
21 June 2009
DAY OF PRIVATE REFLECTION

EVALUATION REPORT

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The views expressed herein do not necessarily state or reflect the personal views of all members of Healing Through Remembering

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Executive Summary

This report was commissioned by Healing Through Remembering (HTR) to evaluate the Day of Private Reflection (DoPR) held on 21 June 2009. This was the third consecutive year that the initiative was promoted by the HTR Day of Reflection (DoR) Sub Group.

Two previous evaluations assessed the DoPR in 2007 and 2008. These evaluations laid the foundations for the continuation of the initiative into 2009, and the consolidation of HTR's approach in publicising the Day and engaging individuals and groups. This report therefore considers the Day of Reflection on 21 June 2009, the development of the initiative over the three years and the progress on the recommendations from earlier evaluations.

A significant development in 2009 was the commissioning of four Fieldworkers to raise awareness about the Day. A direct result of this approach was that promotion of the initiative and communication around the idea of the DoPR was stronger and more far-reaching than in previous years.

Rather than conducting a wide-ranging external consultation, this report uses the Fieldworkers' experiences as a starting point for developing an assessment of how the DoPR is viewed and responded to among individuals and groups external to HTR. The evaluation thus reflects the findings of a number of in-depth interviews with individuals and groups external to HTR. Taking these views into account, the report also considers the role of HTR as the promoter of the initiative. This is done by conducting an evaluation of how the Day is coordinated and responded to by the membership of HTR.

This approach was possible due to the groundwork laid by the 2007 and 2008 evaluations. This report is produced with the intention of building upon those evaluations, highlighting areas where recommendations made in those reports have been acted upon. Furthermore, it was agreed with the management of HTR that the more self-reflexive approach in this report could, at this stage of the DoPR's development, enable more detailed elaboration of persistent sticking points highlighted in the previous evaluations, and to enable HTR to 'self-examine' as it carries the initiative forward.

This report commends HTR and the DoR Sub Group on their dedication to developing the Day with sensitivity to the needs of society. The evaluation found that positive or ambivalent responses to the DoPR initiative significantly outweigh the ones that clearly reject the idea.

The evaluation also highlights certain contradictions, questions and strengths with which HTR can engage as the organisation and the DoPR move forward.

The report makes it clear that HTR is in many ways aware of and understands the majority of the questions, criticisms and difficulties raised by respondents in the course of the evaluation. It could be said that 'the knowledge is already there'; HTR and the DoR Sub Group now need to find ways to engage with and act upon certain aspects of that knowledge.

A small but significant number of people expressed deeper reservations about the initiative and its current format. For example, questions were raised about whether the Day really has relevance for everyone in

society, around issues of personal safety and trauma, and about the danger of the Day being 'hijacked' by different interest groups. HTR needs to engage further with these concerns. The organisation should also work to establish greater clarity around, for example, its message for the purpose of the Day, what 'reflection' means, how people can observe the Day, and the extent to which people are free to make it 'their own'.

Nevertheless, despite the reservations about aspects of the DoPR expressed both by members of the public and by members of HTR itself, groups and individuals across a broad spectrum of backgrounds, political identities, and age groups reveal "a hunger for this sort of initiative". There is also evidence to indicate that a significant number of individuals and groups have already established 21 June as a date in their calendar that they look forward to planning and observing.

There is considerable tolerance and openness across society for HTR to continue to promote the Day. The evaluation found that, although many individuals and groups are reluctant to organise or set up anything on their own, they are open to the idea that HTR could introduce the DoPR to their networks and communities. They suggest that HTR could do this by partnering or collaborating with them in work that they are already committed to and working on.

This issue of collaboration, connecting with groups and individuals, and developing new ways of joined-up working is crucial. It is a challenge that HTR must treat as a priority, and which applies to both external relationships and the way in which HTR conducts its business internally.

This report therefore concludes that, informed by the findings and recommendations drawn from this evaluation process, HTR and the DoR Sub Group should be supported to deliver the DoPR in 2010.

1. INTRODUCTION

1. This report was commissioned by Healing Through Remembering (HTR) to evaluate the Day of Private Reflection (DoPR), which was held on 21 June 2009. A significant amount of time and debate has informed the development of this initiative. A list of publications and resources relating to this initiative are included in the Appendices (Appendix I).

Brief Description of the Organisation

2. HTR is a cross community organisation which draws its membership from a range of backgrounds and organisations. As highlighted in previous HTR publications,

since its inception, HTR has sought to ensure through its language, working practices, and group membership 'that anyone from any background would feel comfortable with approaching at least one member of the Board and that voices could be heard from all sections of society.' (HTR, 2006d: 1)

Thus, while members of HTR belong to the organisation in their individual capacity, they encompass churches, ex-prisoner groups, former security force groupings, education and trade union backgrounds, as well as a broad spectrum of nationalist, unionist and other views. While most of HTR's membership is based in Northern Ireland, the organisation also has members living in the Republic of Ireland, other parts of the United Kingdom and internationally.

3. HTR evolved from discussions which began in 1999, and which considered the value and limitations of seeking ways to address the past in Northern Ireland.

The discussions were instigated by Victim Support Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO). These organisations invited Dr. Alex Boraine (at the time, the Deputy Chair of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission) to visit Northern Ireland to facilitate discussion around dealing with the legacy of the conflict in and about Northern Ireland. The publication of a report, *All Truth is Bitter* (1999), following that visit revealed consensus among a wide range of contributors that further consultation and discussion was needed around the issues of dealing with the past.

4. On the basis of these findings, the Board of HTR was constituted, and the organisation engaged in a wide-ranging consultation with both individuals and organisations, asking the following question:

How should people remember events connected with the conflict in and about Northern Ireland and, in doing so, individually and collectively contribute to the healing of the wounds of society? (HTR, 2002: iii)

5. The findings of that consultation were published in *The Report of the Healing Through Remembering Project* (HTR, 2002).

6. The report outlined six recommendations in relation to the main question. One of these was the establishment of a Day of Reflection (DoR) which could

...serve as a universal gesture of reconciliation, reflection, acknowledgement and recognition of the suffering of so many arising from the conflict in and about Northern Ireland. (HTR, 2002: vi)

Background to the Day of Private Reflection

7. Between 2002 and 2006, HTR engaged in a process of deeper and wider consultation around the idea of a Day of Reflection. In 2007 this process culminated in the initiation of the DoPR as an annual event on 21 June.

2009 is thus the third consecutive year that the HTR Board and DoR Sub Group have promoted the initiative. A list of current members of the DoR Sub Group and the Board of HTR is found in the Appendices (Appendix II).

8. The consultation process and the establishment of the Day are documented in the Appendices of this evaluation report (Appendix III).

2. BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

- 2.1. As noted above, this report was commissioned to evaluate the third consecutive annual DoPR, held on 21 June 2009.

Previous evaluations: 2007 and 2008

- 2.2. Two previous evaluation reports assessed the DoPR in 2007 (HTR, March 2008) and 2008 (HTR, March 2009). These evaluations informed the continuation of the initiative into 2009, and the consolidation of HTR's approach in publicising the Day and engaging individuals and groups. The reports addressed three key areas, which are listed below.
- 2.3. Firstly, the previous evaluations scrutinised the process which led to the establishment of the DoPR in 2007 and its continuation into 2008 (see Appendix I). This included highlighting challenges faced within the HTR membership on reaching agreement regarding the format and promotion of the DoPR, and commending the organisation on having engaged with the issues, despite differences of opinion.
- 2.4. Secondly, the reports looked outwards from within HTR, engaging with a wide range of people from different backgrounds and sectors, to attempt to gauge how far the message of the DoPR had been communicated, and how it had been received.

Both evaluations found that where the Day had been discussed, it was predominantly well received. Moreover, where people had reservations about the idea of a DoPR, the evaluations noted that those people nevertheless expressed appreciation at having been engaged with on the issue.

- 2.5. Thirdly, the previous evaluations recommended that the initiative should be supported to continue in the future, with HTR as the lead organisation.

In both evaluations, additional recommendations were made regarding particular aspects of the Day and the ways in which engagement and communication around it could be developed and improved upon. (These are considered in Section 5 below.)

Evaluation 2009: new scope and methodology

- 2.6. A significant development in 2009 was the commissioning of four Fieldworkers (listed in Appendix IV) to raise awareness about the initiative among their own networks and work contacts. This was an important new dimension to the initiative which has had implications for the shape of this evaluation.
- 2.7. Following a meeting with the HTR Director, the first step in the evaluation process was to conduct in-depth interviews with each of the Fieldworkers.
- 2.8. On the basis of the findings of those interviews and an initial conversation with the Day of Reflection (DoR) Sub Group, the parameters of the wider evaluation were agreed with the Project Director. These are outlined in the following points.

This evaluation has a different focus from the previous ones in two key ways:

- i. Firstly, rather than conducting a wide-ranging external consultation, it focuses on and uses the Fieldworkers' experiences to develop an assessment of how the DoPR is viewed and responded to among individuals and groups external to HTR. On the basis of the consultation with the Fieldworkers and other feedback received by HTR to the DoPR, the report then reflects the findings of a small number of in-depth interviews conducted with other groups and individuals external to HTR.
- ii. Secondly, it focuses on the role of HTR as promoter of the initiative, by conducting an internal evaluation of how the initiative is coordinated, viewed and responded to within the organisation's membership.

Broadly, this approach has been adopted to enable more detailed elaboration of ongoing issues highlighted in previous evaluations, and to enable HTR to 'self-examine' as the organisation carries the initiative forward.

2.9. This methodology was also chosen to allow different voices, opinions and feelings to be clearly heard in this year's evaluation of the DoPR. The emphasis has been on incorporating respondents' own words to illustrate the findings of the evaluation.

2.10. This evaluation was framed by the following four questions:

- i. How do individuals and groups external to HTR view and experience the initiative?
- ii. What has been the value in commissioning Fieldworkers to enable wider outreach, and what were their experiences and findings?
- iii. With three years' distance from the original launch of the initiative, what is the perception and support for the DoPR within the membership of HTR?
- iv. In the constantly evolving local context of the debates around dealing with the past, what are HTR members' thoughts on the relationship between ongoing processes external to the organisation and the promotion of the DoPR?

2.11. The methodology for the evaluation involved a combination of desk-based and social research.

2.12. The **desk research** involved reviewing a range of sources, including:

- various documents produced by HTR, including the evaluations of the Days held in 2007 (HTR, March 2008) and 2008 (HTR, March 2009). As noted above, the full list of these publications is listed in Appendix I;
- minutes of the DoR Sub Group meetings;

- media communication about the DoPR, including press releases sent from HTR to various newspapers, and other media coverage of the Day;
- the DoR website ([←http://www.dayofreflection.com/→](http://www.dayofreflection.com/)), including feedback from individuals and organisations and endorsements by public figures. A list of the public figure endorsements can be found in the Appendices (Appendix V); and
- HTR office records relating to planning for the DoPR, communication with individuals and groups, and dissemination of materials. Images of the materials can be found in the Appendices (Appendix VI).

2.13. **The social research element** involved an external and an internal dimension.

- **External consultation:** in-depth interviews were conducted with the 4 Fieldworkers. On the basis of these conversations, interviews were then carried out with three key individuals/organisations who had expressed reservations to the Fieldworkers about the idea of the DoPR.

Structured conversations were also conducted with two people who had sent feedback to HTR relating to how they had marked the DoPR.

Further informal interviews in the form of 'opportunistic discussions' (i.e. where opportunities arose to discuss this matter) were held with a large number of individuals from a wide range of backgrounds, organisations and age groups who

- had been involved in the Day itself, in a variety of forms;
- had chosen not to be involved; or
- had some awareness of the Day but do not feel that it involves them.

- **Consultation within HTR:** the DoR Sub Group was consulted as a group.

An open invitation was issued to the Board and wider membership of HTR to contribute to the evaluation. On the basis of this invitation, interviews were conducted with a further 16 members of HTR, including eight Board members.

In total, 30 members of HTR (approximately ¼ of the total membership) contributed to the internal consultation.

2.14. There were ongoing discussions with the Chair of the DoR Sub Group, the Director of HTR and staff of HTR over the course of the evaluation.

2.15. The evaluator is grateful to all who made the time to reflect upon and discuss the DoPR, and to the staff and Board of HTR for their cooperation and support over the course of the evaluation project.

3. A COMMENT ON CONTEXT

- 3.1. Discussions which took place in the course of this evaluation were informed by and frequently made direct reference to various aspects of the current local context. A number of issues relating to the present social and political environment – which are also relevant to the DoPR and other themes addressed in this evaluation – are considered below.
- 3.2. Several interviewees welcomed the evaluation interview as an opportunity to take stock of recent developments in debates around dealing with the past. It was noted on numerous occasions that “there has been a significant evolution” in this area: when *The Report of the Healing Through Remembering Project* was published in 2002, “hardly anyone was talking about dealing with the past, and now everyone is”.
- 3.3. It is important to note the **funding environment in Northern Ireland**. Significant funds have been channelled into the community and voluntary sector over the last decade with various cross-community and peacebuilding criteria attached to them. The current disbursement of Special European Union Programme Body (SEUPB) Peace III funds prioritises reconciliation through dealing with the past. In this context, the DoPR is perceived by many people as an element of both growing interest in and ongoing discussions around dealing with the past.
- 3.4. The publication of the **Report of the Consultative Group on the Past** in January 2009 and the reaction and debate the Report provoked, should also be taken into account. Furthermore, the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) consultation process on the Report and its recommendations was underway at the same time that this evaluation was being carried out. This meant that the issues were fresh in many people’s minds when they were approached to contribute to this evaluation.

Several respondents commented that, in terms of ‘getting the message out there’ about the DoPR, HTR had succeeded to a certain degree, since the Consultative Group on the Past (CGoP) Report made substantial reference to both HTR and the DoPR initiative.

HTR and the DoR Sub Group were interested to know how the CGoP’s recommendation of a Day of Reflection and Reconciliation (CGoP, 2009: 100-102), and the substantial reference made to HTR in that recommendation, had impacted upon peoples’ perceptions of the DoPR. While the organisation acknowledged the inclusion of this initiative in the CGoP’s recommendations, there were reservations expressed by members of HTR that the DoPR was perceived by the CGoP and framed in their Report as being predominantly about remembering victims, and that “the harder-hitting message that the Day is really about institutions and sectors” had not been understood.

