aim: To examine the influences, challenges and boundaries in 'reaching out'

Time: 30 min

Method: 

- Introduce the reaching out model.
- If there are groups that share an identity and wish to examine 'reaching out' they could work together to answer the questions.

Questions:

a = What influences us to reach out ?

b = What boundaries exist for us at the moment e.g.

- physical
- time
- concerns
- money
- knowledge
- emotions
- bad experiences
- conflicts
- different cultures
- numbers/attendance

What boundaries may exist for others?

c = What might influence others to 'meet' with us e.g.

- a 'safe' environment
- common interests
- listening
- partnerships
- equality





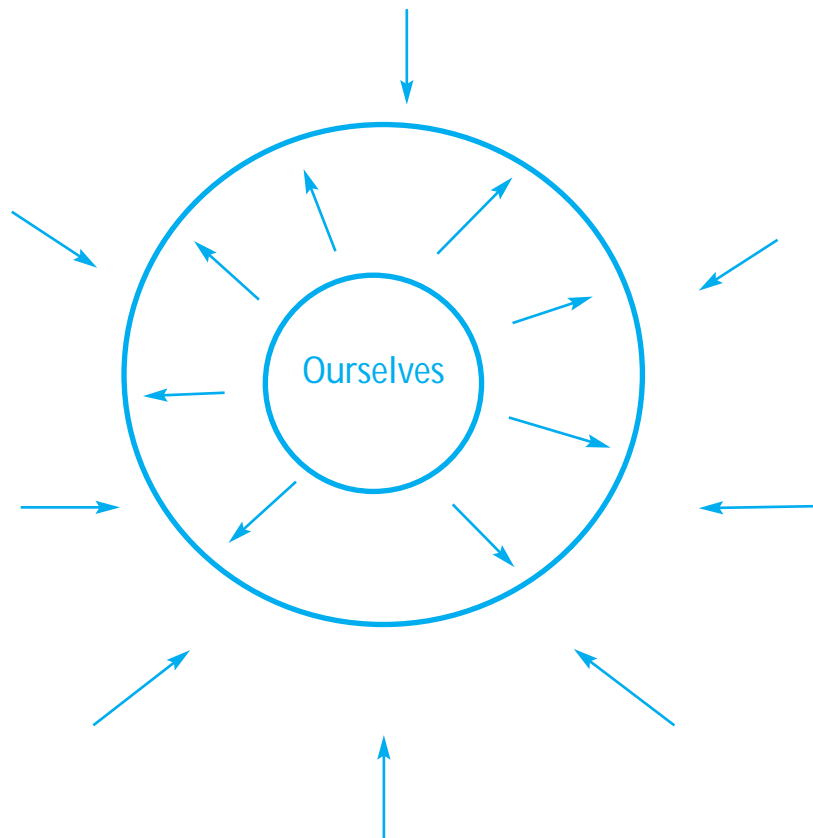


### Learning Points

- These questions can start to form the backbone for Groups' strategies for 'Reaching Out'.
- We need to develop ways of reaching out that promote better ways of dealing with difference and take heed of the sectarian system.
- See:
  - Dealing with Difference model
  - Bi-focal vision



### 'Reaching Out' Model



### Explanation:

- The inner circle represents me and/or the group I belong to.
- The 1st set of arrows (pointing out) represent what influences us to reach out towards 'others'.
- The 2nd circle represents boundaries to positive encounter that exist for 'us' and for those we are reaching out to.
- The 2nd set of arrows (pointing in) represent things which might influence others to meet with us.



## GREETING DIFFERENCE

(Based on an exercise of the same name from the Publication 'Ireland: All Different All Equal' (1995) adapted with kind permission of Development Education for Youth (DEFY)- see copyright acknowledgements.)

**Aim:** Exploring encounter with difference in a fun, simple way. It will probably work best as a 'warm up' exercise.

**Groups:** This exercise requires an amount of familiarity, daring and good humor within the group.

**Time:** Total 25 min

### Method:

- Each person is given a different role that consists of a greeting style from a particular culture (see over).
- Move around the room and greet others according to your role.
- Allow the other person to greet you according to their role then say farewell and go on to greet someone else.
- When every one has greeted at most 10 people return to your seat.

### Questions:

- What did people find difficult about this exercise?
- What was enjoyable?
- Were some of the greetings more difficult for us than others?

### Learning Points:

- Encountering difference can sometimes cause anxiety or feelings of foolishness and 'discomfort'.



## Greetings:

Eskimo  
 French  
 Dutch/Swiss  
 Irish/British  
 Brazilian Men  
 Russian  
 Indian  
 Parts of South Africa  
 Tanzanian

Rub Noses  
 A peck on both cheeks  
 3 pecks on alternate cheeks  
 Shake Hands  
 Shake right hand, while patting the other man on the shoulder  
 Hug Warmly  
 Place hands together and bow  
 Slap each hand and bump hips  
 Shake hands 3 times, 1st and 3rd as in Irish/British above, 2nd as at the beginning of arm wrestling.





## WEAVING IDENTITIES



**Aim:** To assist people in exploring and sharing about diversity of culture in Northern Ireland.

**Groups:** It works best with a group that has plenty of time.

**Resources:** A1-A2 size paper or piece of material, material 'scraps', colored paper, magazines, glue/ safety pins, pins, scissors

- A store of 'cultural symbols'/'badges of identity' (see the diagram)
- small pieces of paper and colored pencils.

**Time:** 2 hrs

- Method:**
- The weave is approximately A1 size (e.g. small table cloth) and can be designed by the group or prepared before hand by the facilitator.
  - It is best to have a sheet of cardboard or a large piece of fabric as a base.
  - The weave itself can be made from materials or paper in colors or shapes that have significance for Northern Ireland e.g. orange, green, blue, red, tartan; in the shape of a cross, a house, a circle etc.







- The weave can be designed by the group. This process may produce discussion points e.g.
  - why do people choose the colours of the weave and the shape as they do?
- Glue the weave to the cardboard or pin to the material (see diagram for an example).
- The next step requires a number of different badges, pieces of text, photographs and other items. These items will need to be gathered before hand by the facilitator or the group could bring them for this exercise. They should be representative of a range of cultures/traditions e.g. churches, Christian traditions, , clubs, charities, ethnic minorities etc.
- Members of the group may also like to make their own icons using small pieces of paper, markers, pencils, pens, scissors magazines etc.
- Examine the items. People pick up an item and place it anywhere on the tapestry using the safety pins to pin directly on if needed or they can be placed on. (Small curtain hoops can be attached to the base and used for attaching the safety –pins}.
- Although it may not be possible to keep what the group creates you may wish to photograph it, if everyone agrees.



- Discussion
- Share why you chose a particular item to place on the tapestry:
  - What does it mean for you?
  - What items were left off and why?

#### Learning Points:

- The society we live in is made up of many different cultures and experiences that share a space.
- Sometimes these different cultures don't relate very well to each other and sometimes we don't even know what the other's experience means to them. We may avoid the other cultures as much as possible in order to avoid the difficulty involved in encountering them.



## EXAMPLE



fig. 1 Layout materials to be used, design then cut and lay out the Weave



fig. 2 Pin down the Weave that has been designed.



fig. 3 Attach or place Icons/badges on the tapestry.



fig. 4 Discussion regarding the cultural symbols.



## MANA SIMULATION GAME



**Aim:** To explore feelings and experiences relating to encountering difference and to introduce the model for Dealing with Difference.

**Time:**

|                             |              |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>1 hr:</b> |
| Intro, brief and background | 5 min        |
| Group preparation           | 15 min       |
| Summit                      | 20 min       |
| De-brief and discussion     | 20 min       |

**Groups:** For groups with time and energy to take part in a simulation game. Whatever the age of the participants they need to be prepared to take part and enter into the spirit of role-play.

**Resources:** Briefing sheets, Stones or something to represent stones.

**Background:**

- See the Briefing Sheets
- The dynamics involved in this exercise are meant to represent some of those we may expect to encounter when dealing with difference.
- The facilitator may particularly wish to highlight the following learning points:
  - Listening and empathy are key areas in the early part of the process
  - In Negotiation losses and gains need to be considered
  - An alternative to losing what we want to keep can be to mitigate the possible destructive outcomes
  - All sides have a responsibility to participate and to not only consider themselves.





*Mana: The New Zealand Maori word for 'spirit', 'life force', 'strength of character'*

**Method:**

- Give every person a 'stone'
- Read the common brief and explain the format for the experience.
- Split up into 3 groups and give each group their role.
- Each group has a particular role to bring to the Summit.
- Each group will spend time in their groups before the Summit to carry out tasks that will prepare them.
- The Summit should last no longer than 20 min and each group should have an opportunity to present their ideas. There will then be a general time of negotiation to reach a decision.
- The facilitator can act as the Chairperson for the discussion.



**Debrief and discussion:**

- Stop the Summit at an appropriate moment.
- Each group in turn shares how they experienced the exercise.
- Ask individuals what issues/ideas were raised for them at the summit.



**Suggested Discussion Questions:**

- Did people within a group want to do different things?
- What were the groups prepared to give up/ not prepared to give up?
- What is it like for the different groups when one group does not communicate verbally?
- What options were available to reach a decision?



**Learning Points:**

- Introduce:
- Negotiation and Mitigation
  - Model for Dealing with difference







## Brief

### Group 1

The peoples of Mana are in great danger. Their land is losing its energy and beginning to freeze.

Mana has traditionally produced its warmth through 'Stones' that everybody is born with. These 'stones' are now losing their energy. The only thing that seems to work is combining the stones. This produces a greater amount of heat energy and helps prevent energy from being lost.



There is to be a major **Emergency Summit Meeting** with representatives from the three main ethnic groups of Mana meeting together to decide on what to do. These groups are:

- |         |                  |
|---------|------------------|
| Group 1 | The Manak people |
| Group 2 | The Manu people  |
| Group 3 | The Mana people  |

Group 1 will create a structure that theoretically generates and maintain warmth. The structure is a *Pyramid*.



### Reasons:

- The pyramid forms the strongest shape with little heat loss.
- They believe this structure best represents the nature of their God i.e. the structure heads towards a single point and has a solid foundation.

### Pre-Summit Tasks:

- Spend 5 min discussing in your group how to best construct the pyramid and give it a try.
- At the Summit you will promote your idea and try to convince group 3 to give you their pebbles to make it work.
- Decide on who will be your main spokes people and demonstrators.



The Summit should last no longer than 20 min and should result in a decision on the way forward for the planet.

Each group should have an opportunity to present their ideas then a general time of negotiation to reach a decision.



## Brief

### Group 2

The Peoples of **Mana** are in great danger. Their land is losing its energy and beginning to freeze.

Mana has traditionally produced its warmth through 'Stones' that everybody is born with. These 'stones' are now losing their heat energy faster than new warmth can be produced. The only thing that seems to work is the combining of the stones. This produces a greater amount of heat energy.

There is to be a major **Emergency Summit Meeting** with representatives from the three main ethnic groups meeting together to decide on what to do. These groups are:

- Group 1      The Manak people
- Group 2      The Manu people
- Group 3      The Mana people

Group 2      wants to create a structure to generate warmth from the stones. The structure is a circle.

