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## 'Peace: A Gift of God, A Human Task': Toward a Liberation Theology for Northern Ireland

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'Peace: A Gift of God, A Human Task':  
Toward a Liberation Theology for Northern Ireland

A Senior Honors Project Submitted to  
The Department of Religious Studies

By  
David Miles Moore

Waterville, ME  
` May, 1992



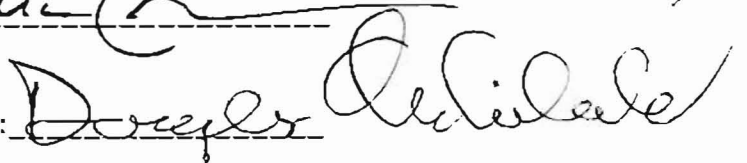
Submitted by David Miles Moore  
to the Department of Religious Studies  
May, 1992  
as partial fulfillment of the honors program

Approved by:

Mentor:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to be "John C.", written over a dashed line.

Second Reader:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to be "Douglas A. Wilson", written over a dashed line.

## PREFACE

I would have to cite the five months I spent in Cork, Ireland as the biggest motivating factor behind this paper. I knew next to nothing about Northern Ireland before this period. Soon after my arrival in Cork, however, I became fascinated with the socio-religious anomaly to the north of me. Since I became a religion major at Colby, I have always been interested in liberation theology. As I read about the poverty, injustice and violence that pervades Northern Ireland, I was reminded of the context in which Gustavo Gutierrez, Tissa Balasuriya, and Elsa Tamez write and live. The idea behind my paper, that a properly worded liberation theology could change minds in Northern Ireland, may indeed be nothing more than wishful thinking. If I have gotten nothing else out of this long, tedious process, I have at least expanded my knowledge in both areas.

And I could not have completed this paper without the help of the following people: my adviser and oftentimes professor Debra Campbell; her husband, Dean Ferm, who really sparked my interest in liberation theology and supplied me (and the rest of the world) with much needed books on the subject; J. J. Lee, for his tremendous insight in Irish history; my loving parents, Wendy and Dr. Conner Moore; my brothers, Zippy and C; Chris Forman, for his Protestant viewpoint and his insight on the IRA; Cahal Daly, for taking a stand and writing a truly enlightening book which made this paper possible; and, of course, all my friends who prodded, poked, encouraged me through this endeavor - Trace, Smitty, Sohn, Randy, Nate, Hillary, Ryan, Josh, Bear, Pete. At the risk of sounding unscholarly, I must also thank some of the truly amazing musicians and lyricists who initially molded my emotions concerning Ireland: the Pogues, the Dublin Ramblers, Stiff Little Fingers, Makem and Clancy, etc.

## INTRODUCTION

Writing about any theology involves a certain amount of optimism. Exposition concerning the possibilities of solving protracted political conflicts also requires a fair amount of idealism. Therefore, this paper, by its very nature, demands a fair amount of faith from the reader. It is certainly written as theory, but with hope and only sincere intentions. After outlining the problems of Northern Ireland and the various factions responsible for the religio-political stalemate, this paper will attempt to show how a new theology could bring about change in Northern Ireland.

The first chapter supplies a brief history of Ireland. It concentrates on events that contributed to the formation of the factions which dominate Northern Ireland today. Plantation, the rise of the Ascendancy, Cromwell's incursions, the fight for Home Rule, to name just a few, all helped set the stage for the Troubles. I have primarily used Irish sources for this chapter. As a result, the history may be slightly different to those who learned their Irish history via British history.

The next chapter details the effects of Britain's imposition of direct rule. The horrible carnage of IRA bombs is the only news most Americans see of Northern Ireland. Unfortunately, British injustices in Northern Ireland, e.g., interment without trial, murder trials in which the judge is also the jury, cannot be compressed into thirty second news clips. Westminster's Northern Ireland policy has consistently been geared toward stopping Republican paramilitaries. Extreme poverty and unemployment, and the cessation of certain civil liberties are by-products of these indiscriminate method of anti-terrorism. Many Catholics and poor Protestants have become a marginalized, voiceless, but burgeoning , minority.

The third chapter catalogs the role that the Protestant and Catholic churches have played in the centuries-old conflict. The British government and hard-core Republicans can only take partial responsibility; the churches must also accept some blame. First, the text outlines a brief history of important events which solidified Protestant/Catholic distrust and hatred. Then, the reader is given a glimpse of the mix of Unionism and conservative Protestantism which dominates life in Northern Ireland. This chapter also gives a glance at the Irish brand of Catholicism and which most Ulster Protestants perceive as intrusive and domineering.

The next chapter brings theology into the discussion. Via the criticisms directed at liberation theology, the text constructs a rough outline of this new Christian voice. Can parallels be drawn between liberation theology's primary context, the so-called Third World, and the destitution of Northern Ireland? The second half of this chapter attempts to explain just how a liberation theology could exist in Northern Ireland. In particular, it outlines what aspects, which have been culled from existing liberation theologies, should be included, excluded and/or emphasized.

This paper is not trying to concoct an abstract theology for Northern Ireland. As scholars have pointed out, a liberation theology must be truly indigenous. With this in mind, the fifth and final chapter deals with a specific piece of theology. The text dissects a fairly unassuming book by a concerned Ulsterite. Archbishop Cahal Daly's The Price of Peace champions a simple, yet powerful theology of peace. Daly acts as a voice for the marginalized people of Northern Ireland described in chapter two. He speaks for those who are weary of the paramilitary crime rackets, the 'unchristian' preachers, and the devastating apathy of Westminster. At the very least, Cahal Daly has laid the groundwork for a liberation theology for Northern Ireland.

In writing about this highly sensitive topic, I have tried to remain as objective as possible. I am well aware of the powerful connotations of words and I have tried to use the most innocuous terms. When writing of the area in question, I use the term Northern Ireland, which is generally accepted by the world community. When referring specifically to the Protestant community, I use the expression 'Ulster,' which, I have been informed, is preferred by Protestants in Northern Ireland. The careful reader may notice that, in documenting the Troubles, I squarely place the blame on Britain, Unionism, and the religions of Northern Ireland, but that I do not directly point a finger at the IRA. This omission should in no way be construed as Republican sympathies on my part. Cahal Daly very thoroughly and systematically debunks all of the IRA's claims to legitimacy. In the fifth chapter I outline Daly's logic. For me to have supplied my own, inferior argument against the IRA would have been redundant

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE HISTORY BEHIND THE CONFLICT

"The history of Ireland in the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries is not easy to write without evoking anachronistic parallels to modern times,"<sup>1</sup> writes historian Michael Richter. This humble assertion can easily be expanded and inverted; it is almost *impossible* to fully understand the current situation in Northern Ireland without evoking the island's troubled history. The current British presence is certainly not the first of its kind. In fact, much of Ireland's history consists of recounting various foreign invasions and the subsequent indigenous uprisings.

The first Celts arrived in Ireland some six hundred years before Christ, and about one hundred years later, the island seems to have been a completely Celtic country. The Celts, like the Vikings and British to follow, helped define Irish culture. Celtic kings provided a loose structure of political leadership. The Brehon Laws, a seemingly fair but encompassing<sup>2</sup> system of justice, were the source of law and order in Ireland for centuries.<sup>3</sup> In fact, the Brehon Laws helped provide such stability that Gaelic society "remained a series of tribal monarchies right into the Middle Ages."<sup>4</sup> And unlike much of Europe, Ireland was never a part of the Roman Empire. The Celts

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<sup>1</sup>Michael Richter, Medieval Ireland : The Enduring Tradition (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1988), 140.

<sup>2</sup>Historian John O'Beirne Ranelagh claims that "[No] one was above the law." John O'Beirne Ranelagh, A Short History of Ireland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 14.

<sup>3</sup>Ranelagh notes in A Short History of Ireland (17) that, under these doctrinaire laws, "divorce was allowed freely." Ironically, today in the Republic of Ireland divorce is illegal.

<sup>4</sup>Ranelagh, 14.

managed to create the first culturally homogeneous Ireland. There was, of course, no central leadership, but this fact has been ignored as the rule of the Celts has been gradually romanticized over the centuries. Thus, it comes as no surprise that during various periods of foreign occupation, calls for a revival of Gaelic culture often went hand in hand with indigenous calls for revolt.<sup>5</sup> Even today, the idea that Celtic culture is indigenous to Ireland persists.<sup>6</sup>

Although Ireland escaped the influence of Roman civilization as a whole, it was profoundly influenced by the state religion. There "were certainly Christians before [him]"<sup>7</sup>, but St. Patrick was the first known Christian missionary on the island. Sometime in the early fifth century (specific dates for this period are all but non-existent), Ireland's most famous saint was born. Ironically, Patrick was raised in England; he first came to Ireland as a prisoner of pirates. He escaped and eventually returned to the island after receiving a divine vision in which a man named Victorious brought him scores of letters from Irish folk pleading for his return.<sup>8</sup> For the rest of his life, Patrick traveled far and wide and, according to his writings, converted thousands of Irish people to his monastic view of Christianity. Most other incidents attributed to him<sup>9</sup> are debatable, for he soon became a legendary figure in Ireland.

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<sup>5</sup>Liam de Paor, in his anecdotal yet insightful history, gives an intriguing discussion of the use of Celtic myth in modern Irish revolution. Liam de Paor, Portrait of Ireland (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), 43-46.

<sup>6</sup>In Portrait of Ireland (45), de Paor notes that such thinking has largely been abandoned in the Republic. But, in the North, "among the nationalist part of the population, sentimental and romantic imagery still has the power to move."

<sup>7</sup>Tomas Cardinal O'Fiaich, "The Beginnings of Christianity," in The Course of Irish History, ed. T. W. Moody and F. X. Martin, rev. and enl. ed. (Cork, Ireland: The Mercier Press, 1984), 61.

<sup>8</sup>Ranelagh, 23.

<sup>9</sup>The most famous of which concerns St. Patrick driving all the snakes out of Ireland.

Other famous figures in Irish religious history soon followed. Columba the Elder founded a pair of monastic communities, but fled to an island off the coast of Scotland after he was condemned by a synod.<sup>10</sup> St. Finnian of Clonard compiled one of Ireland's first penitentials. Columba the Younger, who proselytized through much of Europe during the second half of the sixth century, might be considered a typical representative of Irish monasticism on the Continent.<sup>11</sup> These four men placed an importance on spiritual devotion, physical sacrifice<sup>12</sup> and their link with Rome. They laid the groundwork for Ireland's unique piety.

Initially, the Irish Church, unlike Christianity on the continent, did not have the power of the state behind it. Monks, inspired by the aforementioned figures, spread (their particular version of) the word of God in Ireland. Since the time of St. Patrick, a traditional hierarchy had been in place. But the bishops' "great number . . . and the nature of their position prevented them from developing the kind of authority wielded by bishops on the continent."<sup>13</sup> Still, the monasteries' emphasis on the spiritual sovereignty of Rome lead Richter to argue that "the Irish Church was . . . more Roman than any other regional Church."<sup>14</sup> Such a link is difficult to ignore. Most noticeably, Ireland never succumbed to the Reformation. And Irish Catholicism's fierce loyalty to Rome has helped to keep the conflict in Northern Ireland alive.

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<sup>10</sup>The synod took place at Tailtiu, but no one is sure of the exact charges against Columba. Richter, 54.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid. , 68.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid. , 58.

<sup>13</sup>J. C. Beckett, A Short History of Ireland, 6th ed., (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1979), 12.

<sup>14</sup>Richter, 62.



Christianity, of course, brought Latin to Ireland. The introduction of this new language, garbled with Irish at first, initiated a period of scholasticism which began in the sixth century. Monasteries gave birth to church schools; monks began to copy the gospels and compile biographies of church fathers. Thus, historical records of post-Patrick Ireland are much more plentiful and accessible. But the Christianization of the country was not the only reason for the increase in scholarly works and activity. As plundering tribes and the Black Death prowled Europe, Ireland was spared and provided a safe haven for Christian scholars to study unharmed.<sup>15</sup> This proliferation of knowledge was so widespread that:

The two centuries between the death of Colum Cille [Columba the Elder] and the beginning of the Viking raids are regarded as Ireland's Golden Age . . . At a time in which the Continent was particularly lacking in culture, Ireland, as the country of learning, exercised an almost magnetic attraction and possessed a wide sphere of influence.<sup>16</sup>

Obviously, the seventh and eighth centuries are looked upon fondly by Gaelic revivalists. Even without exaggeration, it provides evidence that counters the image of 'thick Paddy,' the common English stereotype of the Irish as crude and stupid.<sup>17</sup>

The first Viking attacks on Ireland occurred at the end of the eighth century. The natives proved quite difficult to conquer, a trait that reappears throughout Irish history, and the Vikings never made a serious attempt to

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<sup>15</sup>Ranelagh, 26.

<sup>16</sup>Richter, 68.

<sup>17</sup>On the other hand, James Joyce (1882—1941), perhaps Ireland's most famous author, apparently bore witness to the intellectual demise of Ireland. He saw his homeland as "a caricature of the serious world. No longer, Joyce argued, could an Irishman be said to live in the Island of Saints and Sages." Harold Orel, Irish History and Culture, ed. Harold Orel, (Lawrence: The University Press of Kansas, 1976), 310.

take the entire island. They were more selective; their encampments were usually located near their favorite targets: monasteries replete with riches. Thus, it was the Vikings who, as a result of their greed, founded Cork, Dublin, Waterford, and Limerick.

Despite modern myth, historian John O'Beirne Ranelagh claims that "the Vikings were not a purely destructive force in Irish history."<sup>18</sup> In fact, the Vikings opened up Irish trade with Europe, shared their superior nautical skills and provided Ireland with what eventually became its largest cities. It is important to remember that Ireland was not a unified nation at the time and the Vikings soon became another tribal faction. In fact, it was not long before they became an integral part of Irish politics<sup>19</sup>, making Irish allies and enemies. In this atmosphere of Vikings and Irishmen fighting side by side, Brian Boru rose to power.

Brian Boru, an Irish king of the late tenth century, dominates both Irish medieval myth and history. He was, to say the least, a cunning and very ambitious ruler. Brian, with the help of a motley band of allies, attempted to overthrow the opposition that kept him from being king of the entire island. However, at the battle of Clontarf (1014), Brian Boru met his maker. His contribution to Irish history is quite simple; he was the king who attempted to rule over all Ireland. Such a figure strengthened the idealized vision of a united, Celtic Ireland. Although others<sup>20</sup> have come close, no one has filled this leadership void.

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<sup>18</sup>Ranelagh, 29.