Feedback from interviewees and the Fieldworkers showed that in most cases, people did not make a significant connection between the HTR initiative and the CGoP recommendations. Among those who had noted the connection, two observations stood out. Firstly, HTR’s approach was favoured over the CGoP’s suggestion, which implied that a ‘Day of Reflection and Reconciliation’ would become a government-led initiative with a prescribed number of specific people featuring in the public element of the Day. Secondly, there was significant resistance to the suggestion of the use of the term ‘reconciliation’.

It should be noted that these and other comments were detailed in the HTR response to the NIO consultation on the CGoP Report¹.

- 3.5. In addition, the significant number of public talks and events around dealing with the past is noteworthy. HTR has been involved in a number of these events. As one respondent commented, the large number of discussions and events that reflected on the conflict and on the connection between the past and the present demonstrate that “there is a desire to connect with the conflict and to reinterpret it”.
- 3.6. In this context, where dealing with the past seems to be high on a range of different agendas, the development of **HTR’s Conversation Guide** and the plans for training conversation facilitators is significant. The HTR Peace III funded programme *Whatever You Say, Say Something* uses this conversation guide, offers opportunities for considering a wide range of issues around dealing with the past. These developments underline the organisation’s strategy and growing capacity for engaging with increasing numbers of diverse organisations and individuals.
- 3.7. These and other aspects of the current context are to the fore in HTR consideration and discussions. Both the interviews conducted with HTR members and the review of the DoR Sub Group meetings’ minutes highlighted the fact that all membership, Sub Group and Board meetings always begin with a consideration of the current context. Members are always given the opportunity to report back on discussions and developments happening both within other HTR Sub Groups and in their workplaces and other networks outside HTR. Furthermore, steps are taken by the HTR staff to ensure that any relevant news in the local media is brought to the attention of all Sub Group members.

¹ HTR’s written response to the NIO consultation on the CGoP Report and recommendations can be accessed at: [←http://healingthroughremembering.info/index.php/resources/reports/→](http://healingthroughremembering.info/index.php/resources/reports/).

4. FINDINGS

- 4.1. The evaluation sought to assess how the DoPR is perceived and responded to by individuals and groups external to HTR, and to provide a space for the membership of the organisation to take stock of the developments which have occurred in the first three years of the initiative, and to think critically about how to move forward.
- 4.2. It was initially planned to address these findings in separate sections in the evaluation report. However, as the evaluation progressed, it became evident that many of the comments gleaned from the external consultation were mirrored, balanced by, or, in some cases, responded to by observations contributed by HTR members.

Given the overlap between the findings of the external and internal consultations, it was appropriate to group them altogether in one section. This approach was chosen in order to emphasise the common space that exists between individual members of HTR and individuals and groups 'on the ground'. This also created an opportunity for HTR to consider how it might reach out to and build relationships with other individuals and groups in that common space.

- 4.3. This should be regarded as a positive finding, particularly as it challenges an opinion voiced by some respondents, both external to and within HTR.

This finding challenges the view that HTR is a 'middle class' organisation that is removed from the concerns and experiences of working class people, and that addresses questions around dealing with the past in a way that caters essentially for intellectuals and academics.

As one Fieldworker observed,

"For some, HTR still seems like a middle class organisation. There's a real need for a much more developed and thought-through approach to breaking this image." [Fieldworker]

The following comment from another external respondent emphasises this view:

"HTR's work is not digestible to people around here. The minute the academics own the debate, then it's lost." [External interviewee]

In the course of the evaluation, however, two things became clear. Firstly, HTR is prepared to engage with these criticisms, for example several members agreed that, as one member stated,

"I can't apologise for intellectualising the whole endeavour because the flip side is not thinking at all." [HTR member]

Secondly, many members of HTR express similar arguments and identify the same obstacles to engaging with HTR and the DoPR initiative that were highlighted by external individuals and groups. The following comments demonstrate the extent to which the membership of HTR itself grapples with these issues:

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"The name of HTR itself is unfortunate. It is very hard to communicate. It conveys a sense of dogoodery, even religiousness..." [HTR member]

"Reflection isn't relevant here. Truth recovery and storytelling are what's relevant for this demographic. And we need to see movement on these fronts before we can move forward in other areas – where can a Day of Reflection go without a baseline of fact established via truth recovery? We need a framework to reflect in, and at this point, there is no framework. I realise that the 'Private' aspect tries to deal with this and keep it low key. But in including that 'Private' bit, perhaps unwittingly, the organisation has said that there's still a question mark hanging over why this is not an official public process. [...] I'm not against the initiative, I'm for it. But like all elements of HTR, I feel that it can only go so far without the truth issue being addressed..." [HTR member]

"Do we really think that the people who were most impacted by the past 30 years, that those communities who bore the brunt of the conflict, need an orchestrated day of private reflection? Isn't it perhaps the middle classes, and by extension the churches, the media, etc. who need reminded that something went terribly pear-shaped here?" [HTR member]

These comments indicate that, contrary to the view that HTR does not understand what people want and need 'on the ground', there are numerous active members within the organisation who fully understand day-to-day life, concerns and priorities in different parts of Northern Ireland.

The question therefore is: why do so many people get the sense that HTR stands aloof from the 'realities on the ground'?

There are a number of possible answers to this, those suggested include:

- many people don't know about HTR at all (all four of the Fieldworkers commented on this);
- that the public only sees 'the end products' of different HTR discussions and research, and is not aware of the processes of inclusive discussion and consensus which govern all HTR work. The process of finding consensus on different points means that the language that HTR uses in its documents and other communications has to be carefully crafted and nuanced. This means that, at times, material produced by HTR is difficult to capture in simple sound bytes. This in turn compounds perceptions that it is essentially an academic organisation; and
- that the public doesn't generally know who belongs to HTR, or the diversity of its membership.

As one member of HTR put it:

"It's a catch-22 situation. We don't and can't shout about our membership or name people. But if there was a greater awareness of just who was around the table, there would possibly be more buy-in." [HTR member]

However, even if all of the above aspects of the HTR membership and process were clarified in detail to the public, the organisation recognises people's reservations about the Day. HTR understands that many people maintain the view that

"...a day of reflection should be the outcome of something that we've all agreed."

[External interviewee]

Members of HTR understand the criticisms that are levelled at the organisation. Moreover, the interviews showed that HTR knows its own boundaries. The following comment from an HTR member demonstrates this point:

"For the size of the organisation, HTR successfully brings a range of people around the table, and yes, it brings the middle classes into discussions that have traditionally been 'oh, we in the working classes are the problem'. The group is conscious that it is not a community development organisation, but nevertheless it manages to say very strong things."

[HTR member]

The strongest message that emerged from the evaluation was that HTR faces a significant challenge. As more and more people consider how the past and the legacy of the conflict in and about Northern Ireland should be remembered, how can HTR engage more effectively with increasing numbers of diverse individuals, organisations and communities?

Summary of findings

- 4.4. **The findings of the external consultation demonstrate that, despite the fact that opinions on aspects of the Day in its current format were generally mixed, there was a substantial appetite within different parts of society for an initiative like this. It was very well received by many groups and individuals. In particular, people responded well to the idea when they were introduced to it by someone they knew and trusted, and who had the capacity to facilitate their engagement with it. A summary of activities that HTR is aware were conducted by individuals and groups on the Day is included in the Appendices (Appendix VII).**
- 4.5. A small but significant number of negative responses to the initiative were recorded in the evaluation. These responses constitute an important dimension to the initiative that can be constructively engaged with by the DoR Sub Group and HTR as plans for the Day progress.
- 4.6. Overall the DoPR was welcomed by those contacted by the Fieldworkers. While the issues associated with the Day remain divisive for some people, it was felt that participation was not only possible but also interesting. While there was a general reluctance on the part of some groups and individuals to actively organise something for the Day, the Fieldworkers agreed that there was no great resistance to the idea overall. It is important to note that more guidance regarding how to structure activities would be appreciated by many individuals and groups.

Outreach and promotion of the DoPR: website and Fieldworkers

- 4.7. There were a number of new developments in the ways in which the DoPR was promoted in 2009. Two key new developments were endorsements by public figures and the appointment of fieldworkers. HTR sought and secured the public endorsement of the DoPR by several public figures and highlighted this on the DoR website. HTR also used Fieldworkers to promote the Day.

4.8. **Public figure endorsements:** All respondents who were aware of the public figure endorsements of the Day agreed that it was a positive development that had the potential to bring the DoPR to the attention of a wider range of people. However, several respondents commented that a more powerful statement could have been made if at least one of the named public figures had made an appearance at the launch of the Day, or had given an interview or made a comment in local or national media. This observation should be kept in mind for future years.

4.9. **Activity on the DoR website:** HTR staff submitted feedback to the evaluation regarding the activity of the DoR website. The findings are summarised below:

- i. **Volume of traffic and new visitors:** HTR records showed that between January and the end of October 2009, the DoR website received 1,525 visits, 80% of which were made by people who had never visited the site before. 243 of those visitors were referred to the DoR site from the HTR website, while more than half of the visitors found the website by using a search engine. Nearly 1 out of 5 visits were made by people who had simply typed the site address into the web browser.

This suggests two things: firstly, that a certain number of people seem to have heard about the DoPR in connection with HTR and have looked for information about it via the HTR website. Secondly, there also seem to be large numbers of people who have sought information about the DoPR without necessarily making a connection with HTR.

This analysis suggests that HTR was well advised to create the DoR website as an independent site from the main HTR website, and to advertise that independent site on the promotional materials developed for the Day. Furthermore, it supports the potential for future development of the DoPR as a stand-alone initiative that is not specifically 'owned' by HTR.

- ii. **Increased numbers around the DoPR:** The feedback showed that activity on the site increased significantly around the time of the DoPR: while the site received approximately 100 hits per month over the course of the year, in May it received 198, and in June the numbers rose to 421. The site was visited 152 times during the week prior to 21 June 2009, and 21 times on Sunday 21st June.

This indicates that increased numbers of people were learning about the Day in the weeks leading up to 21 June, via the Fieldworkers, media, and other communication initiated by HTR. This suggests that the efforts made by HTR to promote the Day were successful.

- iii. **Popular pages/sections:** The most popular pages were the resources section, which received 428 hits, and the 'get involved' section, which was visited 377 times. This finding links with the feedback received in interviews that people would like ideas and direction with regard to how to mark the day.

Other popular pages and sections were the 'about the day' section (249 hits), and the 'who we are' section and the Sub Group page, (which were visited 226 and 141 times respectively).

- iv. Evidence of both local and international interest: Over the course of the year, visitors to the DoR website came from a total of 63 countries/territories, with 1015 from these islands, 234 from the United States, 52 from Canada, 43 from Philippines, and 36 from Australia. In the months of May and June, where increased activity was seen on the site, the Website was visited by 514 persons from these islands, 43 from the US, 17 from the Philippines, 12 from Canada and 8 from Australia.

These findings indicate a significant degree of international interest in the DoPR which has proved difficult to gauge in previous years. A factor that is likely to have influenced the level of interest shown in Australia and Canada was interest which may have been generated around The Linen Memorial event held in the Canada Room at Queen's University (see point 4.35. below and Appendices for more information). (Appendix V)

These findings suggest that the DoPR holds relevance for different people living in other countries and that those people take an interest in the initiative. Some of this interest could arise as a result of diaspora connections to these islands.

- 4.10. **Promotion in local and regional media:** HTR sent press releases highlighting the DoPR to individual local newspapers. Engaging in this type of close communication with numerous different media sources requires significant resources in terms of time and personnel: in 2007 a staff member was able to take on the relevant tasks, while in 2009 a volunteer/intern did the work. In 2008 there were insufficient staff members, interns or other resources to achieve the same level of outward communication around the DoPR.
- 4.11. **Fieldworkers:** Four Fieldworkers were commissioned by HTR to promote the DoPR among their work networks and contacts. This was made possible via funding granted by the Allen and Nesta Ferguson Charitable Trust (www.fergusontrust.co.uk). This outreach strategy constitutes a significant and valuable new dimension to the DoPR initiative which should be supported to continue in future.
- 4.12. In total, the Fieldworkers made personal contact with 116 organisations and individuals. In addition to those numbers, HTR sent DoPR materials to a total of 39 organisations and individuals. By communicating with and through HTR, care was taken to avoid a duplication of effort by the four Fieldworkers, who were active in the following areas and sectors:
- one primarily in Co Fermanagh and the border areas of Republic of Ireland;
 - another in rural areas around Belfast (via the Rural Development Council and the Rural Community Network) as well as within parts of urban Belfast;
 - the third in Belfast and west of the Bann; and
 - the fourth in North Belfast (primarily in the Social Care and Voluntary sectors).
- 4.13. A goal in commissioning Fieldworkers was to enable communication around the day to be initiated within the Fieldworkers existing networks. This allowed the DoPR to be promoted more widely than in previous years and to allow in-depth conversations.

- 4.14. These conversations enabled a positive engagement between individuals and groups, the Fieldworkers and HTR. In many instances those contacted by the Fieldworkers demonstrated an openness to discuss the initiative and many were actively engaged in the DoPR. The Fieldworkers themselves found the work meaningful and rewarding. As one said,

"I felt very trusted by HTR, it was a really good work experience. " [Fieldworker]

All of the Fieldworkers emphasised that they found this work meaningful, and that it created opportunities for positive engagement with their diverse contacts.

- 4.15. **The Fieldworkers indicated that people they engaged with felt that HTR was 'the best organisation' to lead the DoPR initiative.** Reasons given for this included the diversity of HTR's membership, the trusted relationships it has developed across the social and sectoral networks with which it connects, and the wealth of research and publications upon which it bases its work.

Even in places where little or nothing was known of HTR (particularly in rural areas), once the ethos and membership of the organisation was explained to people, there was a significant degree of support for HTR as an appropriate lead organisation for the DoPR.

