Place for Hope – Responding to Sectarianism

Evaluation Report by Charlie Irvine, June 2013

Charlie Irvine
is Visiting Professor at the University of Strathclyde Law School and
Course Leader on the MSc in Mediation and Conflict Resolution:
www.strath.ac.uk/humanities/courses/law/courses/mediation/

Place for Hope
is a not-for-profit organisation set up by the Church of Scotland in 2009.
It has trained both ministers and lay people in facilitation and mediation
and is involved in addressing congregational conflict throughout Scotland.
It aims to "support and enable 21st century church, communities and society in Scotland
to develop creative, positive and life-giving ways to explore and address our differences."
www.placeforhope.org.uk

Abstract

*"By inviting relative strangers to speak to each other, dialogue inevitably starts
with a move from safety to risk."* (Evaluation Report, p.19)

In early 2013 Place for Hope conducted a series of community dialogues on the subject
of sectarianism in Scotland with an initial focus on rural areas and a national 'stakeholders'
group. It commissioned an evaluation of the project's three aims: breaking down barriers,
increasing our understanding of sectarianism and demonstrate the value of dialogue.
This report sets out the findings.

The evaluation used observation, interviews and written reports. It found that sectarianism
does exist outside Scotland's Central Belt, with Catholics rather than Protestants relating the
great majority of incidents. Other findings include the significance of Catholics' position
within the UK constitution; other sources of division such as anti-English sentiment or the
secular/faith divide; and religious people criticising and distancing themselves from those
who act in a sectarian way. Faith schools remain a source of controversy.

When it came to the dialogues themselves, participants appreciated the opportunity to
speak to those of other traditions but felt the approach could both go to a deeper level
given more time, and could be taken to more challenging groups. The report concludes
that demonstrating the value of dialogue is still a work in progress and that the approach
should be tested in riskier settings and over a longer timescale.

Introduction

The term "sectarianism" carries particular weight in Scotland. Speaking in the debate on the Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Bill, the Minister for Community Safety, Roseanna Cunningham, linked the term with a range of negative attributes including *"offensive"*, *"vile"*, *"bigotry"*, *"hatred"* and *"violent"*, adding *"we cannot simply shake our heads and say, 'This is the way it's always been and the way it always will be.'"*[1] The word sectarianism is so taken for granted that a definition is rarely provided, even by those funding efforts to address "it". One useful definition is *"an ideology of conflict rooted in religious differences."*[2] The charity Nil by Mouth prefers *"Narrow-minded beliefs that lead to prejudice, discrimination, malice and ill-will towards members, or presumed members, of a religious denomination."*[3]

While the Bill is now law,[4] the Scottish Government was clear that it would require more than legislation to address this problem. In November 2011 it announced *"wide-ranging action to tackle the root causes of sectarianism."* As part of that initiative, Place for Hope was invited to design and conduct a series of community dialogues with the intention of weighing up the potential of mediation-based approaches in addressing sectarianism.

Place for Hope asked me to evaluate this project. From its inception in September 2012 through to completion in March 2013 I was given access to planning, training and preparation meetings as well as to two dialogues and a stakeholder meeting. I also conducted telephone interviews with ten individuals who participated in the dialogues. This report sets out my findings.

It contains the following sections:

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[1] Debate on the Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Bill: Stage 1, 23 June 2011, see http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28862.aspx?r=6576&mode=pdf

[2] Rory Williams and Patricia Walls, "Gone but not gone: Catholic Disadvantage in Scotland" in T. M. Devine (Editor) *Scotland's Shame? Bigotry and Sectarianism in Modern Scotland.* Edinburgh: Mainstream Press, 2000, p.232

[3] 'What is sectarianism?' - http://nilbymouth.org/what-is-sectarianism/ Last accessed 13/4/13

[4] The Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communication (Scotland) Act 2012 was enacted on 31 March 2012 – see http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Justice/law/sectarianism-action-1/football-violence/bill

1. The Scottish Government's Initiative on Sectarianism

A great deal has been written about sectarianism in Scotland.[5] The current initiative followed some particularly disturbing incidents in 2010 and 2011.[6] Faced with criticism that the law is a blunt instrument with which to tackle deep-seated societal issues, the Minister for Community Safety, Roseanna Cunningham, proposed a *"fresh approach to tackling sectarianism and bigotry that puts supporting communities at its heart."* In November 2011 she announced the creation of a £3 million fund to help tackle sectarianism for which organisations were invited to bid.

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While Scottish Government made clear its desire to *"tackle"* sectarianism*,* Place for Hope's proposal recognised that we in Scotland are still at an early stage in our understanding of what might be effective. Place for Hope therefore preferred to use the term *"respond to sectarianism"*. As well as contributing to our understanding of sectarianism, the current project sought evidence for the usefulness of community dialogue.

2. What is Community Dialogue?

Dialogue is a simple term describing conversation between two people. It has always held attractions for those wishing to address conflict, not least because of its inherent non-violence: when people are talking they are not fighting. Johan Galtung, one of the pioneers of UN peacemaking efforts, talks of the *"duty of dialogue"*[9] as the best response to the human right to life. When a previous Scottish Government sought to address religious difference it published a guide entitled *"Belief in Dialogue."*[10]

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[5] See Devine, 2000, for a wide-ranging collection of perspectives inspired by James McMillan's 1999 speech entitled "Scotland's Shame". For the most recent statistics on religiously aggravated crime see the Scottish Government Report *Religiously Aggravated Offending in Scotland, 2010-2011,* available from www.scotland.gov.uk/socialresearch

[6] As is often the case. Writing about a previous Scottish Executive Action Plan on Sectarianism, John Flint claimed that: "*The manifestation of sectarianism through urban disorder appears to be the primary focus"* John Flint, "Governing Sectarianism in Scotland." *Scottish Affairs, no.63, spring 2008*

[7] Place for Hope LEAP Report, February 2013

[8] Ongoing dialogue was a key feature of the Northern Ireland peace process, and the first steps were frequently described as "single identity" work. Work with Rangers Football Club would come into this category, but at the time of writing these dialogues have yet to take place.

