

FOREWORD

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THIS BOOK WILL BE ON my desk and not my bookshelf for quite some time. There is so much that resonates in this timely collection for both scholars and practitioners grappling with approaches to peace and peaceful relations. Many of these approaches continue to fail in so many contexts and communities, but here, Scherto Gill and David Cadman bring hope to the disappointed and new lenses for our visions for changed times.

In this collection of insights, I liked the ambition of the excellent *whole* volume matched by the passion in the *individual* chapters and I liked the way it draws from work in academy and from practice in the field. Peacefulness as an idea, as a way of life and as an approach to lived reality, is carefully defined and explored and we are left in no doubt of the clarity of purpose of each contribution.

The essays combine this passion and ambition with controversy. There will be bits that inspire most of us, if not all. Equally, some may disagree with, or want to place different emphases on both the narrative and conclusions. But, no one will doubt the commitment and emotion with which it has been formed. This articulation of peacefulness and the challenges it brings to our lived reality is real spiritual leadership and as with great leadership, we are offered the opportunity to disagree alongside the energy and capacity to think through new ideas and new inspirations.

When I first met our editors, Scherto and David, their calm, confident and controlled enthusiasm for peace was entirely captivating and they bring this, undiluted, to this carefully nurtured volume. The result has refreshed my desire to see what can be mobilised by bringing very personal peacefulness alongside peace within our communities and neighbourhoods to peace in the public realm. These three dimensions, the personal, the communal and the public realm, for me, unlock an exciting appreciation of peace – for which some work so hard – and *liberate* ideas of peacefulness from violent conflict. In our troubled times, making peace our default rather than our response, and *keeping* the peace rather than finding and/or building it, seems both powerful and comforting.

At a recent Spirit of Humanity Forum in Reykjavik, where so much of this rich narrative unfolded, Scherto and David had asked me to join a panel. I had been prepared to talk about the work of my Centre at Coventry and my then current work in peace-building that had been significantly influenced by a visit to President Carter's Library in Atlanta in the US. Above the President's office door is the encouragement: *Waging Peace*. I had reflected a lot on this in the ensuing weeks and months. I have long and continuously been inspired by President Carter's recent work – his passion for freedom and democracy and his energy – interestingly in all the three dimensions of personal, community and public space. The thought of 'waging', fighting and campaigning for peace was very attractive – and probably described well what I humbly aspired to do in my work. But, for the Reykjavik Forum, Scherto and David were quite directive: "In your academic and personal life, we know *what you seek to do*, Mike," they asserted, "so we are more interested in *why you do it*." Now there was a challenge and I took it to be a challenge for us all.

This insightful book will help us answer that important question and help us to position ourselves and our communities for peace and peacefulness. Living peacefulness is an active thing to do, not a state that we simply aspire to achieve. This notion of positioning is so much more powerful and sustaining than the campaigning or 'waging' of my past approaches. So, what must we do as professionals, as scholars and as practitioners and how must we infuse in the behaviour of others, strong reminders of our humanity and our baseline need to live in harmony in whatever complex context we find ourselves?

Our more traditional approaches to exploring transitional justice and the dynamics between this and social movements; our interest in the *movement* of people, and the displacement and diaspora that this creates, as well as our studies of representation, of inclusion and political institutions, all describe reaction to created contexts – responses and special measures to address human experience. Perhaps one area more than these others, can help us mobilise the three dimensions at the core of the book: trust. For many, trust is a critical quality in relationships, or even with oneself, and the trust between community members and

between citizens and the State is critical to support confidence in our abilities to release our inner peacefulness.

What remains to be seen is whether peacebuilders can, like this enthusiastic and informed team of authors, take a stand, embrace the core message and help bring about the transformations we all seek.

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