The other interviews carried out for this evaluation confirmed these findings, which are also highlighted in previous evaluations of the DoPR held in 2007 and 2008.

- 4.16. The Fieldworkers' experiences also highlighted a number of challenges and difficulties that they encountered. Two important points can be drawn from their accounts of those experiences. These are addressed below.

- 4.17. **Firstly, the need for 'dedicated conversations' with new contacts around the Day:** All of the Fieldworkers commented that although the DoPR seems like a benign and straightforward idea, it actually raises a huge range of sensitive and sometimes upsetting issues for people.

The Fieldworkers all noted that the approach of 'tagging' a conversation about the DoPR on to other conversations that they were already having with their various colleagues avoided giving those contacts the impression that something 'extra' was being imposed on or asked of them. They were in agreement, however, that a dedicated conversation – even a workshop-type discussion – would have been more helpful, and would have given their contacts more time and freedom to explore the issues that the initiative clearly raised for them. The following comments from the Fieldworkers demonstrate the difficulties which they encountered in this regard:

"I didn't talk about the Day with anyone I didn't know, but in those circles, people don't talk about hurt unless it's a direct conversation... So I guess, sometimes, we were talking at cross-purposes, or at least we weren't really on the same page about what reflection in this context could mean for them as individuals. If we had had the opportunity for a dedicated conversation about it, that might have been different..." [Fieldworker]

"Is this a proposal that people are being asked to 'get on board with', or is the aim to start a discussion about the issues?" [Fieldworker]

- 4.18 **Secondly: the fact that people sometimes just accept what their trusted colleagues suggest might be good or interesting for them to do.** Both the Fieldworkers and members of HTR who took steps to mark the Day in their work and social environments commented that there is a danger that, often simply because people are busy, if they trust and respect 'the messenger', they are happy to mark the Day in whatever way is suggested 'because X thinks it's a worthwhile idea'. It was noted that this sort of combination of circumstances, while a perfectly 'normal' reaction in a busy day-to-day environment, could undermine the possibility for genuine reflection and self-examination.
- 4.19. These broad points were taken into consideration as the evaluation progressed and consultation was carried out with other external interviewees and HTR members.
- 4.20. Lack of clarity for some regarding the purpose of the Day: There was consensus among both the Fieldworkers and other respondents that

"There is a hunger for this sort of initiative."

[Fieldworker]

However, the interviews conducted for this evaluation found that, for many people, it is not yet clear what or who precisely the Day is about. As respondents both within and external to HTR put it:

"We should have a Day of Reflection. We should. But at this stage, it's not clear who it should be for."

[External interviewee]

"To be completely honest, I never understood this initiative... Looking at it culturally it seems to come from a very mainstream, conservative way of thinking. Why is it private? Why is the title a-historical? What are we reflecting on? The fact that we are emerging from 30 years of deeply protracted conflict? The fact that Northern Ireland remains a deeply divided society?"

[HTR member]

- 4.21. **Questions around the need for the initiative:** While many respondents and Fieldworker contacts were not strictly against the idea of the DoPR, some felt that the initiative was 'not necessary'. As noted in previous evaluations, this response was strongest among Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist respondents, who frequently made observations along the lines of: "we do commemoration". Nevertheless, in the course of this evaluation, the same response was also heard in Catholic/Nationalist/Republican areas.

Various comments made by respondents illustrated that their sense that the initiative was 'not necessary' hinged on a number of factors. These included:

"To many Unionists, who have been good at remembering throughout the generations, this seems like liberals putting their conscience at ease."

[HTR member]

"What actually would make this [the DoPR] different? It just seems like more of the same..."

[External interviewee]

HTR members interviewed expressed a sensitive awareness of these questions, and the following comments articulate some response to them:

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"For a mother who has lost her son, it won't do much for her, perhaps. We make no assumptions about what it would or wouldn't do for her. But it will let her know that we are not thoughtless."

[HTR member]

"The Day is not a replacement but an alternative or an extra. It provides the space to step aside and consider other angles."

[HTR member]

Moreover, the DoPR was highlighted as a positive dimension to the engagement between individuals that occurs within the membership of HTR. One respondent commented that

"...a good aspect of the initiative is that it variegates the space and events that happen at HTR."

[HTR member]

This is because, whereas events at HTR are predominantly characterised by dialogue and discussion, the DoPR creates an opportunity for some quietness and a safe space

"... to reflect personally on the painful aspects of the issues we discuss."

[HTR member]

4.22. **Difficulty with term 'reflection':** Both the Fieldworkers and other respondents within and external to HTR emphasised that 'reflection' is not a concept or term that comes easily to many people. The following comments – a small number of those received in the different interviews conducted for the evaluation – illustrate this point:

"What is reflection? People don't know what that means. I'm not sure I even know what it means!"

[HTR member]

"It doesn't matter what HTR wants to do or is trying to do with it; it's what the public perceives that counts. And people deal with sound bytes – the detail and nuance generally goes over our heads."

[External interviewee]

"Now, I know that it's about internal reflection, but it doesn't necessarily say that 'on the package'."

[HTR member]

"Reflection? That doesn't mean much to people. We need to keep it simple. We're talking about stopping for a minute to have a wee think about things."

[External interviewee]

"Even people who enthusiastically attend events that we lead at (name of organisation) on the day will remember the event, but might not remember the 'reflection' bit! It seems as though the name just hasn't caught on, and we should take stock of that."

[HTR member]

HTR members acknowledge and, to a certain extent, share this difficulty with the term 'reflection'. However, it was pointed out that there is a potential for similar and even bigger problems to crop up when the term is substituted or added to – for example, HTR has expressed resistance to the connection of the word 'reconciliation' with the initiative in the Consultative Group on the Past's suggestion of a 'Day

of Reflection and Reconciliation'. As noted in the HTR response to the NIO Consultation on the Report of the CGoP, research conducted by HTR to date indicates that

...there are difficulties with the term "Reconciliation". These include:

for many people the term is off-putting as it implies some form of relationship with a perceived perpetrator;

it is viewed by some as a church-based concept and way of engaging and therefore not inclusive;

it implies too many different goals to different people due to various interpretations, as such it is an unhelpful single goal... (HTR, 2009: 14)²

- 4.23. **A 'relevant' initiative?:** A negative reaction to the initiative in its current format was expressed by a small number of respondents. These respondents voiced significant concerns from important constituencies in this debate. The initiative is perceived by many as being irrelevant to communities that have not yet benefited from the so-called 'peace dividend'. The following comments from several respondents external to HTR illustrate this perspective:

"It [the DoPR] is just not relevant. Any intervention that you stage will be filtered through people's lived experiences, and many peoples' lives haven't changed substantially since the Troubles. For a lot of people, the conflict is still here." [External interviewee]

"It's not for people who eat neat cucumber sandwiches. You need to bring in the corned beef sandwich eaters!" [External interviewee]

It is important to note that members of HTR understand this point of view: several members highlighted it as a continuing and significant challenge that both the Sub Group and Board have taken into account. As one HTR member acknowledged:

"This is totally not relevant to urban working class communities. Poverty, social exclusion, jobs, trauma, grief – these are all relevant, live issues. The Day of Private Reflection implies this stuff is in the past." [HTR member]

In contrast to the opinions reflected above, however, the Fieldworkers and several external interviewees insisted that the DoPR has particular relevance and power for some people:

² See also: A Day of Private Reflection: Discussion Paper and Proposal (HTR, 2006a), The Report of the Healing Through Remembering Project (HTR, 2002) and Making Peace with the Past: Options for Truth Recovery regarding the Conflict in and About Northern Ireland (HTR, 2006d).

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“Often you find that people don’t actually feel ‘important enough’ for a ‘day of reflection’ – they feel as though other people have suffered more than they have, and that they therefore don’t have a right to claim that space. But once you start talking about what went on, the stories come out, and people realise that they have carried an awful lot. And they are grateful to find that they can set it all down for a moment. That’s the power of this thing – in the numbers of people who don’t yet understand how it gives them a place.”

[Fieldworker]

This perspective was echoed by various HTR members:

“Non-committed’ people [i.e. people not committed to any particular side in the conflict] need a space for commemoration. There is a big constituency of people out there who need to know that this is an option.”

[HTR member]

“We’re at the stage, now, where those who were implicated in the violence can at least in name accept and share responsibility for what went on. The Day of Private Reflection gives the rest of society an opportunity for the same sort of self-examination and acknowledgement.”

[HTR member]

“Maybe we need to realise that this will never be a mass event, and that it would be better to target it at that niche market, those people who feel they can’t or won’t be involved in other memorial events.”

[HTR member]

Conversations with diverse participants in the DoPR affirmed these views, as one commented:

“It is an appropriately modest initiative. It gives the opportunity to do something without making a big deal of it”.

[DoPR Participant]

4.24. Is it something that people will do? There is a great deal of evidence available to show that people marked the DoPR in 2009, as in 2008 and 2007 (see Appendix V for more details). The events and activities held on and around 21 June 2009 were characterised by creativity, thoughtfulness, and in some cases, deliberate efforts to build relationships between different groups.

For example, a Presbyterian congregation invited people to cast a stone in a pool of water and to reflect on the ripples that it caused. Later that evening, the same ‘props’ were used by a neighbouring Catholic parish to create a similar reflective space. The fact that HTR only became aware of these ‘partner’ events when one of the individuals who attended them left positive feedback on the HTR website suggests that some people marked the DoPR without ever making contact with HTR. It is therefore impossible to gauge accurately how many individuals and groups observed the Day.

The conclusion which may be drawn from this is that, where “there is a hunger for this sort of initiative”, many have found creative ways to mark the Day. However, many people who feel the need to mark the Day struggle to find ways to do so.

To encourage more people to participate in the Day the key seems to be to go beyond merely telling people that observing the Day is an option. The aim should be to offer some sort of facilitation, or collaboration with already ongoing projects. The following comments illustrate this point:

“People have very busy lives. It’s easy for us to think that dealing with the past is the most important thing in the road, but most people don’t have time to think about it! Their minds are on the present. To them, thinking about the past seems like a luxury.” [Fieldworker]

“Don’t give us any extra work or planning to do, but connect into the work we are already doing.” [External interviewee]

- 4.25. **This suggests a need for very early preparation in terms of communication around the DoPR in future. The external contacts, as well as members of HTR, emphasised that ‘word did not get out early enough’ in 2009.** The resource limitations of staff personnel, time pressures and financial constraints are acknowledged and addressed elsewhere in this report.

The Fieldworkers emphasised that the organisational structures, even of fairly small groups, are often complex, and that it can take a considerable amount of time for messages to ‘filter down’ to the body of a group’s membership. Where meetings are held on a monthly or bi-monthly basis, the news about the DoPR and reminders to put it in the group’s diary need to come through within appropriate timescale. The Fieldworkers recommended that if they had had the time to check in with groups a second time before the Day to remind them about it and stimulate some more discussion, there may have been a greater take-up of the initiative in 2009.

- 4.26 **International dimension to the DoPR in 2009:** When considering whether the DoPR is a relevant initiative that people may or may not feel inclined to engage with, it is important to consider the international dimension to the DoPR in 2009. For example, the feedback received from HTR staff regarding activity on the DoR website highlights a significant level of international interest in the DoPR in 2009 (see point 4.9 above). The attendance of tourists at the Linen Memorial event in Belfast is also notable (see point 4.32 below).

It is impossible to accurately gauge the level of engagement and uptake of the initiative across all parts of local and international society, as only a proportion of individuals and groups submit feedback to HTR.

- 4.27. **A ‘risky initiative’ – possibility the Day will be ‘hijacked’:** A concern which was frequently recognised by both external respondents and HTR was that, given the still-divided nature of politics and society in Northern Ireland, it seems to many that

“it is inevitable that this initiative will be hijacked in some way or another by someone, whether on the air waves, at a particular event, in a particular newspaper article.” [External interviewee]

With this concern in mind HTR emphasises that the Day should be marked in a positive and respectful manner.

- 4.28. **Concerns around personal safety and trauma:** another, although less frequent, argument against the Day was in terms of its potential for harm. The following comment illustrates the concerns that some people have in this respect:

"This particular initiative could have any number of unexpected, damaging repercussions. That's my main worry. You could say, I suppose, that it seems like a nice idea on the surface, but it's not for me."

[External interviewee]

From the outset HTR has recognised concerns about personal safety and trauma in relation to the DoPR initiative. HTR encourages people to mark the Day within trusted groups and support networks where possible. Furthermore, the organisation always has a 24-hour support line activated specifically for the DoPR. This year, the line went live three days before the Day, and remained active for three days afterwards. It was staffed by two counsellors, who were aware that, with 21 June 2009 being Father's Day as well as the DoPR, there was a possibility that some individuals could need special support. As in previous years, however, the dedicated line did not receive any calls.

Nevertheless, it is recommended that the support line should continue to operate around the DoPR.

- 4.29. **Public/private debate:** A sense of confusion and ambivalence surrounds the idea that this is a Day of Private Reflection. This is an issue that HTR members understand, as illustrated by the following comment:

"People [around here] are used to doing things in a community way, so the 'Private' aspect doesn't really resonate."

[HTR member]

Furthermore, responses from HTR members indicated that there is some frustration with the current format of the Day: as one member commented,

"I didn't think that it would remain 'private' for so long."

[HTR member]

One respondent explained that she preferred the term 'personal' to 'private'. For her, 'personal' is more appropriate, because it communicates the journey of moving away from privatised and individualised grief to a situation where there is more public acknowledgement of the losses, grief and hurt and within society, while at the same time preserving a space for personal reflection. This view was balanced out, however, by the Sub Group's sense that to use the word 'personal' might imply that the Day is about thinking about individual guilt, as opposed to reflecting on a societal level. These different understandings should continue to be expressed and taken into account as the Day develops.

- 4.30. **Direction:** Many people still voice the need for a firmer framework and clear guidance on activities that would be appropriate to mark the Day. This point has come up consistently in all three evaluations. One Fieldworker explained why people might feel so 'at a loss' regarding what they should do to mark the Day:

"There's a big contradiction there. How can you promote a Day but stop short of telling people what to do on the Day? By putting it out there, you immediately raise a desire or expectation – but then you back off!"

