

# NATIONAL ARCHIVES

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Meeting with the Rev. Ken Newell, 14 June 1983

I met at my request with the Minister of Fitzroy Presbyterian Church in Belfast, the Rev. Ken Newell, at his home on 14 June.

Mr Newell is very involved in the Ecumenical and Charismatic movements. Like some other Presbyterian Ministers I met who were prepared to be publicly identified with the Ecumenical movement, his congregation consists of solid middle-class people in the Malone area of Belfast. He was more hopeful of better inter-church and inter-personal relationships across the religious divide than he had been in the past. He thought it not without significance that Presbyterian Ministers had attended some recent funerals of Catholics killed by sectarian assassins. Equally some Catholic clergymen now attended the funerals of RUC men killed by the IRA and by the INLA. Gestures of this nature do elicit responses from the other side. He thought that Protestant exclusiveness was breaking down and that in both religious and political terms they just want to be talked to and not ignored.

He thought the SDLP should try to make a gesture and join in the Assembly. Molyneaux, by his lights, had made a significant gesture after the election when he had publicly invited Roman Catholics to join the OUP. He was very worried about the size of the PSF vote. He thought the DUP may be on the wane in both a political and a religious sense. He also thought it possible that Paisley himself may have undergone a change in the last 18 months and may now be more prepared than he was in the past to take account of other people's views.

On the Forum Mr Newell will consider making a submission but he asked for time to discuss it with others first. Life could be made very difficult, he thought, for any Presbyterian clergyman who made a submission to the Forum. In his view any submission he might make would have to be confidential. He thought that the situation is moving towards a Roman Catholic majority in Northern Ireland. The task is to change people's attitudes step by step so that they will be ready for unity or for a new shape within the island.

*Doc*  
D. Ó Ceallaigh

22 June 1983