### Reasons:

- It is simple and can withstand having many layers built one on top of the other.
- The circle is the Central Symbol of the Manu peoples. They believe this structure best shows the nature of their God i.e. It has no beginning nor end and encompasses all.

### Pre-Summit Tasks:

- Spend 5 min discussing how to best construct your structure and give it a try.
- At the Summit you will promote your idea and try to convince group 3 to give you their stones to make it work.
- Decide on who will be your main spokes persons and demonstrators.

The Summit should last no longer than 20 min and should result in a decision on the way forward for the planet.

Each group should have an opportunity to present their ideas then a general time of negotiation to reach a decision.





## Brief

### Group 3

The Peoples of Mana are in great danger. Their land is losing its energy and beginning to freeze.

Mana has traditionally produced its warmth through 'Stones' that everybody is born with. These 'stones' are now losing their heat energy faster than new warmth can be produced. The only thing that seems to work is the combining of the stones. This produces a greater amount of heat energy.

There is to be a major **Emergency Summit Meeting** with representatives from the three main ethnic groups meeting together to decide on what to do. These groups are:

- |         |                  |
|---------|------------------|
| Group 1 | The Manak people |
| Group 2 | The Manu people  |
| Group 3 | The Mana people  |

**Group 3** The members of this group believe that their stones are extremely important to them. They believe that if they lose their stones their lives will end. **At the Summit you will not give away your stones if you think that you will be losing them forever.**

### Pre-Summit Tasks:

- The pre-summit task is to decide on what you can agree to e.g. will you give up your stones if you can get them back at some stage?
- This group cannot communicate in any verbal or written way with the other groups.
- Statements may be made through the chairperson.

The Summit should last no longer than 20 min and should result in a decision on the way forward for the planet.

Each group should have an opportunity to present their ideas then a general time of negotiation to reach a decision.



## CASE STUDIES

**Aim:** To stimulate exploration of the challenges and feelings associated with dealing with difference in Northern Ireland.

**Time:** 40 min (more time if personal sharing takes place - could last an entire session- e.g. 2 hrs)

**Resources:**

Case Study Handout Sheets (There are 4 case studies provided here, they are based on events that actually happened)

**Method:**

10 min

- Introduce the Approaches to Dealing with Difference Information and Process model.

30 min

There are a number of Case studies included. One story can be examined by all or different stories for different groups. You may wish to use other stories that better relate to your group.

- Split up into small groups, give each group copies of a case study and ask someone to read it out.
- Consider the questions under the story and record answers.
- Back in the main group, share your case study (if different to the others) and your group's answers.

**Variation:**

If you think that the group is ready to discuss issues in a more personal way and you have time then after 1 of the case studies people could share in their small groups their own experience of encountering difference. The same process and questions can apply. (This will take a long time and it would be best to keep the groups small, approx 3 people) A feelings check may be needed.

**Learning Points:**

- Re-cap Process Model for dealing with difference.





## Case Study 1 Separation

The following story is based on an actual experience of the MBS team.

You are doing a series of interviews about sectarianism. You are concerned to understand why some conservative Protestants judge the Catholic church so harshly and why they refuse to worship with Catholics, so you interview a conservative Protestant minister. He tells you that he believes that some of the teachings of the Catholic Church- he mentions the role of Mary, the doctrine of purgatory, and the Catholic understanding of the Eucharist, among others-are so out of line with what he understands as the Biblical understanding of faith that he cannot accept that the Catholic is Christian. Quoting two Biblical passages- 'Touch not the unclean thing' and 'Come ye out from among them'- he argues that true Christians must therefore keep themselves strictly separate from Catholics.

You ask 'How far must this separation go? Can you talk to Catholics? Can you live in the same neighborhood? What are the limits?'

He responds, 'I'll give you an example. When abortion referral clinics were being introduced to Northern Ireland, our Church was against them.

We believe that human life, from the moment of conception, is the gift of God. As often as not we would be marching along with our signs when along come a Catholic priest or some nuns and some ordinary Catholics, and they would join us:'

'So that degree of cooperation wouldn't bother you?'

'Well I wouldn't want to call it cooperation. It's not that we planned it together, it's just that we didn't feel any need to leave simply because some Catholics joined the picket. And of course you have to realize we were there for different reasons:'

'What do you mean?'

'As Protestant fundamentalists we were there because we understand all abortion as the destruction of God's gift of life, as I said earlier. For their part, however, Catholics would tend to be against abortion because they are afraid abortion will reduce their numbers.'

How do you feel in the situation?

What do you think the minister understood himself to be doing?

What destructive ways of relating are evident and what are the likely consequences?

What could help this situation?



## Case Study 2 The Boycott

In the aftermath of Drumcree, tensions are very high. You are a radio interviewer sent to do a story on the Catholic boycott of Protestant businesses in a small town. You have interviewed a series of people about the boycott and go to talk to the local Catholic Priest.

You put it to him that as a person of influence within the Catholic community you would expect him to be doing something to try to stop the boycott and to encourage his parishioners to support local traders regardless of their religious beliefs. He replies that it is not his place as a priest to tell his parishioners where to shop and that in regard to his own choice of where to spend his money he chooses to support local Catholic traders because they are his parishioners and they are the ones who are contributing to the upkeep of the church.

How do you feel in the situation?

What do you think the priest understood himself to be doing?

What destructive ways of relating are evident and what are the likely consequences?

What could help the situation?





### Case study 3 At a Catholic and Protestant Wedding

You are on your way to attend the wedding of your friends, John, a Protestant, and Mary, a Catholic, who are being married in the Catholic Church where Mary grew up, although she moved away to go to college some years before.

When you arrive before the wedding, there is a bit of a buzz among the guests, and you are quickly told the story.



It seems that the previous night at the wedding rehearsal, the Catholic Priest who is conducting the service said something that assumed that communion would be part of the service. Mary and John hadn't actually planned that the ceremony would involve communion, but the priest persuaded them that Mary's mother really wanted it this way, so they consented. When the Protestant minister asked about the Protestant wedding guests taking communion, the priest said he was sorry, but that wouldn't be possible.

Because this story had made the rounds of the wedding guests, when the communion was offered, the Protestant guests, mostly John's relatives, didn't go forward. But somehow John's mother, an elderly woman with a physical disability, hadn't heard that Protestants were not to go up for communion. She made her way very slowly and painfully to the front of the church, but when she arrived, the priest turned her away, and she limped back to her place, the whole congregation watching her.



How do you feel in this situation?

What destructive ways of relating are evident and what are the likely consequences?

What do you think the priest understood himself to be doing?

What could have helped to prevent this situation?



**NB:** Separated communion is not the issue here, rather the way in which things were handled and the likely affect on relationships between Catholics and Protestants.



## Case Study 4 Negotiation at the barricades

It is the evening of the 11th of July. You are a paramedic on duty with a 999 ambulance team. You are called to attend an elderly woman with a suspected heart attack. On the way to the house you get through a barricade at the end of the road where the woman lives. It is a middle-class mixed area.

You take some time at the woman's house to stabilize her in the ambulance. The woman's daughter travels with her in the ambulance. When you start back towards the Hospital Orange protesters at the barricade want to know who you are carrying. You explain that a woman is very ill and you must get her to hospital. The daughter gets out to talk with them because she recognises some of them as her neighbours. The woman and her daughter are Catholics. Those on the barricades do not want to let the ambulance pass and start making comments about 'Fenian Bastards'. The daughter is distraught pleading with the protesters to let her mother through, reminding them that they have been good, friendly neighbours for years. You intervene again and say that the woman's condition is deteriorating. Eventually and reluctantly they let you through and you get her to the hospital.

How do you feel in the situation?

What destructive ways of relating are evident and what are the likely consequences?

What do you think the protesters understood themselves to be doing?

What helped them get through?

What could have helped to prevent this situation?







## The Woman at the well

**Aim:** To examine an example of dealing with difference and to practice empathy

|              |                      |             |
|--------------|----------------------|-------------|
| <b>Time:</b> | <b>Total:</b>        | <b>1 hr</b> |
|              | Intro, reading       | 10 min      |
|              | Group task           | 30 min      |
|              | Discussion questions | 20 min      |

**Groups:** For groups particularly interested in examining the subject from a faith perspective

**Method:** Read out the story of Jesus' meeting with the Samaritan woman at the well (The Gospel According to St. John, Chapter 4)

Split up into groups. Each group develops a 'view' of the story from one of the following perspectives:

- Someone who knows the woman ( e.g. towns people)
- Jesus' Disciples
- Jesus
- The woman

- Regroup and listen to each others stories

**Discussion Questions:**

- What is it like trying to view the situation from somebody else's point of view?
- The interaction between Jesus and this woman was radical for that context. Jesus challenged the destructive ways of relating between men and women, Jew and Samaritan at this time. Discuss other ways in which you think Jesus challenged the norm.
- How does Jesus disagree with the woman yet show his acceptance?
- How does this acceptance affect others?
- Who are our Samaritans?

**Learning Points:**

- Empathy involves trying to 'see things' from the other's point of view. We are not told how Jesus knows about the woman's past but we do know that he spoke to her in a way that showed his understanding and concern.
- One way of practicing empathy is to try to understand why people say and act the way they do and what feelings are present, rather than judging or rejecting them.
- Jesus presents a new way of worship that breaks down barriers between the groups:

*"Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks"*



## Discussing experiences of difference

Aim: To examine our own experiences of encountering difference.

Time: 30 min

Method:

- Think of a particular experience that stands out to you of when you felt different/like you didn't belong/when you encountered someone else who was different to you.

- Share this with another person
  - What sorts of feelings were involved?
- 
- Feedback, in the main group, the type of feelings associated with encountering difference.
  - Can difference be positive? When?
  - Can difference be negative? When?
- these questions could be discussed in small groups)
- Introduce the model for dealing with difference





## IDENTIFYING SECTARIANISM

The process of dealing with sectarianism starts with us, examining our place in the sectarian system as well as the place of the groups and institutions we identify with.

We can only heal as Wounded Healers and always be prepared to learn and identify when our intentions may have negative outcomes.

The challenges may seem overwhelming. This is a normal feeling to have but we need to push past resignation and see what can actually be done and how.



## THE LEVEL

- The Level might in any given situation tell us things like:
    - Where we may shop and where we ought to shop
    - What we can talk about with our own
    - What we may talk about with others
    - What it means to join a different church
    - Which sports are mixed and which are separate
    - Where we should live
    - To whom we may sell land
  - The Level represents a certain community equilibrium. It sets limits people rarely talk about and that are not consciously taught, but that everybody knows and most people usually accept and observe.
  - The Level will include some understanding of what are the costs or penalties incurred by violating it.
  - The level sets the point one does not go beyond in sectarian terms, and also sets limits beneath which we should not fall (what destructive patterns of relating are acceptable and unacceptable). When tainted by sectarianism the Level stifles growth, nurtures sectarianism and persuades us that a low level is a tolerable level, maybe even the best we can achieve or the best we ought to desire. The Level needs to be exposed, named, identified, and understood.
  - The Level can resist efforts to lower it as well as to raise it. More established folk in a town sometimes talk regretfully about new people moving in who will not understand or live by the local level.
  - The Level is a local phenomenon. Some features are characteristic almost anywhere, e.g. Few Catholics join the RUC, few Protestants join the GAA. However different towns have different levels e.g. In some locations Catholic and Protestant children hardly play together at all, where in other settings they do.
  - The Level depends on stable communities that intuitively know the limits and boundaries.
  - The Level hinders increased contact and cooperation.
- The level is brittle and does not always cope with all the pressures put upon it.







