

APPENDIX K

REPORT OF HARD GOSPEL IMPLEMENTATION WORKING GROUP

INTRODUCTION

The remit given to this committee by the Standing Committee was to consider the implementation of the recommendations on pages 35 and 36 and 75 of the *Living with Difference - a Reality Check* booklet.

In the suggestions that we are making we sought to underpin our thinking with the first two strategic aims of the Hard Gospel process found on page 6 of the booklet *Living with difference – a Reality Check*.

1. To enable the Church at all levels to model in its own structures and ways of being, the relationships and values with regard to overcoming sectarianism, community conflict and dealing with difference that it will promote in wider society.
2. To develop and promote policies, practices and statements of the Church of Ireland that will encourage honest and constructive relationships in dealing with sectarianism and issues of difference in the church and wider society.

The recommendations of the diversity audit are not just matters of procedure and structure but are most importantly matters of the heart and mind. No matter what structures or policies we put in place the Church of Ireland must assent to this way of thinking and acting.

Our Recommendations:

1. That this report, *Living with Difference – a Reality Check*, be adopted by General synod this year and a resolution be brought by the standing committee for this purpose.
2. While we propose below the committees and groups that should have particular responsibility for the various recommendations, we feel that the underlying principles of the report must be taken on board by the whole Church and be evident in all its workings. **To this end, there should be a new Hard Gospel Group, made up of a small number of people committed to the principles of the report, formed to oversee the implementation of these recommendations. This Group should make regular reports to Standing Committee.**
3. We recommend that the recommendations on pages 35 and 36 be implemented in the following ways:

9:21 When we reflected upon these particular recommendations we did so with four particular concepts in mind. They were the issues of function, membership,

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accountability and communication. *Function:* is the way we do things and how we do things reflects what we believe. This also includes what is done and where it is done. *Membership:* inclusion is a key issue raised in the report but this relates directly to issues such as when and where we do our business. *Accountability:* this is to ensure we are doing what we set out to do and that we are doing it appropriately. *Communication:* when communication is good it usually means that we are confident in what we are doing and are doing it well.

- 9:21 **a, c, d, e** and **f** we suggest that these recommendations are given to the Honorary Secretaries to be taken into account as part of their review of central structures and procedures.
- 9:21 **b, g, h, j, l** and **o** are to be addressed by the existing Hard Gospel Project Team and Committee.
- 9:21 **p**, be addressed in the short term by the House of Bishops and in the long term by the Theological Institute.
- 9:21 **m** and **n** be referred to the dioceses for further discussion.
- 9:22 **a** could be addressed by the following committees. Parish Development as they help parishes address the needs of the local community. Council for Mission as they seek to help us focus on the needs of the new peoples arriving and settling in Ireland north and south. The Church in Society Committee might consider the need for lobbying in both parliaments when it comes to legislation.
- 9:22 **b** the Hard Gospel Committee should report on what groups and committees we need to dialogue with.
- 9:22 **c** this is already happening in the Dioceses of Dublin and Meath and Kildare and their ideas should be more widely shared to enable other dioceses to engage with the issues raised.
- 9:22 **d** to be addressed by the Communications Board.
- 9:22 **e** it should be noted that speaking out may not always be the best thing to do. It would be helpful for each diocese to look at training for this issue.
- 9:22 **f** the commission for Unity and Dialogue should be asked to address this issue.
4. We suggest that the recommendations on page 75 be implemented in the following way.
- 5:1 General Synod has to be able to discuss and adopt these recommendations.
- 5:2 all committees should be encouraged and if possible be facilitated to examine their work within this framework.

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- 5:3 this should be done but the Hard Gospel Group should be asked to produce it in a simpler form.
 - 5:4 this is critical but there are financial implications. The Hard Gospel Group should examine the financial and other implications of this and how it could be resourced including the possibility of using statutory agencies.
 - 5:5 this should be part of the ongoing work of the Hard Gospel Group and become part of the remit of a new group that needs to be formed.
5. There should be a new Hard Gospel Group formed to oversee the issues that still need to be addressed and that group should then review and oversee the implementation of these recommendations making regular reports to Standing Committee.