

BELMONT AND DISTRICT COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
BELFAST

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~
CRU, Room A5.10,
Castle Buildings,
Belfast BT4 3SG.

Dear Mr. Hill,
I am writing to you on behalf of the
Belmont and District Council of Churches.

Four members of the Council were present at a meeting
to hear Duncan Morrow give an address on a "Shared
Future."

We have since had a meeting and enclosed is our
Response Form to the Community Relations Council
consultative document — "A Shared Future."

Yours sincerely,

David M. Wonnacott Hon. Secretary.

A Shared Future

Policy Aims

Q1 Do you agree that the overall aim for policy must be for a more shared and pluralist society?

For example

Should we accept existing segregation and division and focus on stabilising and managing conflict?

or

should we try to promote more rapid progress towards a more integrated and shared society?

Supplementary question

What is your vision for NI in twenty five years?

Tell us what you think

Q.1 — YES

POWER SHARING IS HERE TO STAY.
LETS HAVE COMPLETE HONESTY IN ALL OUR
POLITICIANS AND LESS HYPOCRISY.

SUPPLEMENTARY Q.

OUR VISION IS FOR ALL OUR POLITICIANS TO BE
WORKING TOGETHER FOR THE GOOD OF ALL THE
PROVINCE AND NOT JUST FOR THEIR OWN NARROW
AIMS.

Specific policy aims

Q2 What do you think should be the main policy aims and outcomes which should drive the new approach to promoting good relations in society?

For example

to support the development of integrated/shared communities where people wish to learn, live, work and play together;

to encourage communication, tolerance and trust in areas where communities are living apart;

to promote respect, encouragement and celebration of different cultures, faiths and traditions;

to eliminate sectarianism and racism and to enable individuals to live and work without fear or intimidation;

to reduce tension and conflict at interface areas

and

to shape policies, practices and institutions to enable trust and good relations to grow.

Supplementary questions

- ① What are the main problems / issues which stifle good relations?
- ② What would help build good relations?
- ③ Are you aware of any models of good practice in good relations?

Tell us what you think

Q2 — WE AGREE WITH ALL THE EXAMPLES GIVEN BUT WOULD ADD;—
RESTORING PUBLIC CONFIDENCE AND RESPECT FOR THE POLICE SERVICE OF N. IRELAND WHICH IS AT PRESENT NOT AS HIGH AS WE WOULD WISH IT TO BE. TO THIS END POLICE OFFICERS SHOULD BE MUCH MORE USER-FRIENDLY WITH GREATER EMPHASIS MADE IN THE MEDIA OF THEIR MANY SUCCESSSES.

SUPPLEMENTARY Q.

1. COMPLETE LACK OF TRUST IN EACH OTHERS COMMUNITIES.
2. BETTER UNDER STANDING OF EACH OTHER'S TRADITIONS.
3. MORE PEOPLE HAVE STARTED TO PRAY TOGETHER SINCE THE TROUBLES BEGAN.
THE MANY PRAYER GROUPS THAT HAVE BEEN FORMED IN N.I. OVER THE PAST 30 YEARS WHO MEET AND PRAY TOGETHER FOR PEACE ARE A GREAT AND GOOD EXAMPLE OF GOOD RELATIONS:-
SPECIFIC EXAMPLES ARE THE EAST BELFAST P.A.C.E. GROUP, WOMEN TOGETHER AND P.A.C.E.

Fundamental principles

Q3 What do you think ought to be the principles upon which a new approach to promoting good relations in NI should be based?

For example

Sharing or separation?

Public debate or neutral silence?

Promotion of partnership?

Tell us what you think



Q3

WE SHOULD HAVE A SHARED EXPERIENCE AND PUBLIC DEBATES WHICH IS HEALTHY AND INVIGORATES AND CREATES NEW IDEAS.

PEOPLE NEED SOMETHING TO STIMULATE THEM TO HAVE CIVIC PRIDE IN THE COMMUNITY OF N.IRELAND.

FINALLY THERE SHOULD BE PROMOTION OF PARTNERSHIP AT ALL LEVELS OF OUR SOCIETY.

