John D. Brewer is Sixth-Century Professor of Sociology at Aberdeen University and President of the British Sociological Association. He is a member of the UN Roster of Global Experts, specializing in the sociological aspects of peace processes.

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Francis Teeney is a Research Fellow at the University of Aberdeen and honorary lecturer at Queen's University Belfast. He is an active peace campaigner frequently commenting on radio, television, and other media outlets. He is a consultative director of Mickel Health Initiatives and a founding member of the Emotions Research Consortium.

In reporting, examining and evaluating the role of the churches and Christians during the conflict in Northern Ireland, my hope is that [this book] may help to lead towards the creation of a new society in which all find a permanent home and can make their contributions.

Rev. Norman Taggart, a former President of the Methodist Church in Ireland

“This book needed to be written... The role of the churches, often seen as contributing to the conflict, is analyzed dispassionately. Criticism of institutional inertia, lack of leadership, and the failure to address underlying structural and other underlying roles of the churches, or more accurately individual churchmen and women, is facilitated by the strategic and theological engagements of leaders...”

Councillor John Kyle, member of Christian Fellowship Church and former interim leader of the Progressive Unionist Party

“This is a long overdue book... The reader will be fascinated by first-hand accounts of clerical involvement and their underground efforts to remove the gun from Irish politics.”

Fr Myles O’Reilly SJ, Rector of Gonzaga College Community, Dublin

Religion was thought to be part of the problem in Ireland and incapable of turning itself into part of the solution. Many communities deny the churches a role in Northern Ireland’s peace process, believing that it is focusing on the few well-known events of church involvement and the small number of high profile religious peacebuilders. This new study seeks to correct variances in perceptions about the role of the churches by pointing to the major achievements in both the social and political dimensions of the peace process, by small-scale, lesser-known religious peacebuilders as well as major players. This book is not meant lightly or sentimentally, and major weaknesses in their contribution are highlighted. The study challenges the view that ecumenism was the main religious driver of the peace process, focusing instead on the role of civil society, pointing to its regressive aspects and counter-productive activities, and queries the relevance of the idea of ‘spiritual capital’ to understanding the role of the churches in post-conflict reconstruction, which the churches largely ignore.

This book is written by three ‘insiders’ to church peacebuilding in Northern Ireland, who bring their insight and expertise as sociologists to bear in their analysis of four years’ in-depth interviewing with a wide cross section of people involved in the peace process, including church leaders and rank-and-file members of political parties, prime ministerial and parliamentary organizations, community development and civil society groups, as well as government politicians and advisors. Many of these are speaking for the first time about the role of religious peacebuilding in Northern Ireland, and doing so with remarkable candour. The volume allows the Northern Irish to speak to other conflicts where religion is thought to be problematic by developing a conceptual framework to understand religious peacebuilding.

John D. Brewer, Gareth I. Higgins, & Francis Teeney

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