

Place for Hope: Ten Years of Peacebuilding

Annual Review 2018 - 2019





Prayer

Loving, living God,
as we navigate times of change in church and world,
guide us and our leaders in that creative space
between the intimate and the awesome;
between binaries and complexity,
so that all institutions, agencies,
and faith communities
may reflect both the glory and the chaos
of Your creation,
through which flows
justice, peace and love.

Amen



Annual Review

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an introduction...

...a letter from Ruth




In this our tenth year I pay tribute to all involved in the work of faith-based reconciliation. To the clergy, church leaders and members of local congregations who have reached out for help and support in times of change, transition and conflict, I commend your courage. You are the ones who make real the vision that, in the name of Christ, 'every place of worship is a place for hope in the community.' Thank you.

To our volunteer Practitioners who travel in pairs, facilitating difficult conversations, mediating conflicts, training teams for resilience and change, coaching individuals in crisis, and raising awareness about the ministry of reconciliation I say thank you! Your gifts are remarkable. Your wisdom outstanding.

To those who brought the original vision for a mediation and peace-building service within the church to fruition, we are eternally grateful. And to our Trustees, Staff, Patrons, Supervisors and all who support the work of the charity: much honour and gratitude to you as we turn our attention to what lies ahead.

We live in times of rapid change: political, social, economic, environmental. And ecclesial! The resources and the resilience of faith-based reconcilers must continue to radiate out from our places of worship so that all may be reconciled.

Ruth Harvey, Director



"Place for Hope process undoubtedly helped me. Bless you all for the work you do. It's never an easy thing to do but from the moment I lifted the phone you made it feel easy."

Participant in facilitated conversation,
2019

"This training has provided a core learning programme for our Interim and Transition Ministry team. These skills are integral to the success of this form of ministry. I am delighted to be able to offer this training and value the opportunity to work with Place for Hope."

**Daran Golby, Partnerships & Development Secretary,
Ministries Council, Church of Scotland**



our beginning...



The Church of Scotland Guild has helped to give birth to some of the best projects in the life of the Church and we should remember that Place for Hope exists because in 2009 the Guild adopted it as one of their special projects. At the General Assembly of 2010 the Guild reported that it was "working with the Ministries Council to establish A Place for Hope – through [which] the Church could begin to re-establish its role within society as a peacemaker and healer".

That Place for Hope is now 10 years old is testament to the great need for better ways of dealing with our conflicts and it is also testament to the endeavour of the inspiring leaders who have taken it forward from its first steps at the Aviemore Conference in 2009.

As one of those who was there at the beginning I give thanks for the wisdom and vision of the Guild who "got the idea" from the very start and my prayer is simple - that Place for Hope will go on from strength to strength.

John Chalmers, author of 'Report on Congregational Conflict 2008'



I am delighted to congratulate Place for Hope on celebrating its 10th Anniversary.

I had the privilege of taking over the reins of this exciting initiative from Rev John Chalmers, one year on from the Aviemore Conference and being its first Director when Place for Hope became an independent charitable organisation.

It is amazing to witness the way in which the vision expressed at Aviemore has unfolded. The seed that was planted then has grown, many having given of their time, skills and gifts to nurture this seed. As I observe the work it is undertaking, it is evident this seed is bearing much fruit.

The need to transform conflict and find creative ways to live with difference was evident 10 years ago and perhaps even more so now as our faith communities encounter the impact of changing times surrounded by so much uncertainty and anxiety in our society.

I offer my best wishes to Place for Hope for the years ahead as it brings real hope to the lives of many.

Hugh Donald, Consultant and Director of Place for Hope 2009 - 2016

our present...

an overview of our year (2018-2019)

Our work

From 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019, our 35 Practitioners worked on 48 facilitated conversations (19 of which were opened in earlier years), representing a 23% increase on the previous year. They also undertook coaching for 11 individuals, with 4 of these ongoing from previous years.

We enhanced our training work in a variety of ways. We brought the staffing of all training under the single staff post of Training Manager. For our one-day training, we began to move away from centrally-run training to offer local faith communities the opportunity to commission any of our four core training days or, alternatively, training tailored to suit their particular needs. We also began to plan our first six-day 'Faith in Change and Conflict' public access course in Scotland to run in early 2020.