## IDENTIFYING SECTARIANISM

### Suggested Activities

#### OUR OWN

**Aim:** To identify sectarianism in our own cultures

**Groups:** Good for cross-community exploration, but it can be adapted depending on the background of the group members.

|              |                          |             |
|--------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Time:</b> | <b>Total</b>             | <b>1 hr</b> |
|              | Intro                    | 10 min      |
|              | Group discussion         | 15 min      |
|              | Feedback                 | 15 min      |
|              | How can I start exercise | 15 min      |
|              | Feedback                 | 5 min       |

**Resources:** Pens, paper

#### Method:

- Introduce Destructive Patterns of relating (see earlier chapter)
- Form small groups made up of people from Within a Tradition/ Community (e.g. Protestant and Catholic groups/ Church groups etc.)
- In these groups consider:

What examples of sectarianism can you identify in your own tradition?

- Report back to the main group.
- Where else does sectarianism exist? (use flip chart to record answers)
- Refer to Transforming Sectarianism- 'How can I start' worksheet.
- Feedback examples of steps people can take.

#### Learning Points:

- See:
- Bi-focal vision
  - Dealing With Difference Process
- (See Transforming Sectarianism for other resources to help people begin to see ways they can respond to sectarianism)



## MAPPING SECTARIANISM



**Aim:** to help us explore the level of sectarianism for a particular setting.

|              |                             |                     |
|--------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Time:</b> | <b>Total</b>                | <b>1 hrs 15 min</b> |
|              | Intro:                      | 10 min              |
|              | Creating the maps           | 15 min              |
|              | Mapping sectarianism        | 20 min              |
|              | Feedback                    | 10 min              |
|              | How can you raise the level | 20 min              |

- Group:**
- For groups who can identify a particular context and who want to explore what they can do to help transform sectarianism within this context.
  - The exercise could be adapted to facilitate the creation of individual maps.

**Resources:** Large sheets of paper/cardboard, makers/coloured pencils etc.

- Method:**
- In groups create a large map on the sheet of paper. The maps could be drawn for a specific community area people live in e.g. a town, suburb, city, etc. (depending on the nature of the group).
  - Draw on the map significant places, landmarks etc that could help to identify the lay out of the land.



# Leaves



- Place on the map examples of sectarianism according to where it happens in the community.
- Give people an opportunity to look at all the maps (if more than one)
- Discuss the maps back in the main group and ask the following questions:
- Is this a fair representation of your area?
- How do you feel about it?



How can you raise the level of relationships?

- Ask what small steps can you take to start to address the destructive ways of relating? (Refer to Transforming Sectarianism- 'How can I start' worksheet)
- What would help you to take these steps?



## THE DIVIDING WALLS

(Adapted with kind permission from an exercise by Doug Baker)

**Aim:** To examine a different situation involving a level of sectarianism in order to examine sectarianism as we may find it in our context.

**Time:**

|                               |         |        |
|-------------------------------|---------|--------|
| Total                         | 1.5 hrs |        |
| Intro + Describing the Divide |         | 15 min |
| The Temple exercise           |         | 45 min |
| The Wall Exercise             |         | 30 min |

**Groups:** Particularly good for groups wishing to explore Biblical perspectives. If you do not have time enough to carry out all of this exercise you could use different parts of it to illustrate different parts of this resource e.g.

|                       |   |  |
|-----------------------|---|--|
| The Temple            | = | Dynamics and Varieties of Sectarianism |
| Describing the Divide | = | Dealing With Difference                |
| The Walls             | = | Identifying Sectarianism               |

### Background:

Jesus came into a world filled with divisions. In his time there were divisions between men and women, rich and poor, righteous and sinners, and perhaps above all, between Jews and Gentiles. This study is intended to help participants understand how various divisions operate- and may be overcome- by examining the divisions between Jew and Gentile.

### Describing the divide

- Put the words 'Jew' and 'Gentile' on the top of a flipchart page.
- These two groups divided along a combination of religious, ethnic, and political lines. This is often found in divided societies today.
- Ask: What would the relationship between these two groups have been day by day? E.g.
  - Very little contact, rarely entered each other's homes but had some association as traders etc.
  - Mixed marriages: Not only would a truly orthodox Jewish family refuse to attend the wedding, they would have a funeral service for their child instead. For in their eyes their child was dead
- However, there were places where Jews and Gentiles did both go. Perhaps surprisingly one of these was the Temple in Jerusalem.

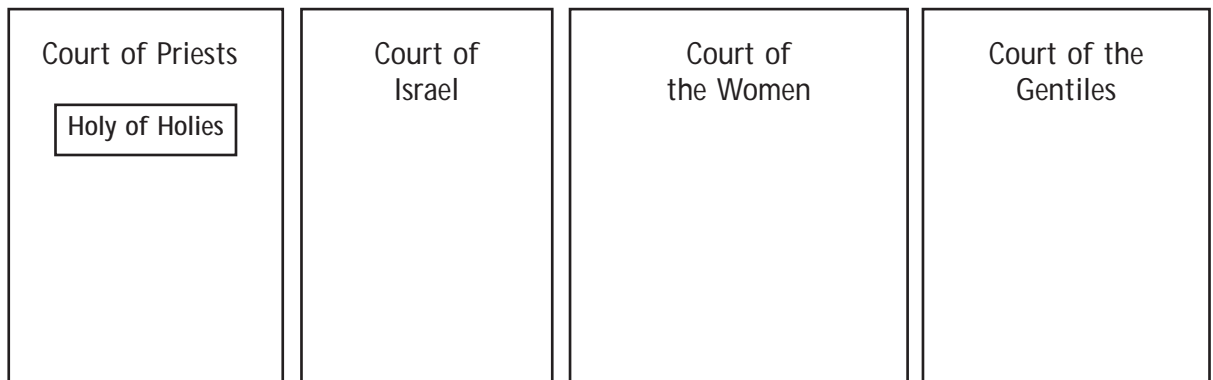




## THE TEMPLE

- Use diagram of Temple (see below)

- In the middle of the temple was a special chamber called the Holy of Holies
- Only the High Priest entered this area
- Inside was The Ark of the Covenant (Symbol of God's Presence)
- Outside the Holy of Holies, beyond a wall was an area known as the Court of Priests where the priests went.
- Beyond another wall was an area known as The Court of Israel where the Jewish men went
- Beyond another wall was an area known as The Court of Women, for the Jewish women
- And lastly the Court of the Gentiles, for the Gentiles i.e. In the ancient world there were often people who shopped around for spiritual experiences or a religion which might satisfy their questions and needs. Therefore, as well as merchants and tourists, there were what are often referred to as 'God-fearing Gentiles' who visited the Temple wishing to learn about the God of Israel and experience worship there. They were not only separated from 'the presence of God' by walls but also had to contend with much noise and confusion in the only place open to them as the sellers of animals and money changers were also present.



### Divide the group

- Use some arbitrary means to divide the group in half ( e.g. those born in Jan to June and those born July to Dec)
- Designate one as Jews and the other as God-fearing Gentiles
- Divide the Jewish group into males and females
- Divide the males into priest and other and choose a high priest



## Divide the meeting place:

- In your venue designate a comfortable Holy of Holies, a Court of the Priests, a Court of Israel, a Court of the Women, and a Court of the Gentiles.
- You may wish to use a kitchen for the women and a busy corridor or an exterior area for the Gentiles in order to enhance the experience.
- Next, state that in a moment you want each person to find his or her place in 'The Temple' based on whichever role they have been allocated. Tell them that when they get to that place they should discuss two questions with the others there:
  - How do you feel about your place? (remember that you have come to the temple to worship or to explore Israel's worship)
  - How do you feel about the other groupings?
- State that there will be an opportunity for them to answer those questions in front of the whole group later.
- Allow 10 minutes for participants to move to their places and discuss these questions.



## Feedback:

- Bring the group back together and discuss their responses
- When it seems that each group has contributed as much as they wish to, ask them to listen carefully- still in their roles- as you read Ephesians 2:11-22 (the J. B. Phillips Translation is particularly good for this study)
- Ask each group how this passage comes across to them:
  - Good news, liberating, threatening, rubbish etc.
  - What do they stand to gain or lose if this passage is true?
- Note that the image of the Temple in Jerusalem is behind the language in this passage. Read the passage a second time asking the group to note the language of separation gradually being replaced with the language of unity. (you may wish to note that in the Gospel according to Matthew the curtain in the temple (entrance to the Holy of Holies) is described as being ripped from top to bottom at the moment of Jesus' death. The writer of Ephesians develops this further by saying that 'the dividing wall of hostility between Jew and Gentile is also broken down.)



## THE WALLS



Before Christ the walls were firmly fixed, after Christ those walls were removed but tragically we have not left it that way. (see: Ephesians 2:11-22)

- Ask the participants to identify division in a particular context, e.g. their town, their class, their church, their work
- Consider what makes up the walls of division in that particular situation (record on flipchart).
- Discuss what small steps could be taken in order to start to take down the wall of division.

## Variation:

- You could make a small, free standing cardboard wall and place it in the middle of the group
- Two groups can discuss and name what 'Bricks' form the wall on the different sides of a particular division.
- When they have finished, each side looks at the others and discuss differences and similarities.
- Finally, discuss what small steps can you take to start to bring any of the bricks mentioned away.

## Learning Points:

Around the wall people can be found in several positions:

- Consciously or unconsciously building up the wall by their words and actions.
- Consciously seeking to break down the wall
- Hiding securely behind the wall (not going out of their way to build it but none the less comfortable with it).
- Firing at each other across the wall (there are those who believe the only way to remove the wall is to get rid of 'them'. Then there won't be any need for the wall.)

Are these all equally valid for followers of Jesus?



## ANCESTRAL VOICES

“And ‘mid this tumult Kubla heard from far  
 Ancestral voices prophesying war!”  
 Kubla Kahn Samuel Taylor Coleridge

The ancestral voices of which Coleridge speaks are not only prophesy war, they exult in conflict and call their heirs to sacrifice for the ancestral cause. Ancestral voices are those memories, symbols, beliefs, actions etc. from our past that affect how we experience our world now. They are often so well integrated into our present identities and cultures that we may not be aware of them.

Such voices sound most powerfully in times of crisis. This has been one of the dynamics of confrontation at Drumcree especially in 1996 when ancestral voices got a hearing that may have surprised both others and themselves.

People who want to resist the ancestral voices do so in several ways:

- Some flee to the opposite pole and then ignore or oppose the ancestral voices, rendering themselves an object of suspicion and contempt, a Lundy.
- Some voices finally only disappear with the extinction of the community.
- They can also be countered, contained, diminished, and finally left all but powerless. What is required is to re-tune our ears to alternative voices. What is far more constructive is for a community to learn to hear its own ancestral voices anew. Other ancestral voices emanating from the very same source, offer healthier alternatives, sometimes an antidote to their poisonous counterparts.

