

**APPENDIX P**

**PURPOSEFUL RE-ORGANISATION  
THE BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES OF THE GENERAL SYNOD**

**A communication from the archbishops and bishops of the Church of Ireland**

The proposals set out below will be seen by some as radical and controversial. They are meant to provoke discussion that could lead to renewal and a fresh focus on the central committee work of the Church of Ireland overseen by the Standing Committee and reported to the General Synod. A fresh vision, drawn from the shared perspectives of the bishops of the Church of Ireland, offering a design for the way we approach those areas of work which may be described as having a missional rather than a governance function. Broadly this distinction may be described as follows:

governance – those constitutionally related to the oversight and/or legislative work of the General Synod, the Representative Church Body or the Clergy Pensions Fund; and

missional – those committees which, from time to time, support more directly the mission related activities, needs and priorities of the Church of Ireland.

For the purposes of this paper “central committees” are not taken to include the bishops’ meetings, the governance structures of the Theological Institute, the Bishops’ Selection Conference, bodies dealing with sector ministry and chaplaincies, Reader ministry or continuing ministerial development, even though these areas of activity are currently supported financially, in whole or in part, by central funding provided through the Allocations process or the Priorities Fund.

The objective of these proposals is to provide a considered and focused address to the mission priorities of the Church of Ireland rather than continuing to approach the work of the Church at central level in a piecemeal and ad hoc fashion. The intention is also to simplify the arrangements for the work of committees and enhance accountability. This is emphatically not an exercise in “slash and burn” prompted by current financial circumstances, rather it is a response to the contemporary needs of the mission of God in the Church of Ireland and to the calls for committee re-structuring that have been eloquently voiced in the past three years and which the Honorary Secretaries have endeavoured to facilitate.

It is towards the missional work of the Church of Ireland, that this paper is directed. Therefore, it is suggested that:

1. The bishops’ statement *Growth, Unity, Service*, which offers a triune description of the mission of the Church of Ireland, should become a structural template for the future. It is contended, therefore, that all the extra-diocesan missional activity of the Church of Ireland, (i.e. that which is driven from the centre and as defined above) should be re-ordered to reflect the triune shape of that mission. Individual dioceses will remain free to order things in response to local circumstances and perceptions.

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2. In order to achieve this – to create space for fundamental re-alignments – all existing committees, commissions, councils and working groups, whether or not referred to specifically below and apart from those required to exist in response to statutory responsibilities, (specifically in the fields of governance, pensions, management, discipline and public education,) should be “stood down” with effect from a date to be determined. No new initiatives should be proposed by existing committees and existing work should be curtailed or brought to a rapid conclusion as soon as practicable.
3. Three new divisions should then be created each with a small core group or “oversight directorate” with strong representation, including representatives of the bishops and the Honorary Secretaries, and each with a brief defined by the appropriate section of the triune mission statement of the Church of Ireland and submitted to the Standing Committee for ratification or amendment. In consultation with the Standing Committee each core group would then become responsible for identifying and prioritizing the key tasks to be undertaken in the respective divisions. It may be prudent to provide that a review of priorities for key mission tasks be undertaken on a regular six yearly basis, i.e. after every second triennium. Such a provision in no way prevents more frequent review if deemed appropriate by either the Standing Committee or a core group.
4. The three divisions are identified as follows:
  - a. Worship and Spiritual Growth
  - b. Unity and Dialogue
  - c. Living God’s Kingdom and Serving the World
5. The creation of policy and proposals for action on the hoof and in an ad hoc fashion has characterized the genesis of many committees and working groups in the past. This practice should be avoided in future. Proposals for new initiatives deriving from individual members of Standing Committee or elsewhere (other than by resolution of the General Synod) should first be scrutinized by the core group of the relevant division and then reported back to the Standing Committee for resolution.
6. In respect of the existing committee structure, the three divisions may embrace, but not be confined to, work undertaken in the past by the following bodies:
  - a. Worship and Spiritual Growth:
    - i. Liturgical Advisory Committee
    - ii. Council for Mission
    - iii. Commission on Ministry
    - iv. Parish Development Working Group
    - v. The above thus bringing together mission and ministry and linking those things to liturgy and worship. One of the obvious cross cutting themes here is that of catechesis (see below at c.)

