



Gathering in Glasgow on Conflict and Faith

transforming relationships ~ creating community ~ building peace

Thursday 31st October – Saturday 2nd November 2019

Event Report



Place for Hope
in association with
Reconcilers Together
Centre for Good Relations
Scottish Mediation
Church of Scotland Presbytery of Glasgow

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1. Gathering Report

a. Concept and Context

In November 2009 Place for Hope was launched at the Aviemore Conference. Designed to offer support, training and mediation to leaders and congregations in the midst of conflict, Place for Hope has grown from an internal project of the Church of Scotland to an independent charity working across a range of faith communities with a team of 35 accredited mediation Practitioners. With our partners we continue to support faith communities through times of transition, change and conflict. The art of faith-based reconciliation is both challenging and rewarding. The opportunity to gather together in Glasgow, share wisdom, worship and inspiration ten years after Aviemore and six years after the companion conference in Coventry, proved to be a wonderful gift for expressing solidarity, deepening practice and forging bonds of faith-based reconciliation.

We live in tender times. The date of the Gathering coincided with what was to have been Brexit day. In the end this political hot potato was postponed – a symptom of the shifting, disorientating political context in which we operate. Now this report is being compiled within the context of a world-wide lockdown as we reel and respond to COVID-19. As the virus veers south, we remember in particular our friends from Sudan and South Sudan who joined us in Glasgow. This virus will land on nations across the globe where there is already violent conflict, instability, famine and fragile leadership. This is a time for robust, wise and global leadership. Faith communities and networks such as ours have a part to play in calling for, and offering such leadership, in strengthening community, in building reconciliation and in augmenting the voices of the poorest.

b. Purpose and Outcomes

The core purpose of the Gathering in Glasgow on Conflict and Faith was

- o to celebrate and sustain the art of conflict transformation, reconciliation and peace building;
- o to nurture the network of relationships and skilled practitioners that supports this work;
- o to strengthen the unique contribution faith communities make to this work.

In addition, it was our intention that the Gathering in Glasgow on Conflict and Faith would also achieve the following:

- o point to a hopeful future
- o provide a platform for learning and sharing amongst those who have experienced the challenge of change or conflict in faith communities
- o offer practical support and tools to faith-based conflict transformation practitioners
- o respond to brokenness in church, faith communities and society
- o model reconciliation, transformation and partnership working
- o be a meeting point for an international network of peace makers
- o mark the 10th anniversary of Place for Hope

- o provide a launch pad for future events/projects/resources e.g. the 'Reconciling Communities' Programme
- o offer an opportunity to market/promote the work and services of partners
- o offer a model for future Gatherings on conflict and faith

c. Partnership

Since 2018 five faith-based reconciliation centres and two training networks have been working together as 'Reconcilers Together.' This partnership agreed that in the spirit of reconciliation it would be important to co-host the Gathering in Glasgow. From the early planning meetings through to the running and follow up of the event this partnership has been crucial. Our aim was to model the reconciliation that we long for. We were joined by three further local partners: Centre for Good Relations, Scottish Mediation and the Church of Scotland Presbytery of Glasgow. Further information about each of these partners, and about Reconcilers Together can be found towards the end of this report.

The 21 'Journey of Hope' Pilgrims, nurtured and equipped over the preceding 12 months by the Reconcilers Together partners, met at the Gathering and were commissioned on the last morning to their work, locally in faith-based reconciliation. During this same ceremony our colleagues from South Sudan, all accredited Place for Hope Practitioners working to bring peace to their country were also commissioned – a sign of the international solidarity which is at the heart of our work for reconciliation.

d. The Event

Introduction

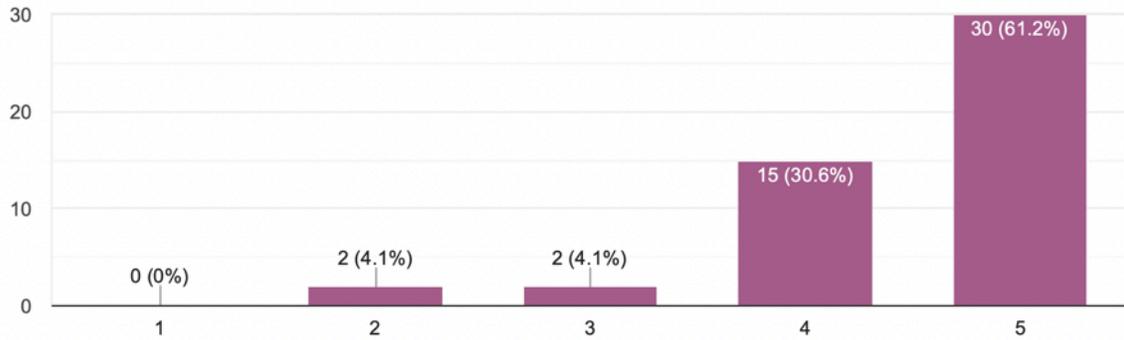
Over 200 people joined together at the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall in the city centre of Glasgow on a cold October day. Weaving a pattern of worship, keynote input, refreshments and table talk, we moved from plenary to workshops to lunch and back again. Overall 61% of respondents were very satisfied with the Gathering as a whole. In particular people valued 'the atmosphere of hope and togetherness', 'the sense of community – professional but never corporate', 'the balance of worship, listening to speakers and learning good practice' and 'the rich diversity of people'. Having said this, we know that we could have improved on the following areas: more young people; more diversity of faiths; deeper engagement with the core issues of

"I really welcomed the chance to be involved with workshops which offered a broader perspective on conflict transformation, by which I mean looking at the whole field rather than just focusing on mediation skills, important as they are."

peacemaking; more time for networking – and participants also told us we could have improved logistics/housekeeping and timings/venues. This is all extremely useful feedback that we'll take on board for future events.

Q1. Overall how satisfied were you with the Gathering in Glasgow?

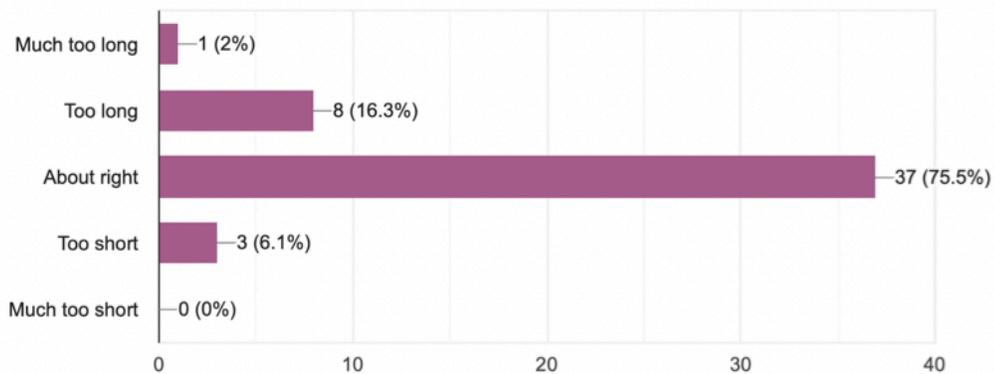
49 responses



The Planning team took the plunge when setting the dates and the length of the event. For future reference it was interesting for us to note that respondents felt on the whole (75.5%) that we got the length of time just about right. Some said they liked the change of venue and pace on day 3 ("I would have liked three full days with workshops, not just two") while others responded saying that it was maybe a little long: "two days was long enough." We were also conscious that asking folks to stay for three nights added to the cost and will bear this in mind for future events.

Q6: The Gathering in Glasgow ran from 9:00am Thursday 31st October to 12:30pm Saturday 1st November. Was this length too long, too short or about right?

49 responses



Worship, Loom, Labyrinth and Exhibition Space

We were delighted that an expert team of worship leaders were able to devote their time and skill to leading worship, weaving it through the programme. The majority of respondents valued the worship highly: "Worship sessions very creative and fresh," "I thought the themes of the worship services were helpful." Some also commented that the worship could have been shorter, and that they would have preferred more inter faith input. We were grateful to Peter and Heidi Gardner for bringing the Peacemaker's Loom to the event, and to Ruth Forsythe and Susan McLachlan for hosting the Labyrinth, both of which received very positive feedback although many found they didn't have enough time to make the most of this, or of the Exhibition Space which once moved to one consolidated place attracted more footfall.