## WHEN IS A RELIGIOUS IDEA SECTARIAN?

Our intent is not to dismiss truth claims but rather to take them very seriously and to ask can we make truth claims without being sectarian? What religious ideas are inherently sectarian and which are not?

On the one hand, attempts to dismiss all religious truths as inherently sectarian are misguided and false. On the other hand we recognize that religious ideas can and do contribute to sectarianism.

A sectarian religious idea is likely to fall under one of three headings:-

- It hardens boundaries between groups
- It dehumanizes another group; or
- It imposes on another group.







## ANCESTRAL VOICES

### Suggested Activities

#### COAT OF IDENTITY

**Aim** To promote exploration and discussion regarding what beliefs, practices and values are important to us.

|             |                          |               |
|-------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Time</b> | <b>Total</b>             | <b>45 min</b> |
|             | Making the shields       | 20 min        |
|             | Examining the shields    | 5 min         |
|             | Questions and discussion | 20 min        |

**Resources** A4 Paper (recycled if possible), Newspaper and magazines, scissors, glue, pens/felt-tips

#### Method

- Each person takes a piece of A4 paper and draws on it a large shield shape (see diagram)
- This 'shield' represents each persons Coat of Identity (similar to a Coat of Arms)
- In each of the four areas make a collage of symbols/pictures etc. that represents different, important elements of your life:
  - Beliefs and values
  - Practices (e.g. going to church, cross community activities, evangelizing, socializing etc.)
- These can be drawn by the participants or cut out of magazines and newspapers.
- Allow for a time of sharing about our different shields (this could be done in small groups)
- Each person places their shield on the floor with others to make up a large rectangle.
- Walk around the rectangle and take time to examine each other's shields.

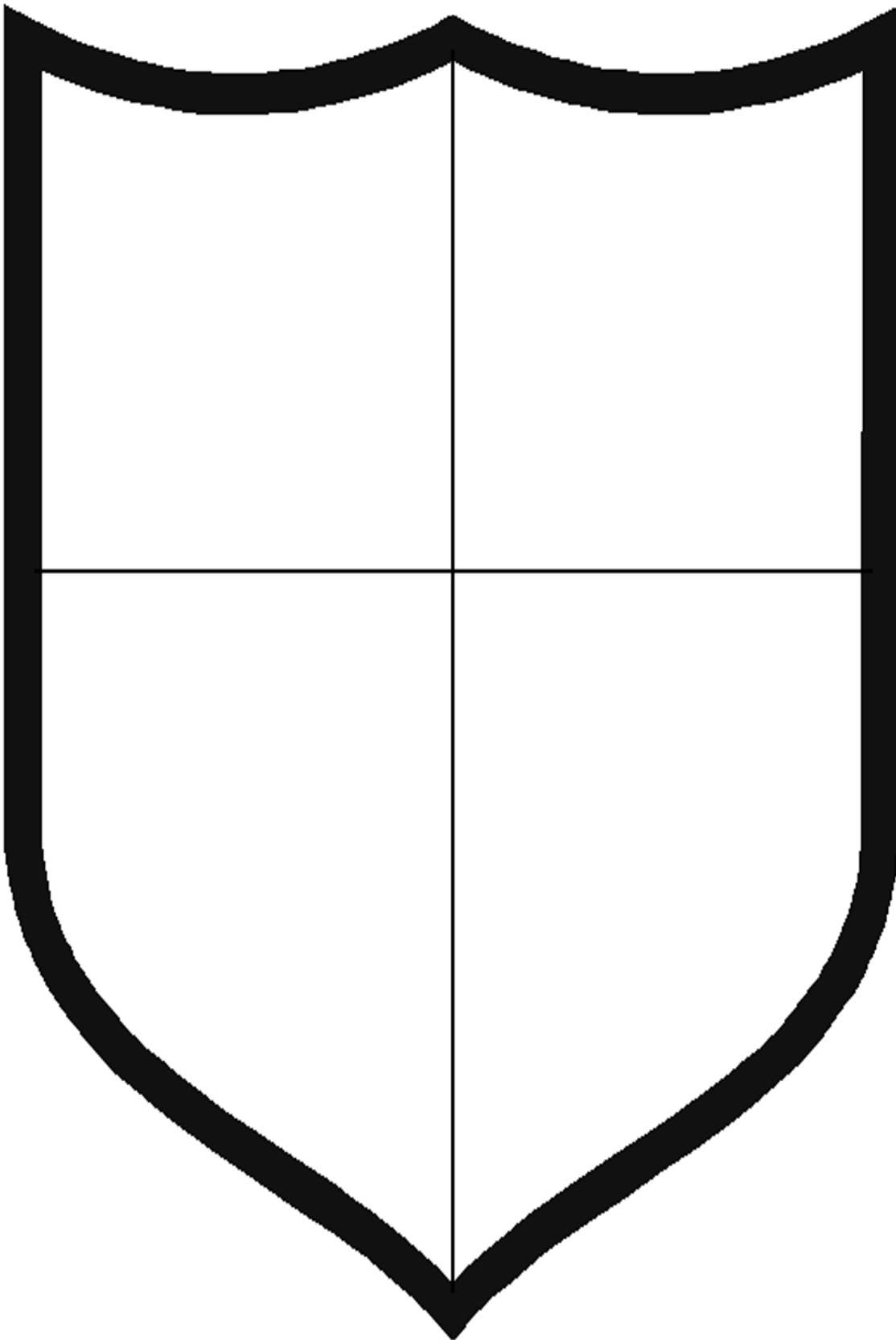
#### Questions

- What thoughts/feelings did this exercise raise for you?
- How do people feel about all the shields being together on the floor?
- How important are the beliefs, values, and practices that you have represented, to you?
- What would you not want to compromise?

#### Learning Points

See Mitigation and Negotiation.





## CASE STUDIES OF ANCESTORAL VOICES, MITIGATION & NEGOTIATION

**Aim:** To explore the processes involved in responding to Ancestral Voices

**Time:** This depends on how many case studies are examined

|                           |        |
|---------------------------|--------|
| Guide Total:              | 40 min |
| Intro:                    | 10 min |
| Case Study questions      | 20 min |
| Feedback (per-case study) | 10 min |

**Resources:** Case Studies

**Method:**

- Introduce Ancestral Voices, Mitigation and Negotiation.
- There are a number of case studies to choose from.
- Depending on your group make-up and time constraints you may wish to:
  - examine each case together
  - split into smaller groups to examine different cases then feedback to each other
  - Examine one case that you think is particularly relevant

- Read the case study and consider the following:
  - What Ancestral Voices are being raised that have destructive consequences?
  - What are the strengths and weaknesses for the different ways of dealing with the destructive Ancestral Voices?
- Feedback answers in the wider group

### Case Studies:

#### The Jewish people and the death of Jesus:

An example of great historical relevance for the Christian tradition as a whole concerns those biblical statements that make the Jews responsible for the death of Jesus. A stark example might be Matthew's account of Pilate trying to release Jesus after his arrest, but the Jewish crowd, stirred up by the chief priests and elders, demanded that Jesus be crucified. *Mathew 27:24-25*

*When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd "I am innocent of this man's blood," he said.*

*"It is your responsibility!"*

*All the people answered, "Let his blood be on us and our children!"*

The effect of this text and others reinforcing it, rattling down through history, has been horrific (Ancestral Voices).



Over the centuries, Christians have seen to it that the answer of the people has been literally fulfilled, making it the justification for numerous acts against Jewish communities and even a root of one of the twentieth century's defining horrors, the Holocaust. Faced with this legacy, Christians concerned to repent of it can take several approaches:

**Negotiation** could involve informally ignoring any texts suggesting anti-Semitism in the New Testament Canon. This treatment of the Canon may not be an option for many. This is God's word, they will reason, so it must be of profit for us, read properly.

A **mitigating reading** of the text 'his blood be on us and our children' (Matt. 27.25) might work in at least two ways. One reads the text as specific and historical: this is a statement about what a particular mob did on a particular day and, despite their words, they have no power to call down wrath on future generations. Another mitigating strategy would interpret the text as general and universal: readers should not assign blame to a particular group, but recognise that the mob in question, those religious leaders, even that Roman ruler, could have been us. This is not a story about a particular group of Jews, it is a story about us all- a story about universal human failure and responsibility.

## Evangelicals and Anti-Catholicism

The ancestral voices that challenge evangelicals are both hard and soft. The hard one upholds a virulent anti-Catholicism; the more elusive voice calls evangelicals to stay away from the concerns of the world and say little about them, leading lives individually and collectively of little public impact. ECONI (Evangelical Contribution on Northern Ireland) has confronted these voices and its significance is that it is challenging the sectarianism of conservative Protestantism while remaining evangelical and by employing evangelical logic. They are challenging the bigoted ancestral voices by calling forth the best of the ancestral voices.

### Negotiation

Historically, the Protestant mainstream churches embraced some version of negative judgment of the Catholic church, and the Catholic evaluation of Protestantism was essentially a mirror image. That such judgments have been rejected and replaced by much more positive ones in the current teaching of most churches is an example of negotiating. These churches jettisoned their former views by re-thinking the teaching of scripture and their doctrinal traditions.

### Mitigation:

One of the *mitigating resources* available within conservative Protestantism is a distinction between **religious separation** and **social separation**.

This distinction allows at least neighbourly relations and potentially cooperation in various enterprises without a religious element. Acting on their freedom to relate to and work with Catholics, outside the explicitly religious sphere, has involved evangelicals in some important cross-community initiatives with Catholics. Also read by any Christian with a *mitigating spirit*, the Bible and especially the teaching and example of Jesus reveals itself as a veritable big book of mitigating principals. Loving enemies is about behaviour as much as attitude. Forgiveness is always a form of love and practiced in hard cases it is especially the love of enemies. The forgiveness of enemies has been an important form of mitigation.







## The Orange Order and Anti-Catholicism

While the Orange Order will have available to it this mitigating principle of distinguishing between religious and social separation, we want to mention another that is particular to one of the Order's core documents, 'The Qualifications of an Orangeman'. 'Qualifications' begins with an exhortation to Christian commitment and practice and then moves on to detail the Orangeman's stance toward Catholicism.

*He should strenuously oppose the fatal errors of the Church of Rome, and scrupulously avoid countenancing (by his presence or otherwise) any act or ceremony of Popish worship; he should by all lawful means resist the ascendancy of that Church, its encroachments and the extension of its power.*

Anti-Catholicism, then, is a non-negotiable woven into the very fabric of Orangeism, along with the potential for destructive and sectarian consequences that follows from it. 'Qualifications' proceeds without a break, however, to put forward a Mitigating principle:

*the Orangeman is to maintain this stance toward Catholicism while at the same time 'ever abstaining from all uncharitable words, actions or sentiments towards his Roman Catholic brethren'*

Abstaining from uncharitableness may be a fairly weak version of the command for Christians to love their neighbours, but it is a recognisable version. It is also a potential mitigating principle to apply to words and actions with sectarian implications or consequences.