[9] Johan Galtung, 1999, cited in Amanda E Keller and Kelly K Ryan 'Definition, Necessity, and Nansen: Efficacy of Dialogue in Peacebuilding' *Conflict Resolution Quarterly, Vol 25 (4) Summer 2012, p.353*

[10] The Scottish Working Group on Belief and Relations (2011) *Belief in Dialogue: Religion and Belief Relations, Good Practice Guide* Edinburgh: Scottish Government, available from http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/347464/0115683.pdf

Much of the writing on the subject is North American, [11] with some from Ireland,[12] but little is known about the effectiveness of this approach in Scotland. In 2009 the Queen Margaret University Centre for Dialogue hosted a forum entitled "Dialogue in Scotland", which attempted to address what it perceived as the confusion surrounding the term.[13] The forum identified the following fundamental qualities of dialogue:

- Transparency and disclosure
- Inclusiveness and egalitarian participation
- Quality listening
- Respect and openness
- Search for common ground and exploration of differences
- Balance of advocacy and inquiry.[14]

A key feature of most dialogue processes is the presence of an independent facilitator or facilitators. The forum considered the impact of Scottish culture on the viability of dialogue processes. There was considerable speculation about the potentially negative effect of the following: perceived short-term political cycles; outcome-driven organisational culture; and general lack of confidence in citizens' capacity to speak out.[15]

Community dialogue implies having such a conversation within a locality or group. This holds attractions for work in responding to sectarianism where communities are by and large mixed. People from both sides of the sectarian divide tend to live side by side with those of other faiths and none, particularly outside the Central Belt. One of the core values of community dialogue is *"co-existence"*.[16] Another is the idea of *"encountering the other"*, allowing people to *"speak fully and be listened to whilst creating opportunities for the exploration of each other's ideology, perceptions, attitudes, and sense of history"* leading to the *"full humanization of those we encounter in daily life."* [17] Physicist David Bohm spoke of dialogue as *"a means to access our thinking while we are thinking"*, suspending judgement, not in the sense of giving up our opinions, but in his words: *"I suspended my thoughts from the ceiling like artworks so I could see them more clearly and have others help make sense of them."*[18]

Bohm is also credited with identifying four stages of dialogue:
1.   *"Shared Monologues", in which group members get used to talking to each other*
2.   *"Skillful Discussion", in which people learn the skills of dialogue*
3.   *"Reflective Dialogue", in which people engage in genuine dialogue*
4.   *"Generative Dialogue", in which "creative" dialogue is used to generate new ideas.[19]*
Place for Hope used this framework both in training its facilitators and in evaluating the dialogues.

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[11] For a summary of recent research see 'Colloquy on Dialogue Processes' *Conflict Resolution Quarterly Vol.29, no.4 and Vol.30, no.1 (2012);* see also John Forester, *Dealing With Differences: Dramas of Mediating Public Disputes.* Oxford: Oxford University Press (2009). For a more critical view see Shawn Rosenburg, 'Rethinking Democratic Deliberation: The Limits and Potential of Citizen Participation' *Polity, Vol. 39, no.3 (2007) 335-360*
[12] Geoffrey Corry, 'Political Dialogue Workshops: Deepening the Peace Process in Northern Ireland' *Conflict Resolution Quarterly, Vol.30, no.1 (2012) 53-79*
[13] Magda Pieczka, Emma Wood and Oliver Escobar *Dialogue in Scotland? A Forum for Practitioners* Edinburgh: Queen Margaret University Working Paper 2, 2010. Available from
http://www.qmu.ac.uk/mcpa/CDial/DialogueForumReport.pdf
[14] *Ibid.* p.4
[15] *Ibid.* p.19.20
[16] Keller and Ryan (2012) p.356
[17] *Ibid.* p.358
[18] David Bohm (1996) cited in Keller and Ryan (2012) p.359
[19] William Isaacs, cited in Kenneth Cloke, *How to Design, Organize, and Conduct Community Dialogues* Mediators Beyond Borders Best Practices Paper, provided to Place for Hope

3. The Project: Planning and Preparation

Community dialogue is Place for Hope's preferred approach in addressing congregational conflict.[20] Its case to the Scottish Government stressed the organisation's skills and experience in working with large groups and in creating safe spaces for people to speak openly and honestly.

The plan involved:
1) Selection (two facilitators per dialogue)
2) Training and induction (focusing particularly on sectarianism)
3) Recruiting two hosts in each area, one Catholic and one Protestant, who would in turn invite influencers from their own communities
4) Conducting two community dialogues in each of four locations outside the Central Belt (three rural and one urban)
5) Conducting a community dialogue with Rangers Newco (this has not yet taken place)
6) Holding two Stakeholders meetings in Edinburgh with representatives of the media, police, health, central/local government, education, mediation and the church
7) Reporting to Scottish Government

Selection and training took place in September and October 2012. I attended one induction session for facilitators on 5 October. When asked what they hoped the project would achieve, the answers fell into three categories: breaking down barriers, increasing our understanding of sectarianism and demonstrate the value of dialogue. When asked what we needed to know, the answers were broader:
- *How to establish rapport with a diverse group*
- *How to get through the front door*
- *How to get folk to 'buy in'*
- *Why 'religious' labels still matter to people*
- *In what ways does 'difference' affect their lives?*
- *For community dialogue: tools for use in all settings*
- *For all: stories, respect, deepening relationships*
- *The 'key/core' identity matters of people/groups*
- *How others think/feel*

I also asked what their "inner sceptic" was saying. The answers revealed concerns about: the Scottish Government's political agenda; whether the people with most to gain from conflict reduction would engage; Place for Hope being too strongly identified with the Church of Scotland; the short timescale; scratching the surface; people not really changing; and *"Are we just stirring it?"* It seems that the facilitators bought into the project goals while at the same time retaining a sense of realism about the magnitude of the task.

The dialogues themselves took place in four non-Central Belt locations in January and February 2013. The choice of locations needs explanation. It is clear that the most Scots associate sectarianism with the West of Scotland, a largely urban area with a history of heavy industry and large-scale Irish immigration in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. For good and understandable reasons most efforts to address sectarianism have been targeted here. However, Place for Hope's networks in other parts of Scotland highlighted the possibility of hidden sectarianism: conversely, some suggested that "there is no

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[20] Place for Hope Project Report (2013), submitted to the Project Advisory Group and on file with the author

sectarianism here".[21] Whichever is correct, little is know about the impact of sectarianism outside the Central Belt and Place for Hope's extensive network of faith communities made it well placed to address these areas.

The facilitators were not local to the area in which they were working, in order to underscore their neutrality. On the other hand the two hosts in each location were local, usually ministers from Catholic and Protestant faith communities. They played an important role in selecting and inviting people to participate in the dialogues. The Project Manager had prepared invitations for them to send out.[22] Community dialogue is a relative novelty in Scotland and it was important to provide an explanation of its purpose and goals. At the same time the facilitators had agreed in their initial induction not to provide a definition of sectarianism: this was to allow local perceptions to emerge without fear of transgressing some "official" line on the subject.

Practicalities

The dialogues followed a standard shape:
1. Welcome, meal and introductions
2. Sharing stories/experiences of sectarianism
3. Reflecting on the issues that have arisen
4. Exploring possible ways forward together

The facilitators had agreed that sharing a meal would be a good way for people to get to know each other in an unpressured setting before easing into the more challenging business of the dialogues. Venue was also discussed at length, with a consensus against churches. Local hotels were chosen as the most neutral venue. Some dialogues took place at lunchtime: others over an evening meal.