"It was just brilliant. The logistics, the quality of speakers, the time for discussion, the music, drama...."

Keynotes and New Projects Launched

We share below the full text of all three keynote sessions. It's fair to say that these were a highlight of the event, with the complementarity of all three speakers noted and the flow from 'Lament', to 'Waiting' to 'Hope' being valued. Some commented that the keynotes could have been shorter, and more interactive, while others praised the high quality of the input and experience of the speakers.

After each Keynote there was time for new projects to be launched by partner agencies. These included:

- Reconciling Congregations (Place for Hope)
- Reconciliation Initiatives (Alastair McKay)
- 'Difference' resource (Archbishop of Canterbury's Reconciliation Ministries Team)
- Journey of Hope/Reconcilers Together (St. Ethelburga's)
- A Commitment to Respectful Dialogue (John Sturrock)

These projects point to the ongoing creativity in the work of conflict transformation, and the potential to collaborate across a range of partnerships. Some respondents suggested that these launch events, particularly scheduled straight after the Keynote input, packed an already full programme.

Workshops

Workshops were scheduled for four separate times, with each one being hosted by a volunteer, and led by an expert in their field. Topics included:

- Responding to Bullying and Harassment

- Community Building Through Graceful Dialogue
- Siblings Seeking Shalom
- Deep Adaptation: peace making and climate change
- Healing the Wounds of History
- Peace and Quiet
- Deep to Deep Interfaith: Scriptural Reasoning
- Sectarianism in Scotland
- Communicating in Times of Difference
- Leading through Change and Transition

Despite the vastness of the venue, most respondents told us they were able to navigate their way to rooms up-stairs and round bends! The t-shirt clad volunteers wielding their canoe paddles with labels helped! When gathered, most respondents told us that the workshops were excellent, with some feedback suggesting they preferred focussed, led input rather than a general conversation, and some telling us that the rooms were not always large enough, or that there wasn't enough time. But overwhelming feedback included comments such as:

"This workshop hit home on the immediacy and deep impact of climate change and the speed of societal breakdown if we continue on this trajectory."

"Excellent exploration of the Book of Ruth to demonstrate its relevance to today."

"Paul's enthusiasm for our human stories, oh wow!! Funny and moving and uplifting."

"Important for me to consider reconciliation again in the context outside the world of war and injustice. Something I have struggled with for many years."

"I learnt about the part that I play and the choices I may daily, how my choices impact and either help to break down division or do the opposite."

"Highly relevant as I am struggling with situations of injustice and prejudice and issues around forgiveness where great harm has happened and continues to happen."

"This was so helpful and Jo's delivery was very engaging. I have used the tools she shared several times already and they provided really useful mental models, which just clicked for me."

Legacy and the Future

In conclusion, Place for Hope and the partners would like to thank all those who took part, who travelled a distance, who led, worshipped, exhibited, wove, walked and prayed. The journey to reconciliation is a 'Cathedral Project' – a long term initiative, the fruits of which most of us won't see in our lifetimes. The projects launched at the event, the ongoing work of so many historic peace and reconciliation organisations represented there, the ministry of reconciliation lived out daily by so many of the participants is legacy to the call and the gift to each one of us to be 'reconciling reconcilers' in our churches and in our communities. The Reconcilers Together partnership will continue to reflect on the impact of the Gathering in Glasgow on Conflict and Faith and will consider options for continuing such an enriching and inspiring movement for the good of us all.



2. Keynote Input 1: Sarah Hills on 'Lament'

'There has been widespread slaughter of innocent people. There have been streams of tears, innocent tears. There have been rivers of blood, innocent blood. Death in the morning, people going to find their livelihood, death in the noon time on the highways and streets... Innocent blood will always cry to God Almighty for reparation. How much blood must be spilled? How many tears shall we cry? How many mothers hearts must be maintained? My heart is maimed. I pray I will see my son, Anthony. ... I am proud of him, I am still very proud of him but I need to know where he is, I need to know what happened to him. I agree, I am sad, I am distraught, I am destroyed... Where is he, someone tell me, where is he?'

This was spoken in front of the TV cameras by Marie Fatayi-Williams, mother of a son killed in the London bombings, July 2015.

Lament – raw, dramatic, petitioning. When disaster strikes we need to be able to lament in order to live. And the church should have a vital role in this process of mourning and healing, grieving and reconciling, despairing and hoping.

In order to do this we need a definition of lament. The Oxford English dictionary defines lament as a 'passionate expression of Grief'. Walter Brueggeman defines it as "a dramatic rhetorical, liturgical act of speech which is irreversible" (in Akeman, 2000:06). Westerman makes the point that the lament is always relational – there are always "the others" and they have something to do with lament. Brueggeman furthers this point saying that the lament is risky, and that it calls into question structures of power, pushing the boundaries of our relationships with one another and with God beyond their general defined limits of acceptability. Denise Ackermann describes lament as an existential wail which comes from the depths of the human soul'.

Space for lament is vital and we often don't give it the space or the time it needs.

So, lament is public, it is about the other, it is political. In other words, it is a wailing of the human soul, a barrage of tears, petitions, and praise. Petitions, praise and hopes which beat against the heart of God. I would argue that lament is a primitive cry which needs to be voiced for the process of healing at least to begin.

We need to address more fully how we can offer a space for lament today. We need to provide a "safe enough space" for this to happen, both for those who lament and for those

who may be alarmed by the outpouring of grief and rage. We need to offer a structured, yet not domesticated, space for the working through of these experiences and emotions.

The experience of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa is a good illustration of the possibilities and pitfalls of a public space of lament. It has been seen to both go too far, and not far enough. The litany written for the service of dedication of the TRC combined both confessional and lament. "We repent" was followed by "we mourn". The act of forgiveness that is asked for by the perpetrators of violence has been given, but at what cost? The 'structuralising' of the much-needed lament has often left the victims and their families feeling that they had not really lamented in public – their anger has not been expressed or heard enough. Clearly, in encouraging the use of lament in prayer and liturgy, we must strike a very careful balance between the wailing of hurt and abandonment, and the restoration and reconciliation of praise and hope. As Ackermann says:

"Lamenting publicly calls for individual hearts which are weeping and raging, seeking a response from God. The very nature of lament is profoundly spiritual and profoundly political. Remorse, anger, the need for accountability and justice, combine as we contend with God. Ever present in the lament is the hope for a better day."

I'd like to suggest a 'way' that gives space for lament and its necessary conclusion. If in our lamenting we are honest and authentic, truly vulnerable, then out of this despair we are called to act. And that action, having spent time discerning, waiting, praying, that action is about justice, reconciliation and hope.

There is a poem by the 13th Persian poet, Rumi: He wrote, 'Out there beyond ideas of wrongdoing and right doing, there is a field. I'll meet you there.'

What is your field like? Who is in your field with you? Your field might be a place of childhood memories; of playing in a meadow; I remember a field from my childhood in NI when I once spent hours trying to find the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow...I was quite a stubborn child...but maybe that's useful as a reconciler! Or the field might be a field of gold; or it might be a muddy field, shell pocked, fought over ..or a field of desert in Iraq, Syria, Palestine... or...

Our field could be this desolate, lament filled, wounded space. It could be. It sometimes, it often is. In fact, it needs to be. And our field could be, often is a space for growth, abundance, peace, reconciliation. These two fields are not at either end of a lane, or on two different farms. They are actually the same field. Because in this field grows suffering, lament and pain, as well as peace, hope and transformation. And whatever is growing there

when we go to our field, we need to meet there. To be ready to choose to be vulnerable, to lament, to wait, maybe to forgive and be forgiven, to be with God and others on the way. Our field is here, it is now. It is where we go on our journey, our pilgrimage. It is the place we meet God and each other.

