

PHASE-II Focus Group: -- draft 1.1

Social and Relational Reconciliation

SIX GOALS for a church-based focus group targeting Reconciliation

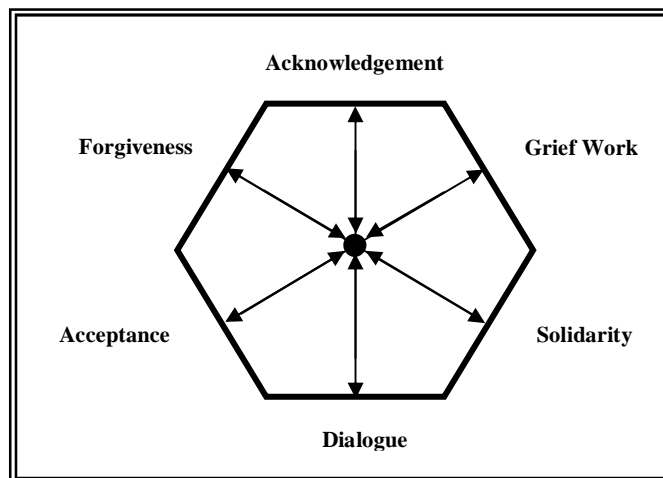
"By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (Jn 13:35)

- 1. Acknowledgement:** *Building trust. Breaking the silence.* Admitting there is an unresolved history still affecting our society, culture and church bodies today.
 - **History:** How does our history affect societal attitudes and behavior today?
 - **Lists:** Racial and racist beliefs. Stereotypes. Names, labels, racially "loaded" words
 - **Truth Committees (TC):** fact finding tasks to make a full accounting of what happened
 - **Projects:** Fact finding interviews. Book reviews. Web research. (Compile data on Yahoo)
 - **Truth telling:** Write note cards high-lighting personal/family stories; read Peggy McIntosh
- 2. Dialogue:** *Building a microcosm of "healing culture" within the church body.* Sharing our own stories from our families and personal experiences. Letting the other side listen in. Becoming listeners and learners. Inspecting our world view.
 - **Ground rules:** "Norming" the group's culture. Establishing safety in the group process
 - **Sharing our stories:** Use the note cards from the homework.
 - **Discuss TC findings:** Justice verses Just Us. The sins of a collective denial. Defining the issues
 - **Developing concenses:** Privilege. Power. Trauma's legacy. Advantage. Marginalization.
 - **Unpack the feelings:** What are the emotional?
- 3. Collective and personal grieving:** *Finding grace to face emotional pain.* Expressing the feelings that lead to a deeper healing. Grieving within a supportive community.
 - **Suffering and Grace:** The ministry of reconciliation starts vertically and continues horizontally
 - **Faces of grief:** Denial Anger Fear Guilt Depression Denial Anger Fear Guilt Depression Denial Anger Fear Guilt...
 - **Guilt and Grief:** What does the Bible say about Christians and guilt?
 - **The hard questions:** What do you do with irreparable losses? "Why?" questions. Angry questions
 - **Sharing feelings:** Can we trust each other? Can you hear me? Can you handle my feelings?
 - **Dreaming new dreams:** Healthy grief work in God's hands—beauty for ashes
- 4. Acceptance:** *Making a space for peace.* Seeing beyond the stereotypes to the person. Grief work that integrates the stories of all the actors. Constructing a different picture of the future. Expanding a shared view of diversity within the Kingdom as it stands on earth today.
 - **Change:** Finding new relationships, within and with others
 - **Looking at the whole picture:** Everyone has a place in the story (the search for dignity)
 - **A shared agenda** in our families, the church and community. Writing a new ending to the story
 - **The legacy of a new heritage:** Breaking the chains and setting the future of our children free
 - **A new ability to connect:** Seeing ourselves in a new light, seeing others through less distortion

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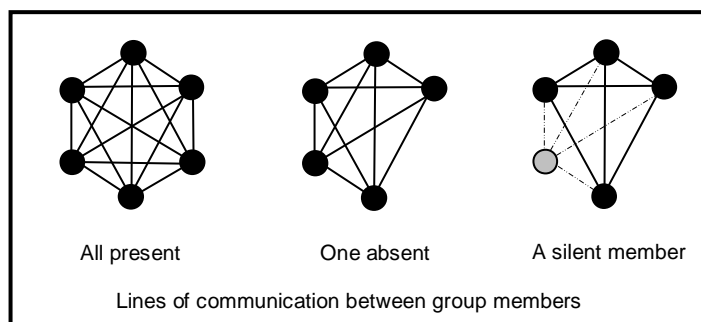
5. **Forgiveness:** *Trusting God to ultimately right all wrongs.* Letting go of the anger and fear that chains us to the past and leaves the past always unfinished and the wounds always unhealed. Finding a personal inner freedom from wrongs suffered. Personal and collective freedom to move on. A different future.
 - **Harbored hurts, harbored sins:** Facing them and trusting God with it all
 - **Letting God in:** Walking through painful compartments of the heart, holding God's hand
 - **Naming specific abuses** and turning them over to God's keeping, one by one
 - **Freedom:** No longer carrying a load that never really belonged to you

 6. **Solidarity:** *Connection and community.* Working together to bring about change. Designing concrete projects to build a healthier culture within the church and community. Freeing the church from being part of the problem. Enhancing the church's role as a social change agent.
 - **Form a Peace Action Committee (PAC):** Putting everything learned to work via practical means
 - **Working side-by-side** in the church and community for social peace via simple tangible actions
 - **PAC planning:** Designing your long-range strategy for lasting relationships
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(figure 1)

The Group Process: *Sharing the stories, humanizing the "enemy," dealing with the emotions of racial and class injustices. Assessing where we are as a church and where to go from here*



(figure 2)

Peer to Peer communication in an active process group