Participants

I observed two community dialogues (two weeks apart in the same town). I also interviewed a number of participants in other parts of Scotland and read reports on the other dialogues. It is clear that the majority of participants were middle-aged or elderly, with a fairly even gender balance. Most professed a religious faith.[23] Some were retired. Some were, or had been, active in public life: teachers, local councillors, the police and those working in healthcare.

4. Research Methodology

Community dialogues, being unplanned conversations between diverse people, are unpredictable affairs. They are also wide-ranging and densely packed with ideas, debates, themes and arguments. This means that any attempt to report on them is necessarily selective, relying on the researcher's sense of what is significant. Research such as this involves an act of interpretation.

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[21] A position eloquently set out in relation to Aberdeen by Scott Styles. See Scott C Styles, "The Non-Sectarian Culture of North-East Scotland" in Devine (Ed.) 2000
[22] See Appendix 1
[23] Not exclusively Christian – in one area members of the Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist communities participated

The project's goals affected the methods chosen: because it sought both to address sectarianism and to evaluate the suitability of community dialogue[24] I chose to mix methods, although all would be described as "qualitative".[25] The research data were gathered in four forms:

a) direct observation and recording of two community dialogues
b) reports on the other dialogues prepared by the facilitators
c) ten interviews with participants in dialogues throughout Scotland
d) a small number of people returned written answers to the interview questions

In research terms, observation deals with naturally occurring data, while interviews and reports involve people's interpretation of events. By combining both approaches I have been able to consider what actually took place in the dialogues as well as participants' opinions about them.[26]

The dialogues and interviews were then transcribed and their content analysed. I used a simple coding scheme: each statement from interviews or dialogues was categorised using everyday language (for example, "Lack of knowledge/ignorance of sectarianism" or "Politeness: we don't talk about things like that.")[27] The number of occurrences was counted, with new categories continually emerging until all the data had been coded. While all coding schemes are artificial, this has the virtue of identifying which themes occurred most frequently.

5. Findings from interviews and observations: what did people think?

In this section I attempt to make sense of what was said. I set out the most frequently occurring themes in both dialogues and interviews, using examples to illustrate the meaning. It is important to stress that these codes are simply a tool to aid interpretation. Qualitative research is useful precisely because it does not claim to measure precise numbers: rather it provides a glimpse of the way people make sense of the world, in their own words. Participants may say what they think; or they may say what they think the researcher hopes to hear; or they may say what they think the country needs to hear. The latter two are just as useful as the first in understanding a subject like sectarianism where beliefs about what others believe are as important as "facts".

I begin with the ten most frequently occurring themes about sectarianism itself, from both dialogues and interviews. I then set out the remaining themes before turning to participants' suggestions for the way forward and comments on the dialogue process itself.

A) Sectarianism

i) Anti-Catholicism rather than sectarianism

Taking the dialogues and interviews together, the commonest form of statement was what I have described as "anti-Catholicism rather than sectarianism". For example, one (non-

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[24] Both process and outcomes are thus being simultaneously evaluated.

[25] Jane Ritchie and Jane Lewis. *Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers.* London: Sage, 2003.

[26] The interview protocol is reproduced at appendix 2

[27] This approach could be described as "grounded theory". For an explanation see Ritchie and Lewis (2003) p.201: *"Grounded theory ... involves the generation of analytical categories and their dimensions, and the identification of relationships between them. The process of data collection and conceptualisation continues until categories and relationships are 'saturated', that is new data do not add to the developing theory."*

Catholic) participant, speaking at the start of the second dialogue said, *"So where it came up it was Catholics that were being targeted rather than Protestants being targeted by Catholics, seemed to be."*[28] One interviewee stated, *"People were quite aghast at the sort of things that Catholics had to put up with even in [rural area]".*[29] Another reported, *"I was surprised by the story we were told about the priest going to the meal and becoming the butt of jokes to the whole company."*[30] It was striking that these comments did not have a mirror image in any of the interviews or dialogue reports: outside the Central Belt in largely rural areas, at least on this tiny sample, there were no voices saying that the problem is anti-Protestantism rather than sectarianism. It should be noted that not every interviewee mentioned this factor but, as we shall see below, other types of statement overlapped and supplemented this impression.

This phenomenon was mirrored in the number of participants who claimed never to have encountered sectarianism. Again the sample is small: however, all but one of these was from a Protestant or non-religious background, reinforcing the impression that Scotland's Catholics do not have the luxury of not noticing sectarianism.

ii)   Ignorance among those who act in sectarian ways

The second most frequent type of statement was a pronouncement of "ignorance among those who act in sectarian ways." This generally involved a negative judgement about those displaying sectarian attitudes or causing sectarian violence. Examples include: *"… my opinion, the people that are like that are not practising any religion"*[31]; *"maybe they don't know, maybe they don't have a clue, maybe they've been brought up with it all their life and they just think that that's funny and they're not trying to be offensive to you"*[32]; *"I don't think those people that sort of carry out the sectarianism are actually church goers, I think they just use it as a sort of label for division"*[33].

I will link this theme to another (the 9th most frequently occurring), which I describe as "other-ing".[34] This mostly describes remarks that attribute negative acts of sectarianism to "others" in the community.[35] Examples include: *"[town] is a wee hotbed of sectarianism"*[36]; *"if they're being fed bigoted ideas or whatever at home then that's going to be within them"*[37]; *"it isn't either Protestantism or Catholicism that teaches people to go beating each other up."*[38] To be fair to the participants, the goal of the dialogues was to understand sectarianism. If they did not regard themselves as sectarian is it hardly surprising that they puzzled over the behaviour of others. In response to a question about what motivates sectarianism, one participant speculated: *"the tribal, the ownership, the peer pressure… belonging…"*[39]. Another spoke of problems for a local manufacturer: *"after an Old Firm match it was incredible, this is a company working at the margins of profitability and they'll have team leaders that are either Celtic or Rangers supporters,*

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[28] Dialogue 2, female participant (henceforth D2, F)
[29] Interview 5, male participant (henceforth I5, M)
[30] I3, F
[31] D1, M
[32] D1, M
[33] I8, F
[34] This phenomenon was also noted by the facilitator in another dialogue (hereafter D3)
[35] John Flint finds a similar tendency on the part of government: *"these problems are attributed to 'the bigoted few' or 'selfish minority.'"* Flint, 2008 (Note 5) p.124
[36] D2, M
[37] D2, F
[38] I6, M
[39] D1, M

and these are men who wouldn't speak to each other for three days and productivity would actually drop during this time. You realise that your jobs are at stake, the profitability of this company is at stake and you half-wits only speak to each other…"[40].

iii)   "It's a Central Belt problem"

One of the least surprising threads from both interviews and dialogues concerned the idea that sectarianism is a more significant problem in the Central Belt, particularly Glasgow, Lanarkshire and Ayrshire. This varied from one rural area to another and in the more remote parts led to a kind of puzzlement: *"we didn't feel sectarianism was a major issue in this part of the world and in some ways we questioned are we they best area to exemplify that debate".* This same respondent went on to describe inter-denominational cooperation in the area before posing the question: *"Well, if we can do it why can't Glasgow?"[41]*

