

# Fault-lines in education



Where we came  
from



“An essential aspect of the reconciliation process is the promotion of a culture of tolerance at every level of society and includes initiatives to facilitate and encourage Integrated Education and mixed housing”

**Belfast Agreement page 18**

We had been moving into a Shared Future.. the question is - what type?

- "Our aim is for a normal civic society, where
- individuals are considered equals
- diversity is respected and
- where violence is an illegitimate means to resolve differences,
- but where differences are resolved through dialogue in the public sphere".



The changing face on Northern Ireland



Gerry Adams



Peter Robinson

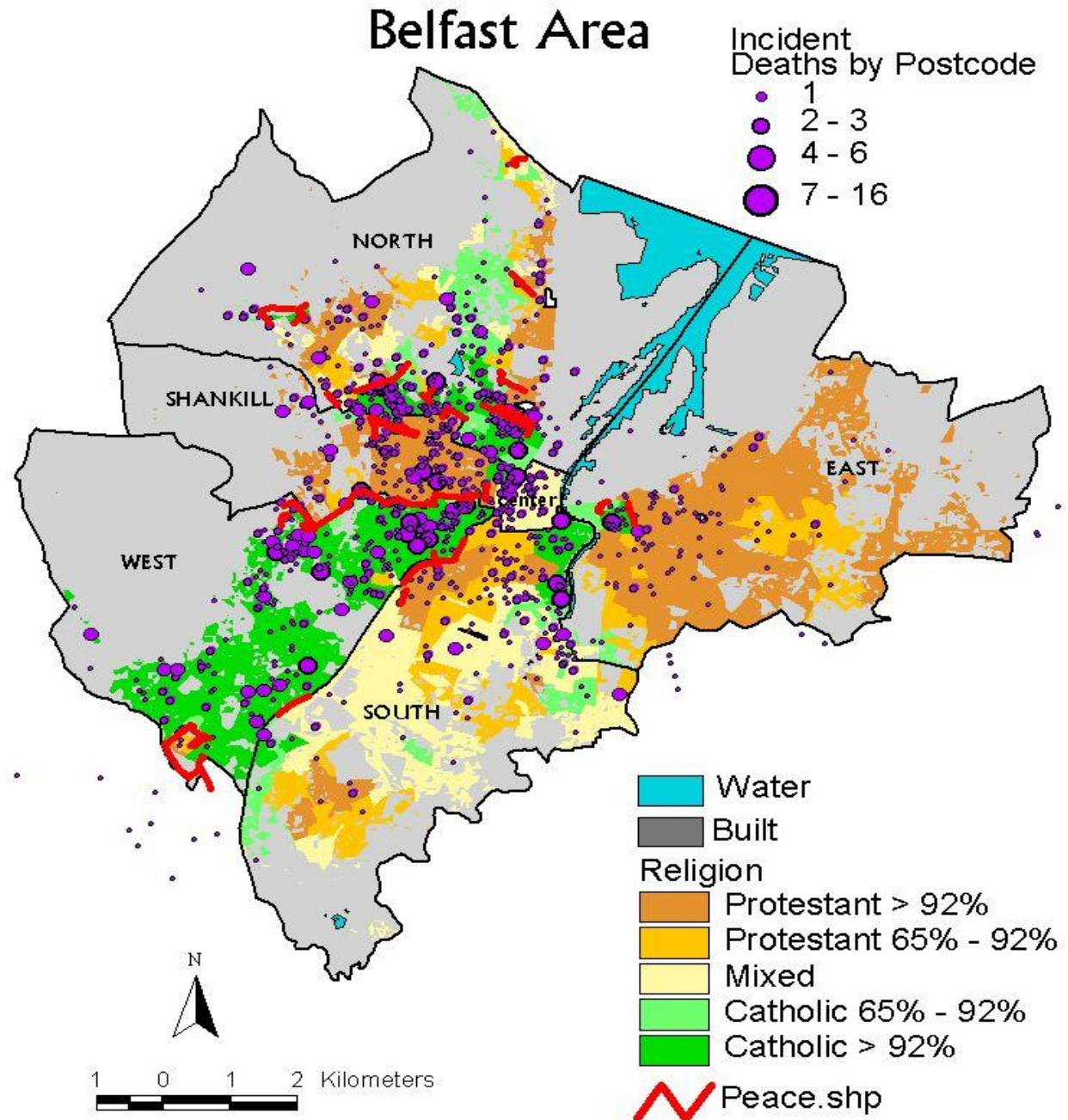
# But...we still live apart

- In Belfast in 1991 63% of the population lived in areas that were either more than 90% Protestant or 90% Catholic.
- By 2001 this had risen to 66%, showing that segregation was rising.



