

APPENDIX E

Church of Ireland Working Group Responding to the Consultative Group on the Past

The Consultative Group on the Past has spent the last 18 months reflecting on 40 years of pain. All view the past from their own perspective and proposals in themselves cannot fix the hurt that so many continue to experience. In facing up to the painful discussions which will inevitably flow from this Report, we must pay particular attention to those who continue to suffer and their need to be heard and understood.

The task we face as a Church and as individuals is to consider the proposals which flow from the Group's wide-ranging consultations. This will demand a new commitment to listen to those whose perspectives differ from our own. As a Church, we have begun to do this through our Hard Gospel process.

Moving forward together will not be easy. While we have had a degree of political accommodation, the process of human reconciliation has only just begun. We must now find new ways to talk, listen and act together if we are to secure a shared and peaceful future.

The Church of Ireland is committed to moving beyond sectarianism. The report includes a range of proposals which will challenge us, not least the Churches. Together, we must give careful consideration to the specific issues highlighted including that of education. We welcome the proposal for an annual 'Day of Reflection and Reconciliation' while mindful that the coming years should be regarded by us all as a sustained period of reflection and reconciliation.

This is a defining moment for everyone in Northern Ireland – not just in respect of the past but in shaping our future. We reaffirm our commitment to working hard at engaging with one other.

Chair of Church of Ireland Working Group Responding to the Consultative Group on the Past:
The Rt Revd Dr Michael Jackson, Bishop of Clogher