

APPENDIX P

INTERIM BOARD FOR SOCIAL THEOLOGY IN ACTION

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

BACKGROUND

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 fulfil their part of that vision.

The Board for 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 was 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 was 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.

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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 counselling 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 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 applying, 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

In March 2009, the three parent bodies, through their shared working group, requested that the Standing Committee consider 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 for 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.

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APPOINTMENTS

The General Synod 2009 appointed the following to serve on the Interim Board for Social Theology in Action:

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

The first meeting of the Interim Board met on 8th June 2009 and after several other meetings a sub committee was appointed to hold a ‘workshop’ on 9th November 2009.

WORKSHOP

Those present at the workshop were:

Rev Kenny Hall (Chairman)
Rev John McDowell (Hon. Secretary)
Mr Walter Pringle
Rev Judi McGaffin
Canon David Catterall
Mr Robert Stinson
Very Rev Gordon Wynne
Mr Eugene Gallagher (Facilitator)

Introduction

The Rev Kenny Hall welcomed people to the workshop, and opened the proceedings with prayers. He then gave a background to the workshop and said that the purpose of today was to look at options for streamlining the work of the Church in Society, the Board for Social Responsibility (RI) and Board for Social Action (NI). He also said there was a need to consider the role of and future governance arrangements for the limited company known as the Board for Social Responsibility (NI), which is currently part of the Board for Social Action (NI). Concluding his opening remarks he said that the aim was to seek to streamline the work of the various constituent bodies within an agreed organisational framework.

Approach to Workshop

Ground rules were established for the workshop, including honesty, candour, a willingness to value each other's contribution, aim to deliver outcomes, which had theological underpinnings and practical out workings in diocese and parishes. It was also accepted that there needed to be collective ownership of the tasks and the outcomes. The point was made that there needed to be clarity in terms of the outcomes and the implications of the outcomes for various constituent parts of the overall system.

Some time was taken to explain the current roles and responsibilities and governance arrangements of the existing committees. Information was also given in relation to the membership of the various committees.

As part of the opening session, it was emphasised that a number of factors needed to be taken into account in the discussion on future organisational arrangements. Chief amongst those factors were:

- The need to recognise the contribution of the existing committees
- The need to build in continuity of membership where appropriate and possible to do so
- The need to ensure that the new arrangements had the capacity to cope with the breadth and depth of the collective agenda facing the church in the area of social action
- To ensure that the work of the previous committees was built upon
- To ensure that the new arrangements incorporated environmental, ecumenics and Christian social action as well as work in the spheres such as political and European issues and legislation

As discussion developed, reference was made to notes of previous meetings and in particular to the report on restructuring proposals set out in the book of reports for the General Synod dated 2009.

Issues/options considered

It was re-emphasised that it would be important to acknowledge and build on the history, culture and contributions of the current committees, with the aim of creating a single set of arrangements which will represent the contributions of all and the objectives of the wider programme into the future. It was also accepted that it would not be possible to find a 'perfect fit' between every aspect of how things were previously done. There was agreement that the common ground was to find the right organisational arrangements for taking forward the programme for social action and inclusion.

Mission Statement

It was acknowledged that there would be a need to communicate clearly to all stakeholders the reasons for and benefits of the change. Part of the communication arrangements would be to create a mission statement which clearly described the *raison d'être* of the new organisational arrangements. Through the coming together of the various committees, there was an

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opportunity to take forward the work in a more cohesive way and in a way which delivered on the core objectives of:

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

The sentiments underpinning the mission statement were expressed in the following words:

- To further the ministry of the church
- To reflect the Church of Ireland's own mission statement of growth, unity and service
- Relevance
- To address people's needs within the circumstances they face
- To be outward facing and practical

It was agreed that those present at the workshop would reflect on the words and sentiments listed above, and would attempt to construct a short mission statement for further consideration by the Interim Board.

Once the mission statement was developed and agreed, it would form the basis for drawing up the objectives for future work programme of the new Board. Once those objectives were developed, a communication strategy could be put together to ensure that the mission statement and objectives were effectively disseminated to all relevant stakeholders, the challenge then would be to 'live out' the mission statement and deliver on the objectives set.