[Fieldworker]

Another respondent said,

"I understand why HTR is not too prescriptive, but the Day seems to lose its power by being too vague."
[External interviewee]

The Sub Group's rationale for the Day demonstrates that these considerations informed the development of the initiative from the outset. HTR and the Sub Group currently resist being too prescriptive about what can happen or how people can mark the Day, in order to ensure that the Day is not 'owned' by HTR, but can be 'owned' and marked by individuals and groups in their particular ways. Again, these different understandings should continue to be expressed and taken into account as the Day develops. (See Appendix III for the rationale for the Day.)

- 4.31. **Some people are not clear on how they can 'make it their own Day':** Feedback sent to HTR and other conversations conducted for this evaluation indicate that many groups and individuals who would have found it difficult or inconvenient to mark the DoPR on 21 June felt free to mark the Day on another date close to 21 June (for examples, see Appendix IV).

However, feedback from the Fieldworkers suggested that, for some people, the DoPR is seen as being limited to 21 June: i.e. that it should be marked on that specific Day or not at all. This observation links closely with the fact that the public still feel a need for more explicit examples and direction in terms of how to mark the Day. The following comments are illustrative of these points:

"Even though I emphasised that the Day was for them, lots of people asked me afterwards 'How did your event go?'"
[Fieldworker]

"People need entry and exit points, they need to know where they can come in and get out if they want to. That's why there's so much frustration with the looseness of the whole thing. It's too vague."
[HTR member]

"People aren't aware that they can change and adapt the suggestions, or do it on a different day if the 21st doesn't work out for them."
[HTR member]

- 4.32. **Linen Memorial:** Substantial feedback was gathered on one event organised to mark the DoPR that drew the attention of a number of not only local visitors but also tourists. This example of a DoPR activity demonstrates the potential for flexible and inclusive approaches that can be taken by individuals and groups when marking the Day.

One of the locally-based respondents who had attended the public viewing of The Linen Memorial (see the summary of activities held on the Day in Appendix V) made the following comments:

"I was fascinated by the interest shown by people from other lands. (...) We need to grow in our remembering and learn to connect with other contexts."
[External interviewee]

"I felt that, after all the hurt, things seemed to have come full circle, and death had lost its sting."
[External interviewee]

In addition, reflections recorded by members of the public in a guest book highlighted the positive experience that visitors to the event seemed to have enjoyed. The artist emphasised that the experience showed that

"Contemporary art should be recognised as a valid vehicle for processing 'healing through remembering'."
[External interviewee]

- 4.33. **Materials:** There were a range of responses to the materials created and disseminated by HTR to assist reflection on 21 June. The following comments give a flavour of the diverse opinions regarding the materials from both internal and external sources:

"Lots of people liked the image. But to be honest, I find it a bit depressing."
[Fieldworker]

"The image is beautiful, very soothing."
[External interviewee]

"I like the image. It seems appropriately neutral."
[HTR member]

"The image needs to be renewed."
[HTR member]

"If most people from our neighbourhood saw the materials, they wouldn't pick them up. It's like, who uses bookmarks? You should be putting the message on beer mats!"
[HTR member]

While people acknowledged that the image conveyed a sense that the DoPR is intended to be for 'anyone, anywhere', some respondents thought the image was too anonymous, and that the image of the beach is not relevant to people living in low-income urban areas. Others felt that targeted resources should be developed for young people and schools:

"[On 21 June] schools are out, but it would not be impossible to pilot a resource pack that could be delivered ahead of time."
[External interviewee]

- 4.34. **The importance of promoting the DoPR to potentially marginalised groups in society was highlighted.**

Respondents from within HTR, commented that while it was important that the churches be part of the DoPR, the focus of communication around the Day should take a much broader perspective. The following comments illustrate this point:

"We do need to go back on the road. We've done well with the churches, but we've never wanted this to be a 'churchy' thing."
[HTR member]

"This isn't for the churches, it isn't for people who will be nice to each other anyway. If it's going to be relevant, this needs to go in at gut level."
[HTR member]

The importance of ensuring that the message behind the DoPR is effectively communicated with a number of key groups was highlighted. These included **young people**, from areas that both were and

weren't directly impacted, by the conflict and its legacy. The following quotes indicate some of these views:

"We want the kids who are the potential gunmen to start thinking about this."

[HTR member]

"Unless they are from a conflicted area, young people battle to make the connection."

[HTR member]

- 4.35. **21 June 2009 fell on a Sunday:** There were a range of responses to the fact that this year, the DoPR fell on a Sunday. HTR had noted this in all of its preparations for the Day, ensuring that articles were sent out to the magazines of the largest churches in advance of the Day, along with quantities of the DoPR materials.

The fact that the Day was a Sunday this year meant that there was a significant increase in the uptake of the Day by churches and church communities (see 4.23 above for an example of how different denominations found a way to mark the day in partnership activities). While some of the Fieldworkers felt the churches could have taken it up 'more strongly', members of the clergy consulted said that they were happy and willing to include it in their bulletins and to mention it.

- 4.36. **21 June 2009 fell on Father's Day:** This year 21 June was also Father's Day. HTR had again noted this in all of its preparations. The minutes of DoR Sub Group meetings in the year prior to 21 June 2009 show that sensitive consideration had been given to the fact that some individuals might have been particularly affected by the combination of emotional triggers represented by the DoPR and Father's Day falling on the same date. (See note on the DoPR support line above at 4.28.)

- 4.37. **HTR and the DoPR initiative:** From the earliest discussions around the DoR idea in the Report of the Healing Through Remembering Project (2002), the DoR Sub Group and HTR have frequently come back to the following questions:

- if, when, and how to develop the initiative from a Day of Private Reflection into a Day with an enhanced public dimension; and
- mindful of the fact that HTR was never intended to be an implementing body where should responsibility for running the Day eventually lie?

The interviews conducted with HTR members revealed a range of opinions about the current format and the future of the DoPR, how the organisation functions at present and the key challenges it faces. Two key themes emerged from these conversations.

Firstly:

- i. **HTR's role in the future of the DoPR:** The interviews revealed that HTR faces a dilemma at this stage of the DoPR's development: to adhere to the organisation's principles and policy as an organisation developing proposals, or become more active as the driver and implementing body of the Day. The following comments about the current format of the day – i.e. as something that has not been 'universally' accepted – capture this choice:

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"It depends what we want to do. If we want to save it [DoPR], we should change it and drive it, go in with a strong message. But if not, perhaps we should leave it as it is, with the groups that have taken it up to date. Leave it with those who it works for, and call it a day, and direct resources and energy in the other areas of need."
[HTR member]

"There are those who feel that a sustainable peace requires progressive change and those who want normalisation/stabilisation... where does HTR sit? Are we about engaging strategically with the work of cultural change?"
[HTR member]

"Let's not get precious about our initiatives. We must be big enough to let things go."
[HTR member]

These comments should be balanced by the evidence highlighted earlier in the report that, even if the DoPR is not 'everyone's cup of tea', in some places there is a real public appetite for – and already successful uptake of – the initiative.

Acknowledging this, the second key theme that emerges is:

- ii. **The challenge of finding ways to further develop and promote the DoPR:** Numerous HTR members emphasised the importance of the HTR membership taking a more 'hands-on' approach with regard to the DoPR – in terms of demonstrating belief in the idea of the Day and initiating and participating in different ways of marking it.

"HTR is probably the only group to lead this initiative. But we should quit holding back! On this occasion, the organisation should show some leadership."
[HTR member]

"We need to consolidate what's been done and what's been taken up by different groups. We can't cut the initiative adrift: at this stage it still needs a leader organisation to source and manage the necessary resources."
[HTR member]

A number of members explained that they felt that 'new development and innovation is needed' to generate more energy and enhance the creative thinking and capacity of the Sub Group.

These themes were reflected and emphasised by observations made by the Fieldworkers and others within HTR. Their comments in this regard highlighted that promoting the DoPR in 2009 was challenging for the Fieldworkers in the sense that they were briefed not only:

- to promote an initiative that, by its nature, was not clearly or easily defined or framed; but also,
- to promote this initiative as something that 'people think is a good idea', and yet they did not feel that there was an explicit evidence base of support, buy-in or conviction about the initiative from within the wider membership of HTR.

When making this observation, the fact that HTR members contribute to the organisation in a purely voluntary capacity alongside multiple other commitments must be taken into account.

38. The evaluation found that the different members of the DoR Sub Group have overcome significant obstacles and differences of opinion in the course of the development and establishment of the DoPR. Several members of HTR specifically commended the Sub Group for their dedication to the process, and the ways in which the Sub Group has shown “sensitive understanding of the needs of society”.

HTR’s members, Sub Group members and Board should be commended for the commitment that they have shown in terms of their long-term engagement, decision-making processes, and the sensitive consideration which they have shown in developing and leading the DoPR initiative to date. Even in circles where the Day is not welcomed with enthusiasm, people who were interviewed for this evaluation commended the organisation for its ongoing work around dealing with the past.

5. A CONSIDERATION OF PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS AND HTR'S RESPONSES IN 2009

1. A number of recommendations were made in previous years' evaluations of the DoPR. This section is a summary of the key recommendations (*in italics*), an illustration of how HTR has responded to those recommendations and, in some cases, how these responses might be enhanced in future. In some cases recommendations are grouped together as in certain areas HTR has succeeded in devising effective single responses to different recommendations.

2. *Recommendations on networking made in previous evaluations:*

2.1 *HTR needs to consider ways of maintaining contact and improving dialogue with organisations beyond the immediate consultation on the DoPR.*

2.1. *HTR should explore the possibility of using other networks [i.e. beyond HTR contact mail-out lists] to promote the DoPR.*

2.3. *Consideration of how to access the key special interest groups [e.g. older people] and community fora organisations in Northern Ireland may help to ensure that there is a wider awareness of, and support for, the DoPR.*

2.4. **HTR's response to networking in 2009 and beyond:**

The use of Fieldworkers in 2009 helped to implement these recommendations.

The employment and coordination of Fieldworkers in 2010 should use these recommendations as guidelines for ongoing outreach and communication.

3. *Recommendations on wider engagement made in previous evaluations:*

3.1. *There was a very limited response to the DoPR beyond Northern Ireland [...] the DoPR still needs to be promoted beyond Northern Ireland to recognise that the impact of the conflict goes beyond Northern Ireland.*

3.2. *HTR needs to consider ways in which the importance of the DoPR can be promoted more widely in the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain.*

3.3. **HTR's response to wider engagement in 2009 and beyond:**

This evaluation has highlighted that HTR has engaged with an activity on the Day which had an international audience in 2009. This is evidenced by the significant international activity on the DoR website (see point 4.9 above) and the attendance at the Linen Memorial event in the Canada Room at Queen's University Belfast (see point 4.32 above).

These findings indicate that appropriate resources should be secured to enable HTR to continue to maintain and update the DoR website in the future. In addition, HTR should endeavour to consider ways in which the importance of the DoPR can be promoted more widely in the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain.

4. Recommendation on enabling involvement made in previous evaluations:

4.1. *As with the previous DoPR there is concern from many in the public arena that they are not sure how they should get involved in the initiative. This is still an issue that HTR needs to address. One suggestion is that HTR needs to get its own members to be more high profile in promoting the DoPR and therefore lead by example. This further 'stepping up to the mark' would also create potentially much more publicity about the DoPR.*

4.2. HTR's response to enabling involvement in 2009 and beyond:

HTR has taken steps to ensure that examples of what different groups have done to mark the DoPR in 2007 and 2008 have been made public, in the published evaluations of those Days and on the DoR website.

HTR should continue to make these sorts of examples available to the public, and should consider new ways of doing so. In addition, this report has once again emphasised the crucial role to be played by members of the DoR Sub Group, the Board and wider membership of HTR in 'promoting and supporting the DoPR at a strategic level', and in a hands-on fashion, as preparations are made for 21 June 2010.

5. Recommendations made on linking with other initiatives in previous evaluations:

5.1. *...[T]here was also a suggestion that the DoPR could be positively linked to other initiatives. Many organisations and groups in Northern Ireland are engaged in shared past projects and this would perhaps be an appropriate place to promote the DoPR.*

5.2. HTR's response on linking with other initiatives in 2009 and beyond:

The use of Fieldworkers in 2009 helped to implement these recommendations.

This report makes further recommendations regarding how HTR should continue to look for ways to link the DoPR to other initiatives across society (see Section 7 below).

6. Recommendation on wider organisational engagement made in previous evaluations:

6.1. *HTR needs to carry out a detailed reflective analysis of its contacts and status with key public bodies to gauge their attitudes to the organisation and how these might affect participation in and promotion of the DoPR.*

6.2. HTR's response on wider organisational engagement in 2009 and beyond:

HTR has not yet carried out a detailed reflective analysis of this nature. A key challenge up to this point has been in relation to finding the time and personnel resources to conduct such an analysis.

Acknowledging this challenge, this evaluation recommends that the organisation should nevertheless take steps to engage with this suggestion, either in the run-up to the DoPR in 2010, or as part of a public debate following 21 June 2010.

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 This section notes the conclusions that may be drawn from the findings detailed in Section 5 above. They are grouped into four broad areas:

- general conclusions;
- leadership and strategy;
- outreach and resources; and
- a long-term view.

The recommendations that follow in the next section (Section 7) are grouped in the same way.

General conclusions

- 6.2. **Positive or ambivalent responses to the DoPR initiative significantly outweigh the ones that clearly reject the idea. While people's views on aspects of the DoPR remain mixed both among groups and individuals external to HTR and within the organisation itself, the DoPR is welcomed by many people.**
- 6.3. **Reservations have been expressed about aspects of the DoPR in its current form both by members of the public and by HTR members. However, despite these concerns, groups and individuals across a broad spectrum of backgrounds, political identities, and age groups reveal *"a hunger for this sort of initiative"*.**
- 6.4. **Often, groups and individuals who are not part of HTR are not aware of the process of discussion and debate that has given rise to the DoPR initiative. People are also not aware that members of HTR share some of their own reservations about the initiative in its current form.**

Leadership and strategy

- 6.5. **Nevertheless, the Fieldworkers indicated that people felt that HTR was 'the best organisation' to lead the DoPR initiative.**

Reasons given for this included the diversity of HTR's membership; the trusted relationships it has developed across the social and sectoral networks which it connects with; and the wealth of research and publications upon which it bases its work. Even among those who know little or nothing about HTR, once the ethos and membership of the organisation was explained, there was a significant degree of support for HTR as an appropriate lead organisation for the DoPR.

