

Fresno Pacific University
Division of Biblical and Religious Studies
MIN 486 Topics: Theology, Culture and U2 (2 units)
Fall 2006

Session #4, September 19
The Context of U2: Growing Up in Ireland

- I. Introduction
- II. The Context of U2: Growing Up in Ireland
 - A. A Brief History of Ireland (display map)
 1. Early history
 - a. Celts arrive several centuries prior to the birth of Christ.
 - b. St. Patrick is credited with bringing Christianity to Ireland in 432.
 - (1) Parts of Ireland were already Christian.
 - (2) Patrick was Roman Catholic.
 - (3) This is the golden age of Ireland.
 - c. The Vikings invade in the 800s.
 - d. Henry II was authorized by Pope Adrian IV to conquer Ireland in the 12th century. This begins an 800 year Anglo-Irish struggle.
 - e. Henry VIII put down a rebellion (1534—37), abolished the monasteries, confiscated lands, and established a Protestant "Church of Ireland" (1537).
 - f. From the mid-16th and into the early seventeenth century, crown governments carried out a policy of colonization known as Plantations. Protestant colonists moved into Ireland and formed a ruling class.
 - g. Throughout the 17th and 18th centuries land continued to be confiscated by the English government and Irish Catholics were denied rights and government offices.
 - h. The 19th century saw multiple attempts to secure "Home Rule," the quest for self-government.
 2. Modern history
 - a. In the mid-20th century Ireland was partitioned into Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. (Show religious distribution map)
 - b. Northern Ireland became a Protestant state and a member of the United Kingdom. Catholics were greatly discriminated against.
 - c. The Republic of Ireland remained largely Catholic and was given the right to govern themselves as a free and independent nation. Many openly opposed the partitioning of Ireland and rejected any thought of British rule, even in Northern Ireland.
 - d. The Irish Republican Army, based in Catholic Ireland, emerged in several forms as a terrorist army seeking the reunification of Ireland.

- e. From the 1960s on the IRA clashed violently with the British and with Northern Ireland Protestants, mostly in Northern Ireland, but also in Dublin and London.
 - f. The Troubles
 - (1) The late 1960s - late 1990s; 30 years of sporadic violence.
 - (2) The Provisional IRA (Nationalists) sought a reunified Irish Republic without British rule of Northern Ireland through acts of terrorism.
 - (3) Loyalists (Unionists) in Northern Ireland clashed violently in counter paramilitary conflicts.
 - (4) The British government was a third party usually presenting themselves as the peacekeepers, but were also prone to use violent force.
 - (5) The violence was not contained to Northern Ireland but also spills into the Republic (Dublin) and Britain (London).
 - (6) Ireland was on the brink of civil war, particularly at the height of the violence in the early 1970s.
 - g. It is in this context of religious, political and ideological violence that U2 grows up in Dublin.
- B. The *Rolling Stone* interview, Bono's experience of growing up in Dublin
- 1. Growing up without a mother in an angry family of three men.
 - 2. At odds with the "Boot Boys."
 - 3. Rebelling in the surrealism of Lypton Village
 - 4. Christian faith as a form of rebellion; read quotes from *Walk On*.
 - a. p.10
 - b. p.11
 - c. p.13
 - d. p.14-15
 - e. p.15
 - f. p.16-17

III. Two Songs

- A. "Sunday, Bloody Sunday"
- 1. Read through the lyrics.
 - 2. Three influences:
 - a. January 30, 1972, Derry, Northern Ireland.
 - (1) 26 Irish Civil Rights protestors were shot by the British Army; 13 died immediately, one died later of wounds; many of the victims were minors.
 - (2) The crowd was unarmed though the IRA was present.
 - (3) This escalated the tension between Northern Ireland Protestants and Republic of Ireland Catholics.
 - b. November 21, 1920, Dublin, Republic of Ireland.
 - (1) The IRA assassinated 14 British agents.
 - (2) Later, British forces opened fire on a soccer match at Croke Park

killing 14 civilians.

(3) The streets erupted in violence that night throughout Dublin.

- c. The irony of the bloody crucifixion and Jesus' resurrection on Sunday.
3. Clip from *Rattle and Hum*
- a. Filmed the day of the Remembrance Day Bombing, November 8, 1987.
 - b. The Provisional IRA bombed a parade of Veterans from WW I and WW II in Enniskillen, Northern Ireland.
 - c. Eleven people were killed, most of them seniors; 63 people were injured.
 - d. Another insightful clip is from the film *U2 Go Home: Live from Slane Castle*. In this version of the song Bono lists the 29 people killed at the Omagh bombing on August 15, 1998. It was the worst bombing of the IRA since the beginning of the Troubles.

B. "Please"

~~1. Lyrics~~

~~2. Video from *Greatest Hits: 1990-2000*~~

"Sunday, Bloody Sunday"

War

1983

I can't believe the news today
I can't close my eyes and make it go away.
How long, how long must we sing this song?
How long, how long?
'Cos tonight
We can be as one, tonight.

Broken bottles under children's feet
Bodies strewn across the dead-end street.
But I won't heed the battle call
It puts my back up, puts my back up against the
wall.

Sunday, bloody Sunday.
Sunday, bloody Sunday.
Sunday, bloody Sunday.
Sunday, bloody Sunday.
Oh, let's go.

And the battle's just begun
There's many lost, but tell me who has won?
The trenches dug within our hearts
And mothers, children, brothers, sisters
Torn apart.

Sunday, bloody Sunday.
Sunday, bloody Sunday.

How long, how long must we sing this song?
How long, how long?
'Cos tonight
We can be as one, tonight.
Sunday, bloody Sunday.
Sunday, bloody Sunday.

Wipe the tears from your eyes
Wipe your tears away.
I'll wipe your tears away.
I'll wipe your tears away.
I'll wipe your bloodshot eyes.
Sunday, bloody Sunday.
Sunday, bloody Sunday.

And it's true we are immune
When fact is fiction and TV reality.
And today the millions cry
We eat and drink while tomorrow they die.

The real battle just begun
To claim the victory Jesus won
On...

Sunday, bloody Sunday
Sunday, bloody Sunday..

"Please"

Pop

1997

So you never knew love
Until you crossed the line of grace.
And you never felt wanted
Till you'd someone slap your face.
So you never felt alive
Until you'd almost wasted away.

You had to win, you couldn't just pass
The smartest ass at the top of the class
Your flying colours, your family tree
And all your lessons in history.

Please, please, please
Get up off your knees.
Please, please, please, please, oh yeah.

And you never knew how low you'd stoop
To make that call
And you never knew what was on the ground
Till they made you crawl.
So you never knew that the heaven
You keep you stole.

Your Catholic blues, your convent shoes,
Your stick-on tattoos now they're making the
news
Your holy war, your northern star
Your sermon on the mount from the boot of
your car.

Please, please, please
Get up off your knees.
Please, please, please
Leave me out of this, please.

So love is hard
And love is tough
But love is not
What you're thinking of.

September, streets capsizing
Spilling over down the drains
Shard of glass, splinters like rain
But you could only feel your own pain.

October, talk getting nowhere.
November, December; remember
We just started again.

Please, please, please
Get up off your knees, yeah.
Please, please, please, please, ah.

So love is big
Is bigger than us.
But love is not
What you're thinking of.
It's what lovers deal
It's what lovers steal
You know I've found it
Hard to receive
'Cause you, my love
I could never believe.