As we walk through our field, we hear each other's stories. Stories of suffering and joy, of conflict and reconciliation, of wounding and healing.

We know we as Christian communities, as the Church, as peacemakers and reconcilers need to embrace this journey, but can we as people of faith actually speak out to our nations, our communities? Can we courageously inhabit this liminal, lamenting, reconciling space, and help to tilt ourselves and our communities toward peace and reconciliation and away from conflict and division?

Today, in 2019, what can we as Christian people do? As people of any faith in fact as people who are citizens in communities, what should we do, to respond and act for justice, for hope, for reconciliation? To inhabit the field of lament? Of conflict? Of hope? In today's world where white gated communities trump cardboard shacks. Where Europe is again being torn apart. Where the colour of your skin, or your gender, or your ethnicity or your sexuality can deny you justice. Where your fields have been appropriated, or taken away like those of indigenous peoples and countless others around the world.

In November 2015 in Coventry we held the first 'Rising, Global Peace Forum.' Hilary Benn, the then shadow foreign secretary was one of the speakers and he talked movingly of his grandfather's experiences in the two world wars of losing members of his family. His grandfather said, 'Peril shared knits hearts together, yes, even between enemies – folk the world over desire peace'. Hilary Benn then asked the question, and it is very pertinent for us today, 'What are the consequences of acting or not?' What are the consequences of doing nothing? Of not seeking peace? Of not trying to knit hearts together?

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn wrote

"If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart?"

This is a vital question for us here today as we face the continuing confusions and conflicts of our world.

Loving our friends, those who are like us, those we are comfortable with, is usually, relatively easy. But living with, relating to those who are different from us, those we may not like, those we feel uncomfortable with, how do we do that? How do we journey with those with whom we fundamentally disagree? We are in a time of political, national and international uncertainty, even crisis. I am not particularly interested in which 'side' of the current Brexit debate you are on. It matters, of course it matters. If nothing else, whatever the outcome will be, much of our civil service will remain tied up in Brexit knots for years to come. The new 'normal', whatever that looks like, will be a long time coming. It will take months and years to work out trade agreements, write and agree legislation affecting our fishing, farming, education, health and the rest...But what I am more interested in is the effect, whether we leave the European Union or not, of the growing divisions, animosities, us or them language and behaviours that we are seeing in our political and communal lives together. Actually, saying that, it is becoming hard to even see whether we any longer can say we have a communal life together. In my work, I hear of families unable to even mention the 'B' word over the dinner table as tempers run too high. Work colleagues assuming that they know what each other think and feel, and astonishment and scorn when they realise they are on 'different sides' of the debate. Not to mention the rise of racist comments at football matches, or the recent burning down of a Polish shop...and the rise of sectarian violence...

On social media we exist in our own bubbles...we 'like' those 'like' us on Facebook; we re-tweet and share comments that we agree with. We read ever more inflammatory language in our feeds online, and we either join in or feel superior that we don't.

A pretty bleak picture, all in all. So what can we do about all this? How do we live in our field of lament, of waiting and of hope? And how do we move towards action that is essential, considered, and just?

When I was working at Coventry Cathedral, the refugee crisis really hit our shores. Do you remember the picture of the little boy on the beach? Well, I suggested to my colleagues that we make a prayer station in the cathedral to enable people to pray for refugees, many of whom were taking to the Mediterranean sea in small boats, some to their peril. So, we brought our sailing dinghy into the new cathedral, and set it up in the middle of the nave. Our boat is about the same size as those boats the refugees were in – about 14 ft long. We strew some lifejackets around it, and set up a prayer station. Many people came and interacted with it...and the response was really interesting. Most of those who saw it were very moved and thanked us for raising awareness of the refugees' plight. Others, though, were furious. People said things like, 'Why is the cathedral preaching to us?!' 'Why are they getting involved in politics?!' Well fair point, in a way. Clergy are not usually experts in the

political field. But, as Christian people, we are called to follow Jesus. The Jesus who continually upset the political order of the day. The Jesus who turned the tables in the temple. The Jesus who ate with sinners, privileged the unclean, who of course was himself a refugee. And the Jesus who listened to everyone, who talked to anyone, who forgave sins, taught his disciples and loved his neighbour. The Jesus who lamented on the cross. The Jesus who prayed to his Father. The Jesus who came to reconcile us to God and to each other.

There is a poem by the Northern Irish poet, Seamus Heaney, a part of which I want to share with you.... It's called, Doubletake, and is part of 'The Cure at Troy'. Here is an extract.

*Human beings suffer.
They torture one another.
They get hurt and get hard.
No poem or play or song
Can fully right a wrong
Inflicted and endured.*

*History says, Don't hope
On this side of the grave
But then, once in a lifetime
The longed for tidal wave
Of justice can rise up
And hope and history rhyme.*

'That justice can rise up and hope and history rhyme'.

I was very struck recently by a translation by Erasmus I had never come across before of the prologue to John's gospel. Instead of, 'In the beginning was the word', Erasmus translates this as 'In the beginning was the CONVERSATION'...

In the beginning was the conversation. Exactly. Because how can we live in isolation? How can we live without dialogue? How can we live out the message of reconciliation if we do not listen to each other?

The reality of the history of the 20th and now the 21st century does not seem at first sight to be hopeful. Conflicts abound and new political eras here in Europe and in America, the middle east and the global south are being levied.

Seamus Heaney acknowledges the pain of our world...'human beings suffer...'...yes, we do. 'We do torture one another and get hurt and hard'. The point of lament though is not to

stay in the place of woundedness. It is to acknowledge it, rail against it, and even against God who has let it happen (we have precedence in the 60 psalms of lament in the Bible to call on!). In lamenting, we move towards justice. We move towards healing. We move towards better understanding of ourselves and the other. As Walter Bruggeman says, lament pushes the boundaries of our relationships with the other. Looking to psychoanalytic theory, Melanie Klein describes two 'positions' and how we move towards healing and transformation from one to the other. The first is the 'schizoid' position, where we see, feel and experience our life and relationships as all good or all bad. As all marvellous or all terrible. As binary extremes. But as we better understand ourselves, we move towards the 'depressive' position. This does not mean that we are depressed...rather, that on our journey toward healing we are better able to integrate good and bad, right and wrong, joy and suffering. This is what lament enables in our journey towards wholeness. In fact, I would say that this is what lament calls us towards...calls us, urges us, moves us, to act against the injustice we are lamenting, calls us towards acting for reconciliation and justice.

Going back to Seamus Heaney's poem, can hope and history rhyme? I wonder whether now is the Kairos moment, the time for that great tidal wave of justice to rise up. That now is the time to decide whether hope and history can rhyme. Do we stick with the world's answers, or do we believe that the God who is always with us, who makes his covenant with us, who calls us to be reconcilers, changes everything? And as we know, this is not an easy calling. It involves lament, justice, truth. As well as love, grace and hope. This calling must be at the heart of our relationships. This calling is something we may hear differently. How I hear it is not necessarily the same as how you hear it. That is not the point. The point is, do we hear this calling this invitation, rising up out of our lamenting? And then, how do we respond? And as our listening, our hearing, our understanding of this invitation from Jesus will not be exactly the same, nor will our response be. Can we provide a different response to the current worldview of the binary treatment of difference? A space in the field for the conversation to happen?

As an aside, I'd like to say that the concept of safe space is not what this is about. No space is or can be entirely safe. We have seen that in the attacks in Manchester and London and Syria, and all over the world. But in our response to these events, we can respond with a space which is faith filled, faith-ful, just. A space, a field, to hear and to listen.

So where does lament call us to today? And how do we get there? Well, we start with sharing our stories, our suffering and pain and anger and lament, ourselves, our vulnerabilities, our lives, our hopes and dreams. How do we share our own story with our enemy, so that they can tell us our story and we can tell them theirs, in a way that makes sense? Well, firstly, we have to know what our own story is – who we are and where we

come from...and how we relate to each other.