<sup>19</sup>*ibid.*

<sup>20</sup>Including Daniel O'Connell, certain members of the Catholic hierarchy and former Prime Minister of the Republic Eamon de Valera.

As the Viking raids gradually subsided, Ireland was given a brief respite from foreign invasion. However, in 1169 Dermot Mac Murrough, the deposed king of Leinster, landed near Wexford. In just over a year, with the aid of several Welsh nobles, Leinster was retaken. A year later Henry II arrived in Ireland with the pope's blessing ostensibly to reform the Irish Church.<sup>21</sup> Henry stormed up the eastern coast and quickly parceled out fiefdoms to his allies. The irony cannot be overlooked; an English king, *acting on behalf of the pope*, helped set the stage for the conflict which still exists in Northern Ireland.

After Henry's blitzkrieg, the occupied territory of Ireland grew slowly. By the end of the thirteenth century the English had conquered more than seventy-five percent of Ireland.<sup>22</sup> During this period a new Gaelic revival made some distinct progress, but it remained too localized; lacking both a unifying leader and a national structure. Historian J. F. Lydon comments on the revival: "there was never any serious attempt made to unite Gaelic Ireland or to bring about the downfall of the English government."<sup>23</sup>

Ultimately, Norman attempts to subdue the Irish were just as fruitless as the Vikings' had been. Although an Irish parliament was founded in 1264, "it was a parliament of and for the ruling group in Ireland"<sup>24</sup> that tried to segregate the Normans and Irish by legislation. Moreover, the onset of the Hundred Years' War diverted England's attention from the slowly

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<sup>21</sup>The evidence seems to suggest that Henry pulled the wool over the Pope Adrian IV's eyes. See Brian O' Cuiv, "Ireland in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries," in The Course of Irish History, ed. T. W. Moody and F. X. Martin, rev. and enl. ed. (Cork, Ireland: The Mercier Press, 1984), 108.

<sup>22</sup>Richter, 150.

<sup>23</sup>J. F. Lydon, "The Medieval English Colony," The Course of Irish History, ed. T. W. Moody and F. X. Martin, rev. and enl. ed. (Cork, Ireland: The Mercier Press, 1984), 153.

<sup>24</sup>Ranelagh, 40.

emerging 'Irish problem.' "By the close of the fourteenth century, the Norman-Irish had become more Irish than English."<sup>25</sup> Richard II could feel Ireland slipping away, but he failed in two separate military campaigns intended to reassert the dwindling English presence. Ireland, as Lydon notes, "was left to go its own way, the Gaelic and Anglo-Irish elements learning to live together, until the original area [of occupation] had shrunk to the Pale,"<sup>26</sup> i.e., Dublin and the surrounding area.

Perhaps inevitably, Ireland, led by the Anglo-Irish, became involved in the War of the Roses. Richard, the Duke of York, drummed up considerable support for his cause while in exile there. The new king, Henry VII, feeling threatened by what had become a Yorkist sanctuary, sent Sir Edward Poynings, "a capable soldier and administrator"<sup>27</sup>, to Ireland. Henry soon realized, however, that having an Anglo-Irish leader would be more practical. Thus, in 1496, Garret More FitzGerald--despite his Yorkist sympathies--became the deputy of Ireland. FitzGerald and his successors ruled Ireland with minimal interference from England for the next thirty-eight years.

Strangely enough, the marriage of an English king became a major turning point in Irish history. After Henry VIII broke with Rome (1533) over his marriage to Ann Boleyn, the Tudor conquest of Ireland soon began. Henry certainly had ambitious ideas; historian G. A. Hayes-McCoy claims that he "wanted to substitute for . . . the Irish population . . . one class only, the

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid. , 41.

<sup>26</sup>Lydon, 157.

<sup>27</sup>Art Cosgrove, "The Gaelic Resurgence and the Geraldine Supremacy," in The Course of Irish History, ed. T. W. Moody and F. X. Martin, rev. and enl. ed. (Cork , Ireland: The Mercier Press, 1984), 168.

king's subjects, all of whom would be anglicised."<sup>28</sup> In 1537, he was declared the 'Supreme Head' of the Church of Ireland. Despite these claims and much to Henry's chagrin, the Tudor Reformation barely spread beyond the Pale during his rule.

Henry did, however, insist upon a very important piece of legislation called the Surrender and Regrant (1541). Under this law, Henry claimed all of Ireland and then parceled it out to his most loyal subjects.<sup>29</sup> This law marked the beginning of the end of an Irish-owned Ireland. During the following two centuries, England went to great lengths in order to secure Ireland, at first, through peaceful measures. Hayes-McCoy elaborates:

The Irish parliament of 1560 . . . tried to make Ireland protestant [sic] by legislation; but the religious conservatism of the people, the fact that the reformed religion was associated with an alien government, and the missionary efforts of the agents of the counter-reformation all combined to entrench catholicism [sic].<sup>30</sup>

Predictably, this entrenchment led to soon led to violence. Lords in the north who were largely unaffected by the Tudors soon took notice.<sup>31</sup> These Ulster Lords eventually joined together, and attempted to unite all of Gaelic Ireland under the leadership of Hugh O'Neill.

The resulting Ulster War (1595-1603) had an apocalyptic air to it. Hayes-McCoy contends that it "was the final contest which would decide the future of the Gaelic institutions and would complete - or make it impossible to complete - the Tudor conquest."<sup>32</sup> The Ulster lords put up a brave, if

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<sup>28</sup>G. A. Hayes-McCoy, "The Tudor Conquest," in The Course of Irish History, ed. T. W. Moody and F. X. Martin, rev. and enl. ed. (Cork, Ireland: The Mercier Press, 1984), 179.

<sup>29</sup>Ranelagh, 49.

<sup>30</sup>Hayes-McCoy, 181.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, 184.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, 185.

mainly defensive, fight. In September, 1601, when about 3,500 Spaniards arrived in County Cork to help their fellow Catholics, it appeared as if the tables were turning.<sup>33</sup> Unfortunately for those who predicted the return of an autonomous and Gaelic Ireland, the combined Catholic forces were crushed and the Ulster lords fled to Italy, France and other countries.

The resulting 'flight of the Earls' led to an increased level of English domination. Land was confiscated and native Irish were segregated, "but the pressures on James [James I, the new Stuart king] at home to prove that he was not a closet Catholic himself forced a tougher line."<sup>34</sup> The answer, for an English aristocracy long frustrated by Ireland, was an easy one: plantation, i.e., the establishment of communities of loyal Protestants within Ireland. And few things stood in the way of this scheme. Many of the native Irish people were transplanted and all were segregated from the new Protestant planters.<sup>35</sup>

The appointment of Thomas Wentworth as lord deputy exacerbated Catholic Ireland's disdain for the plantations. By manipulating the Irish parliament, Wentworth reclaimed huge tracts of land for England. The now gaelicized 'Old English' were not trusted by the government and were treated as Irish. When Charles I went to war with Scotland, the government suspected Scottish Protestants in Ulster as traitors. Ranelagh maintains that Wentworth "did more than any other administrator to emphasize the differences between the governors and the governed in Ireland."<sup>36</sup> Although

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<sup>33</sup>Ranelagh, 53.

<sup>34</sup>Ranelagh, 54.

<sup>35</sup>Aidan Clarke, "The Colonisation of Ulster and The Rebellion of 1641," in The Course of Irish History, ed. T. W. Moody and F. X. Martin, rev. and enl. ed. (Cork, Ireland: The Mercier Press, 1984), 190.

<sup>36</sup>Ranelagh, 58.

the Long Parliament cut short Wentworth's reign—he was executed in 1640--his ideal of a unilateral and doctrinaire control of Ireland live on.

Wentworth's departure and England's emerging Civil War set the scene for a revolt in Ireland. But on "22 October [1641], the eve of the day appointed, a drunken indiscretion led to discovery of the [rebels'] plan."<sup>37</sup> Although the rebels had some success in Ulster, the 1641 Rebellion, like other Irish risings, was more of a symbol than an actual threat to the government. As Ranelagh reminds us, "even native Irish rebels . . . accepted the theoretical right of the British crown to rule in Ireland."<sup>38</sup> The notion of an autonomous Irish nation was still 150 years away.

Inevitably, the Civil War in England had repercussions in Ireland. A large Irish faction, who rallied behind the Catholic Charles I, fought for religious tolerance and the re-distribution of land. The English Parliament also built up an army in Ireland, but mainly pursued the war in England. Historian Aidan Clarke comments that it "was not until the English civil war came to an end with the trial and execution of Charles in 1649, that events in Ireland took a decisive turn."<sup>39</sup>

Oliver Cromwell came to Dublin with his New Model Army in 1649. He promptly and coldly took revenge for the Ulster planters who were killed in the 1641 rebellion. The army destroyed two royalist garrisons and killed all the soldiers and civilians within. In May 1650, Cromwell returned to England and continued to attack Ireland, this time with legislation. The Irish parliament was abolished. More importantly, Irish landowners were severely punished. In order to pay off debts incurred during the civil war, Cromwell

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<sup>37</sup>Clarke, 198.

<sup>38</sup>Ranelagh, 60.

<sup>39</sup>Clarke, 202.

sequestered enormous tracts of land and banished all Irish land owners to Connaught. It comes as no surprise that Oliver Cromwell has become perhaps *the* icon of Irish hatred for England.

The re-establishment of the monarchy, particularly the ascension of Catholic James II, offered the Irish new hope for land reform. Instead, civil war broke out in England, and Ireland, once again, was forced to choose sides. William of Orange stormed and quickly usurped the throne of his father-in-law. In 1689 James arrived in Kinsale with French troops and attempted to gather Irish support. Of course, by this time Ireland was a fragmented country; the distrust between the Presbyterian people of Ulster and the Catholic majority of the island was mutual. Thus, James's attempt at befriending the Ulster aristocracy ended in failure.<sup>40</sup>

The Jacobite War reached its apex in Ireland when William of Orange defeated James II at the river Boyne. The war dragged on until the treaty of Limerick (1691) ended the hostilities. On the surface, William's post-war punishments appeared lenient, especially when compared with those of Cromwell. Nonetheless, Limerick had far-reaching implications. Ranelagh explains why:

William's victory placed power in Ireland firmly in the hands of the Anglican 'Ascendancy' governing class. They were the group with governmental experience in Ireland, and they also enjoyed the most powerful connections with political and ecclesiastical leaders in England. In addition, within their numbers were the richest landlords in Ireland.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>The apprentice boys, who slammed shut the gates of Londonderry on James' garrison, are still folk heroes in Protestant Ulster.

<sup>41</sup>Ranelagh, 69.



With these men in control of Ireland, plans were quickly implemented to eliminate the Ascendancy's biggest fear: Catholicism.

The Irish parliament began to enact the Penal Laws; over the course of twenty years, it attempted to legislate 'popery' out of existence. Catholics were forbidden to own weapons. In 1697, all Catholic bishops were expelled from the country. Priests had to be registered with the government. These laws, however, were rarely enforced. More important were the statutes that whittled away at Catholic power. Catholics with land "were required to will their lands to all their sons equally unless one became a Church of Ireland Anglican,"<sup>42</sup> a cunning law which tested a family's faith and cohesion. Those without land were effectively prevented from acquiring it. Irish wool could be sold only to England. Moreover, Catholics were barred from holding jobs in the government, the military or the legal profession. "All these restrictions bore heavily upon the gentry, and it was against them that the penal code was really directed,"<sup>43</sup> writes historian J. C. Beckett. Above all, the Penal Laws strengthened the Ascendancy's dominance of Ireland.

Because the Ascendancy was mainly comprised of Anglicans, the Irish parliament also wanted to hinder the success of non-conformist Protestants. Unwittingly, it had created a common bond, albeit a very tenuous one, between Catholics and Ulster Protestants. Other voices of dissent were not difficult to find. Jonathan Swift, the philosopher George Berkeley and William Molyneux, an Anglican MP, all argued eloquently for Ireland's freedom.

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid. , 70.

<sup>43</sup>Beckett, 93.

Soon thereafter, other factors contributed to this cry for freedom. "The war of American independence profoundly and dramatically influenced Irish politics,"<sup>44</sup> claims historian R. B. McDowell. Irish regiments departed for America and left the island almost defenseless. Irishmen, who could easily sympathize with the American colonists, were influenced by their revolutionary ideas. The Irish Volunteers were supposed to defend Ireland against French invasion, but they also pressured Westminster for reform.<sup>45</sup> To appease both the Presbyterian and Catholic Irish, several Penal Laws were repealed. These concessions were not enough, however; the air of revolution at the time gave birth to an Irish nationalist movement led by Theobald Wolfe Tone. His group, the United Irishmen, inspired the many nationalist factions to follow.<sup>46</sup>

A rebellious Ireland worried England's prime minister, William Pitt the younger. So, in 1793, land-owning Catholics were granted the right to vote, but the Catholic Relief Act did little to appease Ireland's revolutionaries. As France prepared to wage war with England, Wolfe Tone plotted against the government. The rebellion of 1798 was, once again, a failure; but it "had one important consequence. It demonstrated unmistakably that Ireland presented an urgent political problem."<sup>47</sup>

England's answer to this problem was a fairly ambitious one : Union. On 1 January 1801, Ireland became a part of the United Kingdom. Because the

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<sup>44</sup>R. B. McDowell, "The Protestant Nation," in The Course of Irish History, ed. T. W. Moody and F. X. Martin, rev. and enl. ed. (Cork , Ireland: The Mercier Press, 1984), 232.

<sup>45</sup>Ranelagh, 81.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.* , 85. For a detailed discussion of the various Irish independence movements see Tom Garvin, The Evolution of Irish Nationalist Politics (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1981) and Garvin Nationalist Revolutionaries in Ireland 1858-1928 (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1987).

<sup>47</sup>McDowell, 245.

Ascendancy so opposed the Act of Union, the English government bribed the Irish parliament with an amazing sum of money. At first, the effects of Union seemed superficial. Westminster absorbed the Irish parliament and the two established churches became one. Free trade between the two islands was established. Plans were made for a merger of the two economies. It soon became apparent, however, that the Act of Union was a cosmetic solution; it would only exacerbate the 'Irish problem.'

Feelings of unrest smoldered, only to flare up two years after Union when an angry mob led by the eloquent idealist Robert Emmet attacked Dublin Castle. Daniel O'Connell, a figure who dominates nineteenth-century Irish history, took a much less violent approach than Emmet. His main goal was Catholic emancipation: allowing Catholics to hold political office. O'Connell believed that emancipation, achieved by peaceful means, would directly lead to the repeal of the Act of Union.