An Orange chaplain known to the MBS research team was surely acting in this spirit when, having participated in the decision to cancel an Orange march down the Lower Ormeau Road in Belfast in order to defuse tensions in the summer of 1997, he spent the rest of the summer in Protestant churches preaching charity to Catholic neighbours.

William Bingham, Presbyterian minister and Orange chaplain, must have been similarly motivated when he advised the Orangemen to pull out of a very tense Drumcree parade situation in the aftermath of the murder of the Quinn boys in the summer of 1998.

## One Bread, One Body

*One Bread, One Body* is a teaching document on the Eucharist issued by the British and Irish bishops in 1998. In the way it handled excluding Protestants from sharing communion with Catholics in all but a handful of instances, the document had, we argue, the sectarian consequences of hardening boundaries between groups and overlooking the 'other'.

A negotiating approach to this problem begins by rejecting both the practice of excluding Protestants from the Catholic Eucharist and the teaching on which the practice is based. This might take a largely theoretical form or it might involve actually sharing communion with Protestants.



But many Catholics who share with negotiators a regret about sectarian consequences will not wish or be able to deal with the problem by means of negotiation. Catholic teaching is a whole, they may reason, so Catholics are not free to pick and choose as they please. One Bread, One Body is a reiteration of traditional Catholic teaching on the Eucharist, and no doctrine and practice is more central to the life of the Catholic community. They do not wish to give offence, but if sectarian consequences can only be dealt with by rejecting the doctrine, then they cannot be dealt with.



In these circumstances, mitigation might take several forms:

- One is simply to be sensitive in anticipating and avoiding where possible circumstances in which the practice of exclusive communion might give offence.
- Another, in this case drawing explicitly on the teaching of the Catholic Church, is to consider the varieties of accepted practice within the world-wide church. Mitigators might think through the content of various agreements the Catholic church has reached with others on the subject of communion and offer them as a standard of practice.
- A mitigating spirit at least considers the question: 'does the existing and accepted practice and teaching of the Catholic church allow a degree of flexibility concerning shared Eucharist that is not sufficiently explored in Ireland today?'



## Football

It can be argued that the support of football in Northern Ireland has been heavily influenced by the sectarian system. At the best of times, football fans can find themselves deeply antagonized by opposing supporters. If you add to this antagonism opposing religious/ethnic differences then encounters between the opposing sides have the potential for sectarian consequences.

- Examples:-
- Sectarian chants
  - Attacks at games, on supporter buses etc.
  - The identification of Protestant and Catholics with the opposing Scottish Football Clubs Rangers and Celtic (respectively) is a good example of how polarized support can become distorted in a sectarian system to maintain divisions, boundaries, and antagonisms between religious/ethnic groups.



## Mitigating Resources

- The existence of cross-community support for English Premiership teams.
- Non-oppositional aspects of football:
  - Team work
  - Personal Development
  - Health and Fitness
  - Community involvement
- The love of the game on both sides of the religious/ethnic divide.





The Irish Football Association's Community Relations Department has been working to develop a vision for developing community relations as well practical suggestions, policies and procedures for clubs and supporters. (If you are interested in finding out more please see the contact number listed in the Other Resources Section).

Efforts to address sectarianism in football need to be supported and encouraged (practically, financially, and emotionally) at all level, e.g.

- Individual fans
- Supporter Associations
- Club
- Institutional



## Traditional Music

Culture is not necessarily divisive and different cultural traditions in Northern Ireland may not intend to support sectarianism. However, they exist in a sectarian system and as such are as vulnerable to distortion as anything else.

The following is a limited examination of just one form of culture. It by no means does justice to the varieties and depth of traditional music in Northern Ireland.

Traditionally musical forms and instruments such as the Lambeg Drum and Fyffe, the Flute, Accordion, Bag Pipes, the Fiddle etc. have a long tradition in the North of Ireland.

Many young people today (Protestant and Catholic) gain access to traditional music through such musical structures as the flute or pipe band. One could argue, however, that the down side to such cultural expressions is that they can foster division and, at times, antagonize the 'other-side'.

Like-wise, some folk music has the potential to exclude or antagonize the 'other'. Threatening or antagonistic lyrics from both sides can result in a number of destructive ways of relating. Framing our folk cultures as if the 'other' does not exist is also liable to have sectarian consequences.

## Negotiation

A 'coming together'/'sharing of both sides' common musical heritage could help to create a new, shared culture.

- Both traditions share similar historical foundations e.g. tunes such as 'The Star of the County Down' can be found on both sides.
- Both traditions share some instruments e.g. the flute, bagpipes, accordion etc.

Some may feel, however, that their tradition would be corrupted to and unacceptable

## Mitigating Resources:

Difference is real but there are some things we share beneath our difference.



- The enjoyment and personal development that playing and performing music can provide is a powerful resource for healing as well as division.
- There is a difference between songs that are meant to be antagonistic and songs that are not intended to be so. In the spirit of relationship and reconciliation the destructive consequences of the later can be mitigated.

There are arts and culture based groups seeking to negotiate and mitigate our cultural differences. The Community Relations Council can provide contacts for such groups (see Other Resources Section).







## MOVING BEYOND SECTARIANISM

### MODELS, CONCEPTS AND IDEAS FOR GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS

The following pages include a number of models, definitions, questions, exercises etc. aimed at stimulating practical thinking regarding transforming sectarianism. Hopefully there is something here that you will find useful. The Other Resources section gives pointers to other sources from which you may be able to find help.



### WHAT MIGHT A PLACE BEYOND SECTARIANISM BE LIKE?

It is a fairly simple psychological truth that people will not change if they do not have a vision of what it is that they are changing to, moving toward, becoming etc. In the absence of such a vision, they will, to a remarkable extent, prefer the devil they know to the devil they don't. No vision= no change, even though people may rail against their present situation. When captivated by a vision, on the other hand, the changes of which people are capable of are amazing.



### PROCESS

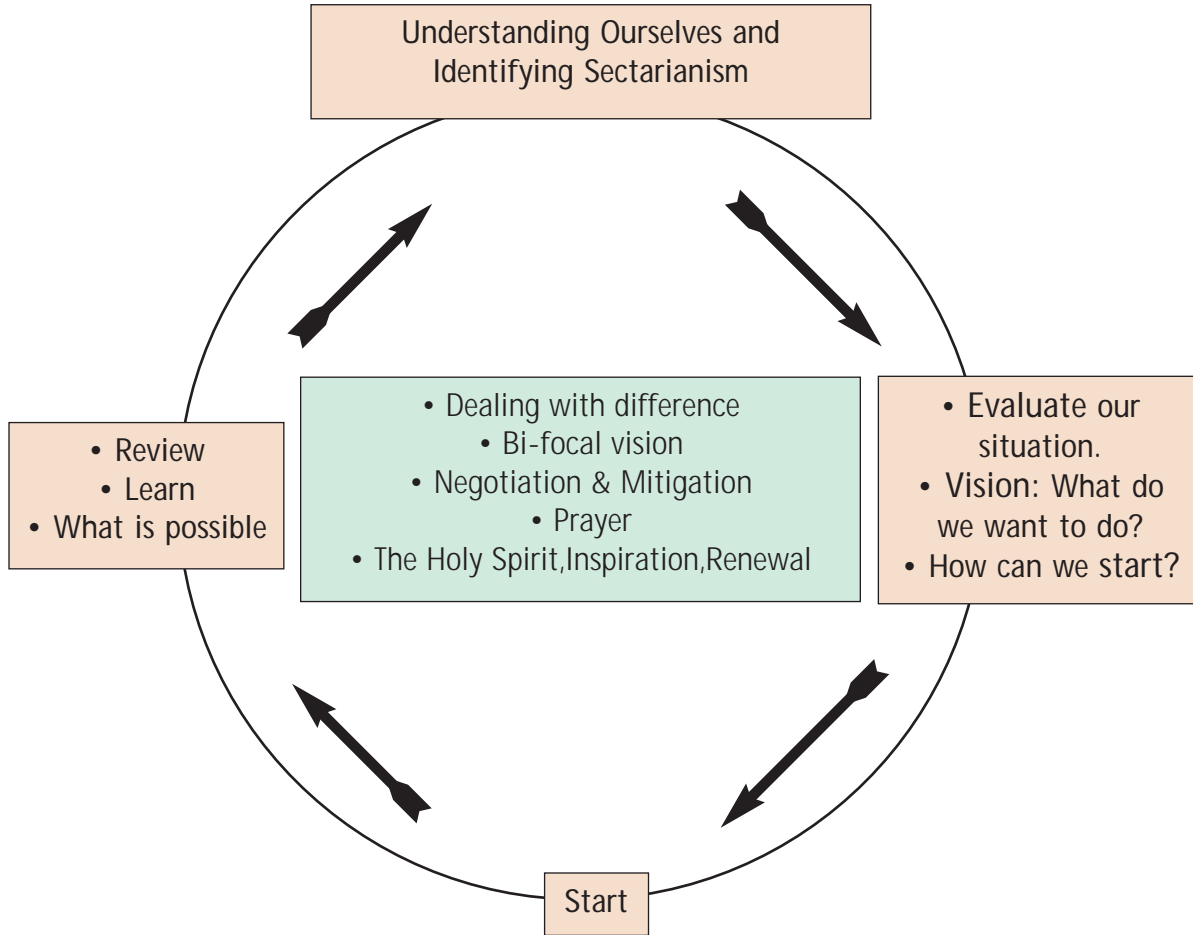
The term Process here refers to the way in which steps can be taken to raise the level of positive ways of relating in our contexts.

It involves:

- Understanding and identifying sectarianism
  - Evaluating our situation at present
  - Ideas of where we want to go
  - Understanding how you might be able to get there
- The process starts with ourselves, examining our place in the sectarian system as well as the place of the groups and institutions with which we identify.
  - We can only begin to heal as *Wounded Healers*.
  - The challenges may seem overwhelming. This is a normal feeling to have but we need to push past resignation and see what can actually be done and how.
  - The journey is ongoing i.e. we need to be aware of our own journeys. Circumstances will hopefully continue to develop/change and this will present new challenges and opportunities.
  - Sectarianism is not the sort of problem one ever leaves entirely behind. We may best think of ourselves as 'recovering sectarians'.



## PROCESS MODEL



## HOW CAN I START?

Transformation can happen at a number of levels:

- Personal/ Inter-personal
- Communal/ organizational/ group
- Institutional
- National, International



## My sphere of influence

In order to overcome feelings of resignation we need to have an idea about what we can realistically do. Our sphere of influence refers to the places in our lives where we can have influence. This could involve a number of different parts of our identities, e.g.

- My personal relationships
- My household
- My knowledge
- My prayers
- My work place
- My church
- My groups

What influence do you have in these areas and what can you realistically start to change? Start small and as you practice opportunities will develop.

## Small steps:

Having identified your sphere of influence what small steps can you make to start to change?

Start with REMEMBERING what has helped you in the past and what you are involved in now.

## Building relationships:

It is important to gain the support of others in all areas of transformation. You may want to seek the support of a friend or to find others interested in transforming sectarianism. Remember, however, that every inclusion can create a new exclusion.

The process is always ongoing.



