

Anglican-Lutheran Society Conference 2014

**'Fear Not Little Flock'
The Vocation of Minority Churches Today**

Session Two : Divided Communities

The Most Rev Dr Michael Jackson, Archbishop of Dublin

As you will see, Michael Jackson chose not to deliver his planned presentation, but to respond to, and to develop, some of the issues raised by Praxedis Bouwman in her presentation. What he said is reproduced here, and his planned presentation follows on page 9.

The Actual Presentation

I'm going to do things slightly differently. I'm going to take up a few points from what Praxedis Bouwman said a few minutes ago, and I'm not going to stick to the text that I've written. What I've done is send a copy of it to the organisers of this conference and that will appear on the website. But I want to ask you to think about something which may sound strange or maybe excessively pious or outrageous of me. Ian Paisley died yesterday, and although he was a significant part of the problem [in Northern Ireland] he also contributed to a resolution of the problem. I say that with no insincerity, having lived and grown up in the sort of contrived divided society that he sought to create and sustain. But I think that within the totality of God's providence it's fascinating how things change and people are used for different purposes by the God who has an over-arching desire to go and search for the lost sheep, to hang over a precipice rather than work in a warm and comforting and pastoral way walking ahead of the sheep with a baby lamb around his neck. Rather he chooses to do those dangerous things like leaning over a precipice in the ice to grab an extremely foolish and wayward sheep.

Now I suppose that one of the things that fascinated me in what Praxedis said was her honesty that minorities may in many ways have been constructed to have no duties, and you can push that further and say no codified responsibilities, and how in a sense that psychology of itself can create a sense of self-indulgent victimhood. Now it needn't do

that, there can be a freedom in it which enables you to move courageously in an area which has been defined. That's the creative, the eschatological way of doing, it the way in which a little flock can actually become a critical changer of the landscape. But very often, and I think this has happened in Ireland in particular, a minority has begun to feel exceptionally sorry for itself and therefore has begun to look for exclusivity as the best expression of rights rather than exploration as the best expression of its gifts.

Here's a shocking example. It was in the winter of 2002, there was a gathering of the variety of people that are in the small parliament that is in Belfast. I happened to be invited. It was one of those wonderful occasions where people were given four minutes to speak. A woman came to the lectern and she said the following: 'I'm a French, Algerian atheist. I have no interest in your two communities and I belong to neither.' And she sat down. In a way she had pointed up the constructs that people put around their minority and their majority status, the constructs they put around those protected and polished identities whereby those who are not coping need other people who are not coping to convince themselves that they still exist. And this grows as they seek more and more a place in the shared public space. So that's another thing that interests me from what Praxedis was talking about, that whole Apologetic approach, the way in which the prophet Jeremiah went out to buy a field and said, 'Yes, we're here. We're not sure when we're leaving. We're not sure if we're going to get away. But we have to get on with being part of this society because if we don't we actually lose our core values.' And what are the core values? To be fellow human beings, to be part of the community which has a definition but which moves out and shares those core values.

And there I think we're brought again to the heart of our theme; that if fear defines the psychology of the minority then the minority is in double trouble. The first is because we work in terms of being small, and if you're small you feel you have less power, which leads us into that equation where the understanding of authority is something that plays against and works with power. And the second is that if you have fear you won't take those first steps and you will not be able to engage with the trust which is out there which wants to reach out to you. So I think that's one of the very important ways in

which our theme has been opened up, and in which not only can it inform our discussion it can inform our informal conversation as well.

The paper that I wrote at my kitchen table because I like working at my kitchen table in the small minority community to which I belong which is myself and my three dogs (that's not because I live utterly on my own but because my wife works in Belfast while I work in Dublin). That paper which I wrote tried to set something of the context of the idea of community itself which, at its base, has been value neutral. But then it's the aspirations and the values that people share and over which they battle that actually divide communities and forces communities to be places not of sharing but places of tearing down. But you can see all of that when you look at the paper.

The other thing that I tried to set out is the way in which in a particular way divided communities as such constitute the Irish society. The way in which I try to draw the paper to an end was to make a suggestion that after not just 30 or 40 years, maybe not just after 800 years, we need to begin to learn something fresh which would have helped us a lot earlier – that conflict is something that is creative. It's not going to go away, so what do you do with it? Do you let it continue to drag you down or do you begin to engage with the energy which is part of it?

I suppose I take you back to something that is shared between the Anglican and the Lutheran tradition, an illustration which may not be the easiest to embrace, and illustration of St Augustine of Hippo. Preaching to a large congregation in North Africa he takes the illustration of sewerage and he says you can do what you like with it. You can throw it out of the window and pollute the environment in which you live, or you can create a little channel and divert it and grow a small kitchen garden and get some vegetables. Now to me it's quite an important image because violence, diminishment, intimidation are a sort of sewerage, a destructive force in our society. There is an energy there, there are frustrations, there is potential, there are often reasons improperly or insufficiently understood, why parts of society don't work and why people are angry. And that, I think, is where the pastoral picture of the shepherd as

leading from in front is actually quite important to our understanding of the healing of divided communities.

And there always seems a really big question as to whether than healing comes from above, within, or from a completely surprising source. During the Troubles in Northern Ireland two women were jointly given a Nobel Peace Prize for saying that they were going to stand against the manipulation chiefly of young men in their own Nationalist community by the IRA, and they didn't want any more of this. They didn't want the next generation polluted, to go back to Augustine's illustration. So there are people who appear and actually change the culture. That's why I go back to that morning when the French Algerian Atheist woman told us all that we really ought to tear up the script and stop talking about the exclusivity and the exclusive entitlement of two communities with no function in society.

