

## **Motion No.11**

**Proposer: The Revd Raymond Kettyle**

**Embargo Until Delivery • Check Against Delivery**

Hello, Chair and members of General Synod. As I mentioned my name is Raymond Kettyle. I'm 35 years of age. I grew up in rural county Cavan. Personally, while I have some family members who lived in Northern Ireland during what is called 'the Troubles' – I don't stand here before you today as someone with a personal story or first-hand experience of the devastation 'the Troubles' brought to so many.

However, what I do stand before you with is personal and first-hand experience of trying to pastor to and care for people who have been affected and have trauma from what they have seen and experienced.

My first experience was as a curate in a church in East Belfast. I can remember meeting one gentleman who served in the RUC. He witnessed one of his best friends and colleagues being shot and killed right in front of him. As he shared that story it was evident that all of the pain and hurt and anger and injustice was still as fresh then as it was the day it happened – which was decades before.

I remember sitting there thinking, 'What do I say to this man? What can we do as a church to support this man?' Because while he attended church services, he did so infrequently because he felt so guilty coming to worship God while having all this anger and resentment in his heart.

My second experience was when I moved to St John's Parish Church in Lurgan. The church itself is situated amongst communities of both nationalists and unionists.

I've heard stories from people in the congregation who have lost relatives because they were murdered, or who were injured, or had death threats made against them – and the trauma of those events hasn't gone away.

The heart I have that motivates this motion, is that we as a Church would not be complicit in treating 'the Troubles' like some often do – like a dark stain on the carpet of our history – and hoping that if we just move a piece of furniture over it – then hopefully that'll deal with it and no one will dare bring it up again.

Because these are real people. These are people for whom Christ died. These are people whom Christ loves. And I suspect that at least in every parish in Northern Ireland there isn't a single

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community that wasn't affected by what happened during 'the Troubles' – whatever side that may have been – whether that be the one individual or the many in the community.

My reason for request of this motion is to ask the Church and Society Commission to explore, and if necessary, to recommend or draft resources to enable, in a sense, those who like me would like to reach out and offer support but are not sure what is the best way to do so.

Because surely as a Church we should be seeking to emulate the heart of God, as revealed by Isaiah when he said, 'A bruised reed he will not break, and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out' (Isaiah 42:3)? In people's hurts and brokenness the Lord gives gentleness. And in the moments where in people's lives when they feel their passion and life is burning is low the Lord gives tenderness.

And so, I ask the members of this General Synod to consider this motion. Thank you.