Until this point, the general public and the Catholic Church had denounced Irish nationalism. Now they rallied behind O'Connell. In 1829, the newly unified parliament reluctantly passed a Catholic emancipation bill. But it was hardly a landmark piece of legislation. The strict qualifications allowed only a tiny minority of Catholics to hold office. But there was a more important result: "Roman Catholics were organized in a formidable political movement."<sup>48</sup> Today, the Church's hierarchy still exerts a strong influence in the Republic of Ireland's politics.

This growing feeling of nationalism, however, was dampened and delayed by the arrival of the potato blight. Starvation and disease swept across

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<sup>48</sup>D. G. Boyce, The Irish Question and British Politics (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), 4.

the island. The great famine, which lasted from 1845 to 1849, sent much of the rural population to Ireland's cities, America or the grave. Government relief and volunteer programs lessened the blow, but the famine had absolutely devastating effects on Ireland, where potatoes were the main source of sustenance. From 1845 to 1851, the population of the island shrunk by more than 4 million.<sup>49</sup> Since this period, there has been a steady stream of emigration from Ireland.

Reflecting on this period, Ranelagh notes that "Irish emigrants carried [a] significant effect of the famine abroad: their hatred of Britain. Britain was blamed for the famine."<sup>50</sup> This resentment manifested itself in the Irish people on both sides of the Atlantic. The creation of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) ushered in the era of Fenianism. The Fenians, asserts Irish historian T. W. Moody, "believed that Britain would never concede independence except to physical force."<sup>51</sup> This philosophy, which went a step further than O'Connell's populism, quickly drew sharp criticism from the Catholic Church. The Fenians were not only a secret society and therefore forbidden by Rome, they also had violent intentions and resented the Church's encroachment on the state.<sup>52</sup> Nevertheless, Fenianism remained quite popular with the Catholic peasantry.

Of course, Fenianism did little to improve Anglo-Irish relations. After a farcical rebellion in 1867, attempts to release jailed Fenian leaders resulted in the deaths of several prison guards. The "Fenians became firmly

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<sup>49</sup>E. E. R. Green, "The Great Famine," in The Course of Irish History, ed. T. W. Moody and F. X. Martin, rev. and enl. ed. (Cork, Ireland: The Mercier Press, 1984), 274.

<sup>50</sup>Ranelagh, 119.

<sup>51</sup>T. W. Moody, "Fenianism, Home Rule and the Land War," in The Course of Irish History, ed. T. W. Moody and F. X. Martin, rev. and enl. ed. (Cork, Ireland: The Mercier Press, 1984), 278.

<sup>52</sup>*Ibid.*, 279.

established in British minds as odious murderers and terrorists."<sup>53</sup> In 1867 three Fenians were hanged in Manchester after a somewhat dubious conviction. Over a century later, the animosities still exist. The 'Manchester Martyrs' were a precursor to the Birmingham Six, Fenian bombs foretold the terrorism of the Provisional IRA.

This turn toward violence prompted a call for moderation. Issac Butt, an industrious Irish MP, revived the spirit of O'Connell when he promoted a practical Home Rule proposal. During his tenure (1870-79) the Church of Ireland was disestablished. Moreover, the "land act of 1870 marked the first attempt of the British parliament to intervene in the land question on the side of the tenants."<sup>54</sup> Although some Irish MP's viewed Butt as too conciliatory, his goal lived on. After 1877, Charles Parnell emerged as the leading Irish proponent of Home Rule. He soon developed the Irish MPs into a unified political machine.

Meanwhile, Catholic peasants were less concerned with Irish autonomy than immediate and substantial land reform. A solid majority of Ireland's land was owned by a handful of aristocrats. Exorbitant rents and unjust evictions were commonplace. The tenants decided to fight back. Moody calls "the so-called land war of 1879-82 . . . the greatest mass-movement of modern Ireland."<sup>55</sup> Led by the powerful Land League, agrarian agitators used boycotts and, quite often, outright violence to sway the opinions of land owners. Prime Minister Gladstone helped pass a bill to

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<sup>53</sup>Ranelagh, 123.

<sup>54</sup>Moody, 281.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid. , 286.

appease the Land League.<sup>56</sup> Rents were significantly lowered and selling land became a more viable option for landowners.

Able to concentrate again on Home Rule, Parnell, with the support of Gladstone, seemed to be making progress in Westminster. Unfortunately, in 1890 the leader of the Irish MPs found himself involved in a particularly messy divorce case. Of course, politicians of Parnell's era had to exercise a prudent morality, especially with the Catholic (and Protestant) clergy peering over their shoulders. The Irish Parliamentary Party split over Parnell's 'fall,' and it would be some time before a unified Irish party could again influence Ireland's destiny in Westminster.

The arduous process of achieving constitutional Home Rule began to frustrate many. In an attempt to emphasize Ireland's cultural autonomy, another Gaelic revival began to take shape. Formed in 1893, the Gaelic League "was dedicated to the cultivation and revival of the Irish language and tradition."<sup>57</sup> The Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) was formed to promote truly Irish sports such as hurling and Gaelic football. Essentially, the movement was another manifestation of what Gaelic League co-founder Douglas Hyde called 'de-anglicisation'; the GAA was a revolt against British sports (e.g.- cricket). Later, it also served as a front for more subversive and violent organizations.

This search for Irish roots gave birth to a different kind of political movement. Arthur Griffith, an enterprising Fenian, believed that the Act of Union was illegal and consequently, any manifestation of the United Kingdom government in Ireland was illegal. Irish MPs were viewed with

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid. , 288.

<sup>57</sup> Garvin, The Evolution of Irish Nationalist Politics , 100.

distrust. In short, Griffith and the political party he formed, Sinn Fein, saw the creation of a provisional Irish government as the catalyst to Home Rule.

Since 1900, the Irish party in parliament had been re-united under the leadership of John Redmond. As these constitutionalists were narrowing in on their elusive goal, more radical elements were emerging all over the country. The Irish Republican Brotherhood, which "by the turn of the century . . . had lost much of its sense of purpose,"<sup>58</sup> appealed to those who were frustrated with the snail's pace of constitutional politics. Sinn Fein eventually became inclined to violence (and began to resemble modern-day Sinn Fein, which has very close ties with the Provisional IRA). Up north, Edward Carson formed a quasi-army, the 'Ulster Volunteer Force,' to fight for retention of the union. But, by this time (1913), Home Rule appeared to be inevitable. As Ranelagh reports:

In 1912 [British Prime Minister] Asquith introduced the Liberal Party's third Home Rule Bill . . . [It] was passed three times by the commons in 1912, 1913, and 1914, and each time it was rejected by the lords. Nevertheless, as required by the Parliament Act, the Bill automatically became law in 1914<sup>59</sup>

Unfortunately for Ireland, the United Kingdom declared war on Germany and the institution of Home Rule was delayed.

This delay proved to be the catalyst for an amazing chain of events. Although the majority of the Irish people backed Britain in the war, "the small minority of separatists - republicans [sic], socialists, Sinn Feiners - . . . became more and more convinced that the war offered an opportunity for successful rebellion."<sup>60</sup> This loose coalition of anti-British groups attempted

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<sup>58</sup>Ranelagh, 170.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid. , 162.

<sup>60</sup>Beckett, 151.

to take over the Dublin government in Ireland's most famous rebellion: the 1916 Easter Rising. The rising failed. It did, however, manage to enrage British public opinion and fling Ireland into chaos.

Sinn Fein soon emerged as the dominant political force in Ireland. Dail Eireann, the independent Irish parliament created by Sinn Fein, aggravated Westminster and provoked Protestant Ulster into taking up arms. Conflict was inevitable. Just as the devastation of World War I horrified the world, the Anglo-Irish War, which began in 1919, marked the nadir of Anglo-Irish relations. Historian Donal McCartney observes that:

It was a struggle characterized by guerrilla warfare, ambushes, raids on police barracks and planned assassinations on one side; and reprisals, the shooting-up and burning-up of towns, executions and terrorizing on the other.<sup>61</sup>

The British public, obviously weary of war, demanded an end to the violence. Lloyd George responded with the Government of Ireland Act (1920). The Act partitioned the island into two entities: the Free State of Ireland (which, in fact, was a dominion of the United Kingdom) and the province of Northern Ireland.

The Act did little to quell violence in either state. Hard-line Republicans disliked the Free-State idea and the South plunged into civil war over the details of the Anglo-Irish Treaty. In newly formed Northern Ireland, sectarian riots broke out almost at once and hundreds of people died. The Government of Ireland Act did accomplish one thing: England was no longer *directly* involved in the Irish Problem.

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<sup>61</sup> Donal McCartney, "From Parnell to Pearse," in The Course of Irish History, ed. T. W. Moody and F. X. Martin, rev. and enl. ed. (Cork, Ireland: The Mercier Press, 1984), 311.



## REPERCUSSIONS OF HISTORY

Certain characteristics of the island's history can still be found in Northern Ireland. England's imperialistic attitude toward Ireland has not subsided. The imposition of 'direct rule,' which placed Westminster in control of Northern Ireland's destiny, reminds one of Thomas Wentworth's unilateral policy decisions. Like the planters of the seventeenth century, Ulster Protestants continue to be segregated from Catholics. Gerrymandering, direct rule, and other measures that rob Catholics of their political voice could be considered *de facto* penal laws. Henry II's troops arrived in Ireland with the best of intentions, and so did the British Army in 1969. But the army has long since abandoned its peace-keeping role; now its primary goal is the repression of all Republican paramilitary elements. In the 1980's, Margaret Thatcher's intransigence toward Northern Ireland, particularly her callousness towards the IRA hunger strikers, mimicked the calculating coldness of Oliver Cromwell.

Protestant Ulster also perpetuates Ireland's history of hatred. Although it did not end Irish resistance, the Battle of the Boyne has taken on mythical importance. Because it symbolizes a Loyalist, Protestant defeat of Irish Catholicism, the commemoration of the battle is perhaps the most important day of the year in Protestant Ulster. Flagrantly courting conflict, planners of the festivities often re-route their parades through distinctly Catholic areas. In Ulster, the 'Ascendancy' is still in control. Groups with strong historical roots like the Orange Order, a quasi-religious fraternal organization, make sure that the political and economic status quo is

maintained. Preachers like Ian Paisley still warn of the evils of the papacy and reiterate the inherent superiority of Protestantism.

Republicans in Northern Ireland, those who still desire a united and autonomous Ireland, are also guilty of manipulating the past. Like the participants in earlier, unsuccessful Irish rebellions, the IRA continues its hopeless struggle. The Catholic Church has strongly condemned their actions and, because of their increasing involvement in extortion and larceny, many Catholics in Northern Ireland have put their faith in *constitutional* politics. Only blind idealism and irreconcilable hatred of the British propel the Republican cause.

In conclusion, few people have learned anything but hate from Anglo-Irish history. This fact is hardly surprising; Ireland's history is one of invasions, uprisings, repression and lingering bitterness. A few times, Catholics and Protestants did share a sense of solidarity, but only in the face of politically motivated Anglican repression. Therefore peace movements will gain nothing by attempting to re-interpret Ireland's history. The key to any ecumenical movement is forgiving the past while, at the same time, emphasizing the common ground between the two sides.

## CHAPTER TWO

### INJUSTICE AND POVERTY : PRODUCTS OF THE TROUBLES

The problems of Northern Ireland involve more than politically fueled violence. The province is also being ravaged by poverty and intolerance, as well as an autocratic judicial system and police force. While not fully responsible for the current situation (commonly referred to as the Troubles), Britain has robbed Northern Ireland of its autonomy but failed to treat all Ulsterites fairly. This chapter will demonstrate that Britain, despite the imposition of direct rule, has done little to solve a violent conflict which, technically, is taking place within its borders. In the 'political backwater' of Northern Ireland, Catholics, poor Protestants and suspected paramilitaries are the victims of Britain's apathy. For this reason alone, the various religious denominations of Northern Ireland should intervene in the crisis.

Finding a long lasting, fair and practical solution for the problems of Northern Ireland has never been at the forefront of Britain's political agenda. Nevertheless, in the wake of a new IRA bombing spree, the problem is finally being discussed again. On 11 February 1992, British Prime Minister John Major met with Unionist leaders Ian Paisley and James Molyneux, John Hume of the SDLP (the Social and Democratic Labour Party, a non-violent Nationalist party), and John Alderice of the non-partisan Alliance Party. That this event was "the first time in 16 years that a British premier has met with the political leaders of Northern Ireland"<sup>1</sup> demonstrates the British government's ability to ignore Ulster problem. Unfortunately, even this

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<sup>1</sup>Kevin Cullen, "Major Resists Call For N. Ireland Sweep," The Boston Globe, 12 February 1992, 2.

quotation is misleading. Major met with only four of the many leaders of Northern Ireland. To no one's surprise, Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams did not receive an invitation to 10 Downing Street.

Sinn Fein is not the most popular political party among Nationalists in Northern Ireland, but it receives a significant amount of the vote. In no uncertain terms, it advocates the creation of a completely united socialist Irish state and the use of any means necessary to achieve this end. Thus, Sinn Fein has undeniable ties to the Provisional IRA. Conservative British elements consider Sinn Fein the 'mouthpiece for the IRA.' Because of its link to violent organizations, Sinn Fein has been denied access to any serious negotiations or talks. However, connections between hard-core Unionists, including the Reverend Ian Paisley, and loyalist paramilitaries have been well documented.<sup>2</sup> Because of such a double standard, many Catholics feel alienated and have little faith in the talks.

At the aforementioned meeting on 11 February, "Molyneux and Paisley expressed their support for internment--imprisonment without charge or trial."<sup>3</sup> Such a seemingly desperate political maneuver may sound like the trappings of a police-state, but internment is nothing new to Northern Ireland. In fact, if some had their way, Belfast would soon resemble the West Bank: "hard-line unionists, including Paisley, have called for sealing off Catholic areas and instituting identification cards."<sup>4</sup> Sadly, these suggestions only scratch the surface of the tremendous injustices and wrong-

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<sup>2</sup>See Steve Bruce, God Save Ulster : The Religion and Politics of Paisleyism (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 79, 142. Ed Moloney and Andy Pollak, Paisley (Dublin: Poolbeg Press, 1985), 292, 386-389. David McKittrick, Despatches from Belfast (Belfast: The Blackstaff Press, 1989), 96.

<sup>3</sup>Cullen.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

doings that have occurred in Northern Ireland since the onset of the Troubles.