Praxedis talked about immigration, the migration of peoples which is something that has been greatly facilitated in Ireland by the European Union and the opening of borders. Because now in Ireland we have at the last count 220 different nationalities. Now Ireland isn't a big country, it's not even a coherently united country, but there are still people of up to 220 different nationalities and cultures and, I would argue as well, people with a religious sub-stratum. To me, questions of identity are important, and the way in which the issue of people who look massively different from those who are local has been handled is very interesting. I'm not in the least trying to be offensive with my next illustration. One of my priests is a Nigerian Anglican and the Second Sunday of Advent last year he invited me to his church to take part in a Service of Nine Lessons and Carols. The nine lessons were all read in different languages, and when I arrived he said to me would I mind staying behind afterwards as people would like to take photographs. I told him I didn't mind at all and he said, 'They need to take photographs for two reasons; one is to show the people back home that they're alive, and the second is to show them what they're doing.' And then he said something wonderfully telling. 'Most of the natives here don't get that.' I thought that a wonderful inversion of language because the word 'native' used by someone who was a citizen to describe

genetic white Irish people was actually the right thing. I thought it was wonderful, and I said to him, 'Keep using that word!' because it turns the whole thing in such a way that we can understand things better.

In Northern Ireland and in the Republic the arrival of people from abroad was treated in very different ways. In the Republic of Ireland groups of people of varying sizes were given housing in different parts of the country. You would find African and Asian people in small villages. So these people found themselves dispersed across a country that has had a history of both immigration and emigration. It wasn't easy for people but they established themselves and not 15-20 years on they're very much part of those communities. Some take part in local politics, they're involved in local community groups, and some are involved in churches because, let me be honest, the church is in many ways is slowest to catch up with the exploration of human friendship.

In Northern Ireland it was different. People were kept with the radius of Belfast. The argument was that the resources needed for people to establish themselves were in the urban area. Now I think that's a wrong answer because the fallacy is that the people coming will be able to establish themselves in urban areas. But the urban areas are the very places where you begin to disappear because the sense of community isn't there, the concept of hospitality based around simple things like food and clothing doesn't really happen. Questions of child care, questions of 'novelty friendship' of one another don't happen in a city area.

So I suppose the complexities we have had of recent date in relation to people living in Ireland are partly due to the fact that many of them don't really want to be there. If you think of the circumstances that actually drive people with nothing away from their home – rape and pillage, exploitation, warfare – that lead them to land somewhere where they have to start afresh. And as we move through life there is something that's stronger than nostalgia. There's the question of connecting our earlier selves with our present selves, and that becomes almost insurmountable when you have this tremendous psychological, geographical and political divide between you and your country.

So if I can take an example or two, one of the things that's quite interesting about where we are in Northern Ireland, the current political maturity in Northern Ireland, such as it is, wouldn't have happened if it hadn't come out of a period of conflict. The period of conflict began as the 50th anniversary of a period of revolution which left unfinished business. What we talk in shorthand about 'The Troubles' began in 1966, the 50th anniversary of the Easter Rising which resulted in the Republic of Ireland being independent from England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. 'The Troubles' came out of a sense of unfinished business. Doctrinaire Republicans in the 26 counties (the Republic) felt that the 32 should be free. So it's not surprising that conflict centred on the 6 counties of Northern Ireland. There, society was an inward looking minority, and never forget that one of the mantras of self-understanding for Northern Ireland was 'A Protestant State for a Protestant People'. The fact that power was largely concentrated in the hands of a minority of Protestant landowners fuelled 'romantic Republicanism'. It was the unwillingness of the political establishment in Northern Ireland to address that which turned the civil rights movements into a machine of destruction and intimidation.

So if I can go back to my earlier mention of Ian Paisley, Northern in the last quarter of the 20th century became a by-word for anarchy and brutality. The wilful ambiguity shown by those who held political power and influence in the Republic of Ireland as seemingly determined to resuscitate the rhetoric of 'One Ireland' was a tragi-romantic notion built on a culturally inward looking nationalism that had defined the first 50 years of the Irish State. It was a dangerous idea for which there was no concerted economic sub-structure and insufficient political will. The political parties in the Republic of Ireland remain divided to this day around issues to do with the Civil War of 1922. The political parties of Northern Ireland are likewise divided around the ongoing longevity of the state of Northern Ireland and what it means to have a Westminster axis. Bitterness between Northern Ireland and the Republic has many causes. For example, the out and out Unionists would have confined the new state of Northern Ireland in the 1920s to the three most Easterly counties of the ancient province of Ulster because of the clear Protestant majority there due to the settlement from Scotland that took place

in the seventeenth century. This was to have serious repercussions in the second half of the 20th century. Overwhelmingly 'The Troubles' were concentrated in Belfast and in the border areas, the geography of those old battlegrounds. And so, although it seems to us to be tremendously crude, this was in many real ways quite a sophisticated conflict.