Belfast is a divided city

Socially and religiously





# We stay apart

- 68% of 18- to 25-year-olds living in Belfast have never had a meaningful conversation with anyone from the other community.
- 72% of all age groups refuse to use health centres located in communities dominated by the other religion

**YOU  
ARE NOW**



**ENTERING  
LOYALIST SANDY ROW  
HEARTLAND OF SOUTH BELFAST  
ULSTER - FREEDOM FIGHTERS**



**QUISEPARABIT.**

# We stay apart

- Only 22% will shop in areas dominated by the other religion
- 58% travel twice as far as they have to, to locate what they consider safe facilities to shop, or go to a leisure or health centre



FREE

R.P.G. AVENUE



IRELAND

THE  
THE  
DEAD  
THE

We are kept apart

The number of "peace lines"  
doubled in the ten years between  
1995 and 2005

Belfast now has 87 inter-faces



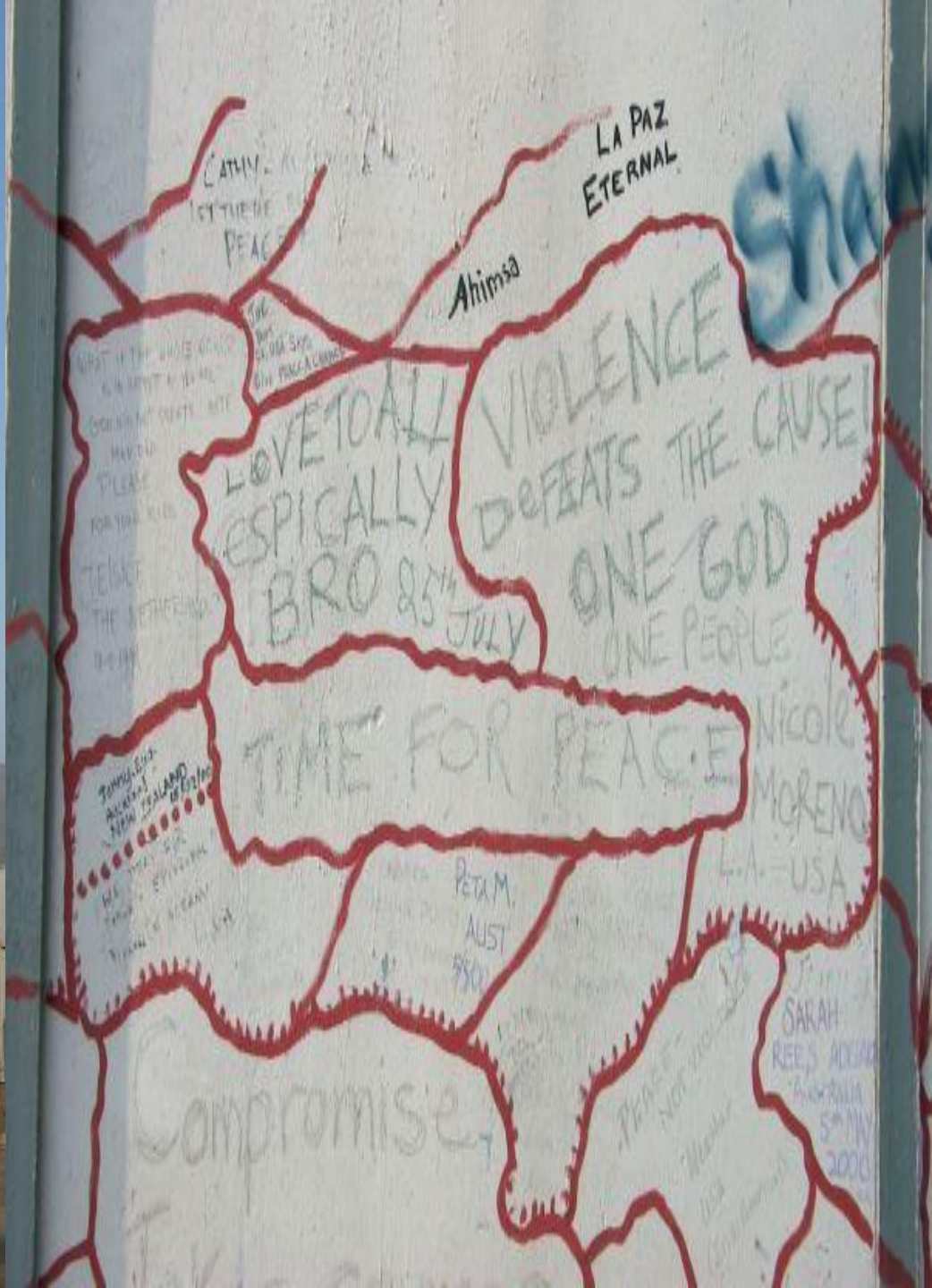
HOBBS ST

ROAD  
CLOSED

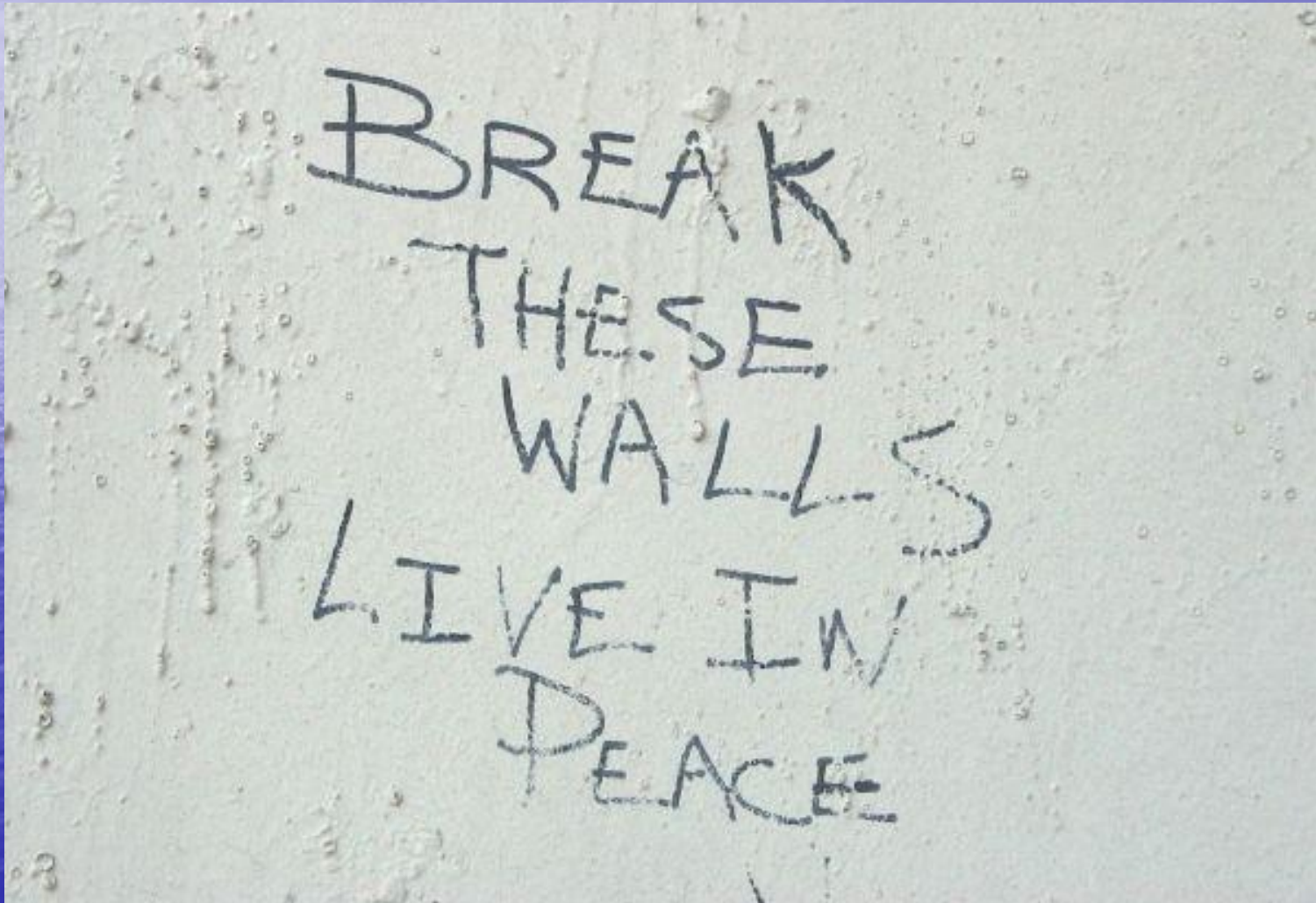
ROAD  
CLOSED

SEPARATE  
LINES

NO



There is no joined up strategy to address division





# The problem

- In this context, there is a danger that “community relations” will be sidelined by “equality” and
- that the notion that “a rising tide of prosperity raises all boats” will gain momentum.



