

The Council on Social Responsibility of the Methodist Church in Ireland continues to be immensely concerned about the nature of Brexit and the deep anxieties engendered, particularly by the nature of the debate currently.

The politics surrounding it has undermined the hard work and risks taken for reconciliation throughout the peace process and there is great damage being done to good relations North & South, on this island - and East & West, between Great Britain and Ireland. In our commitment to see the end of sectarianism, where religion is often misused, this can only be detrimental to all the people on this island and beyond.

For many of our families and friendships, crossing the border is now no different than crossing a county boundary and we think nothing of travelling across it for work or other business. About one eighth of the Circuits of Irish Methodism are made up of members both sides of the border. Due to this intimacy we are strongly resistant to anything that would cause disruption along this currently seamless border.

The disruption arising out of Brexit to the economies in both jurisdictions on this island will be challenging, with many businesses and livelihoods affected. The consequences of the UK leaving without a deal, however, would be severely challenging. All those who are working to ensure that this does not happen have our support in that.

We also recognise that fears are not only about economic disruption, but also, perhaps more deeply, about identity. We are therefore thankful for the sincere dedication of many politicians who are striving for the common good of all on the island. However, we are saddened when only self interest is evident, particularly at this time of immense challenge. It is crucial that those in leadership choose their words well, without demonising others or escalating the situation further but listening carefully to all concerns.

We continue to pray for all those in position of political influence. As citizens of the Kingdom of God, we are committed to revealing the nature of Christ to all. As an outworking of our faith, we pray for and engage with those in political office for the good of all.