I'll end by telling you of some of my conclusions. It is out of such outrage, miraculously, that a level of political accommodation has been brought to life. This has resulted in Northern Ireland having its own devolved parliament as one of three different devolutions within the United Kingdom: Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Meanwhile Queen Elizabeth II has made the first royal visit since Queen Victoria and since Partition to the Republic of Ireland; has met cordially both The First and Second Ministers in Northern Ireland; and the President of Ireland has made the first State Visit of someone in that office to England; and there is every expectation that a member of The British Royal Family will attend at least a part of the Commemorations of the Centenary of the 1916 Easter Rising in Dublin in 2016. The Belfast/Good Friday Agreement has resulted in a form of power sharing according to the de Honte principle. By this principle you share power by matching important ministries of state policy, under devolved authority, across political parties whose members are so distinct from one another as to be political opponents. The hope is that by bringing those formerly at the margins together you will have an operational formula of respect that both works and holds; and by this mechanism things begin to happen through the accommodation of opposites. The hope is that this derives its energy from operational respect for each other and for the people whom these leaders represent. Gradually people have changed the temperature and the pace of their political expectations as they see the most extraordinary of accommodations blossoming into public working friendships. One presumes that while this is happening, the individual parties work with their own internal hard-liners to keep them on side and on track and to keep active violence outside the door.

Those who miss out in this political process of the working accommodation around goals shared today and tomorrow by yesterday's enemies and extremes are, of course, those 'in the middle'. They feel disenfranchised and disenchanting because inevitably 'they would not have done it this way.' The brutal truth, however, which they face, is that they did not succeed in making these things work when they had the ball at their feet – for whatever reason. This is not in itself a negative value-judgement on their political capacity; it is rather an expression of the fact that the middle ground is not a barometer of as much as it thinks it is, nor has it ever been; it is therefore a *de facto* recognition on the part of those internationally who feel a genuine responsibility that something good should happen, that the middle ground has, in this cycle, run out of capacity to deliver peace with an accommodation of those who created and sustained the conflict; and it gives at least a nodding recognition to those who subsequently have most to lose and are most dangerous in an era of peace where their convictions do not receive the structured political accommodation for which they fought and bombed and killed and maimed.

This happens worldwide across yesterday's arena of war and conflict – eventually - and it is how things move forward. Internationally, the middle ground time after time shows itself largely incapable of making this leap of accommodation and generosity but, tragically, those who inhabit this space are often the last to see it or to go for it. There is also the further problem in that you bring people to the table - but what do they do once they are there? How do the politically-accommodated extremes represent either the increasingly disengaged middle ground or how do they continue to represent their own ultra-extremists who resent the fact that their former leaders have gone for an accommodation that they now see as a soiled compromise? And compromise remains a tainted word, however honourable an activity.

There's lots more in the paper that follows, so I'll leave it there.

The Paper Submitted to the Conference Organisers

DIVIDED COMMUNITIES

INTRODUCTION: ASPECTS OF COMMUNITY

The word *community* itself suggests a range of things held in common by a defined and, one would hope, expanding and developing number of people. It also suggests that what is *in common* is more important in such definition than what is *in division*, what divides. This requires a level of *cohesion* and *accommodation* on the part of the individuals who form it. This, in turn, requires that they may sit light to some things while they sit heavier to other things, in order to maintain the supremacy of *the common* as a dynamic activity over what is shared but not agreed. The *cohesion* requires a shared purpose and an agreed direction of travel. The *accommodation* requires further agreement around the things that facilitate the smooth operation of the life of the people concerned with any particular community, however spirited or combative their relationships with one another. In such a way as this we have the coming together of the individual and the group. Together they make a community, and in a way that might rightly be described as organic – it grows as it takes shape and it blossoms from within as well as responding to stimuli from without.

Most of us belong to communities that were formed before we were born. We have no idea why they are there and we have no real idea why we are part of them except through an accident of birth. We expect them to be there for us and too often we expect them to grow without our making much contribution to their life, their self-understanding or their next phase of expression. Because of population movements through war and displacement, communities are not groupings of those of like mind in one place with an agreed emotional purpose. Communities now more than ever are people on the move; settlement is a luxury that does not come to many. People are juxtaposed more than they are integrated; they identify cultural markers that become cultural differences; they either actively seek to accommodate in new ways, as new

people become their neighbours, or they lapse into caricatures and ghettos of misunderstanding. This is where and why a community needs a *society* that thinks beyond numbers and their deployment and beyond the economic potential and capacity of its people.

A SIMPLE EXAMPLE – which could be replicated anywhere

The central part of the city of Dublin has historically been densely populated. At various points in the past century, individuals and families have been enticed or enforced to move to the suburbs. Inevitably such suburbs are sold on as having conveniences and amenities far beyond the scope of the inner city. Although this is sometimes true, they progressively seem to lack the interweaving of the inner-city communities and the family connections. At the beginning of The Celtic Tiger era, many people in Dublin moved out into the surrounding countryside areas. The road system had improved and theoretically commuting was both easier and more attractive and somehow the obvious way to go – and affordable. The reality, however, often was that, the urban tail-back from log-jams, junctions and impasses simply got longer and longer. One such new community in Ratoath, County Meath was analysed and it was found that parents had the telephone numbers of three groups of people and were not interested in anyone else: the first category was that of the other parents and adults in the cul-de-sac where they lived in order that they could keep a safe eye on their own and each other's children as they played; the second category was of family members back in the inner city; the third was colleagues at work. This was the horizon of their sense of community.

A second situation arose in the last few years where members of a particular community in an old part of the city, St Teresa's Gardens, Dublin 8, were encouraged to move out in order for regeneration to take place. Surely an offer, it seemed, that nobody could refuse! Families were moved out first; older people living on their own and single parents remained. The money ran out; there was no regeneration. The families stayed where they had moved in a temporary capacity or moved on again – and the drug-dealers moved in to the now neglected and under-populated area in the heart

of the city and openly walked the area to the dismay and terror of the older inhabitants and the single mothers. This tells us a great deal about a number of things: aspiration for better is part of community; organization around upgrading facilities is part of community; the neglect of the vulnerable destroys community; structural civic neglect debases safety and security and therefore quality of life.