In the dialogues this theme emerged when people were describing experiences of sectarianism. Many of the stories featured an upbringing or time spent in the West of Scotland. Indeed, one English participant who said he had not encountered sectarianism had experienced a sectarian incident in the time between the first and second dialogues. This occurred on a train near Glasgow and had involved two groups singing rival songs: *"it wasn't light-hearted banter… the other people on the train were horrified, we all wanted to get off."[42]* Another asserted: *"it's just a Glasgow problem."[43]* As we will see, however, this perception was contradicted by a number of stories of sectarianism in other parts of Scotland.

iv)   Other sources of division: anti-English feeling

Training in facilitating dialogue emphasises values such as empowerment, self-determination and respect for participants. Rather than impose a strict agenda, facilitators follow the conversation as it emerges. So, although the headline for the conversations was sectarianism, other themes emerged in its wake. They can broadly be described as "other sources of division." The most prominent of these were discussions about anti-English feeling. This is a complex issue, overlapping with wider observations about "incomers" and their role, particularly in rural Scotland. One respondent (an incomer himself) attempted to characterise the pragmatic approach of the "originals":
"I think they tend to realise that the community just wouldn't exist without the incomers"
        "Is tolerance the right word or is it warmer than that?"
"Slightly warmer but not very much."

As with sectarianism, much of the discussion featured reporting of other people's attitudes. For example, two teachers at a local school had been overheard complaining about the appointment of an English person: *"they were furious because they had appointed an English teacher, now what hope have you got?"[44]* Or: *"[area] is very attractive for English people to come and stay which says a lot for Scotland as a place to welcome them – there's always a core of resentment that the auld enemy is amongst us."[45]*

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[40] D1, M
[41] I7, M
[42] D2, M
[43] D2, F
[44] D2, F
[45] D2, M

Another respondent felt that subtle anti-English discourse occurred even in the dialogue itself, manifested through issues such as jokes about football support, the independence debate and *"how good it would be to be separated from the English!"*[46] This strand links to another (reported below) concerning the importance of humour in reinforcing sectarianism. The consensus was that it is for the person joked about to judge whether humour is offensive.[47] The same could be applied to anti-English feeling: *"what was interesting … was the Scotland/England thing that suddenly reared its head quite near the end and I know upset (A), an English person. I wasn't, maybe as a Scot, I didn't particularly find anything that people said would have offended anyone but I know (A) had been upset by it and felt there was a certain hostility towards English people."*[48]

v)   The constitutional settlement

While the dialogues often touched on local questions, the discussions also threw up issues with significance for both Scotland and the UK as a whole. Particularly striking were conversations about the perceived anti-Catholic bias of the UK constitution. The precise details were elusive. It is widely know that the monarch cannot currently be a Catholic; some believed that the Prime Minister cannot be a Catholic; others that this prohibition extends to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The UK's constitution is famously unwritten and it is beyond the scope of this report to attempt to set out the precise legal position. It is clear that some haziness exists even at the highest levels of government.[49] Nonetheless it is hard to find the source of the beliefs about the Chancellor.

Whatever the accuracy of these beliefs, their impact was significant: *"I think it makes you still feel as thought you're a second class citizen"*[50]; *"you know we have sectarianism from the Crown: the Queen can marry a Satanist technically but she can't marry a Catholic."*[51] This respondent went further: *"so we're in amongst that sort of bigotry to start with …. We've got a leadership that institutionally allows sectarianism from the very top down and as I say the problem is that Britain hasn't come out of the post-Reformation period."*[52] Other, non-Catholic, participants expressed shock at the situation: *"I never knew that; isn't that awful?"*[53] The report from another dialogue framed the issue as exclusion: Catholics are excluded from key parts of society, including the Royal Family.[54]

A difficult, related, issue is the possibility of "perceived slights": that is, perceptions of sectarian acts or attitudes which may or may not be accurate (such as the belief that the Chancellor of the Exchequer cannot be a Catholic). It is important to make clear that the term "perceived slights" is not intended to mean that these perceptions have no impact. If I believe someone intends to harm me I am liable to feel anxiety or anger. If it turns out that my belief is mistaken I will not instantly shake off these feelings although the person accused of the harm may see themselves as innocent and falsely accused. At the same time the majority community may need to recognise that even actions without sectarian intent can have sectarian impact.[55]

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[46] Correspondence with the author
[47] D1 & D2
[48] I2, F
[49] See http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/wintour-and-watt/2010/mar/16/tony-blair-catholic-ambassador-vatican
[50] D2, M
[51] I5, M
[52] I5, M
[53] I2, F
[54] Report on dialogues in another rural area (hereafter D4)
[55] A point forcefully made by Williams and Walls who make the comparison with Lord MacPherson's finding of "institutional racism" within the Metropolitan Police and state: *"unequal results, disadvantageous to minorities,*

An example of this emerged when the conversation turned to the equally controversial issue of equal marriage. One person stated that the Scottish Government's support for this reform was evidence of a sectarian agenda, as it meant ignoring the views of the Catholic church (and other religious groups). Another interviewee disagreed: *"there was a deference and maybe a sensitivity because these guys have experienced sectarianism but I think it was unsaid, I think it was un-stated, it was hinted at, maybe this isn't sectarianism, having a different view from you."*[56]

All of this highlights a thorny problem for the project and the Scottish Government: sectarianism operates at the level of beliefs or perceptions, rather than simple "facts". If those beliefs and perceptions trigger people's natural defence mechanisms, such as fight or flight, those subsequent actions become more important than the triggering event. One writer on negotiation puts it well: *"If you're seated at the negotiating table in the absolute, unshakable conviction that your counterpart is a stubborn and difficult character, you are likely to act in ways that will trigger and worsen those very behaviors."*[57] In these perceived slights we glimpse the roots of a wariness and lack of trust that can have a corrosive effect in Scottish life.

vi) <u>Tolerance</u>

A more optimistic theme cropping up in both dialogues and interviews was that of tolerance. These fell into two broad groups: some expressing surprise or even amazement at instances of tolerant behaviour; others calling for tolerance of difference as a defining feature of a mature, self-confident country.