Jose Fuste Raga/The Stock Market

young people have suffered



- young people were at the highest risk of being killed, with almost 26% of all victims being aged 21 or less.
- In 30 years of conflict, 557 young people under the age of 20 have been killed



- it is estimated that 32% of young people aged 14-18 years of age have witnessed someone being killed or seriously injured.



# Early years are crucial

- Paul Connolly: 50% 3 year olds aware of symbols growing to 90% of 6 year olds
- 5% 3 year olds, 13% 5 year olds and 34% 6 year olds identify with one tradition and 1 in 6 make sectarian remarks

# Questions of identity remain



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# From Truce to Transformation

- The boundary between Catholic and Protestant is still defined as much by silence as by argument
- We have won the truce – but what about the war?



The old co-exists with the new in a truce – what is the role of education??





Emerging from the past is a journey not a destination



The journey has begun



# This journey .....

- It is a battle for hearts as well as minds
- So is about people as well as structures
- It is about law as well as attitude
- It is about taking risks for peace and a shared and better future!

# The problem

In N Ireland the boundary between Catholic and Protestant is defined as much by silence as by argument

This can be dealt with by

- Avoidance
- Laissez-faire-ism
- Assimilation
- Polite indifference
- Thoughtful sharing

# *The Facts*

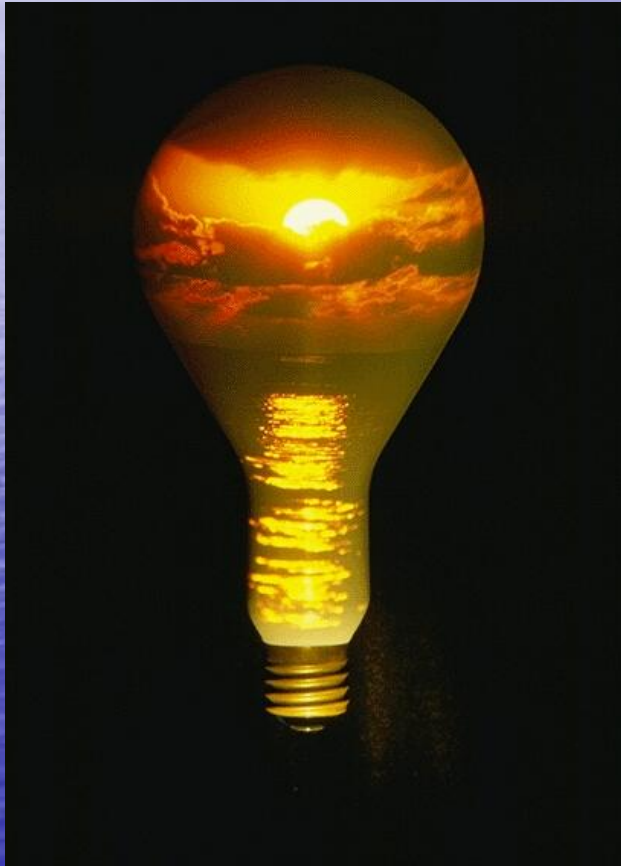
*“ None of us is born intolerant of those who differ from us. Intolerance is taught and can be untaught, though often with great difficulty. But in this area, as in others, prevention is far preferable to cure. We must work to prevent intolerance from taking hold in the next generation. We must build on the open-mindedness of young people, and ensure that their minds remain open.”*

United Nations Former Secretary-General Kofi Annan. The Institute for International Education New York, 27 November 2001.

# A role for Education??



# To consider



- **"Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire." — William Butler Yeats**

# An opening observation

- In my 13 years in the movement, I have seen a quantum shift in general opinion away from confrontation on shared schools to an acceptance that having children together in the same school is a good thing
- The new point of debate is not on the destination but on the journey.