### CIVIL LIBERTIES AND CIVIL WAR

In 1967 Catholics (and some Protestants) who were upset with Unionism's political stranglehold on the government formed the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA). Largely based on the precepts of Martin Luther King, NICRA developed a list of demands: universal suffrage, fair housing and an end to gerrymandering and job discrimination. Soon after its formation, NICRA was receiving heavy criticism from Loyalist factions. It was beginning to be viewed as nothing more than a front for IRA. Ironically, the Protestant backlash caused by these fears awoke the IRA from its politically dormant state.<sup>5</sup> After several civil rights marches turned ugly, the IRA began to recruit members and protect Catholic neighborhoods. Angry Loyalists who were frustrated by the government's cow-towing to Catholics banded together and produced a response to the now burgeoning IRA: the paramilitary Ulster Defense Association (UDA). Tensions soon exploded; the British Army, which had been sent to Northern Ireland as a peace-keeping force and was "welcomed like a liberating army"<sup>6</sup> in Nationalist areas, found itself at war with the IRA. Just how much interaction occurred between civil rights leaders and IRA terrorists during the

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<sup>5</sup>In 1970, the IRA split into two factions which engaged in a turf war for several years afterward. The Provisional IRA (or PIRA) still pursues an agenda of violence. The Official IRA turned to constitutional politics and eventually became the Workers' Party.

<sup>6</sup>Taylor Downing ed., The Troubles, rev. ed. (London: Thames MacDonald, 1980), 150.

initial stages of the Troubles is very suspect. In the eyes of many Protestants, however, the two were synonymous.

Those in power (who were and still are disproportionately Protestant) viewed the incarceration of IRA leaders as the most expedient and efficient solution to sectarian violence. Sporadic incursions into hard-core Nationalist areas of Belfast put some of them behind bars. The biggest operation, the commemoration of which is still cause for celebratory riots in Republican communities, occurred on 9 August 1971. Kevin Boyle and Tom Hadden (law professors from both sides of the Irish border) and Colm Campbell (a lawyer) extensively researched the events of this night. They reported that :

there were immediate and widespread complaints about the discriminatory use of internment against Republicans, about the failure to distinguish between involvement in political campaigns and involvement in political activity and involvement in violent activity, and about the systematic ill-treatment of suspects during the initial arrest operation. Of particular concern was the use of the so-called 'five techniques' - wall-standing, hooding, continuous noise, deprivation of food and deprivation of sleep - which were used on some of the subjects during prolonged interrogation.<sup>7</sup>

It is important to note that many Loyalist paramilitaries were also taken into custody in August of 1971. And, almost certainly, some of them had to endure 'the five techniques.' The central thrust of the operation, however, was aimed at the IRA. The Unionists underestimated the Catholic community's reaction to this 'draconian measure.'<sup>8</sup> Martyrs act as recruiting spokesmen for groups like the IRA. Internment only helped the Republican cause; those arrested were soon replaced with eager recruits. It also helped to

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<sup>7</sup>Tom Hadden, Kevin Boyle and Colm Campbell, "Emergency Law in Northern Ireland : The Context," in Justice Under Fire : The Abuse of Civil Liberties in Northern Ireland, ed. Anthony Jennings, 2d ed. (London: Pluto Press, 1990), 6.

<sup>8</sup>Downing, 158.

further polarize Catholics and Protestants by heightening the level of violence. The events of 9 August "caused an immediate and violent response: 22 people died in the riots of the next four days."<sup>9</sup>

On 30 August 1972, or 'Bloody Sunday,' the violence in Ulster took on international importance.<sup>10</sup> Thirteen people were killed as British soldiers attempted to break up a banned civil rights demonstration. Like all such tragedies, there exist vastly conflicting stories about what actually happened. The paratroopers insisted that the crowd consisted mainly of IRA terrorists and sympathizers, and *not* civil rights marchers. A public enquiry was ordered, but the results satisfied no one. Lord Widgery, who presided over the enquiry, finally determined that some of the "firing bordered on the reckless"<sup>11</sup>: rather mild language when the report mentions elsewhere that one soldier was found to have fired nineteen unnecessary rounds.

Liz Curtis, who has carefully studied media bias in Northern Ireland felt that Widgery, like many of the British newspapers, "gave far more credence to army evidence than to evidence from other sources."<sup>12</sup> Although Widgery also stated that none of the deceased had been using weapons at the time of their death, he concluded that "there is a strong suspicion that some [of the deceased] had been firing weapons or handling bombs."<sup>13</sup> Just enough of suspicion was injected into Widgery's report that "no prosecutions [of soldiers] were initiated, although compensation was paid

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Although this chapter primarily deals with British injustice, one cannot overlook the horrible carnage of 'Bloody Friday.' On 21 July 1972, a series of IRA bombs killed nine people and injured 130 in downtown Belfast. J. H. Whyte, The Course of Irish History, ed. T. W. Moody and F. X. Martin, rev. and enl. ed. (Cork, Ireland: The Mercier Press, 1984), 347.

<sup>11</sup>Downing, 163.

<sup>12</sup>Liz Curtis, Ireland : The Propaganda War (London: Pluto Press, 1984), 49.

<sup>13</sup>Downing, 163.

to a substantial number of those affected."<sup>14</sup> Still, the "state's failure to prosecute . . . marked a watershed in the Nationalist community's attitude to the security forces."<sup>15</sup>

The Unionist government came under heavy international criticism for the events of Bloody Sunday, but it refused to make any substantial changes to the justice system. Quickly, the British government stepped in and imposed 'direct rule'; in one fell swoop, Northern Ireland lost all of its autonomy. The government "immediately appointed a committee chaired by Lord Diplock to review all aspects of security and law policy."<sup>16</sup> This move might have been the biggest factor in the corrosion of the system of justice in Northern Ireland after the implementation of direct rule.

In an effort to be fair, the ensuing report admitted that not only Republicans, but also Loyalist paramilitaries were responsible for the Troubles. This fact led to the most notorious result of the report. According to Hadden, Boyle and Campbell, the committee, chaired by Lord Diplock:

recommended the suspension of jury trial for 'terrorist offences' on the grounds that in a number of recent cases largely Protestant juries had brought in perverse acquittals in cases against loyalist paramilitaries.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Hadden, Boyle, and Campbell, 6.

<sup>15</sup>Anthony Jennings, "Shoot to Kill : The Final Courts of Justice," in Justice Under Fire : The Abuse of Civil Liberties in Northern Ireland, ed. Anthony Jennings, 2d ed. (London: Pluto Press, 1990), 123.

<sup>16</sup>Hadden, Boyle and Campbell, 7.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*



These acquittals have been eliminated, but judicial travesty lives on. Since their implementation, the so-called Diplock courts have been responsible for some very perverse *convictions* of IRA, UDA, INLA and UVF<sup>18</sup> members.

The nadir of Northern Irish justice came in the mid-1980's with the dawn of the 'Supergrass trials.' Grass is slang for an informant, a 'supergrass' is an informer who rats on an entire organization in return for diplomatic immunity. The euphemism is 'turning Queen's evidence.' Critics say the use of supergrasses was a system carefully planned by the security forces. Regardless of its source, the use of supergrass witnesses "was a method of securing the prosecution and conviction of large numbers of allegedly key members of paramilitary organizations."<sup>19</sup> To their credit, the supergrass trials were overwhelmingly efficient; the courts can boast of a 54% conviction rate.<sup>20</sup> And, on the surface, the trials seemed more just than the policy of internment.

In actuality, the Supergrass Trials circumvented Britain's traditional notion of justice. Over a quarter of the defendants (64 out of 223) were convicted on nothing but the uncorroborated testimony of the supergrass.<sup>21</sup> More often than not, the supergrass had been ostracized by his paramilitary group *before* cooperating with the government. One must keep in mind that the convictions and sentences were handed down by the same person, usually a white Protestant, and always male. Questions have arisen concerning the

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<sup>18</sup>The last two acronyms stand for the Irish National Liberation Army, a Republican terrorist group which is substantially smaller than the IRA but still quite active and violent, and the Ulster Volunteer Force, a proscribed Loyalist paramilitary group.

<sup>19</sup>Steven Greer, "The Supergrass System," in Justice Under Fire : The Abuse of Civil Liberties In Northern Ireland, ed. Anthony Jennings, 2d ed. (London: Pluto Press, 1990), 73.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid. , 75.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid. , 75.

whereabouts of, and benefits received by, certain supergrasses. It is widely accepted, however, that the defendants involved were not choir boys; only the most narrow-minded Republican or Loyalist would argue that those put away by supergrasses had not broken at least one law, i.e., being members of a proscribed organization. Fortunately, many of these convictions were overturned by appeals and the supergrass trial appears to be a thing of the past. The Diplock courts, sadly, live on. Law lecturer Steven Greer notes that even those who had their supergrass convictions overturned "were taken out of circulation by what was effectively an executive decision."<sup>22</sup> And *all* the defendants involved spent a tremendous amount of pre-trial time in the state's custody.

Internment and Diplock courts are the most glaring deficiencies of Northern Ireland's justice system, but the conduct of the Army and the RUC (the Royal Ulster Constabulary, the state's predominantly Protestant police force) has also been questioned extensively. Army harassment of Nationalists is considered part of the status quo in Catholic strongholds in Derry and Belfast.<sup>23</sup> Private Ian Thain, the only British soldier to be convicted of murder while on patrol,<sup>24</sup> was given a life sentence but served only three years. In comparison, sixteen UDR members have been found guilty of murdering Catholics<sup>25</sup>, a fact that demonstrates not only the inherent

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid. , 91.

<sup>23</sup>For example, soldiers are allowed to 'P-check' any person; i.e.- ask one his or her name, address, destination and place of departure. Although a helpful tool for the Army and the RUC, the P-check is sometimes used as a stepping off point for the harassment, physical abuse, and/or arrest of a 'suspect.'

<sup>24</sup>Anthony Jennings, "Shoot to Kill : The Final Courts of Justice," in Justice Under Fire : The Abuse of Civil Liberties in Northern Ireland, ed. Anthony Jennings, 2d ed. (London: Pluto Press, 1990), 121.

<sup>25</sup>Anthony Jennings, preface to Justice Under Fire : The Abuse of Civil Liberties in Northern Ireland, ed. Anthony Jennings, 2d ed. (London: Pluto Press, 1990), xxvii.

sectarian nature of the UDR but also the tacit immunity that is granted to *British* soldiers. Sixteen people have been killed by security forces' plastic and rubber bullets.<sup>26</sup> During the 1980's, a protracted investigation into several incidents involving seemingly trigger-happy soldiers, the so-called 'shoot to kill' policy of the security forces, ended abruptly. The chief investigator, John Stalker, received only stone-walling from the RUC and eventually quit out of frustration.<sup>27</sup>

### THE ECONOMICS OF NORTHERN IRELAND'S CONFLICT

With a nearly constant level of violence and a skewed system of justice, it is easy to overlook the other problems of Northern Ireland. In particular, the economy is a shambles. Given the turmoil, such a situation is to be expected. Unfortunately, Northern Ireland's economic woes only exacerbate the political deadlock. Poverty and unemployment rates, particularly among the working class, are substantially higher than in England, Scotland and Wales. Meanwhile, wages are lower and the cost of living is higher than Britain. Food costs about 8% more, "electricity costs 20% more and gas more than double the national average."<sup>28</sup> Moreover, low-rent urban housing in Northern Ireland, although available, is among the worst in Western Europe.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>See Anthony Jennings, "Bullets above the Law," in Justice Under Fire : The Abuse of Civil Liberties in Northern Ireland, ed. Anthony Jennings, 2d ed. (London: Pluto Press, 1990), 131-143.

<sup>27</sup>Not surprisingly, the only detailed account of this investigation was written by Stalker himself. John Stalker, The Stalker Affair (New York: Viking Penguin Ltd., 1988).

<sup>28</sup>Downing, 191.

<sup>29</sup>Liam O'Dowd and Bill Rolston and Mike Tomlinson, Northern Ireland: Between Civil Rights and Civil War (London: CSE Books, 1980), 119.

The working class as a whole suffers, but the brunt of these destitute conditions falls flatly on the Catholic community. Sectarian discrimination is illegal, but it lives on and continues to demoralize Catholics.<sup>30</sup> The unemployment figures seem to back up this assertion. The unemployment rate for Catholic males is usually twice that of Protestant males; in Catholic slums, the number hovers over 50%. This means that the unemployment rate of Catholic males in Northern Ireland is almost always higher than that of any ethnic minority in Britain. Westminster's supposed cure, huge welfare payments, does little to alleviate this problem. In fact, it only keeps Catholic unemployment rates at an inflated level and perpetuates the Protestant stereotype of Catholics as lazy and unmotivated welfare sponges. Moreover, the gap between Catholic and Protestant unemployment has consistently risen since the Troubles began. This is not to say that Catholics employers do not discriminate against Protestant workers, but, it is a matter of fact that an overwhelming majority of employers are Protestants. Quite simply, the religion of those in power of Ulster has not changed since the days of Plantation.

Almost all schools are segregated, and the Catholic educational system is woefully inadequate. As a result, Catholics are considerably less educated than Protestants and their job opportunities are limited. Economists Bob Rowthorn and Naomi Wayne report that "Catholics who do have jobs are crowded into low-paid, insecure forms of employment."<sup>31</sup> Certain good-paying jobs are simply not available to Catholics. For example, jobs in the security forces pay well, but the RUC remains approximately 90% Protestant.

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<sup>30</sup>Downing, 191.

<sup>31</sup>Bob Rowthorn and Naomi Wayne, Northern Ireland : The Political Economy of Conflict (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988), 119.

As of 1979, the auxiliary UDR (Ulster Defense Regiment) was 98% Protestant.<sup>32</sup> This is largely due to the fact that Catholics who join up are asking for harassment on the job and off. Catholics in the security forces who live in hard-core Nationalist areas are risking their lives. At the onset of the Troubles, a vicious cycle was created; the Protestant security forces arrested and harassed Catholics, and Catholics, seeing the forces as the enemy, refused to join up.

The pattern is part of an even more frightening cycle. The security forces have become an integral part of Northern Ireland's economy. They employ nearly one out of every ten male Protestants.<sup>33</sup> This means that the Troubles provide a sort of job security. One despondent Ulster laborer admitted: "There are an awful lot of people who try their best not to have the Troubles stop. They're makin' too much personal profit out of it"<sup>34</sup> Law lecturer Paddy Hillyard goes one step further when he claims that "Protestants can be said to have a vested interest in the continuing emergency."<sup>35</sup> Attaining peace could, at least temporarily, damage an already failing economy.

In conclusion, Catholics, for a plethora of reasons, bear the brunt of ills caused by the Troubles. Because of systematic discrimination and powerful Protestant stereotypes, many Catholics are denied important civil liberties, a decent education, and a chance to earn an honest living. And the current stalemate does not bode well for the children of these people. But this

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<sup>32</sup>O'Dowd, Rolston and Tomlinson, 185.