## Journeying:

We are all on a journey in which we will make mistakes and for which a lot of GRACE is needed. It may help to:

- acknowledge that we have weaknesses and that we are wounded healers.
- accept that other people will have different journeys and they need our graciousness.

IDENTIFY what I can do now.

E.g.

| My area of influence               | What do I want to affect?              | What small step can I realistically take?  |
|------------------------------------|--|--|
| Family                             | Attitudes towards difference           | Start talking positively about difference, encounter 'safe' difference   |
| Work- Policy design                | The way people relate in my work place | Create a policy that includes Bi-Focal Vision.   |
| Personal Relationships             | Encounters with difference             | Make contact with people whom I would not normally associate with.   |
| My Local area                      | Improving relationships                | Find out who is doing what in the local area, start to make connections.   |
| My church                          | Evaluation of our intentions           | List how your church operates, what are the intentions, and what are the outcomes, show these to someone in power. |
| Inter-church/Cross-community group | What this group does                   | Continue to support this group and help others to share the positive experience, look for 'sustainable' projects.  |





# Leaves



| My area of influence | What do I want to affect? | What small step can I realistically take? |
|----------------------|---------------------------|---|
|                      |                           |   |



## WHAT IS POSSIBLE?

Hope is having confidence that something can be done.

Looking at the unusual

Sometimes transformation may require creative alternatives. Sometimes alternatives may be found in unusual places, outside our usual understanding or experience.

**Images, symbols** We can look for Images and Symbols that can capture imagination and offer alternatives e.g.

**The Black Santa** An alternative icon that challenged commercialism at Christmas and touched a broad range of people in Belfast and beyond. The Black Santa sits outside St Anne's Cathedral in the winter collecting for charity. He seldom fails to make the local news broadcasts.

**Breaking the Chains** (Jubilee 2000 World Dept campaign): The image of the broken chain was used to represent the hope that people in developing countries could be released from the bonds of massive dept. A number of different Development Agencies co-operated in this campaign.

Can you think of any others?



## Sustainability - Creative Connections

Sustainability is about finding new ways of relating and living that can be maintained and that are holistic/ make 'natural' links to other areas of life.

It is a holistic form of reconciliation and it takes a 'whole system' approach

### Making holistic connections

As we seek to transform sectarianism we have the whole of society with which to work. This can provide many opportunities. It will involve explicitly co-operating with 'the other' in a wide range of issues e.g. housing, the arts, the environment, employment, tourism, community development etc.

e.g.

### Habitat for Humanity:

This organization offers affordable, quality housing for people who could otherwise not afford it. It involves the would-be homeowners as well as the wider community in building the homes. It is cross-community.

### PAKT (Parents And Kids Together):

This initiative, now co-ordinated by the YMCA National Council, started as a church project in Lurgan.

It involves a comprehensive activity programme for children from different traditions, outside of school, and involving parents.

Child development, family development, class differences etc are being approached in a way that encourages cross-community encounter and understanding.

Can you think of any others?

## Inspiration (looking further, looking beyond ourselves)

It is often encouraging to see how other places and people have been transformed.

The following are some ways people can begin to look further a field for ideas and inspiration:

- As a group consider examples of change in other countries and share these.
- Discuss how you have changed or other stories you have heard
- Read or watch stories together as a group about transformation and share what you think about them. How do they compare to your situation?
- Make overseas connections and visits if possible
- Go to places where people from different places will be sharing their stories of transformation.



## Equity, Diversity, Interdependence

The Community Relations Council for Northern Ireland defines these terms as follows:

"**Equity:** is the commitment at all levels of society to ensure equality of access to resources, structures and decision-making processes and the adoption of actions to secure and maintain these objectives."

In other words... it means being careful to include others as much as possible and to treat people as your equal and of importance even if they are different to you or you don't agree with them.

"**Respect for Diversity:** supports the values derived from the existence, understanding and acceptance of difference whether expressed through religious, cultural, ethnic or political background."

In other words... we need to find positive ways of dealing with difference rather than rejecting it and/or accepting destructive ways of relating.

"**Interdependence:** requires recognition by different interest or identity groups of their obligations and commitments to others and of the interconnection of individual/community experiences and ambitions."

In other words... we affect each other by what we do and do not do. We should not work in isolation. The process of dealing with difference does not progress unless both sides take responsibility for the relationship.







## INTRODUCTION

This section is not meant to provide a comprehensive Biblical basis for the ideas, concepts and tools contained in this resource.

The Biblical references, poems, liturgies etc. provide ideas for groups wishing to include in their programme basic biblical and spiritual exploration.

The materials can be adapted to fit the needs of the group and the style with which the facilitator feels comfortable. You may wish to use them alongside your own ideas and/or other resources.



## CONTENTS:

### IDENTITY:

- The Five Women (short play examining the 'roots' of Jesus - Matthew 1:1-17)
- The Writings of Saint Paul.



### SECTARIANISM AS A SYSTEM:

- The tree and its fruit Luke 6:43-44, Revelations 22:1-3
- A Liturgy for Laying Down and Letting go. By Kate Mclhagga

### DYNAMICS AND VARIETIES OF SECTARIANISM:

- Attitudes to greatness Luke 9:48, Luke 6:37-38



### DEALING WITH DIFFERENCE:

- The parable of the talents Matthew 25: 14-28
- The Apostle Paul
- The Good Samaritan Luke 10:25-37
- Jesus and difference Matthew 21-23

### ANCESTRAL VOICES:

- Tested in the Fire Daniel 3:14-15



### TRANSFORMING SECTARIANISM:

- The Ship Luke 6:29
- Cross Border Peace Talks. By Kathy Galloway
- 'And the Leaves of the Tree are for the healing of the nations' Rev 22:1-3
- Out of the desert came healing Luke 4:1-30



## IDENTITY

### The Five Woman

Bible reference Matthew 1 v 1- 17

**Aim:** This play focuses on Tamar; Rahab; Ruth; Bathsheba; and Mary, the only women mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus. It can be used to stimulate discussion regarding identity.

**Time:** 15- 30 min

#### Instructions:

- Explain the Bible passage above i.e. it details Christ's ancestors, read verse 17
- Ask for volunteers beforehand to read out the following lines of this short drama



### THE FIVE WOMAN

Tamar: I am a Canaanite woman

Rahab: I am a citizen of Jericho.

Ruth: I am a Moabite woman.

Bathsheba: I am the wife of a Hittite

Mary: I am Jewish.

Tamar: I played the harlot in order to ensure Judah's line.

Rahab: I am a harlot who helped two spies

Ruth: I am a widow loyal to my mother-in-law

Bathsheba: I was taken like a harlot by a king

Mary: I am a virgin

Tamar: I was faithful to the law of Israel and God has blessed me with twin sons.

Rahab: I was faithful to the God of Israel, the true God and have been blessed with a son.

Ruth: I was faithful to Naomi, and to the God of her people Israel and have been blessed with a son





- Bathsheba: I have been faithful to king David and God has forgiven him and blessed me with a son
- Mary: I have been faithful to and found favour with God and have been blessed with a son
- Tamar: I trusted God and received justice and mercy
- Rahab: I trusted God and received justice and mercy
- Ruth: I trusted God and received justice and mercy
- Bathsheba: I trusted God and received justice and mercy
- Mary: I trust God and the fruit of my womb will bring justice and mercy love and hope into the world.
- Tamar: I am Tamar
- Rahab: I am Rahab
- Ruth: I am Ruth
- Bathsheba: I am Bathsheba
- Mary: I am Mary
- All: All of us are related to Jesus through the ancestral line

## Learning Points:

- These women were all very different yet all of them are instrumental in the continued line of Judah, and are mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus
- Some of them have a disreputable background, some of them were not Jewish, all of them have in common their faithfulness to God, the law of Moses or the King of Israel and were instrumental in the genealogy of Jesus.

## Questions:

- Who are significant people in our own identity? (write these down but you do not have to share)
- What does this reading tell us about Jesus' ancestors?
- What does it tell us about God's attitude to difference?

Often God challenges our traditions and faith through difference and strangeness. Find out more about them in:

Genesis 38

Ruth

Matthew 1 and Luke 2

Joshua 2 and 6 v 17 – 27

Samuel 11 and 12



## IDENTITY

Christianity does not nullify cultural identity, it subordinates it to identity in Christ.

In the New Testament Paul's response to inter-community, inter-ethnic rivalry between Jews and Gentiles in Christian community is instructive with regard to superiority, self-righteousness and judgement of others.

Paul's letters emphasise that in Christ, through baptism, a new single humanity comes into being "out of" the two, in this case Jewish and Gentile communities.

Eph 2: 15

In the new Israel difference is not abolished by unity, but rather differences are made subordinate to identity in Christ through faith.

Rom 3: 29-30

Later in the letter to the community in Rome, Paul spells out the extent of that subordination: it is permissible to eat or not eat, to drink or not drink, to regard things as clean or not clean as long as everything is done in honour of the Lord and with due regard for the up-building of the community.

Rom 14: 10

The cultural freedom shown by Paul is breathtaking; his teaching is that all should live in a manner that edifies others and if that means letting go of cultural beliefs, in this case about food laws and purity, then so be it. Moreover, Paul asserts that it is not the place of community members to judge one another, judgement is to be left to the Lord: "For we will all stand before the judgement seat of God."







## SECTARIANISM AS A SYSTEM

### THE TREE

#### Reading

Luke 6:43-44

*"No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thorn-bushes, or grapes from briars."*

(See the Tree Model in the Trunk and Branches section)

What bad fruit do we experience/ have we experienced in our personal, communal, and institutional identities?

(write these on pieces of paper and place in a basket to be a presentation to God for grace to help us)

#### Prayer

God, giver of peace, grow hope within and around us.  
God of steadfast love, never leave us hopeless.

#### Reading

Rev 22:1-3

*"Then the angel showed me the river of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations."*



## A Liturgy for Laying down and Letting go

By Kate McIlhagga

(From 'Pushing the Boat Out' (Ed) Kathy Galloway Copyright © The authors 1995 Wild Goose Publications  
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This Liturgy is appropriate for situations of ending, leaving or departing. Moving to a new place; or perhaps with the ending of a relationship or with an old way of thinking, venturing into a new situation; or perhaps for a member of a community or a whole community a 'moving-on'. Care should be taken about the location of the liturgy which should have meaning and significance for the person or persons involved.

As Columba laid down his book and the security of a monastery  
SO WE LAY DOWN THE PAST AND LOOK TO THE FUTURE

As Aidan and Cuthbert let go  
And travelled hopefully on  
SO WE LET GO HURT AND PAIN AND TRAVEL WITH HOPE

As Hilda changed direction and relinquished cherished plans  
SO WE LEAVE BEHIND FAMILIAR PATHS AND TAKE NEW STEPS INTO THE UNKNOWN

*Song*

### *Prayer of Confession*

Merciful God,  
For the things we have done that we regret,  
forgive us;  
For the things we have failed to do that we regret,  
forgive us;  
For all the times we have acted without love,  
forgive us;  
For all the times we have reacted without thought,  
forgive us;  
for all the times we have withdrawn care,  
forgive us;  
for all the times we have failed to forgive,  
forgive us;

For hurtful words said and helpful words unsaid,  
For unfinished tasks,  
and unfulfilled hopes  
God of all time,  
forgive us  
And help us to lay down our burden of regret.