# Strategic Challenge

**To educate and develop the young people of Northern Ireland to the highest possible standards, providing equality of access to all**

# Education -Guiding Principles

- the education system should:
  - provide for the development of all aspects of the individual
  - promote a culture of tolerance, reconciliation and respect for diversity of cultures
  - relate to the changing needs of society and the economy

“An essential aspect of the reconciliation process is the promotion of a culture of tolerance at every level of society and includes initiatives to facilitate and encourage Integrated Education and mixed housing”

**Belfast Agreement page 18**

# Culture of Tolerance report

- " It is a seminal purpose of the N.I Education Service to promote a **Culture of tolerance and reconciliation** and for schools to do so in keeping with the particular ethos and circumstances within which they operate. These different approaches should be valued and all schools encouraged to provide further opportunities to promote a culture of tolerance"

# The future



What challenges does this bring for education?



# One example- Reconciliation



Phil Jude//Science Source/Photo Researchers, Inc.

# What do we understand as reconciliation?

- **Absence of conflict?**
- **Buying silence?**
- **Prosperity?**
- **Getting along together?**
- **Assimilation?**



## RECONCILIATION?

the process of addressing conflictual and fractured relationships, embracing a range of activities.

It is a voluntary act that cannot be imposed.

It generally involves five interwoven strands:

# RECONCILIATION?

Substantial social, economic and political change.

# Economic Case

- “Division in N Ireland is costly in terms of both social and public resources. There is, unquestionably, an economic imperative to tackle these costs”.



# The response financially

- “Adapting public policy simply to cope with community division holds out no prospect of stability or sustainability in the long run”



# Falling rolls



# RECONCILIATION?

Developing a shared vision of an interdependent and fair society.

# Fault-lines - a 7 way split!



- Boys - Girls  
(56,000 or 1 in 6)
- Catholic - Protestant
- Grammar - Secondary
- Others, Irish Medium,  
Integrated, Christian etc.

# Facts and Figures (2005).

1,292 schools in N. Ireland

773 are 100% one tradition

62 Integrated (45% Protestant/43% Catholic)

37 others have 10% or more of “the other” tradition (18 have 30%)



# RECONCILIATION?

Acknowledging and dealing with  
the past.

# Sectarianism and segregation



# RECONCILIATION?

Building positive relationships.

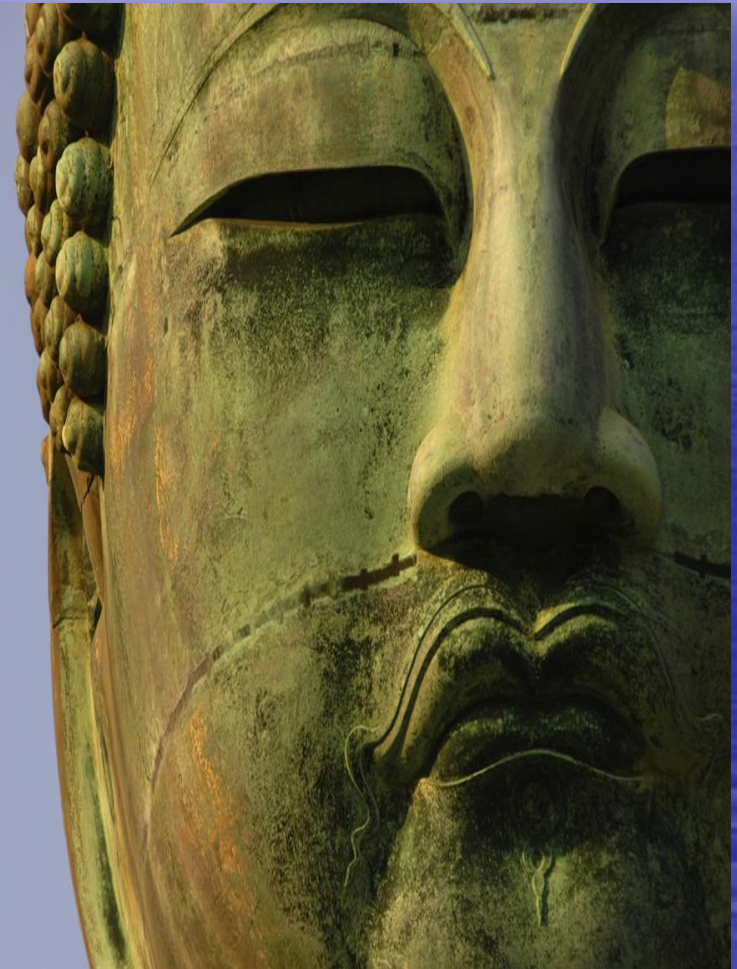
Examples are needed of creative solutions



# RECONCILIATION?

Significant cultural and attitudinal  
change.