A COMMUNITY AS MORALLY NEUTRAL

A community is, on one level, morally neutral. It is defined and delineated by a common interest. Its very existence as a conglomerate is why it is there, whether it be a community of bandits or of bishops, of animal-rights activists or of agnostics. More generally and more hopefully, our expectation is that a community will coalesce around the common good. This brings to bear on the thought-pattern of community an altruism that takes us beyond commonality. It is the commonality itself that is technically morally neutral and it is the sense of facilitating, helping and loving the other that makes and sustains a community of human flourishing and goodness. The doctrine of the common good derives from classical philosophy and forms the basis of the best expressions of contemporary living. It seeks to find in the needs of the weak the fulfilment of the strong; it seeks to give voice to those who have no voice, irrespective of their capacity to contribute to 'the economic imperative;' it is determined to share and to receive rather than to strip and to take. The common good does not of itself demand a democratic system or structure although this is often regarded as the best crucible in which to live and work out such a common good. The corollary is that democracies do not always model the common good. Often through an intolerant version of tolerance they seek actively to suppress the generosity of distinction that always must lie at the base of the liberalism of difference. Too often the criteria are never thrashed out and those who are traditional are binned as being obscurantist; those who are protective are binned as being repressive; those who are subtle in their argument are billed as being unreflectively conservatizing. And so living community is frequently formed out of exhausted compromise!

By the same token, there is little or no scope for the expression of the common good as a disembodied abstract. It needs to be done and it needs to be lived with and for others. If we wish to have an example of this dilemma, we need only to look at Iraq and the Middle East more generally pre-Bush, in the Bush era and now in the Obama era. Freedom is not simply a 'download' of Northern Hemisphere democracy into what was in many contexts a secularized theocracy before the Northern Hemisphere intervention. The way in which things have worked out in both Iraq and in Syria and now right across what people used to call The Levant means that Christian people, and very recently and equally tragically Yazidis and other minorities too – all of them, after all, citizens of their place - are now in a much worse situation than they were before 'Western' intervention or the possibility of it. The further complication is that little more than ten years on, ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) – or IS as it is now called - is seemingly sweeping across territory which purports to include Iraq, Syria, Kuwait, Lebanon, Israel and Jordan in the creation of a contemporary caliphate under Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi or Caliph Ibrahim. As an Irish Times article of Saturday July 5th 2014 expressed it: 'ISIS is at the same time medieval and modern. It sells oil and electricity and exploits social media to raise funds and recruit fighters.' My point is this: what follows the best of intentions or the most gambling of political calculations can wreak unprecedented and unpredictable havoc in the future. Community is not settled nor is it simple any longer – if ever it was.

WHAT DIVIDES COMMUNITIES?

We have identified communities as having a commonality of intention. We have further identified communities of goodness as having the wellbeing of the needy and vulnerable along with that of the capable and successful as a priority in their outworking and outliving of the public good. We have identified the qualities of compassion and of altruism and of moving forward together as the commonality as being that which builds up capacity in a community. This enables any such community to look beyond itself to the welfare of others and the shared flourishing of all.

The pervasive triumph of Neo-Liberal economics as a definition of what matters and what is real has divided and estranged communities that, in other circumstances, ought to be modelling a secular happiness. Christianity has no monopoly on happiness even though it has a distinctive world-view on the ingredients and components of happiness for the one and for the many. The arguments from and the arguments for the death of Christendom have meant that the majority of people in the Northern Hemisphere can no longer snuggle in under the Christianity which they have chosen to reject and from which many continue to want to derive values at second or third hand. Such values are a type of free insurance policy and they are effectively meaningless to them because they have no theological basis, direction or purpose. Let me just give a personal example: ever since I was first ordained until today I have seen this sort of movement around Confirmation ceremonies. It typically runs as follows: we don't go to church but really we live by Christian values – and by the way we would like our children to be confirmed; or we don't know what you are talking about, honestly we haven't a clue what you are on about – and we leave our children to decide if they want to engage with church and/or be confirmed; or I don't really know why I am here – it has ruined my golf – but my daughter decided she wished to be confirmed so I had to come along, and just remind me: Why do you have to have to hold this Service on a Sunday morning?

The challenge today is that Western societies and communities have to find sustainable ethical principles and lives beyond the assumed active inheritance of a world-view such as Christianity, in our case, and the commodification of politics and the consumerization of the common good which have become the norm. These effectively have replaced Christianity in the minds of policy makers; in so many ways it seems as if it was bound to happen. And this brings us back to the mixed and inter-penetrative character of communities. As long as Western societies and communities could presuppose that there was a vague altruism out there derivative of Christianity in some shape or form, then it was presumed that things would carry on. The difficulty is that much of secularism and secularization is angry and keen on settling scores with a religious past. The other thing is that because of easy familiarity with religion and culture, 'laissez-

lapsed Christians', if I may coin such a phrase, have not even begun in most cases to distinguish and differentiate between the religious and the cultural specifics in personal and community identity. They just know that they dislike people of faith and feel more and more entitled to despise them as sub-intellectual and irrelevant to the agenda of equality and inclusivity. It is, by this argument, religion that is deemed to close down human flourishing by virtue of its stubborn adherence to belief and obedience, vulnerability and authority. Without even this level of self-awareness of what we are doing, we are genuinely in trouble and in danger of prejudice, exclusion and racism in a world of Liberal self-congratulation.