One respondent described his reaction to a participant who visited other denominations for reasons such as liking to hear a female minister or preferring the singing: *"It is surprising, yes, but it was almost like saying to us why would you find that surprising? What's your problem, because it's normal."*[58] Another described encounters with clergy from other denominations: *"we crack jokes and we'll always crack jokes about each other's institutions and that is accepted, although you could say that is a bit sectarianistic, them and us, but on the whole the relationship isn't destroyed by it because we can take it from a banter point of view."*[59] A further expression of surprise concerned football support in an area outside the Central Belt: *"I'd say 75% of the people I know who support Celtic … here are not even Catholic."*[60]

One passage of dialogue turned to the issue of faith schools. A participant was bemoaning the assumption that the ending of faith schools is necessary to reduce sectarianism: *"You are a Catholic and should be proud to be a Catholic and I'm a Protestant and should be proud to be a Protestant, I shouldn't have to change my tradition if you like just to suit- I don't mean this in a bad way, to suit you … how do we get past this trying to become an amalgam that suits nobody, you've got to water down yours and I've got to water down mine….?"*

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can be produced by institutional practices which have no discernible discriminatory intention at all." (Williams and Walls, 1999, Note 2 above, p.234)

[56] I4, M
[57] David Lax and James Sebenius, *3D Negotiation.* Camb, Mass: Harvard Business School Press, (2006) p.81
[58] I1, F
[59] I5, M
[60] D1, M

"It's called tolerance, isn't it?"[61]

And later: "Can I allow you not to want Catholic schools? Of course I can. Can you allow me to want Catholic schools? Of course you can, but it's how do you balance that… Catholic schools are part of the diversity of what we have for education."[62]

Another interlaced theme involved religious people in the dialogues suggesting that the churches could bear some responsibility for improving the situation by working together in a tolerant way. One suggested: "relish our differences, our variations rather than differences and if we are seen to be really celebrating…"[63]

vii)   Other sources of division: the secular/faith divide

Place for Hope's roots in the Church of Scotland and its commitment to recruiting co-hosts from the Catholic church make it unsurprising that many of the participants professed a religious faith. And it perhaps follows that, when asked to discuss issues of division and intolerance in society, some chose to highlight their perception of an increasingly secular society that marginalises Christianity and pays insufficient attention to the views of religious people. Some suggested that this fuelled sectarianism: others took the opposite view, that this social movement was tending to unite the churches in the face of external indifference or hostility: "saying yes we are afraid that we lose all Christian input in the community and that therefore yes we would be willing to work together so long as there was some spiritual Christian input."[64] This had an impact on the debate about faith schools: "they're Protestants and their parents send them to Catholic schools purely because they get a good religious education there".[65] Clearly some religious people feel under attack: "it's not politically correct to down other faiths but it's alright to kick Christianity because supposedly it's a Christian country"[66].

For two respondents this had a sectarian dimension: "anything to do with the Catholic Church it goes on for weeks and weeks and weeks and you'll get Channel 4 doing a special programme on it and that's sectarianism, coming from the media"[67]; "they write like razors to make comments about priests."[68] However, one non-religious participant saw the focus on secularism as a reflection of the group's remoteness from ordinary people: "most of them were unaware of the issues of sectarianism within their community … you can go through your whole life and not encounter any form of sectarianism, one if you're middle class, two not a football supporter and three, don't use public transport."[69]

viii)   Politeness: "We don't talk about things like that"

A number of respondents picked up on the idea of politeness. The notion seems to be that these matters are risky and painful and that it may well be easier to avoid them altogether: "I felt a reluctance to deal with the issue"[70]; "one of the people said, oh we're too polite round here, there's very much a [local region] attitude that if they suffer, if there's a mistrust

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[61] D1, M
[62] D2, M
[63] D2, F
[64] I1, F
[65] D1, F
[66] I2, F
[67] I5, M
[68] D2, M
[69] I9, M
[70] I5, M

they keep it to themselves."[71] Another respondent linked this to debates on tricky subjects such as equal marriage or faith schools: *"folk who are tippy-toeing out of respect and perhaps not pursuing things as vigorously as they might"* and again *"I think there is a kind of tippy-toeing around the whole question of whether separate schools are good or bad."*[72]

Because there were hints that this politeness was a facet of rural Scotland it seems to link to another theme which I have termed "subtle sectarianism". A longer quote conveys the idea: *"I would say there was certainly a reluctance to admit that there could be sectarianism up here because we don't hear of it but it's done in a very discrete manner, it's not as blasé as the Central Belt, there's much more finesse than that and it can be through work practices, promotions and so on."*[73]

A similar theme emerged in story after story: while not as visible as in the Central Belt, sectarianism does exist elsewhere in Scotland. The tales featured employment, public transport and public life: *"there was a sense of yes it's under there, it's something just keeking through the cracks, sort of under it and maybe also too institutionally locked into Scotland's politics and society."*[74]

ix)   Humour

In my analysis I separated "humour as a negative factor" and "humour as a positive factor" (9th and 11th most frequent respectively). Had I combined them it would have been the third most common thread. The two facets of humour were clearly evident: its humanising potential (as evidenced by the passage above on cracking jokes about each other's institutions); and its power to caricature and mock the other. In one powerful passage a priest described attending a sportsman's dinner in the West of Scotland during which he became the butt of an extended period of joke-telling: *"some of them were funny but a lot of them were just, this whole idea of alter boys and priests and stuff, I found it very offensive."*[75] This led to speculation about the motives of those telling the jokes:
> *"maybe they don't know, maybe they've been brought up with it all their life and they just think that that's funny and they're not trying to be offensive to you… you do need to know who these people are and where they came from and what their upbringing was to find out if they're genuinely sectarian or just stupid."*[76]

There was considerable effort to distinguish light-hearted banter from *"the vile rhetoric of sectarianism".*[77] The nature of humour makes this tricky: *"things that can offend that you don't expect to or which you find funny and part of what you find funny is because you know it's inappropriate as well."*[78]

The topic of the *"90 minute bigot"*[79] came up, with one participant describing having chosen to stop going to Old Firm matches because he found himself adopting attitudes that he later

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[71] I6, M
[72] I4, M
[73] I5, M
[74] I4, M
[75] D2, M
[76] D2, M
[77] D2, M
[78] I2, F
[79] A term coined by Lawrence MacIntyre, Head of Safety for Rangers FC, in 2007: *"There's a thing in a football ground called a 90-minute bigot, someone who has got a friend of an opposite religion next door to them. But for that 90 minutes they shout foul religious abuse at each other and we've got to handle in the first instance the 90-minute bigot."* Retrieved from http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/4264669.stm on 10/6/13

viewed with disgust. This led to discussion about "the line": the ever-changing boundary between fun/banter and mockery/derision. No consensus was reached but it is clear that Scotland's sense of humour is deeply implicated in sectarianism

x)   Surprise at sectarian acts

In both dialogues and interviews there were expressions of shock at the existence of sectarianism in rural areas. These tended to follow stories of harm against Catholics, such as a brick being thrown through the window of a priest's house, vandalism of a crib, abuse shouted from a car or a tale of prejudice in employment. For example: *"probably quite shocked that from the Roman Catholic perspective folk were speaking about experiences they have had historically and also quite recently of what they would say would be sectarianism and others… had said no there's no such thing… they were shocked too"*[80]; *"I was kind of surprised at the brutality of that and the lack of subtlety."* There was also shock at the starting of a new Orange Walk in the previous few years in a county town: a number of participants expressed astonishment at this development and there was some speculation as to why it should have occurred: *"I mean I was absolutely gob-smacked by that, that's just a little suburb of [county town]… and somehow sectarianism had transported itself there."*[81]