# Pluralism



# Challenge of "Others"

Religion in 2001 census.. Amended figures  
53% Protestant, 44% Catholic, 2.5% none  
and 0.5% Other

(Actual figures...45.5% Protestant, 40%  
Catholic, 14% None and 0.3% Other Faiths)

# Schools can be agents of reconciliation... how???

*Peacemaking* normal meaning is an attempt to tackle some concrete problem in a process which works from a difference of interests, proceeds in the form of negotiations, and aims at an agreement concerning the conduct of both sides.



# We are called to be agents of peace

*Peacebuilding*, on the other hand, covers a wider area and, in most cases, a longer time-scale. Its aim is a change in the social structures underlying the conflict, and a change in the attitudes of the parties to the conflict.

**“Peacebuilding and reconciliation are slow, painstaking, often expensive trust-building exercises whose impact must be evaluated across decades.”**

**Andy Pollak**

**How does Cross-Border co-operation contribute to Peace Building in Ireland?**

Whatever we believe...relationships  
are core

**“New relationships need to be built  
which embrace both commonalities  
and differences. The emphasis on  
relationship-building is in and of  
itself crucial.”**

**Katy Hayward**

**PEACE and Cross-Border -Reconciliation: A beginning not an  
end**

# An example - Integrated schools

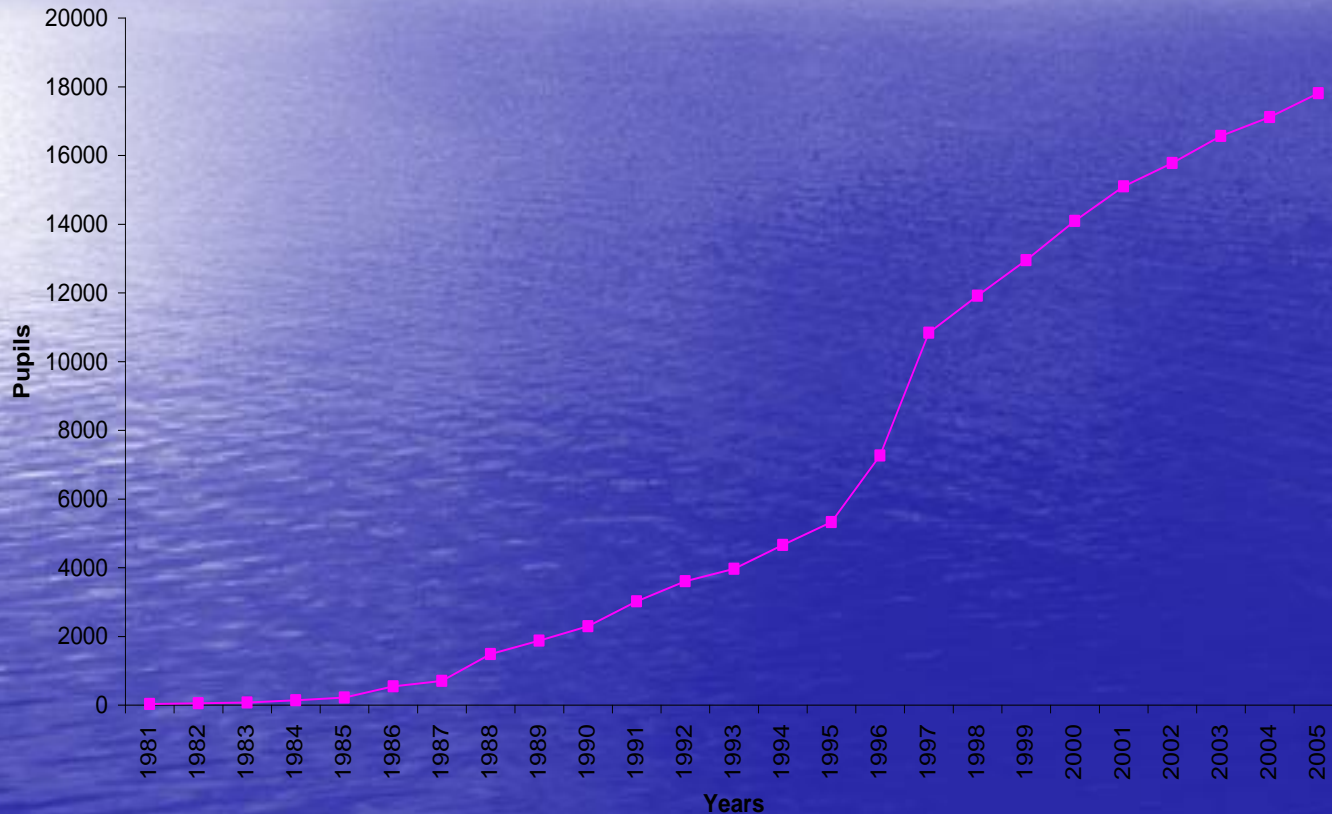
- Two types
- Existing schools can transform/change  
All to date have been "Protestant"  
Board changes, policies can change, intakes change
- New schools can be set up by parents