<sup>33</sup>Rowthorn and Wayne, 112.

<sup>34</sup>Sally Belfrage, The Crack : A Belfast Year (Toronto: Grafton Books, 1987), 363.

<sup>35</sup>Paddy Hillyard, "Political and Social Dimensions of Emergency Law in Northern Ireland," in Justice Under Fire : The Abuse of Civil Liberties in Northern Ireland, ed. Anthony Jennings, 2d ed. (London: Pluto Press, 1990), 194.

institutionalized oppression transcends religion. Poor Protestants and/or anyone with even the most remote connections to paramilitaries must also endure the follies of Unionist politicians and the apathy of Westminster. No matter whose political responsibility Northern Ireland is supposed to be, it is the Churchs' responsibility to help these people.

## CHAPTER THREE

### CATHOLIC VERSUS PROTESTANT

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Britain cannot be held fully accountable for the current conflict in Northern Ireland. Political leaders of all faiths have used the opposition's religion to bolster their arguments against this or that. But this theory, that religion has been 'hijacked' by politicians, fails to explain everything.<sup>1</sup> And the hypothesis that church leaders have brainwashed their parishes is an insult to millions of free-thinking Irish/Ulster people. This chapter will demonstrate that, over the past four centuries, Protestant/Catholic relations in Northern Ireland, formed by the clergy, the laity, and even those with little interest in religion, have always involved a substantial degree of bitterness and distrust. Today in Ulster, the situation is no different.

During the time of Henry VIII, the Church of Ireland was merely viewed as yet another Irish grievance against England.<sup>2</sup> But, with the arrival of the first Planters, this grievance soon turned to Irish Catholic resentment. At first, class was the most important antagonizing factor. In general, Irish Protestants were rich landowners who hoped to increase their wealth. As the Ascendancy gradually took control of the island, however, class differences gradually became entwined with religious bigotry. The English government initially imposed a physical separation on the two factions: the dispossession

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<sup>1</sup>Historian and sociologist John Hickey concurs. "Politics in the North is not politics exploiting religion. That is far too simple an explanation." John Hickey. Religion and the Northern Ireland Problem. (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1984), 67.

<sup>2</sup>Eric Gallagher and Stanley Worrall, Christians in Ulster 1968-1980 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 5.

of Catholic tenants was an integral part of Plantation. But Catholics and Protestants also did their part to widen the gap socially and economically. Jesuit missionaries fighting for Rome's Counter-Reformation warned their flock of the Protestant zeal for proselytism. Stories of Protestant oppression in Europe, such as the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre (1572) in France, fueled the planters' siege mentality. Protestant distrust of Catholic Ireland reached new heights after the 1641 Rebellion.<sup>3</sup> 1690, the defeat of Catholic James II by Protestant William of Orange, is arguably the most important date in Northern Ireland's history. It "drew attention to the difference between 'planted' Ulster and the rest of Ireland and thus sowed the seeds of eventual partition."<sup>4</sup>

The penal laws epitomized Protestant-Catholic relations during the eighteenth century. The Ascendancy used its overwhelming and disproportionate power to try to legislate 'popery' out of existence. As is often the case in religious history, the persecution of Catholics only strengthened their faith. It also widened the gap between Protestants and Catholics. Just as 1641 has not been forgotten by Protestants, the collective memory of the penal laws serves as a grim reminder of the England's oppressive dominance over Catholic Ireland.

Events in the nineteenth century offered some hope of improved relations. The penal laws became all but nonexistent. The Catholic emancipation bill was passed. Protestants, led by the Society of Friends, fed Catholics during the potato famine.<sup>5</sup> Tensions, however, soon surfaced

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<sup>3</sup>Inflated accounts of the casualties of 1641 only exacerbated this distrust.

<sup>4</sup>Gallagher and Worrall, 7.

<sup>5</sup>"Unfortunately, some evangelical Anglican clergymen, particularly in the West of Ireland, brought distrust to the notion of soup kitchens with 'Souperism': offering nourishment to people in return for their conversion [sic]." (Ranelagh, 115.)



again. In the second half of the century, the Catholic hierarchy, in Ireland and Rome, flexed its muscles. The Syllabus of Errors (1864) and the pope's proclamation of papal infallibility (1870) raised age-old Protestant fears of Rome's power and influence. The Synod of Thurles, which insisted that Irish children of an inter-denominational marriage be raised as Catholics, made those fears even more real.<sup>6</sup> The Fenian movement, although denounced by the hierarchy, was perceived as a Catholic offensive. At the same time, the evangelical revival that took root in Ulster in 1859 solidified Catholic distrust of Protestant proselytism. The Ascendancy's adamant refusal to even consider Home Rule also increased sectarian tensions.<sup>7</sup> These hostilities were only quelled, and only in the South, after the imposition of the Government of Ireland Act (1920).

The conflict in Northern Ireland has preserved anachronistic and isolationist religious institutions. One must remember that the English government never made a wholehearted attempt to convert Catholic Ireland; it only tried to suppress the Church with the penal laws. Figuratively, if not literally, the Reformation is still being waged in Northern Ireland. To an outsider, such a level of sectarian tensions may be difficult to believe. But a brief look at two manifestations of present-day Loyalism, a holiday and a leader, forcefully illustrate this point.

Historians David Gallagher and Stanley Worrall claim that Ulster Protestants "have been on their guard"<sup>8</sup> since the 1641 Rebellion. This comment may be an oversimplification, but it is far from an exaggeration.

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<sup>6</sup>Sean Connolly, Religion and Society in Nineteenth Century Ireland, (Dublin: Dundalgan Press Ltd., 1985), 27.

<sup>7</sup>To be fair, "Protestants saw not merely their ascendancy but the survival of their way of life endangered . . . [The Catholic] Church was seen in such countries as Italy and Spain to tolerate no opinions but its own." Gallagher and Worrall, 15.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 6.

The 'Twelfth', the commemoration of William of Orange's victory, is not just a national holiday; it is a day-long homage to everything that is Protestant Ulster. Of course, for Catholics there is nothing to celebrate and many things at which they can sneer. Union Jacks, already more prevalent in Northern Ireland than in most parts of England, become ubiquitous on the Twelfth and underscore the community's extreme loyalty to the crown. Parade watchers wear T-shirts that proclaim themselves 'PROUD TO BE PROD.'<sup>9</sup> Some banners in the parades, for example ones that read THE COMING OF THE LORD DRAWETH NIGH, are overtly apocalyptic and religious. Others praise such folk heroes as Martin Luther, Cromwell and the Duke of York.<sup>10</sup> And others, such as the one of bearing a picture of "a turbaned black man kneeling to a young Queen Victoria with the motto; 'The Secret of England's Greatness'"<sup>11</sup>, hint at some of the reactionary attitudes that are tacitly accepted in Protestant Ulster. Vitriolic clergy often use the day and the captive audiences to preach familiar anti-Catholic rhetoric.

The Orange Order helps organize many of the day's activities. The Order seems to embody all of the aforementioned elements of the Twelfth: a romanticized conception of England, an exaggerated patriotism that borders on self-parody, and Protestant belligerence. Many Twelfth parades climax with the Orange Order passing a resolution:

As Orangemen we take seriously our commitment to a Christianity which is Christ centered, Bible based, and true to the beliefs of the Primitive Church.

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<sup>9</sup>Prod is Irish slang for Protestant. Obviously, the term is not necessarily derogatory.

<sup>10</sup>Belfrage, 352-4.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid. , 354.

As Protestants we are determined to continue to declare that faith in and by our Churches as Christians together in unity of truth and brotherhood.

We are resolved to stand firm for the Protestant faith against those who would destroy it by accommodation to error or false doctrine, by manipulation or mis-use.<sup>12</sup>

This resolution, taken from a 1980 celebration, is typical. Surprisingly, the Orange Order has no formal ties to any church<sup>13</sup>, but it demonstrates just how entangled religious intolerance and politics have become.

When combined with a charismatic leader, this fiercely anti-Catholic and decidedly conservative Protestantism manifests itself in people like the Reverend Ian R. K. Paisley. One of the most visible figures in Northern Ireland, Paisley has successfully combined vocations in religion and politics. His Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), although just over twenty years old, has consistently challenged the only other Unionist party, the Official Unionist Party (OUP). In the 1983 Westminster general elections, the DUP garnered 20% of the total Northern Ireland vote and three parliamentary seats. The Reverend Paisley personally holds seats in the House of Commons and the European Parliament. He has also formed a maverick denomination, the Free Presbyterian Church, which is one of the fastest growing religious groups in Northern Ireland.

Paisley traces his roots to early Scottish planters. Although his father was a Baptist pastor, Paisley himself was trained as a Presbyterian. This is hardly accidental, for the Scottish Reformed Presbyterian Church of his ancestors resembles Paisley's Free Presbyterian Church. Paisley biographers Andy Pollak and Ed Moloney note that the Scottish Presbyterians were a

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<sup>12</sup>Gallagher and Worrall, 21.

<sup>13</sup>Despite its disdain for ecumenical overtures involving the Catholic Church, Gallagher and Worrall note that "no organization has done more to encourage interdenominational services and mutual exchanges of pulpits between *Protestant* denominations" (*italics mine*). *Ibid.*, 194-5.

"God-fearing puritan people who held to an old-fashioned gospel as taught by Calvin and John Knox."<sup>14</sup> Paisley has kept this spirit alive with Free Presbyterianism; he preaches simply, from the Bible. Like Calvin, he believes that humanity is truly evil.<sup>15</sup> And the Scottish Presbyterian distrust of outsiders can easily be seen in almost any speech of Paisley's. From the pulpit, Paisley spews out a sectarian theology that is never mild and often crosses over to hate-mongering. From the political platform, Paisley advocates the end of direct rule and a return to the Stormont government which governed Northern Ireland since its inception.<sup>16</sup> More often, he speaks out against *anything* that might threaten Northern Ireland's link with Britain or give privileges to Catholics. Ecumenism, the Republic of Ireland, and, in particular, the Roman Catholic Church are his favorite targets. Using familiar prophetic imagery, e.g., Rome is the Whore of Babylon and the Pope is the Anti-Christ, Paisley spins a web of anti-Catholicism that easily translates into Unionist politics and Loyalist activism. In a recent survey, 74.5 percent of Northern Ireland's Protestant population listed their reason for choosing Unionism as 'fear of the power of the Roman Catholic Church.'<sup>17</sup>

For Paisley, actions speak louder than words. His theology, which is so single-minded that it tends to become redundant, is often overshadowed by his charisma.<sup>18</sup> His calm and dignified behavior in the European Parliament, where he is on stage in front of an entire continent, is a testament

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<sup>14</sup>Moloney and Pollak, 21.

<sup>15</sup>See Bruce, 9.

<sup>16</sup>The Reverend, however, has few things to say about the gerrymandering and disproportional representation which made Stormont a *de facto* one-party government.

<sup>17</sup>Bruce, 123.

<sup>18</sup>Bruce (199-219) argues, fairly convincingly, that, although Paisley is exceedingly charismatic, his isolationist rhetoric and his reverence for Protestant Ulster's tradition accounts for most of his popularity.

not only to his charm but also his highly refined political skills.<sup>19</sup> He has a definite flair for publicity stunts. Whether tossing snowballs at the Irish Prime Minister or being denied access to the Vatican, the Reverend Paisley manages to rally support for his cause and play up his populist appeal.

Although Paisley and his followers are at one end of Northern Ireland's religious spectrum, they represent a sizable minority within the Protestant community. Admittedly, they are not the only intransigent elements in the conflict. While anti-Protestant attitudes are usually silenced in Northern Ireland, vocal dissent can be found south of the border. The Church's influence in Irish politics has remained strong in the twentieth century. In 1937, an amendment giving the Catholic Church special recognition was added to the constitution of the Republic of Ireland. Although it was removed without fanfare in 1972, the legacy of anti-Catholic fear lives on. Quite simply, many Ulster Protestants view the Republic as a Roman-occupied dinosaur. And they can point to evidence to confirm their view: contraception is often difficult to obtain, divorce and even abortion *information* is illegal in the Republic. As reporter Sally Belfrage confesses "you don't need to be prejudiced, or even Protestant, to feel wary of the 'ecclesiastical imperialism' of the Catholic Church in Ireland."<sup>20</sup> Historian and sociologist John Hickey comments that the Roman Catholic clergy "in fact control parishes and a school system, and exercise a control over their lay members which represents a frightening monolith to an outside observer."<sup>21</sup> Protestants' fears that their rights will be silenced in an all-Ireland Republic seem very real.

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<sup>19</sup>Moloney and Pollak dedicate a whole chapter (402-416) to Paisley's behavior in the European Parliament and his opinions on the EEC.

<sup>20</sup>Belfrage, 391.

<sup>21</sup>Hickey, 69.

The cause of the deplorable relations between Catholic and Protestants is much deeper than medieval superstition or vitriolic rhetoric. Differences in the doctrines of Catholics and Protestants also fan the flames of hatred and fear. Hickey soundly rejects the idea that doctrinal differences do not heighten interdenominational tensions and, subsequently, extend the conflict in Northern Ireland. Catholicism relies heavily on sacraments and prayer as a way of achieving grace. The priest, who must administer the sacraments, naturally becomes a respected member of the community and part of a large hierarchy. The major non-conformist denominations in Ulster (Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist) profess a more direct form of grace. There is a strong emphasis on scripture, while ritualism and the role of the clergy is played down.<sup>22</sup> The Catholic hierarchy, and the power it wields, are seen as "a denial of the right of the individual to approach God"<sup>23</sup> directly; in the mind of the Loyalist, such an intrusion eats away at one's liberties and freedoms. Although they are not usually explicitly expressed, doctrinal differences exacerbate conflict in Northern Ireland.

Why should the Churches be involved in this political conflict ? There is a simple answer to this question. The Catholic Church and the major Protestant denominations, while not fully responsible for the situation in Northern Ireland, certainly have exacerbated the conflict at some point in time. Thus, the Churches should accept partial blame for, and attempt to end, this war between Christians.

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<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.* , 69-70.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.* , 70.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### A LIBERATION THEOLOGY IN NORTHERN IRELAND ?