And so I would like us to share something of our own story now. With our neighbour... just for a couple of minutes. Maybe start with what your field is like? What is in your field? And who is there with you? And then we'll come back together and share something of our fields. And then I'll share something of a story I was part of.

The story I want to share with you is of a peace walk. Two years ago I spent part of Holy Week and Easter on a peace walk, a pilgrimage, in Northern Iraq, in Kurdistan.

About 20 of us from Europe and others walked with local Christians, Muslims and Yazidis. A quarter of people living in Northern Iraq live in Refugee camps, people internally displaced from their own country due to ISIS attacks. Many refugees and aliens in their own land. We walked for peace, to proclaim the possibility of peace in that fought over land. That field was indeed bleak. Full of lament. Why, O Lord? How long, O Lord?

On Good Friday we visited a village about 30km from Mosul – Mosul, incidentally is the ancient city of Nineveh – a village that had been destroyed by ISIS, the villagers having all fled or worse. It was a place of destruction, completely devoid of life. Houses were rubble, shops damaged, and the church though still standing had been desecrated, the altar broken and lying in rubble. We could hear Mosul being shelled. So I held a Good Friday service in the desecrated church. A service of lament.

We laid candles that we had brought with us in the shape of a cross in front of the destroyed altar and prayed the prayers of Good Friday, the pain and lament for Jesus, and for healing, for the end to that conflict, for peace.

On Easter Day we returned to that deserted village and desecrated church. But this time, the bleakness in the Church was transformed. The same rubble was there, the same bullet holes in the walls, the same broken crosses and hacked memorials. But there were people from the surrounding villages, flowers on the altar, children dressed in white, and a packed church there to proclaim the hope of the resurrection, the hope of peace and the possibility of rebuilding.

The local Peshmerga, the soldiers came to receive their Easter communion. There were even painted eggs and chocolate after the service. As an aside, people were rather surprised to see a female priest – unknown in those parts. I don't think I have been asked to bless as many babies and people in wheelchairs ever!

The foundation of a rebuilt community was born that day. A space in between for remembering and for reconciliation. A liminal space.

It was in many ways an extraordinary walk. Risky, at times truly dangerous. But a liminal space – where we existed caught between the past and the future. Our necks straining, trying to look in both directions as we walked. As we left that church in the destroyed village, we had to walk carefully back to the bus for fear of unexploded ordinances just off the path.

Lament to hope, hostility to peace, conflict to reconciliation.

But all of us here in this room know that the journey of reconciliation is not straightforward. It is really hard. Our field is messy and muddy. But what we do know is that the journey of lament towards reconciliation is worth it. How best then can we communicate that to the world?

I preached at a church in Wuppertal in Germany a couple of years ago where the Barmen Declaration was signed in 1934. The Barmen Declaration was a response from the confessing churches in Germany against the rise of Nazi ideology, and the subordination of the Church to the State. Today, in our local, national and international life, in politics, in communities, in homes and schools and workplaces, we know we are facing conflict, division, anger and mistrust. Is it time now for a second Barmen Declaration? A Declaration of Reconciliation, maybe? Now, I'm not suggesting that we are facing national socialism, or Nazi ideology, or that we are back in the 1930's. But I am suggesting that we as Christian citizens need to speak out into our world of conflict at so many levels. And I am suggesting that we have something useful to say in terms of lament, love, peace and reconciliation. That hope and history can rhyme. But I am also suggesting that we can or should share a different way of being. Do we have to argue across the ballot box, or the aisle or the altar? Pointing fingers, 'you're wrong, I'm right'?

So I offer to you a first draft of a new Barmen Declaration – a Reconciliation Declaration as we join together to work for peace and towards hope in our world.... I would love us to be able to work on this together here in Glasgow and beyond...so a very first draft to maybe take into our field of meeting...

A Declaration of Reconciliation, October 2019

Jesus asked, commanded us to love God, to love one another, to love our neighbour and to love our enemies. Through Paul's letter to a divided community we are asked to be ambassadors for Christ, to bear the message and the ministry of reconciliation. Therefore we together discern our calling, our vocation to be reconciled and to reconcile. This is a

'kairos', a timely moment in our nation when we are called to lament, to listen to Jesus and to respond to him, for God's sake and for ours.

1. We lament the current climate of division, disunity and derision in our national life together.
2. We believe that we are called to be reconcilers, and that this is laid upon all Christians.
3. We believe that this call is a gift. A gift from God and to Him; a gift to ourselves and to the other.
4. As people of reconciliation, we humbly acknowledge that we do not always get it right. Nor do we have all the answers. But our calling as reconcilers is to tilt towards living as those who love one another. As those who forgive and are forgiven. As those who love our enemies. As those who practice hospitality, generosity and justice.
5. We acknowledge that we hear this calling differently. We are all made in the image of God, but we are not all the same. Gay or straight; Jew or Greek; woman or man; powerful or powerless; black or white; slave or free, right or wrong, have or have not, us or them.
6. As reconcilers we can provide a space where hurts and laments can be brought and heard; where responses of love and mercy and forgiveness can be sought and given. We can provide a space which is safe enough for people to gather with and for each other.
7. We acknowledge that reconciliation is hard and it is not fast. That it is cross shaped.
8. We know that reconciliation is costly and often convoluted, but vital.
9. We trust that the reconciling love of God is above all transformative and hopeful.

I want to finish with a story about Steve Biko and his mother Alice. Steve Biko was a well-known anti-apartheid leader and in 1977 was brutally murdered while being held by the South African police. Steve and his mother Alice were talking shortly before his death and she was telling him how much she worried about him – she couldn't sleep at night until he was home for fear of him having been arrested and put in gaol. He replied by reminding her that Jesus had come to redeem his people and set them free. "Are you Jesus?" she had asked impatiently. Steve had gently answered her, "No, I'm not. But I have the same job to do."

A Prayer for those who disagree

Lord, as we try to disagree well, help us to see that you are in both of us.

As we lament our relationship, help us to risk change and be open to be surprised.

As we try to talk together, help us to hear each other with understanding and compassion.

As we sit at the table, help us to be courageous enough to stay there with honesty.

As we disbelieve it's possible to change, help us to be generous and hopeful.

Lord, as we seek a way forward together, we thank you for walking this journey alongside us.

Amen.

Sarah Hills

Sarah was brought up in South Africa and moved to Northern Ireland. She studied medicine in Sheffield and worked as a Psychiatrist, until ordination as a priest in 2007. She has recently moved from the position as Canon for Reconciliation at Coventry Cathedral to be Vicar of Holy Island. She completed her PhD in the theology of reconciliation at Durham University in 2014. She is Visiting Fellow at St John's College, Durham, and Visiting Practice Fellow at the Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations, Coventry University. She is Honorary Canon for Reconciliation at Inverness Cathedral, and Canon Emeritus of Coventry Cathedral. Sarah is married to Richard, a GP, and they have two sons and a Labrador.



3. Keynote Input 2: David Brubaker on 'Waiting'

Introduction

I was deeply honored to be invited to join all of you for this 10th anniversary recognition of the founding of Place for Hope, and to celebrate the growing network that is in place for mediation, conflict transformation and reconciliation throughout the UK.

This is my fifth trip to Scotland, including that first visit to Aviemore in 2009. Four of those visits were at the invitation of Place for Hope, including a training trip organized by Hugh Donald in 2010 and a wonderful week on Iona organized by Ruth Harvey. Last summer I came on my own to do a pilgrimage on St. Cuthbert's Way.

I was asked to talk about "waiting" this morning, and it may seem an odd time to do so given the pervasive sense of urgency in the land. We are witnessing desperate migrants perish while attempting merely to enter the country. Climate change is already disrupting life in multiple ways throughout the land. The gap between the rich and the rest continues to widen. The legislature is polarized and unable to perform even the most basic aspects of governing. Meanwhile, the head of the country is a boorish man with bad hair, and the leader of the opposition seems old and befuddled. But enough about MY country....

It is precisely when things seem most hopeless that we feel compelled to act...and when we usually most need to wait. There are two examples from the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures of waiting, starting with Abraham.