Options Considered

There were two broad options considered in terms of the new organisational arrangements, namely:

- 1 A confederated approach, building on the report on restructuring set out in the book of reports to the General Synod 2009
- 2 A more federal approach to the new organisational structure, in which existing committees would remain broadly as they are and would come together in one overarching committee.

After debate in which a series of issues and concerns were articulated, there was unanimous agreement that option 1 was the way to proceed.

FURTHER DISCUSSION ON WORKSHOP DOCUMENT

The Interim Board for Social Theology in Action agreed the following points on 13th January 2010.

- That the new Board for Social Theology in Action would consist of ten members, one of whom would be a bishop and another of whom would be an Honorary Secretary. The Archbishops of Armagh and Dublin and the Chairperson of the Board for Social Action (NI) General Purposes and Finance Committee would hold *ex-officio* positions on the committee.
- That a description of the role of committee member for the new Board for Social Theology in Action would need to be put together.
- That an advertisement inviting people to make an expression of interest in joining the Board for Social Theology in Action be placed, upon approval of the Standing Committee, in *The Church of Ireland Gazette*.
- That the Interim Board for Social Theology in Action should attempt to recruit an equal number of clergy and laypeople to the new Board for Social Theology in Action.
- That the new Board for Social Theology in Action would be free to release statements in the name of the committee but for statements to be recognised as official statements of the Church of Ireland they would have to be submitted to the Standing Committee for ratification.
- That the limited company of the Board for Social Action NI would continue to operate as it has done, at an ‘arm’s length’ from the Board for Social Theology in Action.
- That the General Purposes and Finance Committee of the Board for Social Action NI would report no less than once a year directly to the Standing Committee.
- That the Interim Board shall recommend to the Standing Committee that it should close down the Board for Social Action NI, the Board for Social Action RI and the Church in Society Committee from the day preceding the next General Synod.
- The committee noted that the work of the Interim Board would have to be concluded at its next meeting so as to be in a position to report to the March meeting of the Standing Committee and to have its proposal and proposed resolutions ready for submission in the *Book of Reports* for General Synod 2010.

FINAL MEETING

At the final meeting on 15th February the Interim Board for Social Theology in Action drew up and agreed an Appointments Procedure, areas of work to be responsibility of board and a Terms of Reference.

1. APPOINTMENT PROCEDURE

The Interim Board for Social Theology in Action agreed that any members of the Interim Board who wish to apply for membership of the new Board would leave the room as this item was discussed.

The Interim Board agreed that the new Board for Social Theology in Action would require members to have certain general skills, areas of knowledge and areas of special interest. The Interim Board listed the required skills below:

General Skills

Prospective members of the Board:

- must be self-starters
- must have the capacity to self-motivate when faced with adversity
- must have the capacity to motivate
- must be able to set objectives and tasks
- must be able to implement general strategy at a local level
- must be able to communicate
- must have the ability to manage a team
- must have the ability to work as part of a team
- must have the ability to see sustainability
- must have the ability to work in partnership with those outside the Church

Areas of Knowledge

Prospective members of the Board must have knowledge of:

- the Church of Ireland, its structures and how it operates
- social issues
- the role and position of the clergy
- parishes, its structures and how they operate
- community outreach
- theology
- what the responsibilities of the Board for Social Theology in Action will be
- to whom the Board for Social Theology in Action will be accountable

Special Interest

Prospective members of the Board must have experience in at least one of the following areas:

- The environment
- Ecumenics
- Political and European issues
- Law
- Health and social care
- Medical ethics
- Finance
- Public relations
- Information technology

The Interim Board for Social Theology in Action agreed that the following appointments procedure would be utilised:

- An interview panel, comprised of an archbishop, a bishop, an Honorary Secretary and the Chair of the General Purpose and Finance Committee of the Church of Ireland Board for Social Responsibility (NI), will be established.
- The closing date for expressions of interest is Friday 19 February 2010.
- On Tuesday 23 February 2010 a request will be sent to all applicants to send a copy of their *curriculum vitae* and two references to the Synod Office to be received no later than Monday 15 March 2010.
- All applicants will be invited to attend an interview on Tuesday 13 April in Church of Ireland House, Dublin.
- The interview panel will convene at 9.00am on Tuesday 13 April.
- The first interview will be at 10.30am on Tuesday 13 April.