The other interviews carried out for this evaluation confirmed these findings, which are also highlighted in previous evaluations of the DoPR.

- 6.6. **There is evidence of sensitivity among the membership of HTR with regard to engaging with diverse individuals and groups around the issues of 'dealing with the past'.**

There is substantial evidence that members of HTR are aware of the reservations, criticisms and obstacles to engagement on these issues; as well as regarding the current format of the DoPR.

The interviews conducted with members of HTR have explicitly highlighted the conclusions that may be drawn from these findings, and are summarised in the three points below.

- i. HTR is up-to-date on developments in both the statutory and community and voluntary sectors with regard to discussions and initiatives aimed at dealing with the legacy of the conflict in and about Northern Ireland. However, the organisation is sometimes perceived, for a variety of reasons, to stand aloof from those developments.
- ii. HTR needs to consider how to connect more effectively with an increasingly diverse range of individuals, groups and communities, and the DoPR seems to provide an excellent opportunity for developing ways of doing this.
- iii. HTR is based on an inclusive decision-making process and an ethos of confidentiality. People external to HTR often do not appreciate that these principles guide HTR's work. This applies particularly to individuals and groups who have previously perceived HTR to be a purely 'middle class' and 'academic' organisation. When they are told about how HTR works, they
 - a. understand why the material that HTR produces can often seem rather complex and specialised; and
 - b. are more willing to engage with HTR's ideas and initiatives (in this case, the DoPR).

6.7. The role of the HTR membership in promoting the initiative in formal and informal ways among their own networks cannot be overstated.

HTR can access a diverse range of communication resources in terms of its individual members who come from different backgrounds, professions and sectors. There is limited evidence that the potential reach of the membership has been fully utilised in promoting the DoPR.

6.8. There is evidence to suggest that some individuals and groups have taken on the initiative and made it relevant to their own situation, perhaps without even engaging with HTR.

For example, the initiative mentioned earlier between different churches (See point 4.24 in Section 4 above). Had it not been for one participant feeding back to HTR how much she enjoyed the experience, HTR would never have been aware of the larger dynamic at work.

It may be concluded from this that there are people who, without contacting HTR, have already established the DoPR as a regular date to be observed in their calendar.

6.9 Opinions are divided on aspects of the current format and promotion of the DoPR. However, there is significant tolerance and openness across society for HTR to continue to promote the Day.

Those who have reservations about the initiative or who indicate that it is 'not for them' have nevertheless expressed an appreciation for having been engaged with on this initiative. They have welcomed a discussion in which they can air their concerns and arguments – both with HTR/its representatives in the promotion of the Day, and subsequently with the evaluator.

These findings suggest that while there is not an either/or choice to be made in taking the project forward, as the lead organisation, HTR does have a choice in terms of either continuing to promote the initiative in a relatively understated fashion across all sectors, or attempting to target specific sectors with tailored messages about the Day.

- 6.10. **Although many individuals and groups are reluctant to mark the day or set up anything on their own, they are open to the idea that HTR could introduce the DoPR to their networks and communities by partnering with them in existing work.**
- 6.11. **This is a challenge that HTR must treat as a priority, and which applies to both external relationships and the way in which HTR conducts its business internally.**

The organisation's diverse membership, with strong connections in numerous sectors and networks, should be drawn on to enhance its capacity for wider engagement and joined-up working.

- 6.12. **There is limited working across the Sub Groups and wider membership of HTR.** This is recognised by the organisation and is currently being addressed.

Outreach and resources

- 6.13. **Engagement around the initiative was stronger and more far-reaching than in previous years.**
- 6.14. **This engagement was facilitated by the inclusion of Fieldworkers in the promotion of the Day.** HTR and the Fieldworkers should be commended on this approach, which opened up new avenues of communication, networks and contacts.
- 6.15. **The experiences of the Fieldworkers is that, although promoting the DoPR may seem straightforward and 'easy' on the surface, in reality it is a concept that raises sensitive issues for many people, and can initiate complex and profound discussions.**

The combination of the message and relevance of the DoPR, and its implications for diverse individuals and groups, presented challenges for the Fieldworkers. They all commented that they encountered some difficulty in striking a balance between promoting the concept, and ensuring that they created adequate space for explanation and discussion around it.

- 6.16. **Using Fieldworkers to promote the DoPR requires dedicated resources in terms of adequately prepared and appropriate personnel who can engage with a wide range of individuals, groups and organisations to share information about the Day.**

This approach necessitates appropriate line management, including setting appropriate time frameworks and creating opportunities for debriefing, to ensure adequate engagement on the issues which are raised in conversation with their contacts.

- 6.17. **There was significant activity, including large numbers of new visitors from both local and international contexts, on the DoR website.** This suggests that the Website is an important channel of

communication and information sharing around the Day, which has an international reach. Appropriate resources should therefore be secured and made available to enable HTR to continue to maintain and update the Website.

- 6.18. **Promotion and coordination of the DoPR by the lead organisation – including commissioning Fieldworkers, communicating with the media, creating and disseminating materials, maintaining a DoR website, and commissioning an independent evaluation – requires significant resources in terms of finances, personnel and time.**

This evaluation found that investing in these areas produces good returns in terms of connecting effectively with an increasingly diverse range of individuals and groups. However, it should be noted that to date, there has been a heavy reliance on the limited staff capacities of HTR, including the time and skills offered by volunteer interns, to carry out relevant communication tasks.

- 6.19. **At every stage of the planning and implementation process of the DoPR initiative, time was a key issue.** Funding applications, commissioning Fieldworkers, scheduling outreach conversations with different groups and individuals and disseminating materials all had to be carefully planned to allow for delays and to accommodate different schedules.
- 6.20. **As in previous evaluations, many people still voice the need for a firmer framework and clear guidance on activities that would be appropriate to mark the Day.**
- 6.21. **There were mixed reactions to the current range of materials created and disseminated by HTR to assist reflection on 21 June. While some respondents like the materials and images, others feel that there is a need to develop targeted resources that are relevant to specific groups of people.**

A long-term view

- 6.22. **A final and relevant consideration here regards the function and purpose of HTR.** Consultation with the Board and management of HTR for this evaluation highlighted that the organisation was set up to research, discuss, share information and propose a variety of ways in which people can

...remember events connected with the conflict in and about Northern Ireland and, in doing so, individually and collectively contribute to the healing of the wounds of society... (HTR, 2002: iii)

In other words, the organisation was never intended to be an implementation body.

The DoPR initiative represents a 'tipping point' for HTR. It brings the organisation to a point where it needs to gauge to what extent HTR can or should be involved in the future development and implementation of the Day. This consideration has featured consistently in the minutes of DoR Sub Group meetings over recent years. There is a need within the Sub Group and the organisation to focus on and progress discussion around this question.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

General recommendation

- 7.1 This evaluation recommends that the DoPR initiative should be supported by HTR to continue into 2010. As part of that process, the following recommendations should be taken into account:

Leadership and strategy

- 7.2 HTR should continue to demonstrate both sensitivity and good practice in terms of keeping up-to-date with various developments in the current social and political context. Informed by the current context, the DoR Sub Group and the Board should collaborate closely on how to take the DoPR forward – in 2010 and if appropriate in the future.

- 7.3 In promoting the Day, consideration should be given to making it clear that even HTR members have reservations about aspects of the initiative.

Consideration should be given to improving wider understanding of HTR's ethos of confidentiality and consensus, and the difficulties that members themselves encounter and grapple with.

- 7.4 Opportunities should be created to engage the wider membership of HTR in further debate around the DoPR initiative.

Consideration could also be given to finding ways of drawing in new members to HTR who might increase the Sub Group's – and HTR's – capacity to connect in meaningful ways with diverse individuals, groups, organisations and communities.

- 7.5 HTR needs to consider two options which have emerged from the consultation:
- that the DoPR could continue to be promoted in an understated fashion, relying primarily on an organic development across networks and communities; and/or
 - that HTR could do more targeting of specific sectors, with tailored messages and materials, as they promote the Day.

Whichever approach is taken, any future materials should complement the existing resources to promote the DoPR which have already proved of value (see materials in Appendix VI). There are also a number of other HTR materials, such as the Conversation Guide, that are key resources that should be drawn upon further.

Outreach and resources

- 7.6 The role of the Fieldworkers in promoting and discussing the DoPR was a significant and positive development in the promotion of the Day. It is recommended that this measure should be adequately supported and/or built upon with personnel and material resources in the future.

- 7.7. Fieldworkers should be commissioned to promote the DoPR well in advance of the Day. This will allow more time to discuss the DoPR with contacts, and to explore the relevant issues at greater length where appropriate.
- 7.8. Steps should be taken to ensure that sufficient personnel and time resources be secured to enable HTR to communicate effectively with the media around the DoPR in the future.
- 7.9. Preparation for promoting the DoPR in the media in future should begin at an early stage to enable the message to be communicated more than once. This point applies to all aspects of outreach and communication around the Day. Challenges which must continue to be taken into account include:
 - ensuring that the story conveyed by the media is consistent with the message that HTR wishes to communicate; and
 - ensuring that those who promote the Day in the media for HTR are adequately prepared and supported.
- 7.10. HTR should continue to publicise examples of what groups and individuals have done on the Day. This can be via the Website, HTR members, contacted groups, the Fieldworkers and the media.
- 7.11. HTR should review and expand the DoPR promotional material in collaboration with the Field Workers. The emphasis should be on incorporating images and words chosen by people who would potentially be using the materials that reflect how they understand 'reflection' and the meaning of the DoPR.
- 7.12. In whatever way it is decided to move forward, the steps taken will require resources in terms of material, outreach and coordination. These need to be defined and sought early on to enable communication around the Day to begin as soon as possible.

Long-term planning

- 7.13. It is recommended that HTR undertake an inclusive debate about the future development of the DoPR. This final recommendation therefore suggests that following the DoPR in 2010, a public conference should be held to address the questions highlighted in this evaluation.

APPENDIX I – REFERENCES

HTR Publications

Healing Through Remembering (HTR). (2009) HTR Response to *NIO Consultation on the Report of the Consultative Group on the Past*.

Healing Through Remembering (HTR). (March 2009) 21 June 2008: *Day of Private Reflection. Evaluation Report*. (Available at: [←http://www.dayofreflection.com/→](http://www.dayofreflection.com/).)

Healing Through Remembering (HTR). (March 2008) 21 June 2007: *Day of Private Reflection. Evaluation Report*. (Available at: [←http://www.dayofreflection.com/→](http://www.dayofreflection.com/).)

Healing Through Remembering (HTR). (2008) *Healing Through Remembering Conversation Guide on Dealing with the Past*.

Healing Through Remembering (HTR). (2006a) *A Day of Private Reflection: Discussion Paper and Proposal (October 2006)*.

Healing Through Remembering (HTR). (2006b) *Day of Reflection: A Scoping Study (September 2006)*.

Healing Through Remembering (HTR). (2006c) *International Experiences of Days of Reflection and Remembrance*.

Healing Through Remembering (HTR). (2006d) *Making Peace with the Past: Options for truth recovery regarding the conflict in and about Northern Ireland*.

Healing Through Remembering (HTR). (2002) *The Report of the Healing Through Remembering Project*. Belfast: HTR.

All Truth is Bitter: A Report of the Visit of Dr. Alex Boraine, Deputy Chairman of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, to Northern Ireland. (1999)

All of the reports and documents listed above are available at:
[←http://healingthroughremembering.info/index.php/resources/reports/→](http://healingthroughremembering.info/index.php/resources/reports/).

Other Sources

Consultative Group on the Past (CGoP). (2009) *Report of the Consultative Group on the Past*. (Available at: [←http://www.cgpn.org/→](http://www.cgpn.org/).)

Appendix II – Day of Reflection Sub Group 2009 and HTR Board Members

The members of the DoR Sub Group and the Board of HTR were invited to contribute their own descriptions of themselves for this report.

Day of Reflection Sub Group Members

Seán Coll (Chair) is Community Victim Support Officer with the Western Health & Social Care Trust, based in Enniskillen. He is Chair of the Healing Through Remembering Day of Reflection Sub Group. Living in County Cavan, he has worked in Fermanagh and Tyrone for over 15 years.

Kevin Cooper has been a press photographer in Belfast for over 25 years. He was for many years a trade union activist and was a Civic Forum member. Kevin is a member of WAVE. He is interested in news and current affairs, freedom of expression, equality, human rights, truth, peace and reconciliation. He grew up in East Belfast and is now living north of the city. Kevin is the former Vice Chair of the Sub Group.

Michael Culbert is the Director of the Republican ex-prisoner's association. Also a member of the EHSSB Trauma Advisory Panel and Dunlewey Substance Advice Centre management, Michael worked full time as a counsellor in North Belfast for six years.

Harold Good, President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, 2001 – 2002, has served congregations in Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and the USA. Currently, Chair of the Advice Services Alliance and formerly a member of the NI Human Rights Commission, Director of the Corrymeela Centre Ballycastle and Chair of NIACRO. In September 2005, he was one of two independent witnesses to the decommissioning of the weapons of the IRA.

Maura Kiely is the founder of the Cross Group which has been in existence for 31 years.

Alastair Kilgore worked as a teacher in East Belfast. He is a member of the Corrymeela Community and has helped host families and individuals severely traumatised by the Troubles.

Heather Kilgore is a former general practitioner who worked in East Belfast. She is a member of the Corrymeela Community and has helped host families and individuals severely traumatised by the Troubles.

Nichola Lynagh is a professional development officer for the Regional Training Unit. Previous to this position she worked as a community relations officer within the integrated education sector.

Michaela Mackin is Director of the Funding and Development Programme with the Community Relations Council. Since 1999, Michaela has been responsible for the management of financial resources and developmental support with groups working with victims and survivors of the Troubles.