Biblical Examples

Abraham, or Abram, is the spiritual father of all three monotheistic religions. When God called Abram from Haran to the Promised Land he was already 75 years old. It took another 25 years before the "son of promise," Isaac, was born, and by then Abraham was 100 and Sarah was 90. (Which truly gives new meaning to the phrase "miracle baby.") For Sarah and Abraham, there would have been a lot of waiting...and wondering if God were ever going to fulfill God's promise.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, was visited by Gabriel, who made the following promise:

"Don't be afraid, Mary. You have found favor with God.
You will become pregnant, give birth to a son,
and name him Jesus.
He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High.
The Lord God will give him
the throne of his ancestor David.
Your son will be king of Jacob's people forever,
and his kingdom will never end."

Mary waited 30 years for Jesus to begin his ministry, and then three years later saw it end in violence and tragedy. Only millennia later can we begin to comprehend the transnational and transformational nature of this upside-down "kingdom that will never end."

God clearly has a different sense of time, and space, than we do. Perhaps that's because God is working out God's purposes through billions of years of an evolving and expanding universe, rather than the nanosecond that one earthly day, or year, represents in that timeline.

When have you had to wait for something that was very important to you...and what was the result? Talk to the one or two persons next to you, and share a story of a time when you waited.

Purpose of Waiting

There are four good reasons to wait, and you could no doubt add more. The first is that waiting reduces our impulses, and gives us time to think, reflect, and consult. We are reminded daily of the dangers and costs of impulsive leadership actions, and each of us could recall a time when we acted in haste and without sufficient information with unfortunate results. The injunction to "don't just do something, stand there!" is generally wise advice when faced with a complex challenge. One of my favorite authors on organizational change, Ron Heifetz, advises change leaders to "get off the dance floor and get on the balcony" (to see the whole system) before attempting to lead any significant change.

The second is that waiting builds anticipation. Those of us who have raised children know the anticipation that children have leading up to Christmas or another major holiday that involves gifts. Waiting for a seed to germinate in the ground, or for a baby to develop in its mother's womb, is a time of anticipation. The growth is taking place, but it is hidden in darkness, and we wait in anticipation of the emergence of new life. When we fail to wait, we abort the process of anticipation and maturation that is required. That is why we are told to never assist a butterfly to exit from its cocoon—it will happen in the fullness of time.

A third reason to wait is that waiting can build relationships. Perhaps you have heard the expression "absence makes the heart grow fonder." Mert and I lived in Brazil for three years in the 1980's when we were working with Mennonite Central Committee. Brazilians had a more nuanced understanding of how absence works. They said, "Absence is like wind on a fire. If it is a small fire the wind will blow it out. But if it's already an established fire the wind will enhance it even more." Waiting is like absence in this metaphor. When a relationship is already established—whether with a friend, a family member, or with God—waiting often enhances the relationship even further.

The last reason to wait is that waiting builds character. The famous Stanford “marshmallow experiment” offered one marshmallow to four year olds if they wanted to eat it immediately, but two marshmallows if they could wait 15 minutes (with the marshmallow on a plate set in front of them). According to the TED Talk presenter who summarizes this experiment, asking a four-year old to wait 15 minutes would be the equivalent of asking you and me to wait two hours for a cup of coffee in the morning. Two thirds of the children gobbled down the marshmallow immediately after the researcher left the room, but another third waited the full 15 minutes to get a second one. They tracked those children and 14 years later found a remarkable correlation between success in school and entry to university and those children who were able to wait. The ability to defer gratification, even as a young child, is critical to success in life.

Fruits of Waiting

So the discipline of waiting curbs our impulsive need to act rather than to think and consult, and waiting also builds character. However, the two greatest fruits of a developing a practice of waiting are humility and trust. Waiting requires humility because it runs counter to the “I alone can fit it” mentality that pervades our individualistic cultures. It requires trust because we need to believe that the universe, or God, or some invisible physics principle is going to be working on the problem even when we are not doing so.

We tend to grow in trust when we wait because so often we must wait in the darkness.

Read extract from Barbara Taylor Brown article on “Lunar Spirituality” at <https://time.com/65543/barbara-brown-taylor-in-praise-of-darkness/>

We generally cannot see the seed in the soil or the fetus in the womb (ultrasounds only allow us to see through a glass dimly), yet we choose to believe that the seed is germinating and the fetus is growing even before we see it with our own eyes. We wait, then, with a faith in the evidence of things not seen...and yet believed. That is trust.

This is not a call to abandon action. It is in the cycle of action and reflection...of effort followed by waiting...that we do our best work. Many of you know Fr. Richard Rohr, the founder of the Center for Action and Contemplation. Fr. Rohr likes to say that when he founded the center 30 years ago and named it the most important word in the title was “AND.” Without action, the seed never gets planted and the baby never gets created. But without contemplation, without waiting, we’re too impatient to allow the shoot to appear or the baby to mature.

“A Blessing for the One who is Exhausted” by John O’Donohue

When the rhythm of the heart becomes hectic,
Time takes on the strain until it breaks;
Then all the unattended stress falls in
On the mind like an endless, increasing weight.

The light in the mind becomes dim.
Things you could take in your stride before
Now become laboursome events of will.

Weariness invades your spirit.
Gravity begins falling inside you,
Dragging down every bone.

The tide you never valued has gone out.
And you are marooned on unsure ground.
Something within you has closed down;
And you cannot push yourself back to life.

You have been forced to enter empty time.
The desire that drove you has relinquished.
There is nothing else to do now but rest
And patiently learn to receive the self
You have forsaken for the race of days.

At first your thinking will darken
And sadness take over like listless weather.
The flow of unwept tears will frighten you.

*

You have travelled too fast over false ground;
Now your soul has come to take you back.

Take refuge in your senses, open up
To all the small miracles you rushed through.

Become inclined to watch the way of rain
When it falls slow and free.

Imitate the habit of twilight,
Taking time to open the well of colour
That fostered the brightness of day.

Draw alongside the silence of stone
Until its calmness can claim you.

Be excessively gentle with yourself.

Stay clear of those vexed in spirit.
Learn to linger around someone of ease
Who feels they have all the time in the world.

Gradually, you will return to yourself,
Having learned a new respect for your heart
And the joy that dwells far within slow time.

“Wait for the Lord, Whose Day is Near. Wait for the Lord, Be Strong...Take Heart.”

David Brubaker

David is Director of the MBA and OLS Programs and Associate and Peacebuilding, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Virginia. David is a Mennonite and an experienced mediator and conflict transformation practitioner. Having led at the Place for Hope inaugural Aviemore conference in 2009 we are delighted that David was able to join us at the Gathering in Glasgow ten years later, and continues as a Patron of Place for Hope.



4. Keynote 3: Brendan McAllister on 'Hope'

"For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice."

Pilate asked him: what is truth?"

(John 18: 37 – 38)

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Hopelessness

During the years when I was working in mediation in Northern Ireland, there were regular visitors from conflict zones from around the world, sometimes individuals on their own intrepid pilgrimages; sometimes delegations sent by governments or philanthropic donors.

One such group consisted of Israeli and Palestinian political leaders. I was asked to go down and meet them in Dublin. I got lost and arrived at their hotel late and flustered. I was met at the door by one of the Dublin hosts. He told me three important things before I went in.

First, that the Israelis had killed a Palestinian leader the previous week and so the Palestinians in this group would not sit in the same room as their Israeli counterparts.

Second, that I would therefore have to do my session twice.

Third, the group's meeting with the Irish Foreign Minister had been brought forward by an hour. So, I would have ten minutes with each group.

It was early in the morning. As I opened my notes I watched the Israeli politicians slowly file into the room. A number of them looked a bit hung-over and miserable. I suspected that by now they were flooded with meetings. I wondered how, on earth, I could make a meaningful impression on these men.

In a flush of inspiration, I stood up and said:

'Good Morning gentlemen. It is good to have an opportunity to meet you. I have been following your situation for over 30 years and observing it closely. And I have to tell you that, in my professional opinion, your situation is hopeless.'