Given the intransigence of the IRA, the intolerance of Unionists like Paisley and the disinterest of the Westminster government, there seems to be no one who wants to seek out some sort of middle ground in Northern Ireland's dispute. It seems as if the churches are the only institutions with the potential power and commitment to seek change in Northern Ireland. But, as we have seen, any ecumenical overtures have been drowned out by the presiding religious intolerance since the days of Plantation. Must all theologies be competing and antagonistic ones that only fuel the fires of political stubbornness and sectarian violence? Over the past twenty years, a phenomenon called liberation theology has become an emerging and provocative force within Christianity, particularly in the so-called Third World. Although it is squarely rooted in scripture and traditional ritual, liberation theology turns the likes of Augustine and Aquinas upside-down. Just the titles, e.g., Communism in the Bible<sup>1</sup> and Planetary Theology<sup>2</sup>, suggest their unique and controversial approach. Can such a theology thrive in Northern Ireland ?

First, we must answer the question 'what exactly is liberation theology ?' The term itself is so broad that any definition would exclude someone and satisfy no one.<sup>3</sup> Liberation theologians come from all over the

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<sup>1</sup>Jose Miranda, Communism in the Bible, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1982).

<sup>2</sup>Tissa Balasuriya, Planetary Theology, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1984).

<sup>3</sup>"A definition acceptable to everyone would be as difficult to formulate as would a precise characterization of theology itself." Deane William Fenn, Third World Liberation Theologies : An Introductory Survey (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1986), 1.

globe and write on a myriad of religious topics. Most scholars have wisely refrained from establishing any kind of confining definition of liberation theology. Theology professor Roger Haight stresses one of the most important facts concerning liberation theology; it is in no way a unified or univocal school of thought. Haight is also quick to point out that liberation theology is a very young and still developing *movement*.<sup>4</sup> In any discussion of the subject, it is imperative to remember that *no explicit system of thought* governs liberation theology.<sup>5</sup>

Deane William Ferm, a well-published interpreter of modern theology, dares to go a little further. Ferm includes among liberation theologies any truly indigenous theology which "stresses liberation from all forms of human oppression: social, economic, political, racial, sexual, environmental, religious."<sup>6</sup> In this broad scope, any theology with a specific group in mind, e.g., black theology, feminist theology, falls under the category of liberation theology. This paper, however, will primarily deal with theology of economic oppression.<sup>7</sup>

For Indonesian theologian Albert Widjaja, this idea of liberation is intrinsically linked with rejecting traditional theology and starting over.<sup>8</sup> He claims that "to be true and faithful to Jesus Christ one has to be detached from

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<sup>4</sup>Roger Haight, S. J., An Alternative Vision : An Interpretation of Liberation Theology, (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1985), 15.

<sup>5</sup>Perhaps ten years from now the term 'liberation theology' will be considered colonialistic and, for all intents and purposes, obsolete. But for now, we must use the term.

<sup>6</sup>Ferm, Survey, 1.

<sup>7</sup>Undoubtedly, some theologians (Tissa Balasuriya in particular) would object to this classification. But, in the reader's interest, such generalizations must be made.

<sup>8</sup>Widjaja throws out the names of several traditional theologians, including Luther, Karl Barth, Paul Tillich, Reinhold Niebuhr, to make his point. Albert Widjaja, "Beggarly Theology : A Search for a perspective toward Indigenous Theology," in Third World Liberation Theologies : A Reader, ed. Deane William Ferm, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1986), 368.



the demand of conformity to human-made theology."<sup>9</sup> Indeed, many liberation texts are a radical departure from traditional Christian theology. In fact, all of the above assertions are valid *generalizations* about liberation theology. There seems to be only one defining trait that can be applied to all of liberation theology: criticism and controversy always follows it. By examining some of the criticisms engendered by the emergence of liberation theologies, this chapter will derive a working outline of liberation theology.

Liberation theology is most often criticized for its radical economic positions. Mexican theologian Elsa Tamez states that the "accumulation of wealth is incompatible with Christianity."<sup>10</sup> Gustavo Gutierrez, a Catholic priest from Peru who started writing theology in the late 1960's, is one of the first and most famous liberation theologians. He has gone as far as to claim that a "*preference for the poor* is written into the gospel message itself."<sup>11</sup> Arthur McGovern, in his fairly even-handed analysis of liberation theology, defends Gutierrez, claiming that he has been misunderstood. McGovern explains that Gutierrez "seeks . . . a restoration of true unity in society, not the victory of one class over another."<sup>12</sup> Regardless of his intent, this statement and similar ones have provided a reason for critics to summarily dismiss liberation theology.<sup>13</sup> That Gutierrez's seemingly innocent use of the word

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid. , 369.

<sup>10</sup>Elsa Tamez, "Good News for the Poor," in Third World Liberation Theologies : A Reader, ed. Deane William Fenn, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1986), 193.

<sup>11</sup>Gustavo Gutierrez, "Liberation and the Poor : The Puebla Perspective," in Third World Liberation Theologies : A Reader, ed. Deane William Fenn, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1986), 25.

<sup>12</sup>Arthur McGovern, Liberation Theology and Its Critics, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1989), 188.

<sup>13</sup>Incidentally, McGovern summarizes the most common criticisms of liberation theology. Liberation theologians (1) reduce faith to politics, (2) use Marxist and socialist ideas uncritically and (3) create a separate church. McGovern, 58-60.

'preference' has provoked such a strong reaction demonstrates the narrow path many liberation theologians must walk.

Of course, almost all liberation theologians come from the most impoverished areas in the world where the poorer classes have virtually no rights. In their theology, calls for an economic re-structuring often go hand in hand with cries for improved human rights. Samuel Rayan believes that "Christians are a casteless community."<sup>14</sup> Fellow Indian theologian Geevarghese Mar Osthathios uses some of the most fiery rhetoric. He boldly asserts that "God permits class war to create a classless society."<sup>15</sup> These and similar theories leave the theologians open to one of the most common criticism of their school: liberation theology is merely Marxist dogma dressed in a white collar. Although many theologians do not try to hide their Marxist influences, these blanket accusations are largely unjustified. Balasuriya speaks for many of his peers when he writes "I have not accepted Marxism as an adequate interpretation of reality, nor have I totally rejected it as bad."<sup>16</sup> Clodovis Boff, a pioneer in the methodology of liberation theology, sees Marxism as "an instrument of social analysis,"<sup>17</sup> not a full blown ideology underpinning his entire theology. Still, Boff confesses that "he and other liberation theologians have not always been vocal enough in pointing out the defects of Marxism, especially its materialistic and atheistic components."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Samuel Rayan, "The Justice of God," in Third World Liberation Theologies : A Reader, ed. Deane William Fenn, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1986), 353.

<sup>15</sup>Geevarghese Mar Osthathios, "The Reality of Sin and Class War," in Third World Liberation Theologies : A Reader, ed. Deane William Fenn, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1986), 342.

<sup>16</sup>Tissa Balasuriya in Deane William Fenn, Profiles in Liberation (Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1988), 84.

<sup>17</sup>Deane William Fenn, Profiles in Liberation (Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1988), 122.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

Yet another criticism often directed at liberation theology is that it advocates violent revolution. Again, this assertion is an exaggeration. Albeit, certain figures have tainted liberation theology with overtones of violence. Ernesto Cardenal, a Nicaraguan poet and liberation theologian, "reluctantly [came] to see the need to meet violence with violence."<sup>19</sup> Ferm maintains that Jose Minguez Bonino "does declare that the violence of the oppressors sometimes demands violence in return."<sup>20</sup> But these two are truly exceptions. Most liberation theologians, Segundo Galilea and Leonardo Boff to name only a pair, have explicitly denounced violence.

Still others have put forward opinions that critics have interpreted as ambiguous. Gutierrez, who is far from an unambiguous advocate of violence, is bold enough to admit that violent revolution in some parts of South America is inevitable. Juan Luis Segundo claims that opting for non-violence is not an integral aspect of faith.<sup>21</sup> But McGovern, a foremost interpreter of liberation theology in English, claims that he has "yet to find any statement by a liberation theologian calling for violent revolution or declaring it necessary for bringing about social change."<sup>22</sup> Aquinas's 'just war' theory, a highly subjective litmus test, has long been used to justify violent conflict. Despite this precedent of ambivalent positions on violence<sup>23</sup>, Segundo, Gutierrez and others are criticized and scrutinized for having supposedly unorthodox views on violence.

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid. , 138.

<sup>20</sup>Ferm, Survey, 16..

<sup>21</sup>McGovern, 187.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid. , 186.

<sup>23</sup>Of course, in the past Christianity has demonstrated stands that, very unambiguously, *advocated* violence, e.g., the Crusades and the Inquisition.

For many liberation theologians a more effective way of responding to this criticism is the theory of 'institutionalized violence.'<sup>24</sup> The countries in which these theologians live and write are societies "riddled with violence,"<sup>25</sup> but institutionalized violence, the systematic impoverishment and disempowerment of the common people, is the most pervasive form of violence. Perpetuated by those in power on a daily basis, it further dehumanizes the poor and eats away at the fabric of their society. As Ferm puts it when addressing the subject of institutionalized violence; "[To] accuse some liberation theologians of fomenting physical violence . . . , without . . . condemning those in power who continue to use violence, is hypocrisy of the worst kind."<sup>26</sup>

Critics maintain that liberation theology treats the Bible as secondary to history and politics. Or as Ferm phrases it, liberation theologians 'politicize' their faith.<sup>27</sup> Critics perceive liberation theologians as taking a specific world view *first* and *then* cloaking it in religious rhetoric. But as Ferm points out, almost every theologian exists in a certain historical context and places personal preferences on his or her reading of the Bible "which will always be limited and to some extent self-serving."<sup>28</sup> Hugo Assmann, a liberation theologian from Brazil, believes that "theology is never devoid of a specific historical and temporal setting."<sup>29</sup> Indeed, contextualized interpretations of the Bible are nothing new to any brand of theology.

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<sup>24</sup>This concept was originally developed at a conference of South American bishops (CELAM II, 1968).

<sup>25</sup>Ferm, Profiles, 116.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>See Ferm, Survey, 104-107.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 101.

<sup>29</sup>Ferm, Profiles, 116.

Liberation theologians, however, are singled out for having this ubiquitous flaw.

At the heart of most liberation theology lies a new and different approach to reading scripture. But this new approach is not necessarily over-critical. Instead, the typical liberation theologian attempts to re-examine more traditional views: interpretations of scripture which gave rise to inquisitions and witch-burnings. Not surprisingly, themes of liberation and justice comprise the core of this new exegesis. Biblical stories of redemption from oppression, e.g., the Israelites in Egypt or the Passion narrative, are given preference. Often, liberation theologians are inspired by the prophets who boldly denounced Israel for her injustices. Elsa Tamez's Bible of the Oppressed is a "careful study of the theme of oppression/liberation"<sup>30</sup> within scripture. Balasuriya claims that "the New Testament clearly demands social justice."<sup>31</sup> Some scriptural interpretations, particularly those concerning Christ, seem quite radical. Leonardo Boff asserts that "Christ did not come to bring a new morality, different from the one people already had."<sup>32</sup> Jose Miranda, who feels that communism and social equality are intrinsically related, claims that "Jesus himself was a communist."<sup>33</sup> These two theses, however, are exhaustively documented with biblical quotes. In fact, most liberation theologians carefully use the Bible to bolster their arguments.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Ferm, Survey, 191.

<sup>31</sup>Tissa Balasuriya, Planetary Theology, 257.

<sup>32</sup>Leonardo Boff, "Jesus, a Person of Extraordinary Good Sense, Creative Imagination, and Originality," in Third World Liberation Theologies : A Reader, ed. Deane William Ferm, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1986), 111.

<sup>33</sup>Jose Miranda, "Christianity Is Communism," in Third World Liberation Theologies : A Reader, ed. Deane William Ferm, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1986), 165.

<sup>34</sup>Miranda, while defending the above assertion, claims that he and his "Latin American brothers and sisters . . . are shameless conservatives. [They] are looking for the literal gospel." ("Christianity is Communism," 162) This position is a brilliant ploy, but it is not without its faults. He has placed himself in the same camp with biblical literalists; Miranda

Segundo Galilea goes so far as to lash out against those who "do not find their inspiration and orientation in the gospel."<sup>35</sup> As Ferm comments, "liberation theologians . . . take their Christian convictions very seriously; they do not treat them as a secondary consideration or as an ex post facto rationalization of a given political stance."<sup>36</sup>

Liberation theology is also criticized because "it loses sight of the ontological and transcendent dimensions of theology."<sup>37</sup> Praxis, the synthesis of prayerful reflection and action, is certainly an integral part of liberation theology. Many theologians are adamant in emphasizing the *doing* of theology. Gutierrez insists that living "witnesses rather than theological speculation will point out the direction of a spirituality of liberation."<sup>38</sup> Jose Minguez Bonino contends that "theology has to stop explaining the world and to start transforming it."<sup>39</sup> The brothers Boff, Leonardo and Clodovis, maintain that "commitment to liberation and participation in the liberation process must precede theology proper."<sup>40</sup> To their credit, the world cannot be changed merely with words. Ferm admits, however, that "liberation theologians sometimes overlook or dismiss the intellectual nourishment that led them to their present convictions."<sup>41</sup>

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can justifiably be labeled a demagogue. If liberation theologians, in the spirit of Widjaja, wish to truly distance themselves from the didactic theology of the past, then the removal of any 'fundamentalist' trappings should be at the forefront of their agenda.

<sup>35</sup>Segundo Galilea, "Jesus and the Liberation of his People," in Third World Liberation Theologies : A Reader, ed. Deane William Ferm, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1986), 177.

<sup>36</sup>Ferm, Survey, 102.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Gustavo Gutierrez, "A Spirituality of Liberation," in Third World Liberation Theologies : A Reader, ed. Deane William Ferm, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1986), 368-372.

<sup>39</sup>Jose Minguez Bonino, Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 81.

<sup>40</sup>McGovern, 36.

<sup>41</sup>Ferm, Survey, 103.

From these accusations and corresponding rebuttals, one can form the bare bones of an outline of the characteristics of liberation theology. First and foremost, liberation theology is (1) an economically-attuned theology which (2) strives for the poor and marginalized. It also (3) must come to terms with any competing or corresponding political and/or violent revolution; and (4) it proposes a non-traditional approach to scripture and reflection/action that is often called praxis.<sup>42</sup>

#### LIBERATION THEOLOGY AND THE CONTEXT OF NORTHERN IRELAND

Given the model of liberation theology discussed above, can one exist in Northern Ireland's unique situation ? What adjustments would have to be made ? Cahal Daly, the Primate of All Ireland, about whom much more will be said, wants to change the minds of the people of Northern Ireland. He sees the cessation of religious bigotry and sectarian violence as the area's top priority. With this aim and informed by the above outline, a framework for a Northern Ireland liberation theology can be built.

