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Brady backs call for church reflection

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GERRY MORIARTY

CARDINAL SEÁN Brady has told a church conference that the four main Christian churches in Northern Ireland must give full and serious consideration to a recommendation in the Eames-Bradley proposals that they “review and rethink their contribution to a non-sectarian future in the light of their past”, particularly in the area of education.

The Catholic primate told the Ballynafeigh Clergy Fellowship yesterday that the churches were sometimes described as being part of the problem, just as they were, and would continue to be, part of the solution.

“Facing up to this truth requires a humble acknowledgement of just how far we have yet to travel as churches and as a reconciled Christian community, both locally and internationally, to become as Christ would wish us to be,” he said.

Cardinal Brady said the Eames-Bradley Consultative Group on the Past was quite right to highlight the need for critical reflection by the churches in its recent report.

“The Consultative Group on the Past speaks of achieving a more humane, comprehensive and rounded assessment of what it describes as the ‘conflicting moral assessments of the past’. It is not clear what this means for those churches and political parties who consistently rejected violence as a means to political ends,” he said.

“The proposed assessment will require great wisdom. Healing and reconciling the past must be built on solid foundations. What is required is honest acknowledgement by everyone of evil as evil, perpetrated by omission or commission. Genuine repentance from that evil and a recovery of the largely lost art of Christian forgiveness are also required,” he added.

Cardinal Brady said the churches needed to critically examine separately and together their roles in the Troubles. While acknowledging that the churches had need for self-reflection, he also stressed the positive role of the churches and the firm moral line they took in regard to the non-justification of violence.

This article appears in the print edition of the Irish Times

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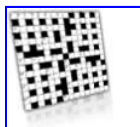
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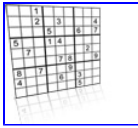
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