Then I sat down.

The room was very quiet. The politicians were wide awake now and staring at me. I waited a moment, then stood up and said:

'But what is our work if it is not to give hope in hopeless situations?'

I do remember that after the ten minutes one of them invited me to visit Israel. Somehow, I had made an impact on him, though I have to say that I'm still waiting on his call.

Today, as I look around this room, only a few of you look hung-over but I know, I just know, that, like me, many of you are struggling with the hopelessness that seems to pervade our world in these times.

Of course, the world has known many, many hopeless times.

Hope

On 19 November, 1979, ten years before he would lead the so-called velvet revolution that would sweep the Communist regime from power, the Czech playwright and dissident, Vaclav Havel, sat down in his prison cell and wrote a letter to his wife, Olga. Though not a religious man, these were his words:

"Hope is a dimension of the spirit.
It is not outside us, but within us.
When you lose it, you must seek it again
within yourself
and in people around you –
not in objects or even in events."

Nearly two thousand years earlier, St. Paul wrote his letter to the Colossians and said:
"You must, of course, continue faithful on a sure and firm foundation, and not allow yourselves to be shaken from the hope you gained when you heard the gospel which has been preached to everybody in the world."

One of the great spiritual writers of the twentieth century, Thomas Merton, contemplated the terrible state of the world in his book, 'Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander', and wrote:
"There is the hope, there is the world that remakes itself at God's command without consulting us."

Hopelessness gives way to hope through creativity.

And what is the source of creativity?

I think that the source of creativity, is spirituality.

But what is spirituality?

Spirituality

"Spirituality is the awakening of mind and heart to the grasp of the Spirit." Pascaline Coff.

"It is what we are. It is being led by the Spirit of God. It is when we are led from the inside by the Spirit, not by external stimuli."

Adolfo Nicolas SJ

"In Islam everything is 'spiritual' because all actions must be in accordance with God's pleasure. There is constant awareness, mindfulness and consciousness of God in everything that the Muslim says or does." "One Reason" website

"Spirituality is a sense that there is more than what is obvious or visible; it is 'a sense of the more'. It is a sense of interiority."

B McAllister

Q 1. Share a personal reflection on spirituality.

The spirituality of conflict

We do tend to think of spiritual experiences as heart-warming; special and positive.

We are used to hearing about 'the spirituality of peace'.

But what about the spirituality of conflict?

What effect does violence or violation have on a person's spirituality?

In his book, "Night", written as a young survivor of the Holocaust, Elie Wiesel told how, as a teenager, he was forced to witness the execution of a ten year old boy in Auschwitz, hanged by the SS in front of the assembled prisoner population. In the weeks that followed, Wiesel struggled "to accept God's silence" and recalled that in the depths of his heart, he "felt a great void."

We should think about how violence affects our spirituality.

The American poet, Samuel Menashe was a US infantryman in World War Two. He fought in the Battle of the Bulge, in the Ardennes, in 1944. Out of a company of 190 men, he was one of only six who had not been killed, wounded or taken prisoner by the war's end. When he died in 2011 an obituary in the Irish Times observed that he was viewed as

"a poet who expressed joy in the here and now. "This was perhaps informed by his experience of war. He once remarked on his return that he couldn't understand how people could make plans: "I was amazed that they could talk of the future, next summer. As a result of the war, each day was the last day. And then it changed. Each day was the only day."

Q 2. How has violence, conflict, violation, struggle or adversity affected your spirituality?

Roland Rolheiser, describes spirituality as 'the holy longing'.

"It is no easy task to walk this earth and find peace. Inside of us, it would seem, something is at odds with the very rhythm of things and we are forever restless, dissatisfied, frustrated, aching. We are so over-charged with desire that it is hard to come to simple rest. Desire is always stronger than satisfaction."

Rolheiser asserts that our efforts to address this inner restlessness, our efforts to address our 'dis-ease', are at the heart of spirituality. He views spirituality as the effort each person makes to engage with the 'holy longing' that is basic to the condition of being human. Spirituality is situated in the gap between desire and satisfaction.

Depending on our response to that inner dis-ease, our spirituality can be good or bad.

Thomas Merton

According to Thomas Merton, *"a life is either all spiritual or not spiritual at all. No person can serve two masters. Your life is shaped by the end you live for. You are made in the image of what you desire."*

And let me quote now from the Thomas Merton Encyclopedia.

Merton affirmed Christianity as pre-eminently, *"a religion of hope", "founded on the belief that human beings are created in the image and likeness of God and that divine mercy and goodness are more powerful than human evil."*

"Hope puts its trust in the power of love more than in law, in freedom more than in structures, in people more than in institutions, in the mystery of grace rather than in a cult of success and visible results.

Again, from the Merton encyclopedia: *"Authentic hope develops not by avoiding the darkness and apparent emptiness of life but by entering into the depths of human suffering and discovering life and meaning where from the outside an observer sees only death and absurdity."*

"Hope is valid only when it confronts darkness, desperation and ignorance and overcomes them in Christ."

Reflecting on insights from his spiritual life as a contemplative, Merton describes the Christian message of hope as an assurance *"that, whether you understand it or not, God loves you, is present to you, lives in you, dwells in you, calls you, saves you, and offers you an understanding and light which are like nothing you ever found in books or heard in sermons", an experience of "the intimate union in the depths of your own heart, of God's spirit in your own secret inmost self, so that you and He are in all truth, One Spirit."*

Merton says that *"the basis of Christian hope "is God's love and acceptance as revealed in the cross of Christ and in the new life bestowed by "the great feast of Christian hope: the Resurrection."*

In this regard, says Merton, *'hope demands resistance to all the forces that deny authentic human dignity and destiny.'*

Alban McCoy writes that *"hope is rooted in God alone and it gives rise to a confidence that the whole of our lives and the whole of creation is encompassed by and taken up into an inconceivable and infinite Love."*

"The virtue of hope", says McCoy, "is a gift of God's grace, not the product of the human will. "Hope is the hallmark of a new life now. To believe in God is to hope, and hope sets us free to love, and love overcomes everything."

Faith

In St. Paul's letter to the Romans, he wrote about Abraham's call from God in these terms:

"... the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through faith."

Abraham's calling, from which, incidentally, Christianity and Islam are descended, was not based on the law, the observance of rules, but on faith.

Let me reflect on this from a personal perspective for a moment (*with apologies that the final section is offered in bullet points....*)

- In February, 2016: parish bulletin notice.
- Discernment year – then decide.
- Four fronts: marriage; the state of the Church; doctrine; faith.
- Glenvale convent: John's gospel: you did not choose me; I chose you.
- Trust the call.
- Feeling at home.
- From seeker to message bearer.
- From cultural Catholic to confessional Catholic.
- Faith-based hope.
- Pastoral v Strategic.
- Jesus was a strategist: sending disciples ahead of him; choosing apostles; associating with women.
- RUC 1992: – not impulsive but calculated: not training but dialogue: recruits; trainers; operational cops; commanders; leadership.
- Argument with police over their sense of mission: we just wanted to be cops.
- Tim Lewis: trust in their equipment.
- What is our equipment? The Good News; the energy of the Word; the energy of prayer; the liberation of faith; patient endurance; a belief in truth.

- The Good News: not just the life of Jesus; not just his crucifixion but also his resurrection.
- South Sudan retreat.
- Newman on faith.
- Merton on Barth.
- Truth: reaching into the spirit.
- St. Benedict.

Brendan McAllister

Brendan has been involved in peace activism in Northern Ireland for over the past 45 years. Originally a probation officer, he led Mediation Northern Ireland for 16 years and served as a Neighbourhood Renewal Advisor for North West England. In 2008 he was appointed as a Commissioner for Victims and Survivors of the Northern Ireland conflict. He has worked in the international peace mediation field since 2012. He is now a Senior Mediation Advisor with the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and a Senior Associate of the Brussels-based 'mediatEUR' which provides mediation support to the EU. Brendan is a member of the Corrymeela Community.