Many liberation theologians advocate the dismantling of capitalistic systems and, as we have seen earlier, use Marxism as a tool of social analysis. In Northern Ireland's politically conservative climate, any anti-capitalist overtones could spell the death of a liberation theology. Socialism is unpopular with much of the Protestant community.<sup>43</sup> The Vatican, with which Irish Catholics have particularly strong ties, has repeatedly denounced

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<sup>42</sup>For the sake of comparison, Haight outlines what he sees as the six methodological themes of liberation theology: (1) a response to the non-person in history (2) the theory of dependence (3) the symbol of liberation (4) praxis (5) a prior option for the poor and (6) a method for doing theology. Haight, 44-47.

<sup>43</sup>Bruce, 259.

Marxism and communism as atheistic and materialistic. Moreover, the IRA and Sinn Fein, anathema to much of Northern Ireland, desire a *socialist* republic. Marxism is far too politically charged for Northern Ireland; if it were used in a liberation theology, even as a methodological tool, its detriments would undoubtedly outweigh its benefits.

However, if the primary goal of lessening religious bigotry and violence were to be achieved, improved economic conditions would theoretically follow. Most importantly, foreign companies would no longer shy away from investing in Northern Ireland. These jobs would more than compensate for the unemployment caused by the reduction in the security forces. Catholic minds that were previously denied access to prestigious occupations would invigorate the workforce. Such a decrease in unemployment would cut welfare payments and further destroy Protestant stereotypes of Catholics as lazy, further enhancing interdenominational relations. There appears to be no need for a Northern Ireland liberation theology to make major economic restructuring a high priority.

Still, a liberation theology must be keenly aware of the down-trodden classes. There can be no denying that Catholics are a marginalized class of people in Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association's clashes with the RUC exacerbated the Troubles. But their goals, which included an end to job discrimination and gerrymandering and the Special Powers Act, decent housing and fair elections, still have not been reached. Catholics are systematically discriminated against and they receive the worst state housing, in segregated areas. Moreover, gerrymandering ensures that their political voice remains disproportionate. The Protestant labourer's opinion, that "so many Catholic businesses . . . haven't a Protestant in them.



And nobody wants to look into . . . how bigoted [Catholics] are,"<sup>44</sup> becomes logically faulty when one considers the religious denomination of the majority of those in power, both in government and business.

Before proceeding, it is important to underscore the point that a Northern Ireland liberation theology could not be based on a *preference* for the Catholic poor. A liberation theology should acknowledge the unfortunate situation of Roman Catholics in Ireland. But, if it were to grant them distinct privileges, for example a call for hiring quotas or money earmarked explicitly for Catholics, then it would immediately alienate the Protestant community. For economic oppression is not the only form of oppression in Northern Ireland. In writing a liberation theology for Northern Ireland, one must consider that Protestants are 'potentially oppressed.' Civilians are possible victims of stray gunfire and indiscriminate bombings. Suspected members of Loyalist paramilitary groups are routinely hassled by the security forces. And those Protestants in the security forces, particularly the UDR (the Ulster Defense Regiment, a 98 percent Protestant division of the RUC) are in constant danger, no matter what their rank. The legitimate fears of Ulster Protestants *have* to be recognized in order to insure fairness. In order to change minds in Northern Ireland, a liberation theology must attempt to embrace all elements involved.

Embracing all of the elements involved does not necessarily mean condoning all of the actions of those involved. Republican and Loyalist paramilitary groups, the RUC and the British Army all view violence as a legitimate means to their end. Still others, including the Westminster government, give tacit approval to thuggery. The UDA, which has

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<sup>44</sup>Belfrage, 363.

undoubtedly been responsible for hundreds of sectarian killings, is still a legal organization.<sup>45</sup> The results of policies that tolerated or even advocated violence, in particular, a twenty-three year long stalemate a war-torn country and, by European standards, a pathetic economy, demonstrate their inherent futility. The IRA and the INLA have proven to be regenerating creatures that are entrenched in every nook and cranny on both sides of the border. The RUC and the British Army, which provide steady, lucrative employment, also have a large pool of recruits. All sides have contributed some form of violence which has exacerbated the conflict.

Any theology in Northern Ireland that condones, or even tolerates, sectarian violence is destined to fail. This is merely due to the fact that violence, in the form of revolution and counter-revolution, exists *on both sides of the conflict*. The first step in ending sectarian violence is a total and unequivocal condemnation of it.

We have also seen that liberation theology tends to look at scripture in a new, sometimes quite controversial, light. But a theology for Northern Ireland should avoid adding additional and unnecessary controversy. Theories like those of Miranda (which claims that Christ was a Communist), although well documented, easily can (and would) be taken out of context and distorted. The Protestant emphasis on 'scripture alone' lives on as a defining trait of the faith, especially with Northern Ireland's populist denominations. More importantly, a non-traditional exegesis would do little to bring together two religiously conservative factions. Instead of re-interpreting the gospels, a

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<sup>45</sup> For a detailed discussion of this situation, see Peter Hall, "The Prevention of Terrorism," in Justice Under Fire : The Abuse of Civil Liberties in Northern Ireland, ed. Anthony Jennings, 2d ed. (London: Pluto Press, 1990), 149-151.

Northern Ireland-based liberation theology should focus on developing a working Christology.

Christ is, after all, who and what unites Catholics and Protestants. The figure of Christ has been the linchpin of liberation theology in Latin America. Hijacking an already existing Latin American liberation Christology, however, would do little good. Instead, a Christology more attuned to the problems of Northern Ireland should be developed. Taking a cue from Leonardo Boff, one could start by emphasizing and simplicity of Christ's message; "Jesus does not wish to say something new . . . [or] . . . astonishing things, but things people can comprehend on their own if they have clear vision and a little good sense."<sup>46</sup> Add to this pragmatism Christ's message of unconditional love. By peeling away the layers of hate-inspiring history and simply emphasizing love as the focal point of Christianity, a liberation theology for Northern Ireland could slowly move away from the out-dated isolationism of Rome or the angry rhetoric of Paisley.

Finally, a liberation theology for Northern Ireland must make a call to action. During Ulster's history, ecumenical services, rallies and umbrella-group peace marches have slowly gained momentum only to fizzle out. But, a cohesive theology and organization would hopefully bind these kinds of movements and initiatives together and give them strength in numbers. As discussed earlier, a Northern Ireland liberation theology would also rely on prayerful and theological reflection, which would, in turn, fuel more action.

Thus, the above four elements--the recognition of Catholics and, indeed poor Protestants, as marginalized, the denunciation of any and all violence, a carefully-worded emphasis on Jesus, and an ecumenical call to

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<sup>46</sup>Boff, 112.

action--would form the core of the liberation theology's doctrine. These would all help a liberation theology for Northern Ireland attain its primary goal: a cessation, or at least a substantial decrease, in bigotry and violence.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CAHAL DALY'S LIBERATION THEOLOGY

Cahal Daly is now the the Primate of All Ireland. That is, he is the the head of the Roman Catholic Church in both the Republic and Northern Ireland. He answers directly to Rome for a country which is 90-95 percent Catholic. Given the fact that most liberation theologians are reprimanded by their respective hierarchies, he is hardly in a position to be making waves. Perhaps this is why, in his book The Price of Peace<sup>1</sup>, Daly uses the term 'liberation theology' only once. This section will attempt to prove, however, that The Price of Peace effectively outlines a liberation theology for war-torn Northern Ireland.

Daly was three years old when his homeland was partitioned. He graduated from Queen's University in Belfast and became an ordained priest in 1941. He was a theological adviser at Vatican II. In 1967, he was ordained as a bishop. He has been actively involved in ecumenical and peace movements for years. In 1973, Daly was a key speaker at the ground-breaking Ballymascanlon conferences which brought together figures from all of the major churches.

The Price of Peace is a unique endeavor in ecumenism. Although it is the goal of the book, Daly goes well beyond a simple call for peace. He delves into the reasons behind the Troubles and questions the motives of those involved. He also develops several unique and refreshing

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<sup>1</sup>Cahal Daly, The Price of Peace, (Belfast: The Blackstaff Press, 1991).

ways of viewing the conflict. All the while, Daly's text seems fall within the previous guidelines of a liberation theology.

### A THEOLOGY OF ASCENT

Cahal Daly does not dwell in an ivory tower. The cover of The Price of Peace shows the bishop being warmly greeted by a crowd of Irish people. All that we know about Daly reinforces the message behind the cover photograph. Capturing this apparent down-to-earth disposition was no publicity stunt. Answering a journalist's question ('What is the Church doing to solve the problems of Northern Ireland?'), Daly once took offense at the idea that hierarchical action equals the action of the Church. Daly explained :

It can thus be used as an alibi by laymen to escape Christian responsibility. It diverts the attention of laymen from the fact that *they are the Church*. It ignores the fact that temporal, social and even political action is Christian action (*italics mine*).<sup>2</sup>

This quote is important for several reasons. Most importantly, Daly acknowledges the tremendous importance of the laity. He also calls the laity to action in all realms of society. Although Daly does not go as far as Leonardo Boff, for example, who believes that the Roman Catholic Church's hierarchical view "is approaching its inevitable end,"<sup>3</sup> he is chipping away at the traditional model of the hierarchy. The bishop is also asking his flock to take a specific political position. Daly affirms that "to identify the Christian faith with any political party is a prostitution of the Gospel."<sup>4</sup> Undoubtedly,

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<sup>2</sup>Gallagher and Worrall, 209.

<sup>3</sup>Leonardo Boff, in Fern, Profiles, 126.

<sup>4</sup>Daly, 37.

this quote is a thinly veiled attack on Paisley and his ilk, but Daly is at least trying to change *perceptions* of the Church.

Daly's belief in a grassroots doctrine geared toward common people, a theology of ascent, manifests itself in The Price of Peace. He writes to all those who live in Northern Ireland, but time after time, he speaks for the poor. Daly firmly believes that the Troubles have been the main cause of Northern Ireland's economic woes. In particular, he is convinced that an increase in employment rates would do considerably more than decrease poverty; it would greatly reduce the moral malaise which has inflicted Northern Ireland.

"Unemployment," writes Daly, "is one of the great social evils and injustices of our time."<sup>5</sup> It makes for a great deal of strain on families and marriages.<sup>6</sup> The idleness and lack of independence caused by unemployment "feeds the spirit of resentment and rebellion"<sup>7</sup> among Northern Ireland's youth. The sky-high rates of unemployment caused by the Troubles exacerbate domestic problems and juvenile crime. It is important to note, however, that Daly is not chiding the unemployed to go and find work. He is well aware of the bleak job prospects in Belfast. Speaking largely on behalf of the poor Northern Irish in his own flock, Bishop Daly attempts to remove the stigma of receiving welfare payments, or 'being on the dole.'

Every industrial enterprise now benefits from massive public subsidy, both in terms of direct grant and in terms of tax relief and tax incentive. Every industrial worker is a beneficiary of state subsidy . . . It is paradoxical that industrial grants regarded as

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid. , 114.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid. , 117.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid. Here we can assume Daly is using the word 'rebellion' in a negative context, that is, nihilistic and destructive rebellion, paramilitary involvement, or rebellion for rebellion's sake.

rewards for enterprise, while unemployment benefits are regarded as dole money for the work-shy or for 'welfare spongers.'<sup>8</sup>

Daly also touches upon the 'vicious cycle' created by Britain. By writing a huge welfare check for Northern Ireland every year, the Westminster government effectively thwarts any attempts to affect real change in Ulster. In Daly's words, the dole and job-training programs "are no substitute for government initiatives to create real jobs."<sup>9</sup>

However, the marginalized in Northern Ireland are affected by more than economic factors. Class segregation is compounded "by the increasing physical segregation between the Protestant and Catholic communities."<sup>10</sup> Families voluntarily move to the appropriate denominational ghettos. Others are intimidated out of non-segregated areas. Daly notes, however, that sectarian segregation is implemented as a part of government policy.<sup>11</sup> Physical separation inevitably leads to a furthered polarization of the two communities. In turn this polarization leads to government favoritism of certain areas and 'communal guilt.' By 'communal guilt,' Daly means "a disposition to blame the whole community for the sins of an unrepresentative few."<sup>12</sup> It leads to the British Army "'leaning heavily' on people from certain addresses, from certain social, cultural or political backgrounds, [or] carrying certain family names."<sup>13</sup> More importantly, communal guilt reinforces centuries-old sectarian stereotypes; it further polarizes the Protestant and Catholic communities.

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid. , 116.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid. , 115.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid. , 119.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid. , 77.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid. , 141.



This denunciation of communal guilt leads Daly to condemn British injustices against Irish people *in England*. In particular, he strongly criticizes the trial and treatment of Birmingham Six, half a dozen men who were incarcerated for a pair of IRA bombings in Birmingham in 1974. The evidence and the apparently coerced confessions of the Six have always been very suspect. Many believe that British outrage at the 16 people who were killed, in conjunction with the men's ties to the IRA, sent the Six to prison. They were finally released in March of 1991. The trial, in Daly's mind, "demonstrates weaknesses in the British legal system that must be remedied."<sup>14</sup>

But Daly is not only pointing a finger at the government and the army. He squarely places a large amount of blame on the IRA and INLA for helping to perpetuate communal guilt, for being that 'unrepresentative few.' Daly has absolutely no sympathy for Republicans who advocate violence; in his mind, they are partially responsible for the continuation of the Troubles. Bishop Daly contends that Republican paramilitaries are as much to blame for the breakdown of justice in Northern Ireland as Westminster and the British Army. Although an injustice against all of Ireland, Daly places a "major share of responsibility"<sup>15</sup> for the imprisonment of the Birmingham Six on the IRA. The IRA, he claims, could have turned in the actual bombers and freed the innocent men years ago.

Daly continues to dismantle the Republicans' arguments. The IRA's methods of quelling internal unrest, which are substantially more unjust than any Diplock court, have been well documented. Kneecapping, i.e, firing a bullet into the back of each knee, is the most common penalty for a first

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid. , 165.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

offense. Daly maintains that "the barbaric behaviour of such 'punishment squads' is a measure of the . . . debasement of the quality of life that IRA violence has inflicted on some communities."<sup>16</sup> Daly boldly asks the question 'how can the IRA promise freedom and civil rights to the island of Ireland when its internal structure resembles a ruthless oligarchy ?'