SOME WARNINGS AND SOME CONSEQUENCES

Many will not see themselves in this picture or indeed recognize in it the communities from which they come and the churches to which they belong. My own contention would be that, of course, it is not the same picture everywhere. There is today a heightened loss of energy in understanding that urgency and activity *for others* rather than for oneself is an important component in community. My point also is the need to recognize that faith historically plays a vital part in culture and culture plays a vital part in personal and community identity. Community tensions and divisions can start from within or from without and such components often play a part in the shift from peace to antagonism. A recent example from earlier in the year 2014 would be the decision in Denmark that there should be no ritual slaughter of animals for eating by members of the Danish Muslim community. This was based on the conviction that it is inhumane and the further suggestion was made as a solution to the problem that all such meat henceforth should be imported from abroad. The cultural assumption at the heart of this is that if you live in a country, then sooner or later you do things, all things, the 'normal' way or make external provision by out-sourcing. You reach a point where your cultural distinction ceases actively to count within the living diversity of the society. Your diversity, at this point, has become irritating rather than enriching. An insider becomes an outsider living within.

And yet in 2012, when I was co-chairing the Anglican-Jewish Commission in Oxford, we were brought on a walking tour of Jewish Oxford. The area concentrated on the Cornmarket and St Aldate's areas of the city. I had myself lived in Oxford for eight years and had known only that the area which led along the wall of Christ Church Meadow to the Botanical Gardens was called Dead Man's Walk because in earlier times it had led to the Jewish Cemetery. The total absence today of any visible or tangible sign of Jewish identity was all the more painful in that our Jewish dialogue-partners were with us on the tour. It underlined to me, in regard to a race of people all too accustomed to persecution and being disappeared, that identity when viewed as a commodity is something that can ... almost ... be obliterated by progress. One final thought, I was discussing the issue around Halal with a Danish Lutheran who suggested that the opposition itself was a cry from within Modernism on the part of those who mourned the death of Modernism in the face of the a la carte of Post-modernism even more than it was a designed slight to Islam and its culture. But I had to say to myself: This is not how you would see it were you a Danish Muslim!

My suggestion at this stage is that in a modern world, where there are quick-fire communications and rapid exchanges of visual and verbal images, there is very little that needs to begin to go wrong for the whole structure to start to unravel. Once religion and culture part company and cease to be interactive in our own tradition, we find it even harder to identify and to frame the questions which facilitate an understanding of 'the other' in her or his cultural space within our own space – because our space has become deracinated from who we have become in cultural and religious terms. It is no longer readily interpretable. Once we no longer have the shared experience, however different the narrative, we no longer have the capacity to use the shared grammar and the shared vocabulary – and we lose the appetite and the capacity to want to share any of it. Hence division follows fast on foot of incomprehension and lack of inquisitiveness. The abandonment of the old paradigms may indeed be the only way to go but there always is the urgent need for critical other and different paradigms which create and sustain community. And in utterly tragic ways we see this in regard to IS and to Islam

and its capacity for ‘celebrity decapitation’ on our TV screens and on our mobile telephones.

IRELAND – A CASE IN POINT

When one hears the phrase: Divided Communities, one thinks instinctively of a variety of parts of the world. It might be India, Pakistan and Bangladesh; it might be Serbia and Croatia or Bosnia-Herzegovina; it might be the city of Kaduna in Northern Nigeria; it might be Israel, Gaza and Palestine; it might be Syria or it might be Northern Ireland. In the first part of my paper, I have sought to set out some of the components that make up a community and to trace some of the components of division. There are, of course, much more brutal ways of making division happen – warfare, invasion, mass murder and rape and systematic ethnic segregation and cleansing. One of the very striking things about Ireland is that to those on the outside and indeed to many on the inside, the division seems wilful, indeed a division sustained in the face of the fact that those who have accepted division as a settled and unalterable state have much more to gain by unity. This is indeed the conundrum of those who are observers and even more of those of us who are practitioners.

HISTORY

Throughout its history, Ireland has been a place of migration and immigration, of settlement and of colonization and again of emigration. Its geographical position is pivotal to this, lying as it does to the west of Britain and granting a very particular access to the Mediterranean and to Africa, not least from further North and East, indeed to peoples stretching well into Scandinavian countries. While this is now the route of those who delight in ocean-going yachts as well as trade itself, its strategic importance historically had to do with defence, attack and trade. Control of the east coast that looks towards Britain would also secure Ireland from attack via Britain as would control of the south coast secure it from attack from the greater Europe. Once the Vikings worked this out, everyone else was going to work it out, travelling North to South and

South to North – whether the Vikings did or did not make it across the Atlantic to what we call The Americas; it doesn't really matter.

Norman and English immigration, settlement and colonization have left their mark in particular in both parts of Ireland in ways that divide communities around loyalty, identity, betrayal and the hope of change. They also, of course, divide them in a primary way around inheritance, land and territory and the forced appropriation of land and the quest for its return to those to whom this once and originally belonged. Only recently I learned from someone that members of his family had only very recently completed the buying back of all the land which had been taken from them in the wake of the 1641 Rebellion in Ireland and the Plantation – it really did matter to them. In this sense, the term *settlement* is something of an euphemism, however advantageous and creative it has proved to be for some. As in many parts of world, once battle and insurrection become exhausted and therefore unpalatable, once all involved have worked out that in a real way all are defeated, politics and its own combination of romantic idealism and the warfare of attrition take over. The landscape, seemingly insignificant towns bypassed now by whizzing motorways, the place names and the family names tell of original habitation, enforced eviction and clearance and finally *settlement*. And settlement sounds so positive!