5. Gospel Stories 'Servant Woman' monologues

Originally written for worship at the Place for Hope 'Gathering in Glasgow on Conflict and Faith' October 2019.

© Jo Love, WGRG, Iona Community, Glasgow G5 9JP, Scotland

1

Luke 5:1-11; 27-32 Calling of the fishermen & tax collector.

Table fully covered with a large cloth to floor level

Fishing net/floats on floor to one side of table

Abacus to other side

In at the deep end!

That's the understatement for the new Rabbi in town.

Well, when I say new Rabbi, I mean Jesus,
the Nazareth carpenter turned Rabbi.

So he's started gathering some followers.

Not in the usual way, though.

Not waiting to attract some of the respectable synagogue brigade with his teaching.
Nope!

(moving to fishing visuals)

Straight to the lakeside and into our Simon's boat
while the boys are busy washing their nets.

I don't know what the Rabbi said to them about religion,
but next thing is he's telling fishermen how to fish!

And before you scoff – like I did –
let me tell you, they got a catch.

The thing is, our Simon is not your timid, self-effacing type – oh no! –
but when he saw those bulging nets...
he was... overcome.

And the Rabbi says, 'Come with me'
and all four of them went.

Then late this afternoon,
they're all trooping past the tax booth,

(moving to tax booth visuals)

averting their eyes as usual,
except for Jesus,
who stops, goes right over to the booth and says to the taxman,
'Come with me.'

A taxman joining a bunch of fishermen? Aye right!
A bunch of fishermen welcoming a taxman? No chance.
But before you scoff – like the entire neighbourhood did –
the word is that tonight, the taxman is throwing a dinner for the fledgling Team
Jesus.
And I have been roped in for serving and washing up.

Well. this is going to be good!
Will any of them come?
Will they really sit at the one table?

What are you up to, Jesus?
In at the deep end...
in up to your neck!

Watch this space...

2

After the dinner at Levi's home

*Table fully covered with a large cloth to floor level
Fishing basket/net/floats on floor by one chair
Abacus/papyrus scroll/money bag on table in front of other chair*

Levi.
The taxman's got a name. Levi.
I actually found him quite likable.

He paid us servants pretty well!
Bit of grumbling around the table about where his money comes from of course...!
But they all survived dinner.

The boys all came –
Simon and Andrew and James and John –
bringing backup too, a bunch more pals from the boats.
Some of Levi's cronies came too.
Reinforcements for both sides.

But they did it. They sat down together.
Jesus took the lead, but they did it, they shared this table.
He's a pretty good host, Levi.
And we cooked up our best and kept it coming –
meat and veg, good wine, plenty of refills...
and clearing away and bringing in more.

You could feel the tension easing the more they talked.
There was even laughter.

Who would have thought it.
Are they really going to stick together though?
I think Jesus is being a bit naïve...
They're going to be up against lots of complaining and criticism.

The Pharisees got wind of it right away
and showed up outside the house.
No surprises their take on it.
A Rabbi mixing with the unclean.
Explain yourself, Jesus!
All he would say was
it's not folk who are well who need a doctor.

I don't know what cures he thinks he's bringing us.
But I saw what I saw round this table tonight.
What next...?

.....

3

LUKE 7:36-50 Pharisees & Woman

*Table fully covered with a large cloth to floor level
Perfume, oil, dusty sandals added to other items*

Well well, after the Pharisees complaining who Jesus keeps company with, now they're keeping company with him themselves...

Were they hoping for a respectable occasion this time, maybe a chance to remind him of the accepted ways, the accepted people, for a dinner party.

Oh my!
They didn't reckon on Ariella gate crashing.
She had heard about Jesus sitting down with the tax collectors, not that she sat down with him exactly, but fell at his feet... touching him, washing him, kissing him, his feet that is, but oh my goodness, nobody knew where to look.
No loud complaining this time though, but a silent, seething outrage...

And what does Jesus do?

He tells them that this notorious woman has been more hospitable to him than the owner of the house!
No welcoming kiss, no water for his feet, no oil for his head...
A Pharisee shown up for his little love, Ariella for her devotion, even declared forgiven by God.
How does Jesus dare to say such things?

Well Jesus, is this what you wanted?
Attracting women to your side?
It's not just the other 'working women' who are glad to hear of your close encounters with Ariella.

It's all of us, yes, me too...

Is there a place here for us?

4 **LUKE 10:38-42 Martha & Mary**

*Table fully covered with a large cloth to floor level
Large saucepan, wooden spoon, kitchen apron & colourful woman's
shawl/scarf draped from table to floor - added to other items*

Dear oh dear,
make up your mind, Jesus.
One minute you care about good hospitality,
the next minute you don't.

So just when I thought there was hope for womankind,
the Bethany sisters are squabbling again.
Blood is thicker than water?
But water is a sight more refreshing!

Why do families get so complicated?
Becoming a Rabbi
hasn't smoothed the trouble of still being a son and brother.
It doesn't look like Jesus can sort out anyone else's family strife either.

Is this where the table creaks and groans?
Is this where the empty chairs shout their final failure?

Fishermen and tax collectors,
Pharisees and prostitutes,
Men and women,
your work is cut out for you, Jesus,
but I thought you were getting through...
now I'm not so sure.

Siblings.

Not just any siblings, but your best friends.
And you took sides!

Or were you siding
with something more important
even than family?

Now there's a thought...

5

LUKE 22:7-13 preparing for the Passover meal

*Table fully covered with a large cloth to floor level
Bread, wine - added to the other items*

Ah, here's the place.
Here's where they'll celebrate.
Nothing much for me to do, for once.
He's trained them well, has Jesus,
telling the boys to get everything ready!

Boys...?
Listen to me.
They're not boys any longer...
and they've learned a lot more
than how to prepare a Passover dinner.

How long is it now since they left their boats
and Levi walked away from his booth,
and Philip and Bartholomew joined them,
and Thomas, Judas, James and Simon...
not to mention the women and the hangers-on like me!

Who would have guessed
that the carpenter turned Rabbi
would be such a game-changer?

He's a prophet... a healer... and he's some storyteller!

But he hasn't wanted the glory, the limelight, no,
he's modelled what he's about, mentoring his team.

Ah but still they argue and fall out and don't 'get' him.
He hasn't won them all...
but we're still here, still together... Team Jesus.

And here we are – Festival time!
Please God, a peaceful dinner...

.....

6

LUKE 22: 14-38 Last Supper and going onward

Table as earlier but bread broken in bits, scattered.

(sounding utterly exhausted, despondent and bewildered)

Happy Passover, everyone.

What was all that about?

One of us is going to betray him?
Who? And why would we?
And what does he think we're going to do?

Does he mean me?
Or him, or her, or who?
We all felt it, we all know we are capable of it...
is it me?

Oh well, nothing like rehashing an old argument to break the tension –
"who's the greatest?"

(exasperated)

Oh brother,
how many times has Jesus said it, shown it,
got down at your feet with a basin and towel –
the greatness that has no need of power;
no desire to grasp control, no thought to lording it over you.

Then he was back to the betrayal talk –
but to Peter, in front of everyone,
Peter! The last one capable of it –
“You’ll say you don’t know me three times before dawn!”

What??!

And after all his example of never relying on money, possessions or weapons,
suddenly he says, “Take a purse, a bag, a sword!”
and my goodness, two of them pull swords!
Where did they get them?
“Here, Lord!”
“ENOUGH!”

What was all that about?
What’s got into him?

The authorities are closing in on him, that’s what.
He knows it.

(Moving to table, picking up a piece of bread, looking at it, long pause.)

“Remember me.”

(Putting bread down.)

Jesus, don’t let us forget.
Don’t let us give up.

Keep us together.
Keep us coming back to the table...
Keep us...

6. Call to Action in times of Transition and Change

(This 'call to action' was issued by the partners to the press on 15th October in light of the current political situation, and the impending Brexit transition scheduled for 31st October)

Our political, personal, and community lives cannot be separated. We urge those who are leading us through these troubled and troubling times to listen, to think, to act with compassion and wisdom.