Daly also questions the paramilitaries' role in keeping law and order. Because the RUC does not enter hard-core nationalist areas, paramilitaries are left to police the community. To its credit, the IRA has no tolerance for hooliganism outside the organization and has kept crime at unbelievably low levels in Catholic ghettos. Of course, this has been achieved through threats and 'punishment squads.' More importantly, the majority of the crime that *does* exist in Catholic ghettos is undertaken by members of Republican groups. "Paramilitary organizations in Northern Ireland," states European reporter David McKittrick, "net very large amounts of money through racketeering."<sup>17</sup> Daly points to the dangers of Republican crime; he claims that it sets a horrible precedent and lowers already abysmal moral standards.<sup>18</sup> Daly concludes with a strong statement against Republican paramilitaries : "crime, marital breakdown [and] family neglect are the inseparable consequences of their campaign."<sup>19</sup> Bishop Daly speaks for the marginalized, primarily poor Catholics, but he also points to *all* the factors that have contributed to their condition.

## AN END TO VIOLENCE

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid. , 57.

<sup>17</sup>David McKittrick, Despatches From Belfast. (Belfast: The Blackstaff Press, 1989), 146.

<sup>18</sup>Daly, 57.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid. , 58.

While debunking the paramilitaries of their status as upholders of justice, Daly further blasts them for their violent ways. As suggested earlier, a total and unqualified denunciation of violence is essential to a Northern Ireland liberation theology. Daly has no qualms about such an approach. "Violence must . . . be declared morally and politically bankrupt,"<sup>20</sup> writes Daly. He adds that "the futility of physical force is now glaringly evident."<sup>21</sup> But Bishop Daly goes beyond emotional rhetoric. He makes an all-out attempt to counter any argument for Republican violence. In fact, Bishop Daly goes as far as to apply Aquinas's 'just war theory' to the Republican cause. First, the Republican claim that "war is being waged in the name and on behalf of the people of Ireland is devoid of all plausibility."<sup>22</sup> As seen earlier, Sinn Fein's popularity since the onset of the Troubles, has never translated into more than a tenth of the vote in the Republic (which comprises approximately 70 percent of the island's population). Thus, the cause, Republicanism, fails Aquinas' test of 'competent authority.' The second and third criterion of a just war, i.e., a just cause and a morally correct intention, are left unanswered. Although these cannot be proven with statistics like the first criterion, Daly would surely reject this pair of claims. Daly's attack on the guerilla warfare of the Republican paramilitaries continues; the civilian lives taken by IRA and INLA guns "are a betrayal of historical republicanism"<sup>23</sup> which waged a military war.

Violence is perpetuated by all sides involved in the conflict. Daly strongly admonishes Britain's one-dimensional treatment of the Troubles.

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid. , 67.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid. , 69.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid. , 52.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid. , 55.

The government cannot limit its policy to the "exclusive concentration on military and police aspects of security."<sup>24</sup> Because it directs Ulster's destiny, Daly contends that Westminster must set a precedent of non-violence and experiment with other solutions. He is not naive enough to suggest the withdrawal of the British Army, but the "greatest mistakes . . . have been those [policy decisions] which resulted from the belief that there were quick, effective, 'relentless and resolute' military and police methods"<sup>25</sup> of ending violence. Bishop Daly also reprimands the RUC for the numerous questionable killings that have taken place during the Troubles. "It is deplorable," writes Daly, "that the police should have provided precisely the material desired for the IRA propaganda machine."<sup>26</sup> Loyalist paramilitary organizations are also condemned. Sectarian murders, which have been carried out for centuries by paranoid loyalists, are, in Daly's words "a betrayal of the Protestant faith."<sup>27</sup>

#### FINDING COMMON GROUND

*The Ecumenical Imperative* is the title of Daly's ninth, and perhaps most important, chapter. The bishop believes that labeling the conflict in Northern Ireland solely a religious dispute is nothing more than a excuse for politicians to do nothing. Moreover, he insists that "Churchmen have appealed to to the political model as a means of opting out of their religious responsibilities."<sup>28</sup> In Daly's mind, the conflict can be seen as religious only

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid. , 141.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid. , 152.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid. , 82.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid. , 190.

when one considers those who have perverted Christianity's message as the primary religious leaders. In other words, when people like Paisley or priests who aid the IRA are no longer considered Christians, the conflict will cease to be a religious one.

Daly first attacks Loyalist paramilitaries. "They can claim to be defending Protestantism or Bible Christianity," he asserts, but their "Protestantism is sociological, not religious. Their Christianity is a politico-cultural ideology."<sup>29</sup> He similarly denounces Republicanism's secularization of Roman Catholicism. In particular, Daly abhors the use of 'quasi-religious' symbolism in the struggle for an Irish nation. Comparing the Passion with the IRA hunger strikers of 1981, for example, was a disgusting misrepresentation of Christianity.<sup>30</sup> In another thinly-veiled attack at Paisley, the bishop denounces those leaders who use Old Testament imagery to equate Protestant Ulster with the persecuted, but Covenanted tribes of Israel. Daly decries both sides equally for subjugating religion for their own devices. Admitting that they may retain "fanaticism of a pseudo-religious kind," Daly dismisses such people as "totally and defiantly outside all influence from the living Church."<sup>31</sup>

Daly's denunciation of those who inject sectarianism into Christianity leads into his next point. The Church (and he seems to be implying the *Christian* Church), he says, is "the prototype of a just and reconciled society."<sup>32</sup> Therefore, any true member of the Church must try to uphold this high standard. In Daly's words, ecumenism "is not an optional

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid. , 191.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid. , 192.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid. , 192.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid. , 199.

extra for Christians. It is at the heart of our faith."<sup>33</sup> Given the circumstances surrounding Northern Ireland, ecumenism is indeed an imperative.

Not surprisingly, Daly suggests that a spiritual renewal will lead Northern Ireland Christians in an ecumenical direction. His logic is painfully simple. "The closer becomes our relationship with Christ Our Saviour . . . the greater will be our respect for other believers in Jesus Christ who is their Lord as well as ours."<sup>34</sup> Daly confesses that clergy on both sides of the dispute have neglected to place ecumenical measures at the top of their lists of priorities. In his mind, reflection on the Troubles has done little. He comments that "[T]heological dialogue is by no means the whole of ecumenism."<sup>35</sup> This frustration leads us to the fourth and most important element of Daly's liberation theology.

#### A DRAMATIC CALL TO ACTION

Daly's prose, when he writes of what may happen after peace is declared in Northern Ireland, is obviously theoretical. But, more often than not, the bishop writes with action on his mind. He has seen glimpses of the effectiveness of ecumenism and wants to see more. "I believe," writes Daly, "that practical steps can be taken to multiply opportunities for contact."<sup>36</sup> From here, Daly outlines an abundance of ecumenical activities that can only bring together Christians and increase understanding.

Daly is happy to report that ecumenical services are no longer anathema in Ulster, but he contends that they must become commonplace

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid. , 199-200.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid. , 206.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid. , 202.

and not an exception. In particular, Daly sees holidays as a perfect time for interdenominational celebrations. Joint bible readings is another suggestion of Daly's. He is not afraid to laud the power of scripture. "All of us derive our faith from the Bible,"<sup>37</sup> writes Daly. Clergy fraternals<sup>38</sup> would not only bring together ministers and priests of different faiths, but they would also supply a larger 'brain pool' to tackle the problems that clergy face.

Keeping in line with his populist slant, Daly believes that ecumenical services and gatherings must be extended to the level of the laity. In recommending the institution of an ecumenical council, he states that "such a group should be informal and local, rather than nationwide."<sup>39</sup> He also advocates the institution of 'regional mini-conferences' based upon the Ballymascanlon ecumenical conference. Daly also wants to see ecumenism incorporated into education. Interdenominational dialogue must be seen at every Catholic, public and private school, and especially every seminary.

But Daly's call to action goes beyond interdenominational dialogue. Churches must also try to change the material realm; in a subsection entitled *Option for the Poor*, Daly chastises "complacency and inaction by the Church in the face of deprivation."<sup>40</sup> Christians must come together in denouncing violence. "The condemnation of violence by the Churches must be clear, absolute and total."<sup>41</sup> And finally, Daly asserts that any ecumenical initiative should find its inspiration in the Passion. The bishop warns that ecumenists, like Christ, will be 'despised and rejected by men.'<sup>42</sup> Daly encourages every

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid. , 205.

<sup>38</sup> A fraternal is defined by Daly as a meeting "for prayer, Bible study and pastoral discussion." Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. , 206.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. , 211.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. , 212.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

citizen of Northern Ireland to emulate the early Christians and to use the sufferings caused by the Troubles as an "incentive for conversion, a source of hope, and a strength for courage to face the future."<sup>43</sup> For Daly, the Cross is the glue that will successfully hold together ecumenical action.

### CRITICISMS OF THE PRICE OF PEACE

Objections to this piece of liberation theology are difficult to find. Daly's work is coherent, insightful, and, for the most part, objective. Unfortunately, Daly does incorporate certain texts that could significantly alienate the Protestant reader. Almost every chapter of The Price of Peace is prefaced with a quote from John Paul II. Although the quotes are quite inspirational and religiously neutral, they suggest that Daly values no opinion more highly than the Vatican's. For the most part, Bishop Daly does an excellent job of walking the thin line that exists between the two faiths, but in this case, by omitting lead quotes from any *Protestant* leaders, he stumbles.

A second criticism can be leveled at his attitude toward politics and religion. Previous quotes suggest that Daly condemns the intermingling of the two. This seemingly reactionary view is not exactly what it seems. Daly is only denouncing the mixing of religion with *partisan* politics. He states:

God alone is absolute, everything else is relative. To regard political beliefs as absolute is to absolutise the relative . . . It is a form of idolatry. It is particularly repugnant to the true genius of Protestantism. (196)

Still, such an assertion may sound like fundamentalist rhetoric. If Daly repeatedly emphasizes such statements, liberal Christians, who are most

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<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.* , 213.



likely to support peace and ecumenical movements, could lose faith in the bishop.

Thirdly, Daly can be criticized for his naiveté. Any religious figure advocating solutions to a partially political conflict is likely to endure such complaints. While denouncing British injustices, Daly brings up an important point. Internment and Diplock courts only solidify IRA support and anti-British resentment. But Daly's solution, i.e, freeing convicted paramilitaries because clemency "is a greater threat to the IRA than harsh repression"<sup>44</sup>, suggests not only a degree of sympathy for the IRA, but also a great deal of Christian idealism. Daly admits that Republican paramilitaries are largely responsible for the crime and poverty in Catholics ghettos. Freeing these men from prison might decrease IRA enrollment, but it will not decrease crime. And anti-British feelings will not begin to disappear until justice is demonstrated *before* Catholics are imprisoned.

The fourth and final criticism concerns Daly's use of inspirational people. In passing, Daly mentions Martin Luther King and Gandhi for their efforts in non-violence. More often, however, Daly asks the reader to emulate the pope or Helder Camara and Oscar Romero, two South American archbishops whom Daly praises for their efforts in combating injustice and violence. If Daly wishes to truly reach the marginalized of Northern Ireland, shouldn't he provide these people with an inspirational figure to whom they can relate ? Paddy Hill, one of the Birmingham Six, has given numerous lectures, denouncing both the British system of justice and the IRA's campaign of violence. Shane Paul O'Doherty, a former letter bomber for the

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid. , 142.

IRA, has now become a vocal peace advocate. The testimony of these people could only augment Daly's theology of ascent.

Cahal Daly has planted the flag of liberation theology in downtown Belfast. The Price of Peace forcefully articulates Daly's concept of a new, productive, invigorating, yet simple theology for Northern Ireland. He beckons all Christians to follow his lead. Daly truly believes that grassroots ecumenical action, a simple emphasis on Christian love, and a rejection of violence *can* make a difference amidst the hopelessness and despair of Northern Ireland. There can be no denying that Cahal Daly is a liberation theologian.

## CONCLUSION

The conflict in Northern Ireland has become a twisted mess of illogical arguments, frustrating contradictions and emotional propaganda. Unionists tenaciously cling to their link with Britain, but they make threats of rebellion any time Westminster hints at compromising the union. The IRA and INLA fiercely fight for a unified Ireland, despite the fact that Sinn Fein has only nominal support in the Republic. Internment and the Diplock courts have only strengthened the IRA's enrollment and its propaganda, but the British government continues to enforce only doctrinaire policies. Furthermore, Westminster's enormous welfare checks only heighten stereotypes and, consequently, drive a wedge between the two communities of Northern Ireland. The UDA was formed to protect Ulster Loyalists; today, its priorities seem to be crime rackets and the killing of random Catholics. Protestant preachers warn of an impending Catholic theocracy, although "the notion of taking over responsibility for the IRA and the UDA, for Gerry Adams and Ian Paisley, understandably appals [sic] Dublin."<sup>1</sup> Because of direct rule, moderate constitutional parties who seek some sort of middle ground, e.g. the SDLP and the Alliance party, lack substantial political power. The British people, whose mandate could truly change the situation in Northern Ireland, are largely uninformed about Ulster due to strict government controls on the media. Common sense and logic seem to be among the most glaring casualties of the Troubles.

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<sup>1</sup>McKittrick, 209.

Amid this confusion, there exists a single common denominator. An overwhelming majority of the people involved in the conflict profess to be Christians. Over the past four centuries, religion has been partially responsible for the strife in Northern Ireland; it now has the potential to turn the situation around. As this paper has demonstrated, few British politicians have anything to gain from trying to tackle Ulster's problems. It is simply impractical for Paisley, Molyneux and other Unionists to initiate negotiations; their stubbornness toward the IRA and even constitutional Nationalists, guarantees their popularity. The IRA has worked itself into a corner with its rhetoric and its actions. In order to maintain their privileged position in the Catholic community, Republican paramilitaries are obligated to pursue the 'Cause.' The UDA has found itself in a similar situation. To reiterate, it seems as if the churches are the only institutions with the power and commitment to change the minds of the people in Northern Ireland.

This paper is fueled by optimism. 'Wishful thinking' and 'pipe dream' are terms that could be used to describe it. After twenty-three years of random violence and political stonewalling, many people have become exceedingly cynical about the chances for peace in Northern Ireland. Unfortunately, cynicism does not solve problems. Cahal Daly, on the other hand, has faith in ecumenism and tolerance. While the theology of The Price of Peace might just be a pipe dream, Daly should be praised for boldly unraveling the logic of the intransigent factions in Northern Ireland and robbing them of their legitimacy. It is quite possible that a great majority of Protestants will reject Daly's ideas simply because he is a Catholic archbishop. Republicans may brand him a traitor and Nationalists may scoff at this religious idealist. But, as I stated earlier, Daly has at least set the stage for the growth of liberation theology in Northern Ireland. A

layperson or a group of ecumenical clergy could easily use The Price of Peace as the base for a more encompassing grassroots theology.

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