

APPENDIX M

Restructuring Proposal: Social Theology in Action

Description of proposed new structure for the management of social theology in action in the Church of Ireland

Following debate at the General Synod of 2007 and 2008 and in response to the review of committees initiated by the Honorary Secretaries and to the Bishops statement of a vision for the future of the Church of Ireland, the three bodies engaged in social action and theology came together to consider how they might work together more effectively to fulfill their part of that vision.

The Board of Social Action NI, the Board of Social Responsibility RI and the Church in Society Committee agreed to discuss the creation of a common structure to address the effective management of work relating to social action in the Church of Ireland. The parent bodies worked through a sub-group in which they all participated and which was known as the Joint Working Group on Social Action.

Following extensive discussion the three bodies agreed to a restructuring process. Their objective is to create a single oversight committee which will create *ad hoc* sub groups to undertake specific projects that may be deemed necessary to meet the needs of the Church in respect of social action or the theology of social action. The proposed name of the new body is the Board for Social Theology in Action.

With the creation of this new central body, the existing parent bodies, the BSR RI, the Church in Society Committee and the BSA, will cease to exist in their current format, although the legal entity of the BSA, which is a limited liability company called the Board of Social Responsibility NI, will continue to exist and to engage in a range of activities outlined below.

As a matter of policy, the Board will maintain an arms length relationship with any legal entities already delivering, or that may be created to deliver, social services, particularly as these services are generally delivered in a partnership arrangement with state agencies.

The new Board will therefore maintain an arms length relationship with the legal company currently known as the Board of Social Responsibility NI, which currently provides adoption services, fertility counseling services, ministry to the deaf, participates in the Inter Church Addiction Programme, provides family support services and runs a project on drug and alcohol addiction.

Similarly, this principle will apply to PACT, which currently nominates a representative to the Board of Social Responsibility RI and which delivers adoption services in the Republic of

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Ireland. However a suggestion was made that a member of the new board could liaise with organizations like BSR (NI), PACT, Protestant Aid or others that may be appropriate.

It is proposed that the new Board for Social Theology in Action would report to the General Synod. It will have 10 members including one bishop and with the two Archbishops regarded as *ex officio members*.

The membership of the new Board should be selected to include a range of skills necessary to the effective management of the work undertaken: theology, social work, finance, HR, communications, legal advice, grant funding knowledge. In volunteering, potential members should be aware of the extent of the commitment required – probably in the region of 15 days per year.

The remit of work for the new Board is:

- Existing and new social work
- Social action (the project work that is undertaken in response to need)
- Theological and social comment and research.

Proposal

The three parent bodies, through their shared working group, would request that the Standing Committee considers the following proposal to carry forward work towards the development of the new structure as outlined:

That the Standing Committee appoints an Interim Board composed of one representative of the Honorary Secretaries and three representatives from each of the following committees: the Board of Social Action NI, the Board of Social Responsibility RI and the Church in Society Committee, to seek expressions of interest for membership of the new Board and to bring names and proposals to Standing Committee by January 2010 to enable the creation of a Board for Social Theology in Action to replace the existing bodies aforementioned and to exercise oversight and direction of the Church's work in respect of social theology in action.

Mr Sam Harper (Honorary Secretary)
Rt Revd Michael Jackson (Church in Society)
Revd Kenneth Hall (Church in Society)
Very Revd Gordon Wynne (Church in Society)
Revd Canon David Catterall (Board of Social Responsibility RI)
Mr George Glenn (Board of Social Responsibility RI)
Mr Walter Pringle (Board of Social Responsibility RI)
Dr J McGaffin (Board for Social Action NI)
Mr I Slaine (Board for Social Action NI)
Mr R Stinson (Board for Social Action NI)