I give you one example from the part of Ireland from which I originate. Very few people go into the village of Brookeborough in County Fermanagh, in Northern Ireland. It lies to the right of the A4, a road which takes you from Sligo in the west to Belfast in the east, if you are travelling from Belfast. The name is interesting because it is not the original name. It is a name of settlement. The original name is Aghalun, meaning in Irish The Field of the Blackbirds. These creatures were beloved of the Irish Lady Maguire who lived there with her family. Two things happened. The first was that The Maguire killed his kinsman on the altar of the church in nearby Aghalurcher, in an internal family dispute, and the church was thereby defiled and therefore instantly deconsecrated and remains such to this day. The second thing was the Siege of Donegal in the 1640s at which the English army commander Brooke successfully defended the castle for the

English monarch against the Irish. In settlement, Brooke was given lands in County Fermanagh, the lands as it so happened of The Maguire who had been instrumental in fomenting the Donegal insurrection. Hence Aghalun changed hands and was Anglicized and named Brooke-borough, once the Maguire clan was driven out of power and their supremacy toppled. The family of settlement changed the name and the culture.

The Brooke family continues to this day, assimilated into the life of the area. It provided substantial military personnel in WW2 and a Prime Minister of Northern Ireland. Its family-members are respected by all members of the community, locally and across County Fermanagh. And the Anglican parish church that stands on the Brooke lands was built one hundred and seventy five years after 'The Reformation.' It serves what to this day is called Aghalurcher Parish (the ancient name continues, as in much of the Church of Ireland) while the village of Brookeborough is also served by another parish on its outskirts, Aghavea. My point is simply this: history changes the flow and focus of events; history lies beneath the surface of visible modernity and to either side of it; and many of us seemingly have no immediate need of it to go about our daily preoccupations. Yet it shapes the very ground over which we travel and the people we are and have become through that journeying. It is the landscaped and linguistic context of ourselves which is more and more being obliterated by urbanization.

POLITICAL ACCOMMODATION OF THE IMPOSSIBLE OPPOSITES

Northern Ireland in the last quarter of the twentieth century became a byword for anarchy and brutality, for the suspension of the regular expectation of law and order within the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and for the wilful ambiguity shown by numbers of those who held political power and influence in the Republic of Ireland as seemingly determined to resuscitate the rhetoric of 'one Ireland' as 'A Nation once Again.' It was a tragi-romantic notion built on a culturally inward-looking nationalism that defined the first fifty years of the Irish State. This culminated in the fiftieth anniversary of The Easter Rising of 1916 in 1966. It was a dangerous flirtation with an idea for which there was no concerted economic substructure and insufficient political will. The political parties in the Republic of Ireland to this day remain divided

around issues to do with The Civil War of 1922; the political parties of Northern Ireland are likewise divided around the on-going longevity of the state of Northern Ireland and what it means to have a Westminster axis. The bitterness between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland had many causes. For example, the out-and-out Unionists would have confined the new state of Northern Ireland in the 1920s to the three most easterly counties of the ancient Province of Ulster: Antrim, Down and Armagh, because of the clear Protestant majority by settlement there, cutting loose the more socially and denominationally mixed Fermanagh, Tyrone and Derry to a Republican fate and future, as they would have seen it. This was to have significant repercussions as The Troubles developed in the second half of the twentieth century. Overwhelmingly The Troubles were concentrated in Belfast and in the Border areas – the geographies of the old battle-grounds. This is, therefore, quite a sophisticated conflict. The beginning of the collapse of nineteenth-century industrialism in and around Belfast and the onset of generational joblessness and loss of hope and dignity; the overblown financial and Public Service sector underpinning of a relatively small region of the UK by Westminster, even though it was the size of Yorkshire; the fear of being swallowed up in a ‘United Ireland’ were factors. But objectively the opposition of the then Stormont Government to the introduction of ‘one person one vote’ for all members of the community is, in retrospect, the most incredible factor in all of this. The previous system favoured in a particular way ‘Protestant’ landlords because you had as many votes as you owned properties. The vote did not come with the person but with the property. And the Protestants owned and rented out the vast majority of the property. As a working definition of a functioning democratic community in the 1960s, this was never going to hold, nor should it have been able to – and it did not. Out of the sense of injustice grew The Civil Rights Movement which perforce drew most of its support from the disenfranchised who were overwhelmingly members of the Roman Catholic tradition. It found itself in many respects hijacked and intimidated by the IRA in the Republican areas.

The Protestant Paramilitaries substantially and repeatedly failed to recruit militias in the west of Northern Ireland where the sense of community was and remains quite