Between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019, we delivered a total of 30 training events.

We also undertook 12 awareness-raising events and provided information or signposting in response to two other enquiries.

This means that in total we undertook over 100 individual activities during the year.

[More details about our work can be found on pages 12 - 17.](#)

Our team

Responding to Place for Hope's steadily increasing workload across all our activities, we trained 15 new volunteer Practitioners from six Christian denominations. Those accepted for training at our selection days undertook our training and assessment programme, which was accredited by Scottish Mediation in 2018 in recognition of its rigour and quality. The programme comprises a one-day selection programme, our six-day residential training 'Faith in Change and Conflict' and two days of role-play and assessment. Having successfully completed the programme, our new Practitioners were welcomed and commissioned at our all-team training event / Continuing Professional Development in November 2018.

We also began mentored deployment for our new Practitioners, paired alongside a more experienced Practitioner. All our Practitioners continue to receive ongoing support through supervision and bi-annual CPD, to ensure a high quality service to our expanding client base. Their accreditation is based on attendance at these events.

Our Practitioner team is supported by a staff team of 5, professional Supervisors, and a Board of Trustees.

[More details about the Place for Hope community can be found on pages 26 - 27.](#)

Our partners

Throughout our 10 year history, partnership working has remained essential to our work. As a project born within the Church of Scotland, we continue to celebrate and build on this key partnership, with 80% of our facilitated conversations and coaching work undertaken for Church of Scotland congregations and leaders.

Our Positive Working Together project with the Methodist Church has continued to thrive during 2018/19 and we were delighted to be asked to offer Continuing Professional Development to our partners in the Listening and Reconciliation Service of the Northerly Synods of the United Reformed Church.

In 2018/19, Place for Hope was pleased both to support facilitated conversations and to lead training for a number of denominations which we had not worked with previously, including Quakers and the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

[More detail about our partnerships can be found on pages 22 - 25.](#)



Our future

In November 2019 we celebrate our 10th birthday and, in partnership with St. Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation, The Blackley Centre for Reconciliation, St. Michael's House, Bridge Builders Ministries, The Corrymeela Community, Rose Castle Foundation, Archbishop of Canterbury's Reconciliation Ministry, Centre for Good Relations and Scottish Mediation, will host the **Gathering in Glasgow on Conflict and Faith**. This is a 3-day event, exploring the nature of conflict faced by churches and faith communities, and the ways we can work together in conflict transformation. At the event, we look forward to launching our Reconciling Communities Programme, a training and support system for local churches to become places of hope, peace and reconciliation within their community.

But, as we celebrate 10 years of peacebuilding, we are aware that the future for all of us is uncertain. Whether it's change on the political, the social, the environmental front, or indeed within our church or faith communities, we know that change, and the transitions that accompany it, can induce anxiety.

In the work of faith-based reconciliation, we hold out a hope, that by working robustly through transition and change we can reach a place of peace and unity – the shalom/salaam – of the Gospel. This is not an easy peace, but a peace wrought out of struggle, turning, listening, and adaptation. On the journey, we look forward to building exciting new partnerships, expanding our workload and continuing to build peace for at least another 10 years!

our services....

Our churches and faith groups face change, encounter difference and experience conflict. In times of change or challenge, we know that practical support can help.

We offer a range of support services for groups experiencing or preparing for change, challenge and conflict. When people contact Place for Hope looking for support, we take time to hear them speak about the challenges they face before deciding with them on the appropriate service.

We offer:

- Support in facilitating important or potentially difficult conversations for small or large groups
- Awareness raising and lectures at events and conferences
- One-on-one coaching for church and faith community leaders

Our training programmes are designed to empower and equip people within faith communities to be peacemakers.

The second strand of our work helps people to be better equipped to navigate conflict, and to use those skills and tools to support others.

During 2018/19, we offered 5 Training Programmes:

- Growing through Change and Conflict Foundation
- Growing through Change and Conflict Further Skills
- Bullying and Harassment
- Scripture, Spirituality and Conflict
- Faith in Change and Conflict (6-day programme)

We can be commissioned by local faith communities to deliver any of these training programmes, or, alternatively, we can offer tailored training to suit their requirements.



our reach this year...