The common good is the responsibility of us all. We urge all leaders to walk around in the shoes of 'the other' and to see beyond binary divides. We do not need to argue crudely across the room, aisle, dispatch box or ballot box. We call all in leadership to create a culture of conversation that places civility at the heart of our civics. We call for a culture that nurtures an intentional process of respectful, robust disagreement particularly in times of polarisation. The contemporary challenge for us all is to maintain the dignity of the human person in our personal and public discourse.

On 31st October 200 people representing more than 20 peace and reconciliation agencies across the UK will be meeting in Glasgow for three days. We are working together closely as Reconcilers Together, and join with local partners for the **Gathering in Glasgow on Conflict and Faith** in the belief that faith communities have wisdom, skill and experience to share in the art of peacebuilding, robust conversation, and the compassionate transformation of society. We recognise that violence has been, and still is perpetrated in the name of religion worldwide. We are ashamed of this legacy and will continue to do all in our power to reveal injustice and violence where we see it, while working towards reconciliation.

We recognise that 31st October symbolises a day of concern for many whatever side of the political divide. We do not believe it is a coincidence that we have been planning for the last year to meet over this period.

In the face of all that separates us, we call on our leaders: political, business, academic, civic and religious, to model robust and compassionate conversation that respects difference and welcomes diversity in the lead up to and beyond 31st October.

Ruth Harvey, Director, Place for Hope

Sarah Hills, Vicar of Holy Island, Honorary Canon for Reconciliation, Inverness Cathedral and Canon Emeritus, Coventry Cathedral

Jo Williams and Andy Williams, Directors, Blackley Centre for Peace

Colin Moulds, Director, Bridge Builders Ministries

Graham Boyack, Director, Scottish Mediation

Justine Huxley, Director, St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace

Sarah Snyder, Director, Rose Castle Foundation

Glenn Jordan, Programme Manager, Public Theology, the Corrymeela Community

Sam Tedcastle and Abdul Rahim, Senior Practitioners, Centre for Good Relations
George Cowie, Clerk to the Church of Scotland Presbytery of Glasgow

Reconcilers Together is a partnership between Rose Castle Foundation, Bridge Builders, The Corrymeela Community, Place for Hope, St Michael's House Coventry Cathedral, The Blackley Centre, St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace, and the Archbishop of Canterbury's Reconciliation Ministry.

For follow up comment/interview, contact Ruth Harvey ruth.harvey@placeforhope.org.uk
tel: 07884 580 357

The Gathering in Glasgow on Conflict and Faith is hosted by **Place for Hope** with local partners (Centre for Good Relations, Scottish Mediation, and the Presbytery of Glasgow) and Reconcilers Together.



7. Partners

The Gathering in Glasgow on Conflict and Faith was a collaboration between Place for Hope and the following partners:



<https://www.placeforhope.org.uk/home/>
<http://www.centreforgoodrelations.com/index.php>
<https://www.bbministries.org.uk/>
<https://rosecastle.foundation/>
<https://www.corrymeela.org/>
<http://www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/smh/>

<https://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/priorities/reconciliation>
<https://www.blackleycentre.co.uk/>
<https://www.scottishmediation.org.uk/>
<http://www.presbyteryofglasgow.org.uk/>
<https://stethelburgas.org/>

8. Participants

Ruth	Adams	Sandra	Cobbin
Nancy	Adams	Steve	Cobbin
Jenny	Adams	James	Coleman
Jan	Adamson	John	Collard
Emma	Alexander	Christopher	Collins
Martin	Anderson	John	Conway
Richard	Armiger	Andrew	Corsie
Joshua	Askwith	George	Cowie
Philip	Austin	Fiona	Crawford
Nick	Austin	Sharon	Crooks
Wendy	Ball	Orozu	Daky
Joe	Banfield	Mark	Davis
Natalie	Barrett	David	Denniston
Catherine	Beattie	Deborah	Doherty
Fiona	Bennett	Hugh	Donald
Sandra	Black	Paul	Doran
Fyfe	Blair	Graham	Fender-Allison
Kieran	Bohan	Jane	Fender-Allison
Helen	Boothroyd	Alison	Fenton
Graham	Boyack	Carol	Few
Katie	Bradley	Patricia	Findlay
Lynn	Brady	Kenneth	Fleming
Rebecca	Brierley	Alastair	Forsyth
Katie	Brooker	Lisa	Forsyth
David	Brubaker	Ruth	Forsythe
Jacci	Bulman	Alan	Forsythe
Joanne	Calladine	Clive	Fowle
Melanie	Campbell	Hugh	Foy
John	Chalmers	Rosie	Frew
Kris	Chapman	Alex	Gabriel
Jennie	Chinembiri	Andrew	Gardner
Julie	Coates	Peter	Gardner

Heidi	Gardner	Karen	Lafferty
Urzula	Glienecke	Magdalen	Lambkin
Daran	Golby	Fay	Lamont
Iain	Goring	Ellen	Larson Davidson
David	Gould	Anne	Lee
Roderick	Grahame	Hugh	Lee
Liz	Griffiths	Ish	Lennox
Nikki	Groarke	Wendy	Lloyd
Ruwani	Gunawardene	Jo	Love
Sarah	Guthrie	Lucie	Lunn
Phil	Guthrie	Pamela	Lyall
Judith	Halliday	Ali	Lyon
Debbie	Harkness	Joan	Lyon
John	Harvey	Heather	Macdonald
Molly	Harvey	Joseph	Maker
Ruth	Harvey	Peter	Marshall
Brent	Haywood	Victoria	Mason
Roy	Henderson	Angus	Mathieson
Kathryn	Hilditch	Owen	May
Sarah	Hills	Georgia	May
Cath	Hollywell	Brendan	McAllister
Henry	Hope	Elsbeth	McCallum
Justine	Huxley	Mukami	McCrum
Charlie	Irvine	Gordon	McDade
Wendy-May	Jacobs	Hilary	McDougall
Paul	Jeffrey	Sally	McElroy
Miranda	Jemphrey	Maryanne	McIlroy
Peter	Johnson	Alastair	McKay
Phillip	Johnson	Susan	McLachlan
Iain	Johnston	Russell	McLarty
Glenn	Jordan	Iain	McLarty
Adrian	Klos	Eleanor	McMahon

Stewart	McPherson	Oana	Sanziana Marian
Marjory	McPherson	Christine	Schoeck
Helen	Mee	Dave	Scott
Phill	Mellstrom	Brec	Seaton
Christine	Mercer	Karen	Sethuraman
Sarah	Moore	Douglas	Shaw
Rachel	Morley	Maureen	Sier
Val	Morrison	John	Skinner
Duncan	Morrow	Penelope	Smirthwaite
Colin	Moulds	Cerys	Smith
Lis	Mullen	Elisabeth	Spence
Michael	Muot Put	Belinda	Stanley
Ian	Murray	Beverley	Stevenson
Verene	Nicolas	Luke	Stewart
Stephen	Nyang Bang	John	Sturrock
Santino	Odong	Andrew	Swift
Val	Ott	Peter	Tate
Robin	Paisley	Caroline	Taylor
Helen	Paisley	Mary	Taylor
Muriel	Pearson	Gayle	Taylor
Martin	Pearson	Sam	Tedcastle
David	Pickering	Alison	Termie
Abdul	Rahim	Heinz	Toller
Allan	Ramsay	Gideon	Tudeal Tai
Craig	Renton	Esther	Vaughan
Fiona	Reynolds	Oliver	Waterhouse
Karen	Ridley	Nigel	Watson
Karen	Ritchie	Ellen	Weir
Sally	Russell	Bathsheba	Wells Dion
Fran	Ruthven	Sarah	Welsh
Stephen	Ruttle	Joanna	Williams
Fiona	Ruttle	Andy	Williams

John	Wilson
Audrey	Wilson
Alex	Wimberly
Vicky	Wright
Neil	Wykes
Gareth	Wynne Jones
John	Yor
Claire	Young



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