Frances McCandless is Director of Policy at NICVA, the umbrella body for the voluntary and community sector. She has worked in the sector and elsewhere for 19 years.

Tommy McCay is a retired primary school teacher with over 35 years experience in education. He has been a full time voluntary member of the Columba Community of Prayer and Reconciliation in Derry and Donegal for over 25 years.

Kevin Mullan is a native of Omagh. He has worked in the North West since the 1970s in a community and priestly role.

Trevor Ringland is a solicitor in Belfast. He is chairman of the One Small Step Campaign, which promotes a shared future where people work together constructively for their mutual benefit. He is also a trustee of the RUC George Cross Foundation and an independent member of the Policing Board.

Bernice Swift is Project Manager with Fírinne working on behalf of victims of State Violence throughout County Fermanagh. Through her campaigning work on victims' issues, Bernice was introduced to the political arena and is now also an Independent Councillor on Fermanagh District Council.

Healing Through Remembering Board Members

Seán Coll is Community Victim Support Officer with the Western Health & Social Care Trust, based in Enniskillen. He is Chair of the Healing Through Remembering Day of Reflection Sub Group. Living in County Cavan, he has worked in Fermanagh and Tyrone for over 15 years.

Claire Hackett has been working in the fields of conflict resolution and dealing with the past at Falls Community Council for the last nine years. She helped to set up the Dúchas oral history archive and is currently the research co-ordinator of the Belfast Conflict Resolution Consortium, which has recently been developed from grassroots republican and loyalist interface work. She is chair of the Storytelling Sub Group of Healing Through Remembering.

Brandon Hamber is the Chairperson of Healing Through Remembering. He is Director of INCORE, a United Nations Research Centre for the Study of Conflict at the University of Ulster and a Senior Lecturer. Prior to moving to Northern Ireland, he co-ordinated the Transition and Reconciliation Unit at the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation in Johannesburg, South Africa. He is a Board member of the South African-based Khulumani Victim Support Group. He has written extensively on the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and on the psychological implications of political violence, transitional justice and reconciliation in various contexts. In addition to his work in South Africa and Northern Ireland he has participated in peace, transitional justice and reconciliation initiatives and projects in Liberia, Mozambique, the Basque Country and Sierra Leone, among others.

Alan McBride is the Co-ordinator of the WAVE Trauma Centre, (Belfast branch), a Victims and Survivors Organisation providing care for those affected by the conflict in Northern Ireland.

Dawn Purvis is leader of the Progressive Unionist Party and Assembly Member for East Belfast.

Geraldine Smyth O.P. is a theologian from Belfast, working in both Dublin and Belfast as Senior Lecturer at the Irish School of Ecumenics, Trinity College Dublin. She holds a Ph.D. in theology from Trinity College Dublin (1993) and an honorary doctorate from Queens University Belfast (2003) for service to reconciliation and public life. She has written widely in this field as well as lecturing at home and abroad, and chairs the International Advisory Group of INCORE, University of Ulster. She is also a registered psychotherapist.

Irwin Turbitt retired as Assistant Chief Constable from the PSNI having served almost 30 years in the RUC and PSNI. He has been involved in voluntary peace-building work for a number of years and has now developed a second successful career combining academic and consulting work in the areas of leadership, innovation, and governance at Warwick Business School, Leeds University Business School, The Said Business School at Oxford and the Harvard Kennedy School. He teaches and coaches, mainly public sector managers, across the UK and beyond and seeks to use these experiences in his ongoing peace work at home.

Alan Wardle is the Director of Shankill Stress and Trauma Group, an inclusive Victims/Survivors organisation based in Belfast. He has participated in international training delivery programmes, in both Kosovo and Croatia, delivering conflict management theories as well as mediation models. Alan also sits on the Belfast District Policing Partnership, supporting Communities to engage more effectively with Policing issues.

Oliver Wilkinson is the Chief Executive Officer of the Share Centre in Lisnaskea, Co. Fermanagh. He was previously CEO of Victim Support Northern Ireland and has worked within the criminal justice system, with people affected by ordinary criminal activity and also with people affected by the conflict in and about Northern Ireland.

Appendix III – Developing the Day of Private Reflection

The Evaluation Reports produced in relation to the 2007 and 2008 Days included detailed appraisals and explanations of how the initiative was developed. Necessarily, the text relating to those appraisals and explanations in the 2008 Evaluation closely resembled that of the previous year's Report.

Following the project initiation meeting for this evaluation, it was agreed that the Evaluation Report for the DoPR, 21 June 2009 would include this information as an appendix to the main Report. The author of the 2007 and 2008 Evaluations has consented to the inclusion of original text from the Evaluation Report of the DoPR, 21 June 2008 in this appendix.

What follows is part of the text from the Evaluation Report of the DoPR, 21 June 2008 (HTR, 2008), Section 3: "Background to the Day of Reflection Initiative". The only amendment to the original text appears in point 5: the composition of the current Sub Group has replaced the description of the Group as it was in 2008.

Background to the Day of Reflection Initiative

1. The Day of Private Reflection developed from the recommendations of *The Report of the Healing Through Remembering Project* (HTR, 2002). The recommendations in the report identified the principles upon which such a day could take place. The day was to:

"provide an opportunity for people to remember the events of the past in a non-confrontational, dignified and respectful manner."

It further outlined that while the emphasis was on private individual reflection that it should also contribute towards:

"ensuring a collective and public dimension whereupon many – sometimes from opposing perspectives – would be remembering and commemorated on the same day."

2. As part of the overall process of developing different areas of work HTR evolved a system of Sub Groups to cover different aspects of its work. These were:
 - story telling;
 - living memorial museum;
 - truth recovery and acknowledgement;
 - network of commemoration and remembering projects; and
 - day of reflection.
3. These Sub Groups are tasked with taking forward the various strands of work identified by HTR.
4. While there is still ongoing discussion within HTR about whether the Day of Reflection should be a collective civic event or not, the initial recommendation indicated that in the first instance it should be a day of private reflection.

5. The Day of Reflection Sub Group currently has 14 members. The Sub Group consists of a wide range of individuals who have specific interests or backgrounds in
 - a. education;
 - b. ex-prisoners;
 - c. faith groups;
 - d. interested individuals;
 - e. promoting peace building;
 - f. statutory sector;
 - g. trade unions;
 - h. voluntary sector; and
 - i. victim/survivor groups.(...)

Initial Research informing the Day of Reflection Initiative

6. HTR, in order to further develop thinking around the potential for such a day, engaged in a number of projects and consultations.
7. In order to inform further thinking about the potential for a Day of Reflection the Sub Group commissioned a research report which would draw on international examples of days of reflection and remembrance. This was aimed to help the group widen their thinking and learn lessons from other societies emerging from conflict that had, or had attempted to hold, a Day of Reflection or a Day of Remembrance.
8. The resulting report detailed *International Experiences of Days of Remembrance and Reflection* (HTR, 2006c), and was published in January 2006. The key recommendations from the report are below.
9. **Consultation:** There was a need for an inclusive consultation process. The process should take place over time and gradually to ensure that a wide range of individuals and organisations are part of the debate on what a Day of Reflection might entail.
10. **Choosing a date:** Choosing the right date is an important part of establishing a Day of Reflection. People will look at previous events that took place on the day/date chosen and depending on what other events occur, some individuals, groups or constituencies may feel uncomfortable with the date. Their reservations should be considered and acknowledged.
11. **Civil Society and Politics:** A Day of Reflection should be a community based initiative but also be part of wider social and political processes. Days unilaterally initiated without support from communities and their endorsement were, the report found, generally lacking legitimacy.
12. **Ways of Commemorating:** There are different ways of commemorating Days of Reflection or Days of Remembrance. Consideration should be given to creative activities through the consultation process and in the organisation's deliberations.

13. **One day a year:** While there is generally one day set aside for remembrance/reflection consideration should also be given to ways of promoting reflection throughout the year.

14. **The Way Forward:** The final and overarching recommendation of the report was that the development of a Day of Reflection should be approached from:

"A long-term, consultative and strategic perspective."

"The Day of Reflection should be a process that is given time and allowed room to develop."

15. In April 2006 the Day of Reflection Sub Group took the decision, based on the international research and ongoing local consultation, to focus specifically on a single Day of Reflection.

16. Initial consultation suggested that there was considerable support for the idea of a Day of Reflection. However, in the period from initial recommendations and subsequent consultation there had been a range of developments which may have impacted on initial thinking among different constituencies.

17. These included:

- a. shifts in voter support;
- b. suspension of the Northern Ireland Assembly;
- c. continued sectarian incidents; and
- d. other Days of Reflection – particularly in Sinn Fein-led Council areas.
- e. Given these changes the Sub Group agreed to undertake further consultation and a scoping study which would reflect more current views. In the course of further discussion the Sub Group agreed that the scoping study should also focus on the practical steps which would make the Day of Reflection a reality.

18. The final report, *Day of Reflection: A Scoping Study* (HTR, 2006b) was published in September 2006. The Report was based on ongoing discussions within the HTR Sub Group and 23 structured interviews with individuals representing organisations who had been identified as potential participants across a broad section of perspectives and sectors.

19. This included the experience of both Councillors and the Chief Executive of the Fermanagh District Council who had previously explored the idea of a Day of Reflection within the Fermanagh area. Most of the major political parties were represented in this part of the consultation.

20. Findings from the Scoping Study were diverse. However key themes did emerge. These included:

- a. a broad consensus that there was unmet needs concerning the legacy of the conflict;
- b. interviewees were split almost 50-50 on whether a Day of Reflection was appropriate at this time;
- c. if it were to take place almost two-thirds felt it should have a public element of reflection;
- d. importance of the support of political parties; and
- e. the need for a broad based structure to co-ordinate activity.

No consensus was reached on the need for the extent and depth of consultation and public debate needed to take this forward.

21. Based on the findings the key recommendations were that a phased approach with appropriate time to take stock between phases be developed.
22. The four phases proposed were:
 - a. initiate a debate on the Day of Reflection;
 - b. develop core principles or a charter for a Day of Reflection;
 - c. consult with a wide constituency on the core principles; and
 - d. plan and implement a Day of Reflection.
23. There was considerable emphasis on continued debate, consultation, and the seeking of views at each phase of the process.
24. The recommendations resulted in further discussion within the Sub Group and continued dialogue with external organisations and individuals. From this, and based on themes emerging from the Scoping Study, it was agreed that a Day of Reflection should take place.
25. It should be noted that at this point in time there were a considerable range of opinions within the Sub Group. The process of debate, the accommodation of often very diverse views, and the concerns that such an initiative raised all caused much discussion and difficulty for the participants in reaching consensus.
26. It is to the credit of all of the Sub Group that they managed to work through this process and reach a consensus. Even those less sure of some of the direction continued to support the Sub Group and inform the discussion so that the Day of Reflection could take place
27. All members of the Sub Group are also particularly clear that the process, while often difficult, was valuable. They were also clear that the support of staff within HTR was highly valued.
28. There were various debates, dilemmas and concerns that the Sub Group faced. Significant among these were the following:
 - a. the sensitivities around holding such a day at all;
 - b. concerns about how this might be viewed by individuals and organisations involved with those most affected by the conflict; and
 - c. the potential of resurrecting memories that might either have negative effects on an individual's own well-being or a negative effect on wider community relations.
29. Additionally, HTR struggled with being the promoters and drivers of such an event. The core of HTR's work is informing debate and facilitating others to engage in debate rather than undertaking direct project initiation. This was further complicated by the fact that this type of event could potentially have negative outcomes.
30. However, notwithstanding these dilemmas and having reached a decision to have a Day of Reflection, the Sub Group moved on very quickly to publishing *A Day of Private Reflection: Discussion Paper and Proposal* (HTR, 2006a). This outlined the debates and dilemmas already identified within the organisation and included both the rationale and concerns about going forward.

Response to Initial Research informing the Day of Reflection Initiative

31. Feedback from individuals and organisations consulted by HTR this period is very positive. There was general consensus that they felt they were listened to and that staff and members of HTR had been proactive and sensitive in their approach.
32. Even among those who had doubts or strong resistance to such a day there was agreement that they welcomed the opportunity to be part of the debate and felt their contributions had not only been listened to but responded to appropriately.
33. The journey of developing and considering the potential for such a day was necessarily a long and involved process.
34. Internally staff, the Sub Group and the wider HTR family expended significant amounts of time and commitment to ensuring that they were well informed and that all views were considered. Their attention to the sensitivities around a Day of Reflection is to be commended.
35. The research commissioned to help inform both internal thinking and to help stimulate wider debate was invaluable. In particular at an early stage the International *Experiences of Days of Remembrance and Reflection* (HTR, 2006c) proved to be a focus of much information for consideration. The report on international research remains a valuable tool for consideration of Days of Reflection and other remembrance processes both within Northern Ireland and in other countries emerging from conflict.
36. Additionally, *Day of Reflection: A Scoping Study* (HTR, 2006b) helped to progress the debate. This was important in helping the Sub Group to reach the decision to promote a Day of Private Reflection.
37. It is difficult to identify and quantify the level of other engagement and debate that went on in the community. This is largely because as well as formal consultation a considerable amount of informal contact was made with individuals and organisations. In addition, HTR and Sub Group members were able to feed back comments from their own organisations and personal contacts. However, it is clear that this was an important part of the overall process.
38. It should also be noted that HTR gave the consultation adequate time to ensure proper debate, feedback and deliberation. In particular, the decision to revisit the initial consultation process in light of the changes in the political landscape and in the wider community is to be commended.
39. In all, the process of arriving at the decision to undertake this first Day of Reflection was given the time and treated with the measured thinking that was needed to make informed decisions on such a sensitive and potentially divisive initiative.
40. *A Day of Private Reflection: Discussion Paper and Proposal* (HTR, 2006a) was produced to encourage debate and comment on the Day of Reflection which had now been set for 21 June 2007.
41. Research revealed that no day in the recent history of Northern Ireland is without memories or significant events for individuals, communities and families. Not one day in the year had escaped at least one individual being killed.