One Catholic respondent described this as his principal finding: *"there seemed to be an ignorance that this actually took place, that was the main theme I think."*[82] This ties in to other themes: for example, there were 11 instances of "stories of harm against Catholics", 6 of "experiences of sectarian harm", 3 of "sectarian attitudes" (all against Catholics) and one instance of "stories of harm against Protestants". There was an overwhelming sense of one-way traffic in these dialogues. The non-Catholics present tended to be unaware of the existence of sectarianism in their community. Nonetheless it seemed a powerful facet of the dialogues that those who had experienced sectarian harm were able to speak and be listened to by their neighbours and community.

xi)   Other themes

The dialogues covered a very wide range of ideas. Participants wrestled with a hugely varied phenomenon, invisible to some and right in the foreground to others. While beliefs are intangible and subjective, acts of harm like vandalism seem clear and objective. But even here the difficulty remains: can we be sure that a particular act is attributable to sectarianism and not some other cause? Vandalism occurs throughout Scotland, as does violent crime. Discerning motives is a notoriously tricky business.

Other themes to emerge were:
- Football the problem – there was speculation about the role of Glasgow's Old Firm in transporting sectarian attitudes to other parts of Scotland.
- Faith schools – some voiced the view that the ending of faith schools would reduce sectarianism; others saw them as a symbol of a tolerant and diverse society.
- Age as a factor – there was a strong belief that things used to be worse and that the young are less affected by sectarian attitudes.
- Scotland is not the same as Northern Ireland – while there are some surface similarities the two places are vastly different. One Northern Irish participant

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[80] I4, M
[81] I3, F
[82] I5, M

commented on how little sectarianism he had encountered in Scotland compared to his homeland, where *"it's the air they breathe."*[83]

- Sadness – the facilitators began the dialogues by inviting stories about a personal encounter with sectarianism. These were generally met with sadness at the continuing existence of the phenomenon.

Discussion also focussed on the reasons for sectarianism. One dialogue speculated about the role of fear, history, football, clannishness or culture before listing the possible benefits of sectarianism for those who practice it: identity, security, a sense of belonging and a way of life.[84] This led to the intriguing question, "if there was no sectarianism, what would replace it?"

B) The Way Forward

Naturally the Scottish Government is interested in gaining insight from the dialogues about helpful ways to approach sectarianism. Again I have listed the most persistent themes.

i) <u>More challenging groups</u>

This category emerged in both dialogues and interviews, generally in response to a question about next steps. The response, "work with more challenging groups", contains an affirmation and a challenge: the affirmation that community dialogue was positive and could be used in more fraught/risky settings; the challenge that the present round of dialogues involved civilised, polite people who are not the target of anti-sectarian work. Examples: *"nobody brought along even anybody from a local Rangers or Celtic supporters club"*[85]; *"maybe we were the wrong people… you maybe wanted people like the ones who vandalised the crib and shouted abuse…"*[86]; *"go and get the person that started the Orange Walk in …….. and get him to come."*[87]

There was, however, a positive dimension to this theme: a clear view that the dialogues had worked well in this initial, safe, context and that they could be usefully applied in areas where sectarianism is a greater problem. People clearly appreciated the dialogues. They portrayed a process in which those from both sides of the religious divide could discuss difficult issues. The earlier description of sadness (rather than defensiveness) as a response characterises the atmosphere.

> *"I think where communities are divided… people begin more and more to live in their bubbles and what dialogue does is take people out of their bubble for a while… so if you did that somewhere edgier it would provide something that isn't there at the moment and that's the space where people can talk and I think in really difficult places that absolutely isn't there."*[88]

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[83] D1, M

[84] D2. This was echoed by dialogue 4, in an urban area, which cited "fear" and "belonging" as sources of sectarianism

[85] I9, M

[86] I2, F

[87] I2, F

[88] I3, F

ii)   Education

Some participants saw education as the route to tackling sectarianism.[89] One thought this should go beyond the school system to, for example, short films and stories that shed light on the harm caused by sectarianism. Interestingly two education professionals took the opposite view: *"to cure society's ills is not, should not be, the core business of a school."*[90]

iii)   Ecumenical engagement

Several examples were given of the churches working together, which was generally seen as a good thing that is insufficiently noticed by government and society as a whole. Others thought that more joint working would set a good example, particularly where Catholic and Protestant churches combine to tackle social issues. One of the persistent themes from the dialogues and interviews, however, was scepticism about whether sectarianism is actually the church's problem. Religious people were keen to declare that those who practice sectarian violence or chanting have nothing to do with them.

iv)   More dialogue

 Community dialogue seems to have been popular with participants. When asked about next steps a significant number suggested further dialogues, either on sectarianism or other topics. Some expressed frustration that the current project had been limited to two meetings, and suggested that three or four would have been better. One group's suggestions for the way forward were:
- *"we need to take a step*
- *need to accept that the issues are real*
- *need more time and space - all a bit superficial*
- *need an attitude of listening and trust - beginning with ourselves."*[91]

Others expressed positivity that people had achieved a united position in such a short time: *"you go to endless meetings … and I've never felt that anything had been achieved; after these two meeting I felt we could do anything… we had all completely united."*[92]

v)   "Out-imagine them"

There was discussion about the impossibility of tackling sectarianism using sanctions and prohibitions. One participant said: *"rather than an easy condemnation it seems to me that the church … just saying this is wrong isn't going to change anything… in the end we have to offer a vision of life that's out-imagining the sectarian alternatives."*[93] This theme reflects the deep-seated ambivalence, described above, about the role of the churches in sectarianism. For some the church is an underused resource and the government should provide more support. For others it should stay out of politics. Others again saw the church as one of the strands in the complex phenomenon of contemporary sectarianism. In all of the dialogues and interviews I only encountered one statement by a participant acknowledging his own church's role in maintaining divisions. However, the report from

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[89] I1, I2, I5, I8, D2 & D3
[90] I7, M
[91] D3
[92] I8, F
[93] D2, M

another dialogue contained this insightful statement: *"we should not try to change others - we can only change ourselves."[94]*

Other suggestions for the way forward included more work with young people, ending separate schools, more work in the Central Belt and two negatives: NOT via legislation[95] and NOT via education.

C) Community Dialogue

What of community dialogue itself? One of the goals of this project was to evaluate its usefulness in responding to sectarianism. As well as exploring the content (sectarianism) I also asked interviewees to reflect on the process (dialogue). Again I list frequently occurring themes. Some relate to the effective running of the event; others to its benefits.

Environmental factors are clearly important. For dialogue to be effective, people need to be able to communicate without inhibition. Seating, lighting, positioning, timing and location all matter. Gathering round a meal was viewed positively, although it needs to be well managed so as not to eat into the time (so to speak). Holding the dialogues in local hotels as opposed to churches seemed to have worked well.

