

# Press Release - 1993 Compilation

Preamble to 1985 Agreement - 12th November, 1993

## Peace Group publish new book

The Interchurch Group on Faith and Politics has just published *Breaking Down the Enmity*.

The Group, which was founded in 1983, is made up of Catholics and Protestants from North and South. It has a well established reputation for dealing with political issues from a hard headed stance, but one that also takes account of the radical demands of the Gospel.

In the book the Group challenge the two Governments as well as both communities within NI.

### *On the Anglo-Irish Agreement:*

The Group stresses the importance of the Preamble to the Agreement which has been overlooked by many commentators. It contains principles, agreed by the two Governments, which if implemented, could form a basis for peace. Among these are:

- The recognition of a unique relationship between the two countries;
- The recognition of the need to respect the two traditions within Northern Ireland.
- The recognition of the need for each community to respect the identity of the other.

*The basic issue that needs to be grasped by the Unionist community is to agree to a significant sharing of power within NI.*

*The Nationalist community also needs to face up to the hard choices involved in power sharing, such as taking responsibility for policing.*

Policing NI is difficult. It is hard to find evidence to convict paramilitaries, and in practice it is members of the Unionist community who police the Nationalist community. There is no simple security solution to the problem, but order has to be maintained in the absence of a political agreement.

If the two Governments are serious about the Agreement they must work together to provide a stable framework for NI. As part of this work they need to act as guarantors to provide security, proper recognition of each group's identity, and constitutional certainty.

Far from being an idealistic dream the politics of reconciliation is the only realistic politics for NI. Forgiveness at times appears impossible. "To reach it is a miracle of grace and to many it will only be given after a long pilgrimage of darkness, and sometimes despair."

In these islands we face the choice of making peace with each other "*or our eventual destruction as a community*".

The Group invite Churches, study groups, individuals to accept their ideas, or failing that, to suggest alternative ways in which the link between faith and politics may be made more adequately.

In the words of Kevin Boyle (Director of the Human Rights Centre, Essex University): "In these pages you will find more than morsels of hope. You will find the ideas from which a democratic future can be constructed."