2. AREAS OF WORK TO BE RESPONSIBILITY OF BOARD

The Interim Board for Social Theology in Action agreed that the new Board for Social Theology in Action should be allowed to research, identify and implement its own areas of work.

The Interim Board for Social Theology in Action did, however, recommend that the new Board should begin with an overnight meeting. This would enable the new Board to introduce the members to each other and to decide on what preparatory research would be necessary. The Interim Board recommended that on day two of this event that representatives from the existing diocesan boards for social responsibility be invited to attend the meeting to explain the works that are already being carried out at diocesan and parish levels and also to discuss what may be required going forward. For dioceses that do not have an active board for social responsibility, the Interim Board suggested that the bishops of those relevant dioceses should be invited to nominate a person to attend.

3. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR BOARD

Name: Board for Social Theology in Action

Membership:

- A Bishop
- An Honorary Secretary
- 8 Members
- Archbishops (*ex-officio*)
- The chairperson of the General Purposes and Finance Committee of the Church of Ireland Board for Social Responsibility (NI) (*ex-officio*)

Structure:

- The Board shall consist of *ex-officio* and appointed members
- The *ex officio* members shall be:
 - (a) the Archbishops
 - (b) the chairperson of the General Purposes and Finance Committee of the Church of Ireland Board for Social Responsibility (NI)
- A bishop nominated by the archbishops and bishops
- An Honorary Secretary nominated by the Honorary Secretaries
- 8 members appointed by Standing Committee after:
 - (a) responding to an advertisement inviting people to make an expression of interest
 - (b) supplying a CV and references
 - (c) being interviewed and deemed as a suitable candidate for nomination
- That the following appointments procedure would be utilised:
 - (a) An interview panel, comprised of an archbishop, a bishop, an Honorary Secretary and the Chair of the General Purpose and Finance Committee of the Church of Ireland Board for Social Responsibility (NI), will be established.
 - (b) A closing date for expressions of interest is set.
 - (c) A request will be sent to all applicants to send a copy of their *curriculum vitae* and two references to the Synod Office.
 - (d) All applicants will be invited to attend an interview.
 - (e) Names deemed suitable will be submitted to Standing Committee.
 - (f) Standing Committee will make final decision and appointment members.
- The original committee formed in the year 2010 to serve for two triennia and then all stand down for reselection. If reselected they may serve another term.

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Mission Statement:

To be drawn up by the new board and submitted to Standing Committee for approval.

Function:

- That the new Board for Social Theology in Action is proactive and seeks to identify, contribute to, challenge and develop areas of living today where the mission of the Church can be active and the love of God shared. It does this through the development of reports, resource materials and by developing projects that apply theological perspectives to public issues in a challenge to Christian living.
- That the new Board for Social Theology in Action is reactive and would respond to reports and documents and would be free to release statements in the name of the board but for statements to be recognised as official statements of the Church of Ireland they would have to be submitted to the Standing Committee for ratification.
- Areas of interest (not exhaustive) - The Environment, Ecumenics, Political and European issues, Legislation, Health and Social Care and Medical Ethics.

Relationship to other bodies:

- That the limited company of the Board for Social Responsibility NI would continue to operate as it has done, at an ‘arm’s length’ from the Board for Social Theology in Action.
- That the new Board for Social Theology in Action seeks relationships with other boards, committees, working groups at central Church level and with the wider Church.

Governance

- That the new Board for Social Action look at governance issues and draw up guidelines to be submitted to Standing Committee for approval.

THANKS AND GOOD WISHES

On completion of this report this committee has completed its task and therefore no longer exists. The membership of the Interim Board for Social Theology in Action wish to acknowledge with grateful thanks all those who were past and present members of the Church in Society Committee, the Board of Social Action (NI) and the Board of Social Responsibility (RI) for their time, expertise and valued contributions.

THE FUTURE

The membership of the Interim Board for Social Theology in Action look forward to seeing the working out of this new structure - a smaller ‘slim-lined’ approach which will be more cost effective and hopefully more productive in the days and years ahead. We extend our best wishes to those who will be appointed to serve on the new board.