**M e d i a   R e l e a s e**

**Healing Through Remembering Response to Launch of Report of Consultative Group on the Past**

27th January 2009                              Immediate release

Healing Through Remembering (HTR) welcomes the publication of the report by the Consultative Group on the Past and calls for a substantive debate on the issues of truth, reconciliation and justice and the thirty one recommendations in the report.

The report builds on the work of Healing Through Remembering and supports the view, long held by Healing Through Remembering, that there is need for society to address the issues relating to the conflict in and about Northern Ireland in order to build a more peaceful future.

Kate Turner, Director of Healing Through Remembering says "What we need is measured and reasonable debate on these issues.  The experience of HTR is that honest inclusive debate in an appropriate environment can bring agreement on reconciliation, truth and justice by those who hold opposing views and opinions."

Brandon Hamber, chair of Healing Through Remembering says "The report offers an opportunity to genuinely engage with the difficult issue of the past.  Few places have consulted so widely in their deliberations on such issues.  We should not squander opportunities for dialogue on these thorny issues on the back of political posturing.  Let's debate the recommendations and try and find a measured way of taking this issue forward."

Healing Through Remembering continues to enable deeper discussions, forums and events on how best to deal with the conflict in and about Northern Ireland to build a better future.

(**Ends)**

**Notes**

**1.**      Healing Through Remembering (HTR), a cross-community organisation considering how to deal with the past relating to the

conflict. Its membership includes people from diverse backgrounds including loyalist, republican, army, and police backgrounds as well as from different faith backgrounds, victims and community groups and academic institutions

**2.** HTR has undertaken a range of consultations, commissioned research, held conferences, led seminars and workshops to both gather public opinion on how to deal with the past as well as inform those not engaged in the debate. Reports of the above activities include: All Truth is Bitter (2000), Healing Through Remembering Report (2002), Storytelling Audit: An audit of personal story, narrative and testimony initiatives related to the conflict in and about Northern Ireland (2005), International Experiences of Days of Remembrance and Reflection (2005), Storytelling as the Vehicle? Conference Report (2005), Day of Reflection: A Scoping Study (2006), A Day of Private Reflection: Discussion Paper and Proposal (2006), Making Peace with the Past: Options for truth recovery regarding the conflict in and about Northern Ireland (2006), Making Peace with the Past Executive Summary (2006), Acknowledgement and its Role in Preventing Future Violence (2006), The Viability of Prosecution Based on Historical Enquiry (2006), Without Walls: A report on the Open Call for Ideas for a Living Memorial Museum of the conflict in and about Northern Ireland (2008), Artefacts Audit: A report of the material culture of the conflict in and about Northern Ireland (2008), 21 June 2007 Day of Private Reflection Evaluation Report (2008).

**3.** Copies of HTR reports and further information on the work of HTR are available from the website – www.healingthroughremembering.org – or by phone: 028 9023 8844.

**4.** Dr Brandon Hamber is the chair of HTR and the Director of INCORE at the University of Ulster. He is an international expert in issues of post conflict reconciliation and conflict resolution.

**5.** Kate Turner is the Director of HTR and has been working for the organisation since its inception.

**6.** A more detailed response from HTR will be available shortly following a careful reading of the full report. HTR will be continue holding events, seminars and discussions on these issues.

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