### *An act of contrition*

People may write what they wish to lay down on a piece of paper, distributed beforehand, and place it at the foot of a cross, or in a boat (coracle), or a rubbish bin, and where appropriate these can be carried out, launched forth or burnt.

Alternatively people could be asked to place a lit candle by a symbol of new beginnings eg. A sandal; keys; an A to Z; a book open on a fresh page.

It may also be helpful to invite people to sow seeds of hope in a central pot or sow individual ones, reminding them that we can "sow seeds with a closed hand."



### *Dandelion Clock*

Hope is a dark elusive child  
curled in the womb  
cradled in our arms.  
It can be lost,  
disappear,  
blown on the wind like a dandelion clock

Its going  
its ebbing away  
leaves us  
grieving  
empty  
hopeless.

'But' is a hopeful word.

But even as the gossamer  
powder puff  
disintegrates,  
the seeds are carried  
to cling to distant crevices.  
As it recedes  
it reseeds  
to grow again.

God, giver of peace,  
grow hope within and around us.  
God of steadfast love,  
never leave us hopeless.

A time of silence for reflection



## *Litany of Letting Go*

I let go  
window and door,  
house and home,  
memory and fear.  
I let go the hurt of the past  
and look to the hope of the future  
I let go  
Knowing that I will always carry  
part of my past (part of you) with me  
woven into the story of my life.

Help me/us Christ my/our brother,  
to softly fold inside  
the grief and the sadness,  
to pack away the pain  
and to move on  
taking each day in your company  
travelling each step  
in your love.

## *To finish*

Pilgrim God, our shoes are filled with stones,  
our feet are blistered and bleeding,  
our faces are stained with tears.

As we stumble and fall,  
may we know your presence  
in the bleeding and the tears  
and in the healing and the laughter  
of our pilgrimage.







## DYNAMICS AND VARIETIES OF SECTARIANISM

### Attitudes to Greatness:

Jesus made a very challenging response to the disciples who were arguing about who was the greatest among them:

"Whoever welcomes this child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me, welcomes the one who sent me; for the least among all of you is the greatest"

Luke 9: 48



Aspirations to greatness and attitudes of superiority have no place in a Christian community whose Lord expressed his own role as one of service. They undermine the Christian mission of reconciliation by promoting distance, division, and even disdain at the heart of churches and faith communities. The challenge for all churches and individual Christians is to live the depth of humility that discipleship demands.

Luke 6:37-38

*"Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."*



## DEALING WITH DIFFERENCE

### Parable of the Talents

(See the Mana Simulation Game- Leaves Section)

Matthew Chapter 25 verses 14-28

Everyone has a responsibility to play their part in the relationship and process of reconciliation. It won't work unless we are prepared to work together and mitigate destructive ways of relating.

### The Apostle Paul

In the Christian Scriptures koinonia is a term that Paul uses to express a number of qualities of participation, relationship and sharing that should be in a community founded on and following Jesus Christ.

The first is the source of communion, which he sees as flowing from fellowship with the Son and with the Holy Spirit, and from participation in body and blood of Christ.

Koinonia, then, is communion with God, freely offered to human beings, and this makes the Christian community 'one body' in Christ.

|   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| Fellowship with the Son                       | see 1 Cor 1:9    |
| Communion in the Holy Spirit                  | see 2 Cor 13:13  |
| Participation in the body and blood of Christ | see 1Cor 10:16-7 |

The second is the depth and closeness of relationship demanded of members of the community, and the willingness to be reconciled to one another, which is symbolised by extending "the right hand of fellowship."  
Gal 2:7-9

The third is the sense of koinonia as sharing resources so that all can live in dignity. If our communion does not issue in just relationships within and outside the community then it is not communion based on and demanded by the love of God in Christ, who reached out to the poor, the marginalized and the outcasts.  
2Cor 8:3-6





## The Good Samaritan

Luke 10: 25-37

The Samaritan:

- He put himself in a challenging place (the journey from Jerusalem to Jericho was not an easy road to travel).
- When difference was encountered he didn't avoid it he offered his support, love, encouragement and healing without expecting the other to become like him.



## Jesus and difference

Jesus repeatedly showed the need for openness, conversation and a willingness to be changed by the other. Jesus neither dismisses nor ignores people, even those who oppose him. He treats them with openness even when roundly condemning their actions and calling them to repentance. This can be seen in several conversations between Jesus and the Pharisees and Sadducees recorded in Matthew Chapters 21-23.



## ANCESTRAL VOICES

### Tested In the Fire

Daniel, Chapter three, in the Hebrew text of the Bible tells the story of King Nebuchanezzar (King of the Babylonian empire) and his ninety-foot high idol of gold.

It was the King's command that whenever the 'worship music' started everyone was to bow down and worship the idol. At least some of the people in the King's court were not prepared to respond in this way and three exiled Jewish friends were soon brought to the King to explain themselves.

*"Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up? Now when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music, if you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good. But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?"*

Daniel 3: 14-15

What went through the heads of these friends as they faced this serious ultimatum? Did they considered whether or not it was worth resisting worshipping such an idol?

What idols exist in our own cultures?

Idolatry:

Christians will always have national or cultural identities but those identities should be subordinate to identity in Christ i.e. we should not worship them like idols.

Idolatry is used here in the classical sense of the Greek *eidololatria*, 'the worship of images.' This is based on the concept that "God could neither be named nor imagined" and that therefore to name God as God of Ireland or of Ulster or of 'our tribe' is to deny the transcendence of God. This god becomes the god of 'our own,' and our ethical concern becomes focused upon that which is not ultimate, namely our own, people, land, nation.

When we are looking towards this idol-god whom we have created, we avert our eyes from the glory and power and demands of Jesus Christ, our saviour and reconciler. And in averting our eyes we not only betray Christ's saving sacrifice for us, but we lose sight of the only source of power and love that can bring about the reconciliation of our peoples, our nations and our churches.







## TRANSFORMING SECTARIANISM

### The Ship

(See the instructions for making the paper ship that is used as a visual aid)

IF THERE IS SOMEONE IN THE GROUP WHO LIKES ACTING OR TELLING STORIES THEN THEY MAY LIKE TO TRY THIS:

Once upon a time a courageous little ship the MOVING BEYOND SECTARIANISM (MBS) set out upon the turbulent waters of sectarianism. Storms were a regular feature of this unpredictable sea. The ship was carried off and thrown against the rocks of reductionism, and became greatly reduced.  
(tear off one end of the ship).

Now some strong currents bore the little ship away to those frustrating islands of benign apartheid, where she came apart at the hind (tear off the other end of the ship).

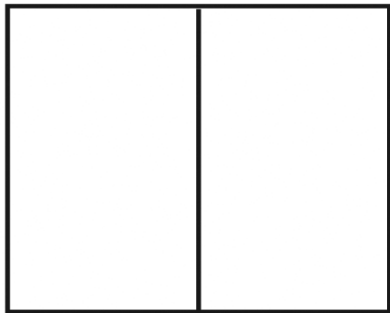
Now you might think this was the end of this little ship's trials but you won't have reckoned on the depressing clouds of resignation that hover near these islands between which there is so little contact. The top of the ship was totally enveloped in the cloud. (tear off the top).

How was the little ship to deal with this situation, surrounded and buffeted on all sides by the enemies rejection, fear, apartheid, arrogance, ignorance, belittling and domination?

No longer a ship, and filled with the spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation it offered the only thing it had left, (unwrap the remains of the ship) remembering the words of the One it followed.

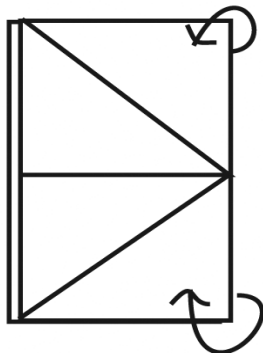
"from him who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt" (Luke 6: 29)  
(present the shirt)



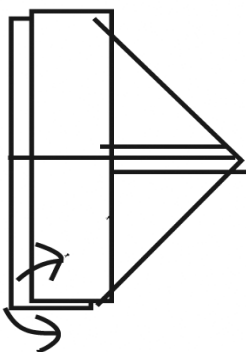


To Make the Ship

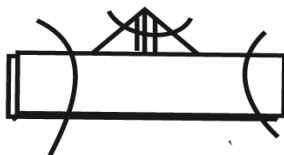
1. Fold a piece of A4 paper in half



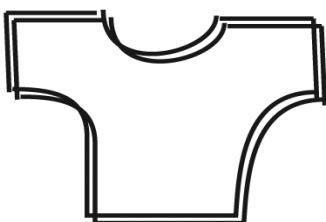
2. Fold in half again  
3. Fold the ends over to meet at the centre



4. Fold the long ends up either side of the 'sail'



5. After the front rear and top of the ship are torn away during the telling of the story....



7. Unfold it to reveal the 'shirt'





### Cross Border Peace Talks by Kathy Galloway

(From 'Pushing the Boat Out' (Ed) Kathy Galloway Copyright © The authors 1995 Wild Goose Publications Unit 15 Harmony Row, Glasgow G51 3BA with permission)

There is a place  
beyond the borders  
where love grows  
and where peace is not the frozen silence  
drifting across no man's land from two heavily-defended entrenchments,  
but the stumbling, stammering attempts of long-closed throats  
to find words to span the distance;  
neither is it a simple formula  
that reduces everything to labels,  
but an intricate and complex web of feeling and relationship  
which spans a wider range than you'd ever thought possible.



The place is not to be found on the map  
of government discussions  
or political posturing.  
It does not exist within the borders  
of Catholic or Protestant,  
Irish or British,  
male or female,  
old or young.  
It lies beyond,  
and is drawn with different points of reference.



To get to that place  
You have to go  
(or be pushed out)  
beyond the borders,  
to where it is lonely, fearful, threatening,  
unknown.  
Only after you have wandered for a long time  
in the dark,  
do you begin to bump into others,  
also branded,  
exiled,  
border-crossers,  
and find you walk on common ground.



It is not an easy place to be,  
this place beyond the borders.  
It is where you learn that there is more pain in love  
than in hate,  
more courage in forbearance than in vengeance,  
more remembering needed in forgetting,  
and always new borders to cross.



But it is a good place to be.



And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

Rev 22:1-3

*"Then the angel showed me the river of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations."*

- The above verses are read out.
- People can write ways in which they can start to respond to sectarianism on pieces of paper shaped like leaves or fruit. These can be placed in a basket or on a drawing of a tree or a model tree.
- People look at the different leaves and fruit.
- There is a time of silent reflection.
- The verses are read again as a closing.







## Out of The Desert Came Healing

(Written in co-operation with Joe Topping- Lisburn Inter-church Project)

The following Bible Study developed out of one of the MBS Adult Education pilot groups. This passage from the Gospel of Luke provided the focus for a five-week programme carried out over Lent, 2001.

Luke 4:1-30

*"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."* (Isaiah 61:1-2)



Jesus goes into the desert

Luke 4:1-2

Understanding Identity

In verse 3 we are told that Jesus is baptized and the Holy Spirit descends on him. This marks the start of his ministry. Jesus then goes to the desert for forty days. Why? Perhaps this experience was to prepare him for the challenges ahead and provide time to reflect on where he was coming from and to where he was going. Perhaps it was to help him come to terms with what was expected of him; to form his earthly identity in a bold new way.