At the heart of the dialogues were the facilitators. Participants appreciated a number of things about their approach:
- Providing a discipline – structuring the discussions and ensuring that people got a fair share of the time were particularly mentioned.
- Setting the tone – the facilitators seem to have modelled the values of community dialogue such as non-defensiveness and appreciation for the views of others. For example *"they took the trouble to get to know each individual and to give everyone due recognition and the way they summarised the points was very fair and concise."[96]*
- Silence – it was important, at times, for the facilitators not to speak but rather to listen and witness what had just been said.
- Skill – a number of respondents commented on the unobtrusive skilfulness of the facilitators.

Other positive features of the dialogues included the idea of bringing objects which had a particular meaning for participants, starting by focusing on local issues and going round the whole group at the beginning. Returning to the idea of the four stages of dialogue,[97] one group reported that it felt it had reached Stage 3, *"Reflective dialogue",* but others felt they were somewhere between Stage 1, *"Shared monologue",* and Stage 2, *"Skillful discussion."[98]*

I also asked about less helpful features of the dialogues. Some respondents couldn't think of any, but others made the following suggestions for improvement:
- Selection – were the right people present? Some thought not. Some thought this was the responsibility of the hosts.
- Partiality – a small number of comments suggested that a facilitator had revealed their own views. One facilitator questioned the possibility of neutrality.

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[94] D3
[95] This from a serving police officer, who maintained that legislation would be unenforceable because sectarianism is so poorly defined.
[96] I6, M
[97] Note 19, above
[98] D3

- Clearer agenda – some would have valued a clearer set of questions in advance.
- Closing down discussion – some found this frustrating, even patronising, highlighting the trickiness of balancing structure with responsiveness.
- Government's agenda – this is not really a criticism of the facilitators, rather a suspicion that the Scottish Government has already "made up its mind" about what will come out of the dialogues.
- Getting the seating right – a comment that all those invited by one host sat together opposite all those invited by the host from the other religious tradition

It is worth noting that none of the participants commented on the fact that both facilitators (thought not both hosts) were from the same faith tradition. Perhaps this reflects their skill levels, although the comments above suggest these were not uniformly maintained. It may be worth considering using one facilitator from each faith tradition. One US project insisted on what they describe as *"cross-identity pairs"* of co-facilitators, commenting: *"traditional facilitation's presumption of neutrality often allows socially unjust interactions and expressions of power to continue."*[99]

Overall there was great appreciation for the facilitators. The transcripts of the dialogues I observed show an unobtrusive presence, with brief interventions in the interests of moving the conversation along. On occasion, however, I wondered whether a particularly controversial topic might have been explored further. These are matters of judgement. Facilitators are performing a fine balancing act, particularly in a new group: steer into conflict and you risk alienating some of the participants; steer away from conflict and you risk missing the most important parts of the dialogue. A combination of repeated practice and thorough de-briefing could help Place for Hope to develop the skills and instincts of its facilitators.

D) The Stakeholder Dialogues

The Stakeholders Group consisted of representatives of key professions with a national brief in Scotland (police, media, health, education, church, local government, mediation). While not a geographically located "community", this group constituted a community of those with a particular professional view of Scottish public life. It is instructive to describe briefly the themes that emerged from the two Stakeholder Dialogues held in Edinburgh.

Three key topics were:
- Education – the issue of faith schools was more divisive, with strongly held positions on both sides. Participants were more likely to view separate schooling as a source of sectarian attitudes. Some were critical of faith schools, but also keen to assert that this was not motivated by sectarianism: rather a desire to *"think critically about our own religious traditions."*[100]
- Perception/reality – some of these stakeholders voiced the opinion that sectarianism may be less significant than Scottish Government believes: *"the theatricality and empty pageantry of bigotry creates the perception that his is a major problem."*[101] From this perspective, the whole publicly funded programme to tackle sectarianism is a mistake in that it risks fuelling, and even reviving, a problem that is fading away of its own accord.

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[99] Kristin Chung-Mei Lensen, Mark Chesler and Nancy Brown "Practice Note: Responding to Civic Conflict: Developing Intergroup Dialogue Co-Facilitators." *Conflict Resolution Quarterly, Vol.29, no.4 (2012), p.427*
[100] Stakeholder Dialogue 1 (hereafter SD1)
[101] SD1

- *"The 90-minute bigot"*[102] – football, particularly the Old Firm, cast a stronger shadow over the stakeholder dialogues. There was considerable discussion around the acceptability of singing and chanting sectarian abuse during a football match and it says a great deal for the facilitators that they were able to contain strongly held, opposing views within the room. There was more consensus around the idea that football fans are an easy target and can be unfairly scapegoated for sectarianism.

The stakeholder dialogues were helpful in confirming that sectarianism seems to have a keener, sharper edge in the Central Belt while at the same time demonstrating the potential for dialogue between those with more polarised views.

6. Conclusion: What have we learned and what needs to happen next?

Long-term observers of sectarianism in Scotland are unlikely to be surprised by these findings. Most of the themes have emerged before and suggest that erudite commentators and the participants in these dialogues are describing a similar phenomenon. It seems clear that, outside the Central Belt, sectarianism does exist. It is less likely to be life-threatening, but may affect family, employment and public life. It is also something of a one-way street: Catholics are more likely to be on the receiving end. Protestants tended either to say they had no experience of sectarianism, or to describe events from another place (West of Scotland) or another time (growing up in the 1950's, 60's or 70's). No-one from either community acknowledged acting in a sectarian manner.

Contemporary depictions of sectarianism range from subtle, with finesse, to shocking, as in the recent founding of an Orange March in a country town. None present questioned the assumption that participating in an Orange March was a sectarian act. People puzzled over the contribution of football, the churches, history, the constitution, upbringing, Northern Ireland and local politics. They also debated the role of education and in particular faith schools. As in the rest of Scotland, this was a controversial topic. For some, the ending of separate schools is a good thing, paving the way for a society where children do not learn that another group is different. For others, such opposition to faith schools is evidence of underlying sectarianism, a failure to accept diversity and a multiplicity of faith traditions.

This last observation illustrates the challenge for community dialogue. By inviting relative strangers to speak to each other, dialogue inevitably starts with a move from safety to risk. If people remain securely in their own faith communities there is little risk of conflict and its frightening relative, violence. Once in dialogue they voice their opinions, even if opposed by, or offensive to, others in the room. Ironically, the more effective the dialogue, the more likely it is that people will reveal these private views. The challenge for facilitators is to "hold" this tension, allowing participants to notice and even delight in their differences without slipping into debate about which is superior.

If this work is carried out effectively, dialogue can produce something more than the sum of its disparate parts. David Bohm talks of the *"stream of meaning… out of which may emerge some new understanding. It's something new, which may not have been in the starting point at all… And this shared meaning is the 'glue' or 'cement' that holds people and societies together."*[103] And so, throughout this project, facilitators and participants attempted to

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[102] Note 76, above
[103] David Bohm, *On Dialogue*. London: Routledge (1996) p.6

forge new understandings out of polar positions: on faith schools, on equal marriage, on the role of football, on humour, on politics and even on the meaning of the British constitution.