In 2018/19, Place for Hope was pleased both to support facilitated conversations and to lead training for a number of denominations which we had not worked with previously, including Quakers, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and the Congregational Federation in Scotland.

We hope to build on these new relationships to develop further the ecumenical breadth of our work.



48
facilitated
conversations



11
coaching



30
training



12
awareness
raising



2
signposting

Training

- 8 centrally run days of our core training, predominantly in Cumbria; where we continued our partnership with Churches Together in Cumbria to provide this training ecumenically.
- 3 centrally run 'Faith in Change and Conflict' residentials: two for the Methodist Church and one as part of the training for our new Practitioners.
- 5 locally commissioned days in the UK using our core training material.
- 2 core training events for the Church of Scotland World Mission Council partners in Africa (South Sudan and Malawi).
- 2 sessions of top-up training as part of our first Network meetings for the Methodist Church.
- 10 tailored training programmes and workshops.

our reach over the decade...



53

Practitioners
trained



35

accredited Practitioners
currently working



149

facilitated
conversations



30

coaching
cases



113

training
events



47

awareness
raising events

Denominational spread of support services*



For more information on support work, please visit: www.placeforhope.org.uk/support.
For training, go to: www.placeforhope.org.uk/training

**This total does not include training events and clients signposted to alternative means of support*

our clients...

a reflection on our work with Portobello Churches

Three churches in Portobello and Joppa, Portobello Old Parish, St. James' and St. Philip's, made contact with Place for Hope in 2012, when the idea of a three-way union was mooted. Thus began a series of conversations and a network of relationships that helped us to move forward together on a new and daunting journey. Perhaps 'relationship' is the key word. Place for Hope took the time to build up relationships with the ministers, the smaller group working to make the union happen, the sessions and the congregations.

Building up trust takes time and patience, it takes insight and awareness, it takes a formidable array of skills. Such skills are not always readily visible in their presence, but the absence of which are too often palpable in heated exchanges. With relationships, with time and with trust came honesty. It took many months before someone candidly said, 'I am frightened of losing my building'. It takes courage to apologise after a sharp comment uttered in frustration and it takes grace to accept and move on in forgiveness.

Within this matrix of conversations the word 'surface' often came to mind. Not just moving beyond the surface of our relationships but surface as a verb: with insightful, gentle, persistent and sometimes challenging questions and probes, those fears, those hopes, those frustrations were surfaced and frequently saw us move to another level. We knew when it was time to discuss money and ministers and buildings and worship spaces. Had we leapt into such discussions alone or perhaps too precipitously, sparks may have flown.

We were not alone in this process. Change and conflict can be so isolating for a member of the congregation, an elder or a minister. But where there is relationship there is no isolation. Huge changes were underway in our churches and our world, we were reminded, so it is not just us. It is not our fault and we were doing our best, with God's gift of grace, to respond to societal currents strong, irrepressible and unremitting.

Such wisdom, gained through experience, brought healing perspective. I wonder if this perspective allowed movement forward. The world changes, the church changes and the people of God too can change. Sometimes, however, we need a little help to build, strengthen and maintain the relationships that allow us to transform change and conflict into new life.

On Sunday 7 September 2014 we baptised the child of one of our newest elders. On Sunday 1 September 2019 we were able to baptise his twin siblings. In the balance and rhythm of the life of faith we can discern the guiding presence of God. That presence brings life and it brings hope. We often need help to get to that place of hope and how grateful we are in Portobello that we had companions on the journey, that we worked with Place for Hope.

Stewart Weaver, Minister





our impact...

**We asked some of our clients,
“What would you do if Place for Hope were not an option?”**

I think I would just have to move. I don't really know...

If Place for Hope couldn't help, I would feel a bit less equipped so I'd have to blunder it with as much grace as I can.

I think I would just need to accept that the way things have been for the last 3 years would be the norm for the rest of my ministry.

Prayer and clenched fists?

I think it can only be that I would try and carry on. I would definitely be seeing if I could survive here for another couple of years and then leave.

We didn't feel that we had any other options.

our partnerships...