Perhaps we could benefit by reflecting on our ministry, on our identities. In the context of Northern Ireland are we prepared to take responsibility for the sectarian consequences of our practices, attitudes and beliefs, to face the temptations to ignore others, to hate others, to do nothing about deep divisions?



The Temptation of Jesus

Luke 4:3-13

Temptations

The first temptation involved food, having fasted for many days and nights (verse 3). Jesus responded not by saying that food isn't important but by emphasising the priority of God's word and will. He chose to relinquish his desires and embrace a process of development that had costs.

The second temptation was the promise of power and domination (verse 5). Jesus again responded by quoting scripture and emphasising the priority of worshipping and serving God over having power and authority over others (verse 8).



Finally Jesus was tempted by the spectacular, the sensational. He knew, however, that the real process of change takes long-term, sustained effort. It's something that requires us to play a patient part.

Jesus dealt with temptations that were specific to his situation and capabilities. If we only blame others for succumbing to their sectarian temptations we may be ignoring what temptations affect us, we may be ignoring our own part in the sectarian system.



## Out Of The Desert

Luke 4:14-30

When Jesus came out of the desert he began his ministry. He soon came to his hometown (verses 14-16) and went to the synagogue, as was his custom, and read from the Hebrew scriptures:

*"he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners..."*  
(Isaiah 61:1-2)

Jesus personalises this passage. He takes responsibility for this 'good news', saying that

*"Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing"*  
(Luke 4:21)

Perhaps if Jesus had not taken personally this passage in Isaiah the people listening would not have felt so challenged. When he suggested that the Gentiles (the 'other') could also be favoured by God the reaction of the people was hostile.

It is hard to affect change in our own communities but God's desires are clear to us: build bridges; offer love, trust and forgiveness; listen to others; follow Jesus' example.





## INTRODUCTION

The aim of this short section is to highlight just some of the other community relations based resources available to groups and facilitators. A number of training/programme resources are listed as well as a range of organisations and people that may be able to offer advice and/or assistance in developing programmes, facilitation, training etc. For the most part only organisations operating on a regional or national level are mentioned here, there are, however, many local organisations and groups involved in different initiatives aimed at improving community relations. The Community Relations Council offers more extensive directories.



The resources contained in this pack are based on the work of Dr Cecelia Clegg and Dr Joe Liechty of the Irish School of Ecumenics (Trinity College Dublin). If you want to know more about material regarding any particular section it is covered, in greater depth, in their book: 'Moving Beyond Sectarianism' Columba Press, 2001



The following is a list of some of the existing group-work resources for community relations.

- 'Stop & Visit In Northern Ireland, An Information Guide':  
Free Publication by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board  
Covers the whole of Northern Ireland and gives contacts for places to visit of historical and/or cultural interest:  
[www.discovernorthernireland.com](http://www.discovernorthernireland.com)
- 'Us and them': Workers' Educational Association (NI)  
(see next list for contact details)
- 'Bridging the Gap' by Johnston McMaster & John Kyle  
"A programme to discover more about yourself and those around you and a tool for building a way forward together"  
For Further Info contact:  
Judith Cairns, Bridging The Gap c/o Habitat for Humanity, Unit 29 Farset Enterprise Park, 638 Springfield Rd. Belfast.  
Tel 028 90243686
- 'Creating Community- a resource for church and community groups' produced by The Corrymeela Community (see next list for contact details)  
"A six-week experiential learning course... 'to create within the group the type of community that they would like to experience in Northern Ireland:'"
- 'A State Apart: Northern Ireland- an interactive chronicle of the conflict'  
Interactive CD Rom produced by BBC Northern Ireland  
[www.state-apart.co.uk](http://www.state-apart.co.uk)
- '1916: Lest We Forget'  
Interactive Symbols CD Rom produced by the Nerve Centre  
[www.symbols.co.uk](http://www.symbols.co.uk)
- 'Northern Ireland: Roots of Conflict, Routes to Peace (Covering the years 1150-1999)  
Published by the National Peace Council  
88 Islington High Street, London N1 8EG
- 'Ways Out of Conflict- Resources for Community Relations Work'  
Duncan Morrow and Derick Wilson  
The Understanding Conflict Trust, 1996  
Contact: Future Ways  
University Of Ulster  
Coleraine BT 52 1SA







- 'Building Confidence: A single identity programme for Church-based groups'  
Youth Link NI, 1996  
(see next list for contact details)

- 'A Strategy for Peace: Training in Cross-Community Skills and Issues'  
Youth Link NI, 1994  
A training manual in cross-community skills and issues for young adults and adult workers, especially in the Church-based sector.



- ECONI; Evangelicals Asking Questions. Action Pack  
Published by ECONI (Evangelical Contribution on Northern Ireland)  
Resources for exploring topics such as Love, Forgiveness, Reconciliation, Peace, Citizenship etc.  
(see next list for contact details)



- 'Churches Working Together- A Practical Resource'  
By Johnston McMaster and Cathy Higgins and published by the Churches Advisory Group of CRC, 2001.

- 'All Different All Equal Education Pack'  
European Youth Centre  
Youth Directorate  
30 rue Pierre de Coubertin  
F-67000 Strasbourg  
Ideas, resources, methods and activities for informal intercultural education with young people and adults.



## INNATE Graphics Library

A compilation of cartoons, drawings, printed photos and other graphics and information held in box files and classified into fifty major headings  
Contact: INNATE, 16 Ravensdene Pk, Belfast BT6 ODA  
Tel: 028 90647106



## The Community Relations Council (CRC)

(see next list for contact details)  
[www.community-relations.org.uk](http://www.community-relations.org.uk)

CRC stocks a number of publications (such as those listed above), catalogues, reports etc. in the Community Relations Information Centre, 21 College Square East, Belfast.  
e.g.

- 'Dealing with difference- a directory of Peace, Reconciliation, and CR projects in Northern Ireland'
- 'Community Relations Resource Centre Catalogue Spring 2001'



The following is a list of some of the organisations and people who may be able to offer advice and/or assistance.

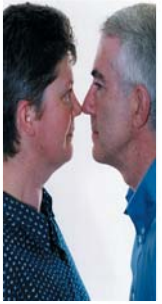
Denominational Contacts:

Think Again- Reconciliation  
Church of Ireland, Diocese of Down and Dromore  
Rev Charlie Leeke  
Church of Ireland House  
61-67 Donegal Street, Belfast, BT1 2HQ  
Tel: 028 90322268,  
E-mail: [Charlie@reconcile-thinkagain.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:Charlie@reconcile-thinkagain.fsnet.co.uk)

Methodist Church in Ireland: Edgehill Theological College CR Co-ordinator  
Olive Bell  
Edgehill Theological College  
Lennoxvale  
Belfast BT9 5BY  
Tel: 028 90665870  
E-Mail [obell.edgehill@netmatters.co.uk](mailto:obell.edgehill@netmatters.co.uk)

Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Peace and Peacemaking Convenor:  
Rev Doug Baker  
Tel: 90652487, 90 43 8614  
E-mail [doug-baker@dnet.co.uk](mailto:doug-baker@dnet.co.uk)

Each Diocese in the Catholic Church has an ecumenical committee (see the Irish Catholic Directory, published by Veritas).



## Other Organisations (in alphabetical order)



### An Crann / The Tree

10 Arthur Street  
Belfast BT1 4GD  
Tel: 028 9024 0209

- Written/visual resources
- Helping people to tell and to hear the stories of the troubles



### Community Dialogue

373 Springfield Rd  
Belfast BT12 7DG  
Tel: 028 90329995

[www.commdial.org](http://www.commdial.org)

- Discussion papers on current political issues presenting both Nationalist and Unionist perspectives
- Facilitators for cross-community dialogue



### Community Relations Council

6 Murray Street  
Belfast BT1 6DN  
Tel: 028 90227500

[www.community-relations.org.uk](http://www.community-relations.org.uk)

- Written resources, funding information, programme support etc



### Community Relations Training Learning Consortium

[www.crtlc.org](http://www.crtlc.org)

- Support and development of community relations training through information, skills training, resource networking.



### Corrymeela Community

8 Upper Crescent  
Belfast BT7 1NT  
Tel: 028 90508020

[www.corrymeela.org](http://www.corrymeela.org)

- Residential centre in Ballycastle
- Programmes
- Worship and programme resources
- Volunteering opportunities

### Counteract

45/47 Donegall Street  
Belfast BT1 2FG  
Tel: 028 90237023

- Anti-intimidation unit sponsored by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions



## ECONI (Evangelical Contribution on Northern Ireland)

1 Brunswick Street

Belfast BT2 7GE

Tel: 028 90325258

[www.econi.org](http://www.econi.org)

- Written resources
- Speakers/ facilitators
- Programmes and other training
- Events



## Habitat for Humanity

Judith Cairns, Tom O'Dowd

638 Springfield Rd

Belfast BT12 7DY

Tel 028 90243686

- Opportunities for cross-community encounter through volunteering
- 'Bridge the Gap' Programme



## IFA Community Relations Department

Michael Boyd

20 Windsor Ave

Belfast BT9 6EE

Tel: 028 90669458

Promoting community relations development in football



## Irish School of Ecumenics (Trinity College Dublin), Northern Ireland Office

48 Elmwood Ave

Belfast BT9 6AZ

Tel: 028 90382750

[www.tcd.ie/ise](http://www.tcd.ie/ise)

- Short Courses, speakers, facilitators
- Certificated training programmes
- Further Education opportunities through a range of Masters and Diploma courses
- Other training materials



## Irish Council of Churches/Irish Inter-Church Meeting

48 Elmwood Ave Belfast

BT9 6AZ

Tel: 028 90663145

e-mail [icpep@email.com](mailto:icpep@email.com)

- Written resources/ publications of an inter-church nature
- Funding from Inter-Church Reconciliation Fund





# Other Resources



The Mediation Network for Northern Ireland  
Churches Project (Doug Baker)  
10 Upper Crescent  
Belfast BT7 1NT  
Tel: 028 90 43 8614  
[www.mediation-network.org.uk](http://www.mediation-network.org.uk)

- Facilitation for inter-church discussion
- Assistance with programme planning
- Training on Mediation, Handling Conflict etc.



Wave Trauma Centre  
5 Chichester Park South  
Belfast BT15 5DW  
Tel: 028 90779922  
[www.wavetc.clara.net](http://www.wavetc.clara.net)

- Work with victims/survivors of the N.I conflict
- Training on bereavement issues



WEA (Workers Educational Association)  
Building Communities  
Colin Neilands  
1 Fitzwilliam Street  
Belfast, BT9 6AW  
Email: [info@wea-ni.com](mailto:info@wea-ni.com)

- Training
- Programme and other written resources



Western Routes (Part of Future Ways)  
Libby Keys  
Gortlowry House  
94 Church Street  
Cookstown  
Co Tyrone BT80 8HX  
Tel: 028 86765806

- Developing/facilitating community relations discussions and initiatives.