different from that in the eastern part of Northern Ireland. And, after decades of picking off individuals who either were Protestant or worked for the British administration, the IRA lost support through international revulsion at the bombs which wreaked havoc in the county-towns of Fermanagh and Tyrone, that is Enniskillen and Omagh, as well as many other atrocities on the islands of Ireland and Britain and beyond. But, whoever orchestrated and executed each death and murder, a wilful killing is just that and plays utter havoc particularly in areas where people know one another, even if their dealings with one another are few and far between. Paramilitarism of such a nature, setting up a Protestant militia internal to a Protestant state, in the western counties did not appeal to people who had for a number of generations lived their lives as neighbours with Nationalists and Roman Catholics. It was wrong and it was senseless and the attempts to do it were utterly cynical. The incapacity of the IRA to read international sentiment when it came to 'innocent civilians' or 'legitimate targets' really meant that there was no further appetite for indiscriminate slaughter beyond the 1990s. The thing that people remember about Enniskillen is that those who were targeted were marking the contribution in self-sacrifice and altruism of people who died in two World Wars for the freeing of Europe and of the wider world from Nazism, many of whom in 1987 were still known to and will always be related to them. This happened on a Sunday morning, Remembrance Sunday. The things people remember about Omagh in 1998 are that a mother and her unborn twins were killed; a Spanish exchange student was killed. This happened in a regular town in Northern Ireland with people buying socks, shoes, pencils, school shirts and schoolbags on a Saturday afternoon at the end of August. Again, the violation of normality combined with the inhumanity of calculation to ensure maximal destruction of life remains in the minds of people and I suggest always will. It has scarred the potential for community and I personally have the greatest admiration for those who tirelessly and graciously build community afresh on the ground for the present in hope of the future, despite the odds and the insults.

It is out of such outrage, miraculously, that a level of political accommodation has been brought to life. This has resulted in Northern Ireland having its own devolved parliament as one of three different devolutions within the United Kingdom: Wales, Scotland and

Northern Ireland. Meanwhile Queen Elizabeth ii has made the first royal visit since Queen Victoria and since Partition to the Republic of Ireland; has met cordially both The First and Second Ministers in Northern Ireland; and the President of Ireland has made the first State Visit of someone in that office to England; and there is every expectation that a member of The British Royal Family will attend at least a part of the Commemorations of the Centenary of the 1916 Easter Rising in Dublin in 2016. The Belfast/Good Friday Agreement has resulted in a form of power sharing according to the de Honte principle. By this principle you share power by matching important ministries of state policy, under devolved authority, across political parties whose members are so distinct from one another as to be political opponents. The hope is that by bringing those formerly at the margins together you will have an operational formula of respect that both works and holds; and by this mechanism things begin to happen through the accommodation of opposites. The hope is that this derives its energy from operational respect for each other and for the people whom these leaders represent. Gradually people have changed the temperature and the pace of their political expectations as they see the most extraordinary of accommodations blossoming into public working friendships. One presumes that while this is happening, the individual parties work with their own internal hard-liners to keep them on side and on track and to keep active violence outside the door.

Those who miss out in this political process of the working accommodation around goals shared today and tomorrow by yesterday's enemies and extremes are, of course, those 'in the middle'. They feel disenfranchised and disenchanting because inevitably 'they would not have done it this way.' The brutal truth, however, which they face is that they did not succeed in making these things work when they had the ball at their feet – for whatever reason. This is not in itself a negative value-judgement on their political capacity; it is rather an expression of the fact that the middle ground is not a barometer of as much as it thinks it is, nor has it ever been; it is therefore a *de facto* recognition on the part of those internationally who feel a genuine responsibility that something good should happen, that the middle ground has, in this cycle, run out of capacity to deliver peace with an accommodation of those who created and sustained

the conflict; and it gives at least a nodding recognition to those who subsequently have most to lose and are most dangerous in an era of peace where their convictions do not receive the structured political accommodation for which they fought and bombed and killed and maimed.

This happens worldwide across yesterday's arena of war and conflict – eventually - and it is how things move forward. Internationally, the middle ground time after time shows itself largely incapable of making this leap of accommodation and generosity but, tragically, those who inhabit this space are often the last to see it or to go for it. There is also the further problem in that you bring people to the table - but what do they do once they are there? How do the politically-accommodated extremes represent either the increasingly disengaged middle ground or how do they continue to represent their own ultra-extremists who resent the fact that their former leaders have gone for an accommodation that they now see as a soiled compromise? And compromise remains a tainted word, however honourable an activity.

THE LARGER AND WIDER POLITICAL CONTEXT IN IRELAND

A number of big issues have been piling up in Ireland over the last decade and I want simply to outline them. The first is the forthcoming centenary celebration of the 1916 Easter Rising, an uprising which resulted ultimately in The Republic of Ireland as a state independent of England. The Troubles grew out of the half-centenary of 1916 with a very clear sense on the part of the IRA and others that '1916' had - and still has in the eyes of Sinn Fein and many others - left unfinished business. The questions now centre on 2016 and what will be the mature public celebration of 1916 in Ireland and internationally. This is to my mind a glorious opportunity to be honest about the past for the future and to do this with those who are 'New Irish' specifically in mind. Ireland has people from upwards of two hundred and twenty nationalities living in the country now. Many came to us out of fear, out of exploitation, out of a desire to make a better life for themselves and their families. Many never wanted to be here and feel totally excluded culturally and psychologically. They deserve to be incorporated into a new and

different future and to have their voice heard and honoured in this and, like their successive predecessors, to be given their chance to shape the future of Ireland as members not observers. They are among us and of us as part of an enforced settlement – but with Euro 19.10c per week in many cases to live on through Direct Provision arrangements rather than tracts of agricultural land.

Other aspects of Irish life that cause significant on-going difficulty are the issues about the now endemic economic indebtedness and the need for economic recovery. The banks and the churches - once twin pillars of authority and trust in the society – are now discredited in the minds and hearts of so many as foci of integrity. What lies behind this is the crumbling of The Celtic Tiger and the now unfolding history of abuse and neglect in church life widely understood and in particular in regard to certain religious orders in Ireland. It centres around banks, the lending of money and the creation of negative equity in housing which for many people now is unserviceable; it concerns wilful abuse of minors and the structural neglect of young babies and small children all of which today are utterly unacceptable as indeed they ought to have been then. There is currently no end to this disclosure. Our society has a very significant problem around re-building trust and altruism and in transcending a deep anger at betrayal by those in power. These difficulties continue to divide a community that, on its own admission, has no game plan for dealing with societal anger.

