

GENERAL SYNOD 2018

Bishops' Appeal & Council for Mission Collaborative Motion Proposer: The Rt Revd Patrick Rooke

**Embargoed Against Delivery
Check Against Delivery**

Your Grace,

The committee structure of the Church of Ireland is core to how we do the Church's work. Committees often emerge as a response to a particular situation and most, if not all, do excellent work. So, this motion is not intended to cast aspersions on any of our much cherished committees, neither is it a plea for a root and branch revision of our committee structure.

It is, however, an attempt to ensure that there is greater cohesion, co-operation and understanding among those committees and other groups involved with social justice issues. Indeed, Bishops' Appeal in bringing this resolution in co-operation with the Council for Mission, is modelling what we are seeking to achieve.

Bishops' Appeal has a history of partnership. We partner with a number of mission and development agencies with whom we have built up excellent relationships over many years. We know they have the highest standards in community development and poverty alleviation. Added to this, we partner with agencies with lengthy experience of disaster relief response for our emergency appeals and with mission agencies working closely with local churches to provide training in wider community initiatives.

Also, for a number of years we have partnered with CMS Ireland to provide a scholarship for a student to come to Ireland, who can take the knowledge gleaned and make a difference in their own community. Scholars to date have hailed from Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Zambia.

We are also excited about partnering with Mothers' Union on the issue of gender justice as part of a wider church initiative. We are aware that other groups within the Church of Ireland work tirelessly to achieve justice goals. Often there are opportunities to collaborate, but more often than not we are unaware of each other's activities and so we work towards similar goals

in silos instead of sharing knowledge and resources and working together to achieve greater awareness and greater results.

But we are aware that there are more possibilities, in the areas of climate change and gender-based violence, but also with hunger and poverty; crisis and relief response; homelessness and dispossession, migration and refugees, wealth inequality and unfair tax and trade. Mental health, well-being, disability and special needs are other important areas too. By finding out who is doing what about a variety of justice and human rights issues, we can identify areas of overlap. Here lies the potential for partnership.

Such a survey will also highlight the gaps – for instance, last year the Bishops' Appeal Committee found ourselves being asked to co-ordinate a response to the widespread flooding across the Republic. But our mandate is overseas development and disasters. Truth to tell, there is no Church of Ireland central committee whose task it is to address emergencies on the island of Ireland. Our response to the flooding eventually came through our partnership with Protestant Aid; as our response to the refugee crisis came from the bishops in the setting up of two ad hoc working groups.

The point is, we have overlaps and we have gaps hence the need for a scoping study to enable better working practices, better economies of time and sharing of learning, and better responses in addressing those social justice issues here and elsewhere that are at the heart of what we are about as church.

Your Grace, I propose the motion as you have it on page 2 of the Motions Document.

That General Synod supports the request of the Church of Ireland Bishops' Appeal and the Church of Ireland Council for Mission to provide the resources needed to carry out a scoping study into the potential for greater collaboration

(i) between existing Church of Ireland committees and

(ii) between the Church of Ireland and groups associated with it.

The research should explore further areas for collaboration for linking local and global justice issues such as (but not limited to) hunger, displacement, homelessness, poverty, wealth inequality, unfair tax and trade, climate change and gender based violence.

The finding of such a scoping study should be delivered to the General Synod 2019 and it should form the basis for decisive, focused and collaborative action on such issues moving forward.