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- b. Unity and Dialogue
    - i. Commission on Unity and Dialogue
    - ii. Covenant Council
    - iii. Bishops' Advisory Commission on Doctrine
    - iv. Representatives of other churches including Roman Catholic, Methodist and Presbyterian together with an ICC representative
  - c. Living God's Kingdom and Serving the World
    - i. Church in Society/BSA (NI)/Theology and Social Action/BSR(RI)
    - ii. Marriage Council
    - iii. Youth Department
    - iv. Children's Ministry
    - v. The question needs to be asked: Why are ministries to children, young people and married couples not addressed together and treated coherently? Is there a case for focusing upon "catechesis" across the age ranges but especially in these related and, arguably, inseparable categories? (See above at a.)
    - vi. Bishops' Appeal (perhaps re-branded as something like "The Church of Ireland World Relief and Development Appeal")
    - vii. Hard Gospel Implementation Group
7. Two major committees fall outside these groupings and proposals in respect of these are set out below. They are:
- a. The Priorities Fund Committee; and
  - b. The Central Communications Board and its committees
8. The centralized distribution of monies contributed to the Priorities Fund should be re-evaluated recognizing that the principle rationale for the setting up of the Priorities Fund was to provide for training for ministry. Therefore, after considering the requirements of training, 60% of the remainder should be redistributed to the dioceses to enable Diocesan Councils to oversee allocations within each diocese and to ensure that such allocations conform to priorities inspired by the overall vision for mission articulated for the Church of Ireland as individually interpreted in each diocese. The remaining 40% should be made available through the Standing Committee for projects directed by the Standing Committee where such projects have a reach or impact across the whole Church of Ireland. The particular commitment to the financial support of training for ministry is re-stated.
9. The Central Communications Board and two of its committees – Internet and Broadcasting - should be disbanded. Communications should be seen as a support service provided "in house" through the Head of Synod Services and Communications. Each of the three divisions proposed above should be required to give consideration to what requires to be communicated and seek advice and support from the Communications team in identifying and achieving its aims. If the Head of

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Communications feels in need of strategic guidance, the matter should be brought by the Honorary Secretaries to the full Standing Committee for determination.

10. The Literature Committee should remain to advise the Standing Committee on proposals for publications. Management of and allocations from the General Synod Royalties Fund should be overseen and controlled by the Standing Committee.

### **Why is all of this necessary?**

It is necessary for several reasons:

To attempt to implement a greater level of integration and coherence, replacing a culture of fragmentation and division in our committee structure.

To provide a clean sheet upon which each newly created division may establish priorities for action appropriate to the circumstances of Ireland and the Church of Ireland beyond 2010.

To provide for a new way of working based upon identifying key tasks and desired outcomes and delegated to small, focused working groups established for a clearly specified and carefully bounded task. The tracking of progress to completion will be enabled thereby. When a task is completed the working group would be dissolved.

To provide a framework for budgeting. The aim should be to require each division to make a “global” budgetary bid and then to direct allocations from its global budget towards the activities that serve that division’s internally agreed priorities. Such priorities to be discussed in detail within the division and presented to the Standing Committee for affirmation before moving to the stage of budget application and subsequent implementation.

There should be an expectation that communication by email and teleconferencing will be a preferred way of working in all appropriate circumstances. The equipment to enable this should be made available at selected hubs. For environmental, as well as for economic reasons, there should be developed a culture that seeks to avoid unnecessary or wasteful travel. These considerations should not, however, be allowed to hamper the achievement of the best outcomes possible for the mission of God in the Church.

Care will need to be taken to minimize the expectation of servicing and administrative support by the staff of Church of Ireland House. Divisions and working groups should aim either to service themselves from within their membership or provide for the acquisition of administrative and/or research support in accordance with pre-agreed budgetary provision.

Although it is too early fully to determine such things, it is suggested (see above) that each division should be overseen by a relatively small but highly focused core group or “oversight directorate” able to engage in a concentrated address to the establishment of priorities for each division and responsible for articulating those priorities in Standing Committee. There should be an expectation that the agenda of the Standing Committee should provide for reporting and scrutiny of divisional issues on a regular basis. More direct responsibility should devolve upon the Standing Committee so that the work of the three divisions may be “owned” and

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tracked. Standing Committee would, in effect, take responsibility for strategic decision making, under the guidance of each core group or “oversight directorate”, with informed and, perhaps, more leisurely debate undertaken on the basis of strategic issues notified to the Standing Committee for resolution.

There is a clear implication that more and not less business will be disposed of by the Standing Committee and that therefore more time should be allocated for that purpose. There is no reason, in principle, why the business of the Standing Committee should not continue into the afternoon of each day of meeting. The business could then be divided between a session devoted to routine business and a session devoted to the discussion of strategic issues. The key objective of enhancing transparency and accountability would then be met. Furthermore, the valuable time of members would be better utilized and the cost of meetings better justified.

The archbishops and bishops of the Church of Ireland commend these proposals to the Standing Committee.

#### **PURPOSEFUL RE-ORGANISATION A POSSIBLE STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

The bishops asked the Bishops of Down and Dromore and of Cashel and Ossory to recommend a strategy for bringing about the implementation of the proposals for re-organisation. The following is commended to the Honorary Secretaries for information and comment.

The strategy proposed is as follows:

1. Inform and persuade the Honorary Secretaries.
2. Provide for a special meeting of the Standing Committee – perhaps in April 2010.
3. Inform the RB that there are no negative budgetary consequences in the proposals under consideration.
4. Set out the proposals in the Primate's Address to the General Synod.
5. 2010-11 persuade existing committees of the need for change
6. General Synod 2011 – take decision to wind down committees and have the new model in place by 2012