We continue to be faced by the dilemma that two small countries – the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland - that were set up in dislike and disrespect for one another are neighbours. Both now understand that their histories tomorrow, as yesterday, are so intertwined that they must ask themselves whether they are going to do anything about it – and what this might be. The warm reception of both Queen Elizabeth ii and President Michael D Higgins has simply highlighted the dilemma but also excited the hope. Everyday people like myself cannot but ask: If they can get on so well in the public set pieces, what are the political possibilities already in train in the background to seek once again to resolve ‘the Irish Question’? It cannot have gone un-noticed that President Higgins has not thus far officially visited Northern Ireland. To many, this is a significant

lost piece in the jigsaw but the invitation has this year, in July 2014, come to him from The Orange Order to attend The Twelfth of July in 2016. This is a very imaginative and creative step as 2016 contains within it the Commemoration both of The Battle of The Somme and of The Easter Rising. We all hope for healing at a trans-societal level and a trickle-down effect from such courageous public visibility. Let us hope that hope itself is not misplaced.

Ireland has a strong background of political and economic colonization, immigration and emigration. It also has the long undisputed supremacy of the Roman Catholic Church and its impact as a form of spiritual colonization for centuries and in specific ways, not least since the Vaticanization of Irish Catholicism from the mid-nineteenth century and through twentieth century missionary activity abroad. It also carries the ambiguity of the Anglican tradition in Ireland - until 1870 allied to a religious and political English dominance throughout Ireland since at least the early 1600s, over against a Catholic and Dissenting majority who last combined forces in the Rebellion of 1798 with any hope of success, even if it ended in romantic failure. Incidentally on June 16th this year I was leafing through a magazine about Pope Francis at Stockholm Airport. It described the Church of Ireland as 'a puppet denomination of the Anglican faith in England.' Anglicanism in Ireland is religiously 'caught in the middle' by not being sufficiently radically Reformed catholicism to satisfy many of its own members or indeed the wider Protestant majority in NI; and by not being sufficiently clear and welcoming in terms of its catholicism or indeed clear enough about its Reformed-ness to have a structural accommodation with the 96% notional Roman Catholic majority in the Republic of Ireland or to be spiritually and theologically attractive to those who are disaffected former members of other religious traditions. In a country which has coped well with the Nano-Revolution, having largely been bypassed in the Industrial Revolution, the march of secularization runs alongside the need now for the historic churches to give an account of themselves in regard to criteria and expectations that most of their members have never even thought about but which are questions which others are asking of them daily.

And secularization takes different forms in both parts of Ireland. But in each context it is rapid. In NI it is akin to Scotland where, on its own admission, the Church of Scotland has all but collapsed to the extent that as a national church it is asking itself very serious questions about whether it can or cannot any longer sustain its parochial system. Census trends suggest that the numerical imbalance within the Church of Ireland, for example, between North and South may well even out in the next twenty years. This is a very interesting prognosis in that the Church of Ireland in Northern Ireland is very much dependent on its Protestant neighbours for its identity and survival and development. And the Church of Ireland in the Republic of Ireland needs very rapidly to overcome its anxieties about welcoming the stranger and the other in terms of those formerly Roman Catholics and those who are still called immigrants, many of whom are Anglican in origin and simply do not feel sufficiently welcome in the current Church of Ireland, so they worship elsewhere.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities come and go. And the opportunities that are orchestrated for full brass rarely deliver in terms of the expectation that they carry because the strain simply is too great. The Millennium has been and gone. 2016 will soon have been and gone. And so it continues. The healing of division is simple and it is slow – and surely that is why it rarely happens. It presupposes that individuals decide that they are better together – whatever that future mutual togetherness looks like. People as individuals need to move beyond individual ‘buy-in’ towards individual ‘sell-on.’ I mean that they need to become pro-active participants in the future of their society. Ireland shows us this. Most people to whom you speak distance themselves from The Troubles and somehow don’t seem to know how they came about. They certainly will tell you: ‘They had nothing to do with me.’ Likewise most people have no real idea how The Celtic Tiger began to roar and how it suddenly stopped. The manipulation of politics and the enslavement to the free market are beyond most people and it is most people who suffer short-term and long-term. Our challenge is to build a culture of dynamic diversity and involved inclusion that can take us the next stage in creativity in being an island culture. Our location made us

once the repository of the cultural and religious treasures of Europe. It will take a lot of individual will, political vision and societal cohesion for this to happen again and in a highly secularized and increasingly religiously radicalized world. Religion, culture, politics and identity are not about the polite drinking of tea. They are about life and death.

My final question is this: Is Ireland faced with the reality that flows from another reality? If, as John Paul Lederach has taught us that conflict is not only an inevitability but, when properly handled, conflict is our friend (because it alone effects the changes that less conflictual realities do not and cannot effect) then is division in Ireland – not only *between*, but *within* each of the small countries – something which everyone will have to get used to and, in that inelegant phrase, get on with in the post-2016 era? All societies need to ask: What is the source of our energy? How can we develop a sufficient pride in ourselves to make us a happy people and a happy place? The honest recognition of divisions and their causes is the essential slip-road to this process. I hope that as we discuss these matters further Ireland may offer some pointers in these directions.

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