

## **BOARD FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (RI)**

### **REPORT 2001**

#### **MEMBERSHIP**

Rev Canon WD Sinnamon (Chairman)	Dublin
Rev AG Marley	Cork, Cloyne and Ross
Rev JL Sutcliffe	Clogher
Ven WD Johnston	Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh
Miss V Darling	Dublin
Mrs F Stewart-Maunders	Derry and Raphoe
Mr S McClure	Cashel and Ossory
Mrs C Schmelter	Meath and Kildare
Mrs CH Thomson	Tuam, Killala and Achonry
Mr PDG Read	Limerick, Killaloe and Ardfer

#### ***Co-opted members***

Mrs Anne Denard	Mothers' Union
Mr JTN McGaffin	Board for Social Responsibility (NI)

#### ***Retiring members***

Rev Canon GA Salter	Cork, Cloyne and Ross
Mrs J Clarke	Mothers' Union

#### **MEETINGS**

The Board met on four occasions during the year.

#### **NEW MEMBERS**

The Board had the pleasure of welcoming two new members, Mrs Anne Denard, representing the Mothers' Union, and the Rev Alan Marley, representing the Diocese of Cork, Cloyne and Ross.

The Board paid tribute to the two retiring members, Mrs Jessica Clarke and the Rev Canon George Salter, and expressed deep gratitude to them for their contribution to the Board over the period of their membership.

#### **1. MORALITY IN HIGH PLACES**

The Board monitored and observed the unfolding work of the various Tribunals of Enquiry and their subsequent revelations, to expose further malpractice and lack of responsibility and morality in the areas of business, politics and many areas of society.

The hope of the members of the Board is that when all the facts are revealed, an era of integrity and morality may finally emerge.

## **2. REFUGEES**

The Board noted with concern the continuing problem with the processing of refugees, but was heartened by the success in many areas of the country in integrating groups of refugees into the community. The efforts of local communities, and in many cases the Churches, is to be complimented.

The recent decision to allow the 141 Kosovan refugees to stay permanently in the country is to be welcomed, together with the appeal by the Taoiseach Bertie Ahern for the Republic of Ireland to be a “land without racism”.

## **3. THE INCREASE IN THE INCIDENCE OF YOUNG MALE SUICIDES**

The Board expressed grave concern over the alarming increase in the number of suicides, the major number being among the young male population.

Much debate to establish the potential causes of the alarming rise in the number of young people committing suicide pointed to depression, abuse, lack of self esteem, alcohol and drug abuse and the pressures of modern lifestyle, together with, so often, the lack of a readily identifiable caring person to approach for help and guidance.

It is also to be accepted that the serious drop in influence of and respect for the Churches, due to scandals and incidences of child abuse, has to be a factor to be considered.

What was agreed to be of supreme importance, was to be able to identify young people at risk, often a difficult task, as those who may have suicidal tendency were often able to successfully disguise it. The ready availability of suitably trained counsellors was identified as a priority.

It was to be applauded that many groups, including the Samaritans, were talking to groups of students in the schools, and it was agreed that the Churches had a deep responsibility to play their part to support and guide young people in their efforts to meet the challenges of the modern world.

## **4. THE INCREASE IN TEENAGE VIOLENCE**

The Board expressed concern over the increase of serious incidents of teenage violence leading to serious injury or death, which have been attributed to young people of all classes of society.

It was established from Garda sources that in the majority of the cases the violence was attributed to abuse of alcohol, and concern was expressed that many drink companies were actively encouraging this factor by promotions in discos and night clubs. It is to be hoped that this practice can be controlled, and a culture of sensible drinking encouraged, as it is now to be accepted that young people are consuming alcohol at an increasingly early age.

**5. CARNAGE ON THE ROADS**

The Board expressed great concern over the escalating number of deaths on our roads, the statistics revealing the major proportion being young drivers. It was noted that at the present time nearly one third of the drivers on the roads only held provisional licences, a situation brought about by the lack of adequate testing facilities.

The Board strongly urges that this disgraceful situation be rectified as a matter of urgency, and also declared itself in favour of the introduction of a “points system” for driving offences.

**6. DRUGS**

The Board expressed their continued concern over the ready availability of drugs, now on a countrywide scale. However, the major success achieved by the members of the Garda Drugs Squad, together with the major drug seizures, and the arrest of known drug traffickers, achieved by international co-operation, is to be applauded.

The continuation of the Drug Awareness Programme in schools is to be welcomed.

**7. THE HOUSING CRISIS**

The Board viewed with concern the present crisis in housing, where the high price of properties put them out of the reach of many of the population. The move to compel developers to include a proportion of appropriately priced social housing in any future developments is to be applauded.

**8. HOUSING FOR RETIRED CLERGY**

The Board expressed concern that a situation existed where clergy approaching retirement would also be affected by the escalation in house prices.

In this regard the Board is studying the possibility of conducting a survey of the situation of all clergy as to their provision, or lack of provision, for housing on retirement.

It is accepted that the problem of availability of affordable housing is more acute in the Republic of Ireland.

This survey would entail a questionnaire to each of the clergy on a confidential basis to establish the extent of the problem, and to research how the whole housing challenge facing retired clergy, especially in the Republic of Ireland, may be assessed, assisted and planned.

In the event of this proposed survey being proceeded with, the Board would most welcome the full co-operation and assistance of the clergy, in order to be able to assess accurately the extent of the challenge faced.

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Board’s terms of reference are “the co-ordination and initiation of the Church of Ireland’s effort in the Republic of Ireland in matters of Social Concern”.

**BOARD FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (RI)****ACCOUNTS****INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT**Year ended 31 December 2000  
IR£**INCOME**

Balance b/f	292.56
Interest and dividends	94.76
Parochial contributions	97.85
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	485.17
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**EXPENDITURE**

Secretary's expenses	100.00
Cr bal c/f	385.17
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	485.17
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