Church of Scotland

Place for Hope is grateful to the Ministries Council of the Church of Scotland for again providing grant funding to enable us to give high quality support free at the point of delivery across local congregations in this denomination. 80% of our facilitated conversations and coaching were undertaken for Church of Scotland congregations and leaders.

During this year, we also entered into a five-year partnership with the World Mission Council of the Church of Scotland to deliver an 'Accompaniment for Peace' programme in South Sudan. This project will support, equip and resource faith leaders in South Sudan as they nurture existing peace initiatives to embed a culture of peace, and deepen a specific faith dimension to the art of peacebuilding and conflict transformation. One of the Practitioners we trained this year is acting as Link Practitioner for this project. This Practitioner and our Director spent time in Kenya and South Sudan this year to support the network of agencies working together in the region, to deliver training, and then to commission seven accredited Place for Hope Practitioners located in South Sudan and Kenya.



The Church of Scotland



Positive Working Together - partnership working with Methodist Church across the UK

Place for Hope continued to develop the Positive Working Together project with the Methodist Church. We completed pilots of the 'Faith in Change and Conflict' residential and planned for the delivery of the first such programme at Cliff College in spring/summer 2019. We launched a Positive Working Together Network for peer support and convened the first meetings of Network members in the north and south of England, which included the production of a film about the project.

The **Methodist Church** 

Reconcilers Together (www.reconcilerstogether.co.uk)

Place for Hope is delighted to be a member of 'Reconcilers Together', an ecumenical network of Christian organisations across the UK and Ireland working for peace and reconciliation. Our shared mission is to inspire and equip Christian leaders to be a reconciling presence in their churches and communities. We do this through our online resources and fully funded 6-month leadership training programme: Journey of Hope.



Spirituality of Conflict (www.spiritualityofconflict.com)

A network of 6 peace-focussed agencies from across the UK and Ireland, this partnership, inspired by the Corrymeela Community, hosts a web resource dedicated to reading the gospel texts through the lens of conflict and reading conflict through the lens of the gospel texts. Two of our Practitioner Team are actively involved in generating new material for this resource.





our team...

As a community of people committed to the art of peacebuilding, we seek to value and enrich the contribution and gifts of everyone involved with Place for Hope.

Practitioner team

To deliver our services, we are privileged to have a highly trained, multi-denominational/faith team of 35 volunteer Practitioners who have expertise in mediation, training and facilitation. Drawn from diverse backgrounds, each member has a personal faith and is dedicated to the art of 'navigating conflict and hosting group dialogues.' We deeply value and affirm the great skill and time commitment our volunteer Practitioners offer to make the work of Place for Hope possible. Training, Continuing Professional Development, and supervision ensure that our Practitioners offer a consistent and high-quality of service.

Staff team

Practitioners are supported by our staff team:

Natalie Barrett	Communications and Client Care Manager
Helen Boothroyd	Business Development Manager
Ruth Harvey	Director
Abdul Rahim	Training Manager
Neil Wykes	Administration and Finance Manager

Trustees, Patrons and Supervisors

We are grateful to our Trustees, who develop strategy, provide governance and oversee staff support, our Patrons who offer wisdom, companionship and connections to help shape, endorse and promote the work and our Supervisors who help to equip and support our Practitioners to a professional standard.



join us...

...in peacebuilding

Help your community in crisis

If you are aware of conflict or difficulty within your faith community, and would appreciate some support, please get in touch and see if we can help.

Nurture your community

Encourage your church or faith group to host a community dialogue. Invite us to deliver a workshop or training session.

Develop your skills

Join one of our learning programmes to help you understand and navigate conflict.

Stay connected

Join our Place for Hope Peacemakers Network, visit our website and follow our social media channels to receive news about upcoming events, training and helpful articles.

Be a champion and enabler

Help us promote peacebuilding and the work of Place for Hope by telling others about us.

Annual Accounts 2018/2019

Our full annual accounts can be found at:
www.placeforhope.org.uk/about/key-documents

For more information or to join our mailing list:

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Place for Hope receives funding from the Ministries Council of the Church of Scotland to provide specific training and support. Place for Hope is available to work with different denominations and faiths. Costs may be applicable.