42. The decision to hold the day on 21 June followed considerable debate. The 21 June is the longest day of the year and so has a significance of being the balance between winter and summer.
43. HTR paid significant sensitivity to families who had lost loved ones on this date throughout the conflict in and about Northern Ireland. Efforts were made to make contact with all of the families in order for the reasons for the Day of Private Reflection to be discussed with them. This was done by identifying and contacting appropriate intermediaries who would know the families. This took considerable time, effort and sensitivity and all but one of the families was contacted.

Evaluation of the Day of Private Reflection (DoPR) 21 June 2007.

44. The evaluation of the 2007 DoPR found that the build-up to, and development of, the Day was well-balanced and carefully considered. As with all HTR's work, the hallmarks were ongoing consultation, dialogue, and sensitivity to people's needs.
45. HTR and the Sub Group were commended on their commitment to inclusivity; the evaluation, however, indicated that there were some gaps in its engagement – for example, with older people. This required the Sub Group to ensure that further work was set within as broad a context as possible.
46. More detail of the pre-planning consultation with groups and individuals is outlined in the previous evaluation on the 2007 DoPR (HTR, March 2008).

Appendix IV – Fieldworkers, Day of Private Reflection 2009

The Fieldworkers commissioned by HTR in 2009 were invited to include their own pen-pictures for this evaluation report. These are listed below in alphabetical order by surname:

Joe Blake is an independent consultant who has been working in the statutory, voluntary and community sector for the last 20 years. He has a particular interest in working with local community groups in the field of good relations. He is currently a member of the Northern Ireland Social Care Council and represents Comic Relief in Northern Ireland.

Bryony Flanagan is the Director of Green Hat, a community consultancy based in Co Fermanagh. She has worked on arts, peace building and community development projects all over Northern Ireland and the border counties, and has a particular interest in rural, minority ethnic and ex-combatant communities.

Lesley Macaulay has been a Community Development Facilitator for 13 years and works with a vast range of community groups and organisations. Her areas of expertise are community and good relations, strategic development, team building, personal development and evaluations. She is Chairperson of The Parents' Forum at North Coast Integrated College.

Ruth Moore, from Fermanagh, is a freelance community development practitioner who has been using community development approaches within area based community work and peace building work, primarily in Fermanagh, the North West and North Belfast, over the last 15 years. Ruth has delivered outreach work on behalf of HTR including the development of the 'A Conversation Guide on Dealing with the Past' (2008) resource.

Appendix V – Public Figure Endorsements of the Day of Private Reflection 2009

The following well-known individuals publicly endorsed the Day of Private Reflection in 2009:

Kenneth Branagh

Bronagh Gallagher

Damian Gorman

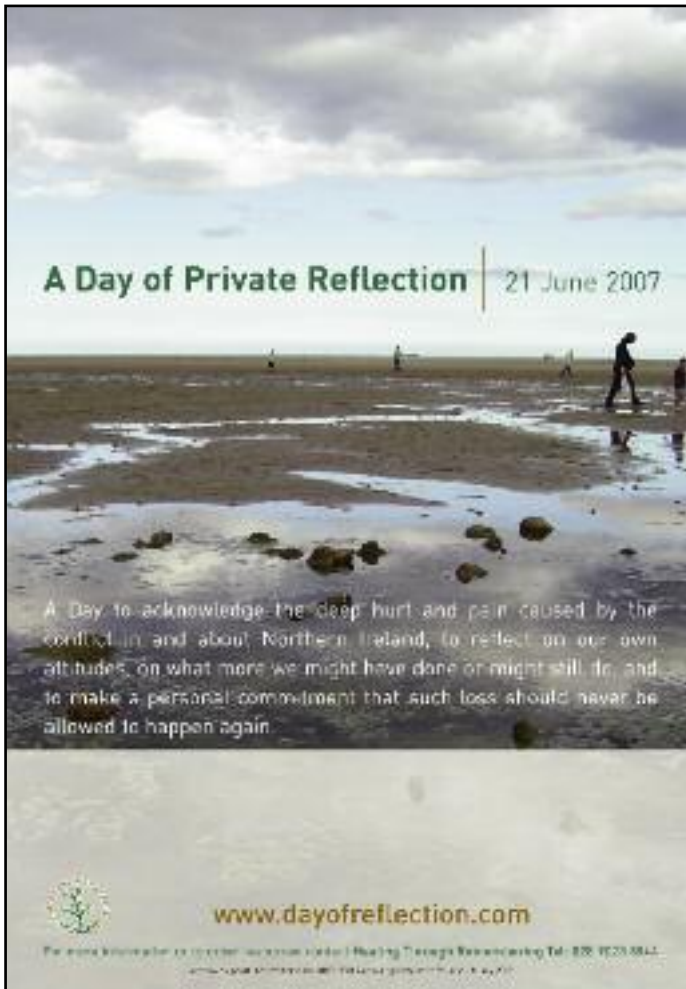
Mickey Harte

Seamus Heaney

Gloria Hunniford

David Park

Appendix VI – Materials for the Day of Private Reflection 21 June 2009



Poster (not actual size)



Wallet card (not actual size)



Leaflet (not actual size)



Postcard (not actual size)



Website home page (not actual size)



Bookmark (not actual size)

Fact Sheet on the conflict in and about Northern Ireland

- Every day of the year marks the anniversary of someone's death as a result of conflict in and about Northern Ireland.¹
- 3,725 people were killed as a result of the conflict. ²
- Approximately 47,541 people were injured.³
- There were 36,923 shootings.⁴
- 16,209 bombings were conducted.⁵
- Between 1969 and 1998, 1,533 of the deaths as a result of the conflict were under the age of 25. 257 of those killed were under the age of 18.⁶
- The largest age group (25% or 898 people) killed between 1969 and 1998 were those between the ages of 18 and 23.⁷
- As of 1998, the largest group (54%) of the deaths as a result of the conflict were civilians.⁸
- As of 1998, the largest group (68%) of those injured were civilian.⁹

¹ Healing Through Remembering, *A Day of Private Reflection: Discussion Paper and Proposal*, (Belfast: Healing Through Remembering, 2006), 4-5.

² David McKittrick, Seamus Kelters, Brian Feeney, Chris Thornton and David McVea, *Lost Lives*, (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 2007), 1552. (and updated using the Conflict Archive on the Internet (CAIN) <http://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/violence/deaths2007draft.htm>)

³ Conflict Archive on the Internet (CAIN), RUC/PSNI statistics: Table NI-SEC-05: Persons injured (number) due to the security situation in Northern Ireland (only), 1969 to 2003. Available at <http://cain.ulster.ac.uk/ni/security.htm#05>. Number is limited to injuries in Northern Ireland.

⁴ Conflict Archive on the Internet (CAIN), RUC/PSNI statistics: Table NI-SEC-06: Security related incidents (number) in Northern Ireland (only), shootings, bombings, and incendiaries, 1969 to 2003. Available at <http://cain.ulster.ac.uk/ni/security.htm#06>. Number is limited to shootings in Northern Ireland.

⁵ Conflict Archive on the Internet (CAIN), RUC/PSNI statistics: Table NI-SEC-06: Security related incidents (number) in Northern Ireland (only), shootings, bombings, and incendiaries, 1969 to 2003. Available at <http://cain.ulster.ac.uk/ni/security.htm#06>. Number is limited to bombings in Northern Ireland.

⁶ Marie-Therese Fay, Mike Morrissey and Marie Smyth, *Northern Ireland's Troubles: The Human Costs*, (London: Pluto Press, 1999), 180-192.

⁷ Marie-Therese Fay, Mike Morrissey and Marie Smyth, *Northern Ireland's Troubles: The Human Costs*, (London: Pluto Press, 1999), 181.

⁸ Marie-Therese Fay, Mike Morrissey and Marie Smyth, *Northern Ireland's Troubles: The Human Costs*, (London: Pluto Press, 1999), 159.

⁹ Marie-Therese Fay, Mike Morrissey and Marie Smyth, *Northern Ireland's Troubles: The Human Costs*, (London: Pluto Press, 1999), 160.

Words for Reflection

Too much has been done to us, and by us, and too much left undone.

How can we heal the hurts of our society?

Let our minds be enlightened by reflection on our attitudes and the consequences of conflict. Allow that enlightenment to be established in our being and thus provide the resolution, strength and steadfastness to contribute to an inclusive and peaceful society.

- *Anonymous*

When great trees fall, after a period, peace blooms ... slowly and always irregularly.

- *Maya Angelou*

Be the change you wish to see in the world.

- *Gandhi*

Peace – it does not mean to be in a place where there is no noise, trouble or hard work. It means to be in the midst of those things and still be calm in your heart.

- *Unknown*

Do not go where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.

- *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Always hold firmly to the thought that each of us can do something to bring some portion of misery to an end.

- *Unknown*

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

- *Margaret Mead*

The shadowy figures that look out at us from the tarnished mirror of history are, in the final analysis, ourselves.

- *Unknown*

In the final analysis, our most basic common link is that we all inhabit this small planet, we all breathe the same air, we all cherish our children's future, and we are all mortal.

- *John F. Kennedy*

I now understand that my welfare is only possible if I acknowledge my unity with all the people of the world without exception.

- *Leo Tolstoy*

Some ideas for preparing for or observing the Day of Private Reflection for youth-based groups and schools

This list is not exhaustive and in no means prescriptive. It merely offers a number of possibilities for participating in the Day.

- While school assemblies on the day could be considered prescriptive (i.e. forcing students to participate in the Day when it is supposed to be private and voluntary), an assembly before the Day might be a good way to help raise awareness among young people as to its purpose and how they can observe the Day in their own way.
- Check out our list of resources on the website (www.dayofreflection.com) for various readings that can be used to help foster reflection. Make copies of these available if anyone would like to have some assistance on the Day.
- Teachers and youth workers can assemble lesson plans or discussion guides related to the Day, asking questions to help students reflect on their memories, stories they've heard, commonalities and differences, what the past means, and what kind of society they want for the future.
- Stories can be told, helping students to place past, present, and future into a relevant context.
- Utilise music, films, and art as a means of reflection through either discussion or personal meditation.

Some ideas for preparing for or observing the Day of Private Reflection in the workplace

This list is not exhaustive and in no means prescriptive. It merely offers a number of possibilities for participating in the Day.

- You can support the Day of Private Reflection by signing up on the website (www.dayofreflection.com) welcoming it and encouraging colleagues and friends to observe the Day.
- Look at the list of resources on the website for various readings that can be used to help foster reflection. Make copies of these or email them to colleagues in case they would like to have some assistance on the Day.
- Download the "Words for Reflection" from the resource page of the Day of Reflection website and place copies of them with notice of the day on public notice boards.
- Dedicate a quiet space within the office for colleagues to go in order to reflect during the Day e.g. a meeting room.
- In meetings, hold a moment of silence in observance of the Day.
- If a group wants to, make space in the office during the Day for discussion or group reflection. While this is a private day, some venues will find this expression of reflection appropriate. Feel free to observe the Day however is appropriate for your workplace.

Day of Private Reflection 2009 Reflections on Bible Readings for Sunday 21 June 2009

A Day of Reflection provides space to reflect, personally and collectively on a tragic past, publicly acknowledge pain, renew commitment to the process of peacebuilding, ensuring that never again will we resort to violence to resolve our differences and conflicts. It provides space also to be courageous and dream of a different and better future. Our reflection, therefore, connects with the past, present and future. But there is more liberation and healing if we reverse the flow: future, present, past.

Being a Sunday gives an added dimension to reflective faith. The 21st June already has the suggestive symbolism of being the longest day. It is the day in our northern hemisphere when there is the least darkness and the most light. The symbolism does not minimise the reality of darkness for those who have suffered and who carry the emotional and physical scars of the tragic past. The symbolism of the day is of light, the light that is always there, but at its greatest today, and therefore becomes the symbol of hope. There is nothing cheap about hope, no superficial optimism, but a refusal to believe that the darkness of human experience has the last word.

From a Christian faith perspective, every Sunday is resurrection day. This is no *'Jesus lived happily ever after'* story, but the affirmation that when the systems of hatred and violence had done their worst, God said yes to the ultimate power of love, non-violence, justice and peace. All of these values embodied in Jesus were vindicated. Life can be lived hopefully and differently. Summer equinox and resurrection day provide us with profound reflective foci for this year's Day of Reflection. They also provide us with lenses through which to reflect on today's readings from the Judeo-Christian scriptures.

I Samuel 17 (1a, 4-11, 19-23) 32-49 – Living With a Violent History

Emerging from over three decades of violent conflict, itself part of a longer history of centuries of violent conflict, makes Bible reading easy or difficult. Texts have been used to legitimise and justify violence in Ireland's past and present and God has been invoked in historical political documents to bless violence. In this context the story of a young boy killing a giant in battle makes for easy reading. The story and other stories of violence in the book of I Samuel make very difficult reading for others. How can God be involved with such killing and violence? How do we live with a violent history in the Bible and in the modern Irish story? Is violence an inevitable part of human experience? Are we *'hard wired'* for violence? Today's reading from the Hebrew Bible might help us reflect on the violence of our history and the ambivalence towards violence within ourselves.

The story of David and Goliath belongs to a larger context in Israel's story. The opening chapters of I Samuel reflect on a period of radical social transformation in Israel. A time of confederal tribal government through judges had ended and was being replaced by the centralised governance of monarchy. It was a time of critical tension in Israel with some wanting a monarch like other nations, which meant militarism and social elitism. Others like Samuel were opposed to monarchy fearing that this would take the small community away from its more egalitarian socio-economic and political existence. In other words monarchy like that of Israel's neighbours would lead to abuses of power, violence and injustices. I Samuel reflects this period of crisis and transition. Saul's reign descends into violence and tragedy. David does a mighty deed in killing the Philistine Goliath on his way to the throne. David's reign is idealised and becomes the benchmark for the subsequent

history of Kings. Though David is often portrayed as hero, as in the killing of Goliath, he is no paradigm of virtue. A royal theology develops around David's reign, but it becomes a violent use of royal power to defend royal privileges. A prophetic theological tradition has God refusing David the right to build a temple because he was a person of bloodshed and violence. Violence and worship are always incompatible.