# Integrated Schools



- Essentially Christian in character
- Offer a Christian rather than a secular approach to education
- Allow for sacramental preparation in primary
- Try and involve local faith communities

# The growth of Integrated Education



- 2009
- 62 schools
- 19,500 pupils
- 6% of all schools
- 30,000 parents



# What makes an integrated school different?

## Enrolment Patterns

40% Protestant

40% Catholic

20% Either/Neither

## Management systems

Mixed Staff

Parents Council

Voluntary status



# What makes an integrated school different?

## School Ethos

All ability

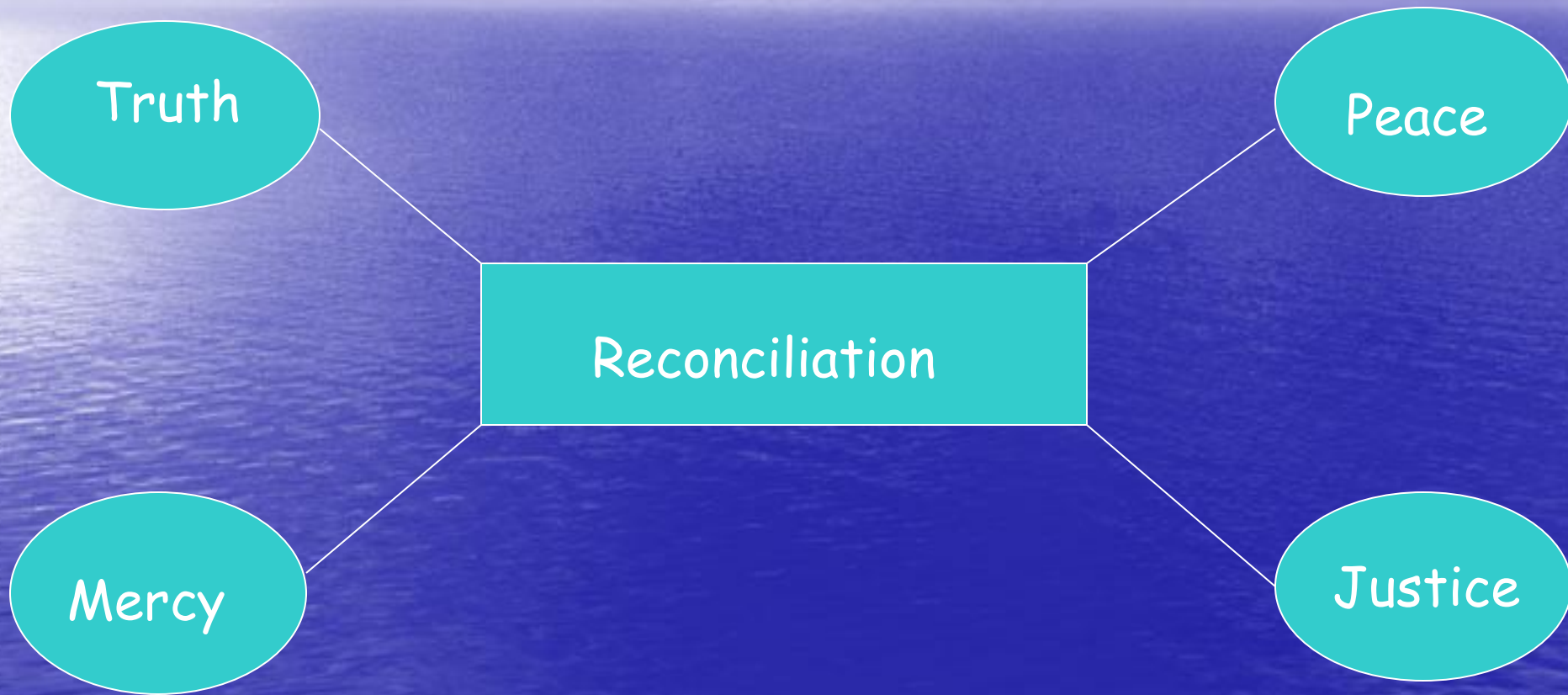
Christian

Anti sectarian





# A safe honest place?

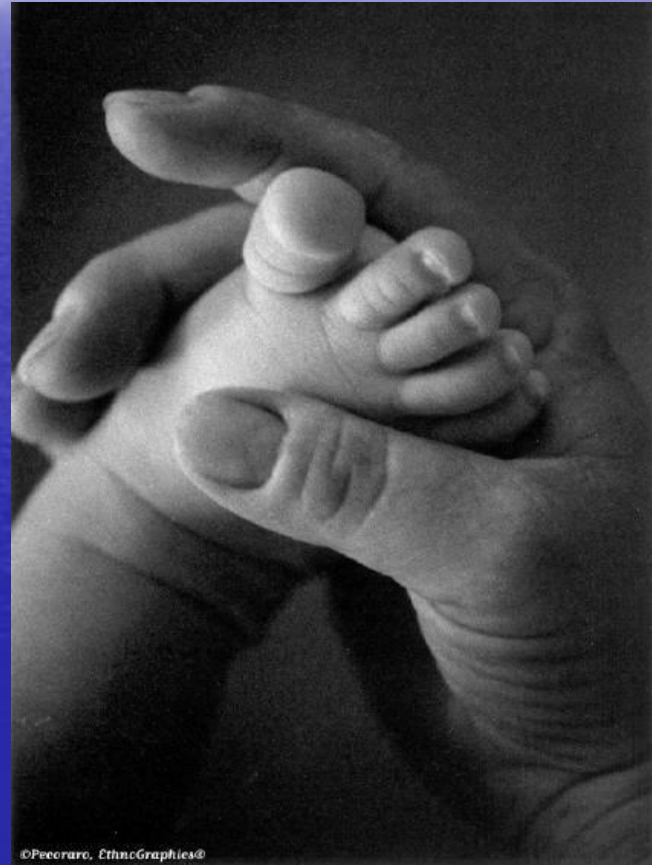


**The place called reconciliation**

Based on a model by Dr John Paul Lederach

# What is needed?

- People of courage
- Leaders not Followers
- Creators not consumers
- Passionate people



# The hard questions

- What are we willing to share?
- Who are we willing to share with?
- What are the terms for that sharing to take place?
- What are we going to do about it?



# The Opportunities

- Only do apart what we cannot do better together
- Government, church and public service to lead by example
- To consider the importance of relationships over outputs
- To focus on outcomes not structures



# Are there operating principles?

## **Unity**

cannot be so extensive and deep that it leaves no space for diversity  
cannot be so formal, abstract and valueless

## **Diversity**

should not be so wide and varied that it leaves our communities fragmented -cannot be passive, mute and ghettoised.

## **Drive for social cohesion**

cannot blur difference, culture and cannot seek to be the only goal for a multi cultural society

Ghandi: "I do not want my doors to be walled and my windows stuffed. I want the cultures of all lands to blow freely about my house. But I do not want to be blown off my feet by any"

# Is not difficult to understand

- “If we could read the secret history of our enemies, we should find in each man’s life sorrow and suffering enough to disarm all hostility”
- HW Longfellow



# Is makes common sense

- “Holding on to anger is like grasping a hot coal with the intent of throwing it at someone else; you are they only one getting burned”  
Buddha.



# Dream On

To accomplish great things we need to dream as well as act



Phil Jude//Science Source/Photo Researchers, Inc.



# The Challenge.. Civic society



- **Few will have the greatness to bend history itself; but each of us can work to change a small portion of events, and in the total of all those acts will be written the history of this generation.**  
*Robert F. Kennedy*

# We can do it!

- **“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever does.”**
- ***-- Margaret Mead***