Implications for actions

Q4 What action needs to be taken at local government and community level to underpin the development of good relations between and within communities?

For example

- *What advice and guidance might the Equality Commission offer on the statutory duty concerning good relations under Section 75(2)?*
- *How could District Councils play a more central role in developing and coordinating action at local level to promote better relations and manage conflict?*
- *How should funding be targeted?*

Tell us what you think

Q4

ALL PARTIES AT LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEVEL AND TRADITIONS REPRESENTED IN COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS SHOULD BE SEEN TO WORK TOGETHER FOR THE GOOD OF THE PEOPLE OF N. IRELAND AT LARGE.

THEY SHOULD ENCOURAGE INITIATIVES THAT ENABLE THIS END TO BE ACHIEVED AND ENSURE THAT THEY ARE CARRIED THROUGH TO THEIR CONCLUSION.

THERE SHOULD BE RIGOROUS ACCOUNTABILITY ATTACHED TO ALL FUNDING.

Action at regional level

Q5 What functions do you think should be carried out at regional level? Should these functions be delivered within Government or by an independent body, such as the CRC or a new statutory authority?

Tell us what you think

FIRST AND FOREMOST WE WOULD BE VERY UNHAPPY WITH ANY BODIES OUTSIDE N. IRELAND MAKING THE POLICY DECISIONS.

WE FEEL THE PEOPLE OF N. IRELAND HAVE THE ABILITY AND EXPERTISE TO CARRY OUT THESE NECESSARY FUNCTIONS BUT MUCH MORE IMPORTANTLY HAVE THE HEART AND ENTHUSIASM FOR THEM AS WELL AS AN INTIMATE KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR CONSTITUENCY.

Central Government

Q6 What action do you think Government Departments should take to improve relations?

Tell us what you think

GET RID OF BUREAUCRACY.

NO ONE ANSWERABLE AND RED-TAPE COVERS EVERYTHING.

A GREATER INVOLVEMENT BY WOMEN WHO ARE IN N. IRELAND HOPELESSLY UNDER-REPRESENTED IN DECISION MAKING. FURTHERMORE BUSINESS PEOPLE WHO HAVE A FINANCIAL STAKE IN N. IRELAND SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN THE DECISION PROCESS AS THEY HAVE MUCH TO GAIN FROM IMPROVED RELATIONS AND MUCH PERSONAL EXPERIENCE THROUGH FEED BACK FROM THEIR CUSTOMERS AND EMPLOYEES.

THERE SHOULD BE MUCH BETTER COHESION IN PLANNING DEVELOPMENT AND IN PARTICULAR TAKING THE VIEWS OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES.

THERE IS A GRAVE LACK OF PLAY SPACE FOR CHILDREN AND SUITABLE ACCOMMODATION FOR AN AGING POPULATION.



Monitoring and evaluation

Q7 How do you think that a new strategy for improving relations ought to be monitored?

For Example

a decrease in sectarian and racist incidents
a decrease in flags and emblems in public places
an increase in shared facilities and services
an increase in mixed marriages
an increase in integrated education
an increase in mixed housing
an increase in cross-community contact and co-operation
an increase in tolerance and respect for cultural diversity
awareness raising, better understanding and acceptance of 'others'
improved and developing relationships
acceptance and implementation of good relations approaches
increased recognition, demand and support for good relations initiatives
positive impact of good relations initiatives

Tell us what you think



WE HAVE CONSIDERED THE EXAMPLES GIVEN AND BELIEVE THESE IN THE MAIN TO BE POSITIVE MOVEMENTS TOWARDS STABILITY IN N. IRELAND BUT THEY ARE NOT HAPPENINGS THAT NEED TO BE MONITORED IN A NEW STRATEGY IN IMPROVING RELATIONS.

WHAT MIGHT BE MONITORED IS HOW TRUST IS BEING IMPLEMENTED AMONGST POLITICIANS AND IN COMMUNITIES. ALSO ONE SHOULD BE ABLE TO MONITOR THE REGARD WITH WHICH THE POLICE ARE HELD THROUGHOUT OUR COMMUNITY AND IF THE NEW STRATEGY HAS OR HAS NOT INCREASED PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THEM.