David's successor Solomon is a complete disaster as monarch, using royal violence and provoking community violence through his abuses of power and social and political injustices. By the end of his reign violence is all-pervasive and the kingdom violently and tragically divides.

The Bible tells it as it is, including Solomon's pious prayer at the dedication of his temple. Violence and injustice invoke God to bless the systems!

These stories of monarchy, of which the David and Goliath episode is a part, need to be read in the light of Israel's prophetic tradition. In this tradition God is portrayed as sovereign Creator and Sovereign over Israel, and in total contrast to Israel's history of monarchy. Royal theology and prophetic theology do not mix. God's rule has a moral bias to justice and right relations based on social, distributive justice. God's rule is therefore not morally and theologically neutral and that includes towards militarism and violence and their unjust abuses of power and structures. This portrait of God is foundational to Israel's deepest insights into God and essential to Israel's most profound vision of communal life.

A difficult reading, when placed in its larger biblical context, opens up radical reflection on our tragic history of violence and an alternative vision of a future with a moral bias to social justice and right relations.

Psalm 9 v 9-20 – Victims Shall Not Always Be Forgotten

There is little consensus in Northern Ireland as to who is a victim. Some want to claim victimhood as a badge of identity. For others it is a political point. Innocence is the key issue for others. Yet others who have suffered in the violent conflict do not want to be known as victims. Anonymity is the wish of some. Victim remains a contested term. Yet many died and many more suffered physically and psychologically, and for all the pain remains. For many it may never go away.

A Day of Reflection does not need to address the contested nature of victimhood. A category or label does not get anywhere near the depth and trauma of human suffering and loss. Perhaps only God knows the depths of all suffering. Certainly in the face of a suffering community only a suffering God will do.

Hebrew poetry, or what we call the Psalms, moves across the entire spectrum of human experience. The majority of the Psalms are Psalms of lament, complaint, argument with God, expressions of anger and sometimes, understandably, longings for vengeance. Israel's faith knew when and how to call God into question and demand answers from a silent or absent God. That was and is faith.

Today's Psalm is a bit more hopeful, but not in any superficial way. It should be noted that Psalms 9 and 10 belong together. They were originally a single poem, every other line from the beginning of 9 to the end of 10 beginning with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet. This single poem holds two different responses in tension. The key note in Psalm 9 is thanksgiving or gratitude, while Psalm 10 is complaint or lament. How can faith hold together thanksgiving and lament, both gratitude to God and complaint? For Israel it was not

either/or, but both/and. That may well reflect the strangeness of human experience and is closer to human reality than either/or.

Victims shall not always be forgotten. In Psalms 9 and 10 the afflicted, poor and oppressed are remembered. These Psalms were probably sung at worship in Babylonian exile, the very location where at first they could not *'sing the Lord's song in a strange land'* (Psl 137). Somehow they found voice again. In their trauma and pain they found a suffering God who was utterly committed to justice and right relations (righteousness). They came to know God and their experience or knowing was of a God who stands for justice. The God who *'avenges blood is mindful of them, he does not forget the cry of the afflicted'* (Psl 9 v 12). The One who *'avenges blood'* is not a punitive God wreaking vengeance and destruction on those who oppress and inflict violence and suffering, though justice does demand that the right be done. Here the words mean *'one who values human life'*. God values life and so God remembers those who cry for help. Those who belong to God are the afflicted, poor and helpless. Only God knows the depth of suffering and perhaps God alone knows the victims. There is much that is beyond our human and limited grasp. *'The Lord is King forever and ever'* (Psl 10 v 16) and God's restorative justice will be. This faith impels us into the post-conflict struggle to partner God at work in the world, in valuing life and working for restorative justice and right relations.

II Corinthians 6 v 1-13 – Suffering Love and Reconciliation

Nelson Mandela is a high profile global senior citizen. Physically more frail now, his moral and spiritual stature remains as strong as ever. We may not fully understand how Mandela, after spending decades suffering confinement and isolation in prison, emerged through the prison gates with so little bitterness and so much willingness to forgive. How this victim of apartheid was able to act towards his oppressors with such moral and spiritual authority is awesome and even mysterious. From a Christian perspective it is the mystery of grace, the power of suffering love which is the heart of God and the universe. Mandela did not switch this on a few days before release from prison. His life to the point had been a process of becoming. On release from prison he was what he had become. Dealing with justifiable bitterness and opening wide his heart (II Cor 6 v 13) in forgiveness and restored relationships to his oppressors was and is an art that requires nurture and practice. The moral and spiritual authority of Nelson Mandela was a major dynamic in the transformation of South Africa from an apartheid state to a rainbow nation. Suffering and reconciliation always go together.

These indivisible themes are the heart of Paul's' second letter to the Corinthians, especially chapters 1-7 and 10-13. The letter as it appears in the Christian testament is more likely his fourth letter to this faith community, possibly even his fifth or sixth. Between the two letters he seems to have written another and II Corinthians itself may be a composite of two or more letters. This may reflect the depths of the problems and divisions Paul had to deal with through correspondence with this awkward and problematic faith community. However many letters some editorial friend of Paul has cut and pasted to form II Corinthians, the unifying theme is suffering love. God is portrayed as a God of suffering love and God's power is not power over or almightiness, but crucified power. For Paul the death of Jesus was an expression of crucified love and power, saying something radically different about the God of life from the god of empire, or the god of much of Christendom. If Paul himself has any moral authority in his life and ministry, it is because of his suffering at the hands of imperial power and oppressive systems (II Cor 6 v 4-11). Paul too has moved beyond bitterness and nurtured the art of forgiveness, expressing a different form of power, the power of suffering love in his relationships with the Corinthians and others. The Day of Reflection provides space to reflect on how we use power in our relationships, and how power is used in the politics of governance in Ireland and elsewhere.

The other key and central theme in II Corinthians 1-7 and 10-13 is reconciliation. In chapter 5 Paul has articulated reconciliation as the heart of God's purpose for all life and the essence of Paul's ministry as servant of God in the world. The reconciliation theme continues into today's reading. Paul's assertion is that cruciform love is reconciliation. Suffering love is reconciling praxis in God and by the people of God. An act of reconciliation is an act of suffering love, God's act towards us and our act of genuine, cruciform love towards others. Paul's deep concern is that the Corinthians have not '*accepted the grace of God in vain*' (II Cor 6 v 1). In the context, what else could that be but the refusal to practice reconciliation in the world?

Reconciliation is a social concern and practice. In community, relationships are put right. In his letter to the Romans relationships are put right through the practice of justice (Rom 5). Relationships are restored, hostility and enmity are ended and alienation is overcome. Nothing of this is possible through power over others or power as domination. Reconciliation is power with, power shared and is shaped by the cross of Jesus. It is cruciform love as reconciliation. Perhaps it is only those who know suffering love who can become the reconcilers in our society. Can our suffering past lead us to the desired reconciliation?

Mark 4 v 35-41 – A Perilous Crossing to the Other Side

How goes the decade's long journey of reconciliation? Perhaps the greatest danger of the present is to think that the conflict is over, the problem of community division solved, and we can simply get on with life. The war is over. There are not a few signs that people of faith and others have settled into that delusion. Peace, in the words of a Hebrew poet and the Christian first letter of Peter, is to be pursued. That suggests it is often elusive. Reconciliation is a lengthy process not a quick fix or a fast food. Peacebuilding and reconciliation are generational, even a three-decades activity. Sometimes they are high risk and it may be that we prefer a comfort zone to the demand and risk of being peacemakers and reconcilers.

Mark tells not one but two stories of perilous sea-crossings. The second is found in Mark 6 v 45-56. The story-telling language reflects images, symbols and mythologies from the Hebrew Scriptures and the East in general. All of Israel's neighbours had mythology depicting the storm god triumphing over the raging water of the monster of chaos. Hebrew poetry picked up this theme in contrast to Baal and Marduk, the Canaanite and Babylonian gods respectively. Psalm 107 v 23-25 portrays God in combat and victorious over the forces of chaos, often symbolised by the sea. Mark's imaginative story-telling echoes and reflects these myths, symbols and themes and offers profound insights to a faith community struggling to exist in a war zone. The foreground to Mark's gospel is the terrible Jewish-Roman war of 66-70 CE. It was not an easy place for the small Jesus movement community to be.

There is a suggestive reflection in the fearful and desperate cry of Jesus' friends as the wind and sea rages. In the maelstrom of chaos, a brutal war zone, who cares? There is no one to share the distress, panic and fear. Who cares for us in our suffering? There is the intense loneliness of suffering, a seemingly solitary experience. It would have been the experience of a small faith community caught in the middle of a Jewish-Roman war, suspect from both sides. It was the experience of many during our 30 years plus of violence. Who cared, especially after the story disappeared from the front page and many were left in the loneliness of their grief and suffering. Sometimes not even God seemed to care. Perhaps some have never recovered a faith in a loving, caring God. Some may even have survived without faith. Reflection today may take us to deep and strange places.

Both of Mark's sea-crossing stories have a radical sub-text. '*Let us go across to the other side*' (Mark 4 v 35), is not a mere geographical reference. Chapter 5 begins on the other side, a strange and foreign place with mad people and mad pigs! Chapter 6 sea-crossing ends with another border crossing into a place full of sick people. The '*other side*' is a symbolic locale, a journey to the unknown, the foreign, the '*other side*' of humanity (Ched Myers). As in Eastern and Hebrew myth the sea symbolises chaos, threat and danger. There are huge risks in going to the '*other side*', real-life social hostility. It is dangerous activity. Jesus' '*integration activity*' might threaten to '*drown*' the community of faith. But the sea-crossing to the '*foreign land*', the '*other side*' has to be made. The sea-crossings are risky stories of radical reconciliation. This is core to Marks' vision of the kingdom or reign of God. Active faith goes to the '*other side*'. For Mark it is the essence of discipleship. Today's gospel may make a Day of Reflection uncomfortable, certainly challenging.

Rev Dr Johnston McMaster

Irish School of Ecumenics

Day of Private Reflection 2009

APPENDIX VII – The Day of Private Reflection 21 June 2009: Summary of Activities THAT HTR IS AWARE TOOK PLACE

1. Formal and informal consultation in the course of this evaluation has revealed that numerous individuals and organisations marked the DoPR on 21 June 2009.
2. Further to this consultation, it was noted that several events and activities that were held by diverse groups were highlighted in both local and regional media. As indicated in the main body of the Report, events were nuanced, with groups and individuals deciding for themselves what specifically they wished to do, and how to make the opportunity to reflect 'work for them' or 'make it their own'.
3. As noted in previous evaluations,
(I)t is impossible to gauge the level of input into the Day of Private Reflection as activities were widespread across Northern Ireland and beyond. The very nature of a Day of Private Reflection means that feedback will never be comprehensive and will always be anecdotal because many people did reflect in private.

However, as noted above, the evaluation process found that many individuals and groups are frustrated with what they perceive as a lack of direction from HTR itself regarding 'what people should do' on the Day.

4. While HTR understands this frustration, the organisation is still reluctant to give any specific direction to groups and individuals. To do so would be to take control of the Day in a way that goes counter to the ethos that the Day is for everyone and anyone who wishes to reflect in his/her own way.
5. Taking all of the above into account, the following list has been included. It gives a selection of examples of what diverse groups did to mark the DoPR, while at the same time demonstrating that HTR continues to resist becoming prescriptive about what happens on the Day.

As in previous years, the ways in which groups marked the Day were too numerous to detail here; it is hoped that the following examples will indicate the range of both the organisations involved and the activities that took place:

- Oakgrove Integrated College in Londonderry/Derry held an assembly on 19 June, including an audiovisual presentation commemorating those who lost their lives in the conflict and a minute's silence, to mark the Day.
- The various regional WAVE Trauma Centres marked the Day in different ways, all on days close to 21 June but not on the Day itself. The activities chosen included keeping the Armagh centre open with a Remembrance Book available for people to record thoughts and prayers; inviting members in Omagh to a service with reflection and music followed by a light lunch; and launching a new artwork (a wishing well) in the garden of the Belfast centre.
- The RUC George Cross Memorial Garden was open on 21 June for pre-arranged visits to facilitate private reflection;

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- Firinne's premises were open on 21 June, with the Ceremonial Candle-Tree lit and *Lost Lives* available for visitors to consult if they wished.
 - The Community Relations Forum, Newtownabbey, held a reflection session that members of the public were welcome to attend in the Barron Hall on 21 June.
 - A number of Presbyterian, Methodist, Catholic and other churches were open to provide a space for private reflection on the afternoon of 21 June. Each parish or congregation made it clear that 'All were welcome' to come into their churches to reflect in a safe and quiet space. In some instances, partnerships were established between neighbouring churches from different denominations to share the resources they were using to aid reflection. For example, one parish invited people to cast a stone in a pool of water, and to reflect on the ripples that it caused; later that evening, the same 'props' were used by a neighbouring congregation.
 - A digital showing of The Linen Memorial, which is a creative chronology of the names of those killed between 1966 and 2008, was arranged by Lycia Trouton in the Canada Room and Council Chamber at Queen's University Belfast on the afternoon of 21 June. The event was open to the public, and incorporated speakers and the opportunity to record thoughts and reflections in a guestbook. (For more information about The Linen Memorial, see www.linenmemorial.org)
 - St Anthony's Retreat Centre and the Iosias Centre (of the Columba Community, Donegal) were both open for quiet reflection on the Day.
 - St Ethelburga's Centre for Peace and Reconciliation in London was open to the public on the afternoon of 19 June to mark the Day.
 - The Corrymeela Centre in Ballycastle held an open event on the afternoon of 21 June to 'reflect on, honour and remember the past'. The event included making and flying kites with personal messages on them. Richard Moore, director of Children in Crossfire, also shared his story with those present.
 - The Irish School of Ecumenics in Belfast and Dublin marked the Day on 21 and 22 June respectively. Students and friends of the ISE in Belfast were invited to share their lunch and participate in a walk up Cave Hill, while a space for quiet reflection was set up in Bea House in Dublin.
6. As stated above this is not an exhaustive list; it only reflects those activities of which HTR was made aware. Research each year has shown that there a range of activities happen of which HTR has not been informed.



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