Were they successful? Returning to the facilitators' suggested criteria,[104] they appear at least partially fulfilled. The first was *"breaking down barriers."* There is certainly evidence of people from both sides of the sectarian divide spending time with each other and enjoying the process. The second was *"increasing our understanding of sectarianism".* The findings above contribute a distinctive rural and non Central Belt perspective to the body of knowledge about the issue, which should provide useful insights for future work.

When it comes to the third criterion, *"demonstrate the value of dialogue",* one would have to characterise the project as a work in progress. There were few indications of changed opinion from participants, despite great appreciation for the endeavour. Those from Dialogue 3 may have it about right in suggesting that they had reached either stage two or three of the four stages of dialogue.[105] Opinions and stories seem to have been expressed and listened to; some debate has sprung up; but it now seems optimistic to imagine that two dialogues would be sufficient to deliver Bohm's vision of a new understanding. What did occur looks closer to a move from *"pre-contemplation"* to *"contemplation"*[106]: where a person with a drug or alcohol problem slowly shifts from denying it to recognising that it exists and contemplating taking action to address it. At the end of the dialogues participants had generally moved from low or limited awareness of sectarian harm to a sober, even sad, reassessment and readiness to take the next steps in doing something about it.

The challenge for Place for Hope and the Scottish Government lies in how to direct future efforts. One strong strand of opinion says the direction of travel should be towards more difficult or entrenched groups. Having honed its craft on supposedly polite stakeholders within and around the churches, Place for Hope could now test its mettle facilitating dialogue in more overtly sectarian organisations or areas. Another view proposes extending the breadth and depth of the existing dialogues. Perhaps regular meetings over a period of six months or a year would take participants further towards the goal of *"generative dialogue"* in creating new ideas.[107] I would suggest a "both/and" approach: if Place for Hope intends to work in more challenging, and thus riskier, settings it may be well advised to consider a longer-term commitment. This would allow qualities like trust and respect to emerge at their own pace and avoid the problem identified above of a superficial, polite discussion.

The challenge for the whole of Scottish society is tricky too. Is sectarianism a problem? Is it helpful to talk about it? Can it be *"tackled"*? What community dialogue does offer is a process that allows people to talk to each other. This everyday activity may be the most useful response any of us can make to sectarianism. Simply spending time with the "other" is not enough: in the wrong conditions that can reinforce and entrench deeply held positions. If, however, people feel their views and experience are being respected their defensiveness begins to drop and, almost inevitably, they start to become human to each other. We would therefore do well do shift our attention from the outcome (tackling sectarianism) to the process (having a dialogue), because the process itself delivers more of a broader goal: a mature civil society that absorbs and welcomes diverse views.

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[104] 1) Breaking down barriers, 2) increasing our understanding of sectarianism and 3) demonstrate the value of dialogue. See page 4, above.
[105] See Note 19, above
[106] Duncan Raistrick, Nick Heather and Christine Godfrey, *Review of the effectiveness of treatment for alcohol problems* NHS National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse, Nov 2006, p.16
[107] See Note 19, above

Appendix 1 (printed as an A5 flyer)

The invitation

What is Place for Hope?

Place for Hope supports and enables 21st century church, communities and society in Scotland to develop creative, positive and life-giving ways to explore and address our differences. Our vision is of a culture where differences are acknowledged, and unity in diversity is valued.

Who will be there?

Your hosts will be
[names, phone and email addresses]
Your facilitators will be [names]
You will be a group of about 12 people in total, from a range of backgrounds within your local community.

What do I need to do now?

If you'd like to take part, and are happy to commit to at least two Community Dialogues, then please confirm this with your host asap. Please also let them know if you have any practical needs, including dietary requirements.

For more information about Place for Hope, visit www.placeforhope.org.uk or call 0131 240 2258

"We should celebrate our diversity; we should exult in our differences as making not for separation and alienation and hostility but for their glorious opposites."
Archbishop Desmond Tutu

You are invited to a series of two

Community Dialogues

exploring responses to sectarianism
on [date]
at [time] for [meal]

in [venue]

facilitated by
Place for Hope
as part of the Scottish Governments
'Tackling Sectarianism' programme

Frequently Asked Questions:

What is a 'Community Dialogue'? Community Dialogue is a way of getting groups of people together in a safe place to talk about issues that are tricky, or potentially divisive.

Why focus on sectarianism? Religious intolerance divides families and communities. Sometimes it's very obvious. Other times it's hidden. The more we can find positive ways to respond, the more peace and well-being we can experience.

Who will run the event and who will be there? The events will be hosted by local people and facilitated by Place for Hope team members not resident in your area. Participants will be members of your local community who are willing to share experiences or understanding of sectarianism.

How will I know that the space will be safe? Confidentiality will be guaranteed. Any reflections or feedback shared after the event will not be attributable to any individuals.

What will be expected of me? You are invited to join in with at least two 2.5 hour Community Dialogues over a meal, and to share about your experience or understanding of sectarianism as much as you feel is comfortable.

Will I have to bring anything? Please bring with you an object from your faith perspective that relates to your understanding or experience of sectarianism.

So what will happen at a Community Dialogue?

Your Community Dialogue will follow a similar pattern to those being hosted in other parts of Scotland at around the same time. You will be invited to a meal where you will have a chance to meet other local people involved and the facilitators. There will be about 12 people in your group, and there will be plenty of time to share any questions that you might have. The format will include:

o welcome, meal and introductions including a bit about background, timings, and ground rules.

o sharing stories/experiences of sectarianism

o reflecting on the issues that have arisen

o exploring possible ways forward together

o planning the second Community Dialogue

The role of the Scottish Government

The Scottish Government is committed to making Scotland a safer place in which to live and work. Place for Hope, along with a number of other organisations, has been given some funding to explore how Community Dialogues might be a model for responding to sectarianism. The results of this research will be collated by a broad-based evaluation group.

Appendix 2

Interview questions for participants

1) Why did you attend the community dialogues on sectarianism?

2) Name the most important topics that came out of the dialogues for you.

3) Did anything that was said in the dialogues surprise you? If so, what was it and in what way did it surprise you?

4) What do you think you have learned as a result of the dialogues?

5) As a result of the dialogues, has your opinion changed on anything? If so, in what respect?

6) Following the dialogues, please describe any ideas you have for dealing with sectarianism.

Please comment on the facilitation of the dialogues.

7) What did the facilitators say or do that was helpful?

8) What did the facilitators say or do that was unhelpful?

9) What might be useful in future community dialogues?

10) Finally, do you have any other comment to make that would enable Place for Hope and the Scottish Government to learn from your experience as a participant in these community dialogues?