

**APPENDIX B****CENTRAL COMMUNICATIONS BOARD****REPORT 2002**

The Annual Report of this Board incorporates those of the Broadcasting, Internet and Literature Committees.

**MEMBERSHIP**

Most Rev RL Clarke (Chairman)

Rev M Graham

Rev Canon RD Harman

Ven RG Hoey

Very Rev MGStA Jackson

Dr AE St Leger

Ven GCS Linney

Rev Dr AW McCormack

Dr K Milne

Mr HT Morrison

Dr R Refaüssé

Mr RH Sherwood

Director of Communications (ex officio)

*In attendance*

Media Officer

Ms V Beatty

**RESTRUCTURING AND DEVELOPING COMMUNICATIONS**

In 2001, the Church of Ireland embarked on a restructuring and development of its communications. The Central Communications Board (CCB) was restructured, the position of Director of Communications was created, and the position of acting Press Officer was transformed into a full-time role.

Mrs Janet Maxwell was appointed to the position of Director of Communications and took up the post in August 2001. The Director works with the CCB to develop communications policy and strategy and to co-ordinate the Church's response on key issues.

**COMMUNICATIONS MANAGEMENT OF CHURCH PROJECTS**

The promotion of church events is co-ordinated centrally working with the relevant church committees.

Among the projects supported are the Summit on Ministry, the Sectarianism Education Project, the Joint Draft Covenant of the Methodist Church and Church of Ireland and the publication of the Book of Common Prayer.

**ENHANCING LINKS BETWEEN THE CHURCH'S CENTRAL AND LOCAL STRUCTURES**

A first step in creating enhanced links between the Church central and local was made with the circulation of Committee news from the Representative Body and the Standing Committee of the General Synod. The bishops placed the item of news for dissemination on the agenda for their meetings.

Plans are in place to develop a Committees' section on the Church of Ireland website. Committees will be able to post updates on their work as it progresses throughout the year. This information can be accessed by Church members, editors of diocesan magazines and external media and will provide a better insight into the work of these committees.

Diocesan Communications Officers work through the Director of Communications and the Press Office to co-ordinate media responses on issues that extend beyond diocesan boundaries.

A key part of improving communications within the Church of Ireland is addressing the special communications needs of parishioners and visitors. This year marked the Church's first venture into providing material for blind worshippers. The Church Hymnal was produced in Braille with the invaluable help of the Braille Unit at Maghaberry prison. A Special Needs survey was distributed in February and the results will be used to develop accessible worship materials in the future. The CCB and its Sub-Committees are also reviewing Equality and Disability legislation in both jurisdictions as well as obtaining reports, such as that of the Royal National Institute for the Blind on making accessible websites, with a view to developing best practice policies for printed and electronic material throughout the Church.

#### **THE RESTRUCTURED CCB AND ITS SUB-COMMITTEES**

Among the first tasks to be undertaken by the CCB and its Sub-Committees was a review of their objectives. From this process a number of projects emerged.

#### **REVIEW OF CHURCH OF IRELAND PUBLISHING**

The Literature Committee began a review of Church of Ireland-related publishing since 1980. This will include material published directly by the central bodies of the Church, diocesan publishing and Church of Ireland funded publishing. The information gathered will be analysed in terms of different categories of publishing, the cost of publishing and will prompt questions about the extent to which publishing supports the Church's ministry and mission. A draft publishing policy will be developed and circulated for debate.

#### **MEDIA TRAINING**

In response to the work of the Internet Committee in facilitating the development of diocesan and parish websites throughout the Church of Ireland, the magazine competition has been extended to include a website competition. A central feature of this will be a detailed analysis of all entries. This will be done by the adjudicators and feedback will be provided. Advice and training may also be offered to participants. The expansion of the competition was very welcome and was facilitated by the donation of £1,000Stg to the Central Communications Board from Down and Connor and Dromore Diocesan Board of Education, which will be used to help fund prizes.

A number of training courses in the areas of media production and communications strategy is at present available. The courses will be offered to Church groups and clergy by the Director of Communications and Media Officer.

#### **POSITION STATEMENTS**

A key concern of the CCB is to make position (or issue) statements more accessible to our own members as well as to external audiences. These position statements would

relate to items discussed at General Synod. They might also be statements by Bishops or reports from Church Committees as recorded each year in the Journal of the General Synod. The Press Office maintains a file with these statements available. They can be faxed to the press or to individuals requiring them for research. The position statements are being posted on the website. All material is updated as new material is issued.

### **PRESS OFFICE**

Mr Brian Parker has filled the role of acting Press Officer during 2001/02. In April 2002 he was appointed on a full-time basis. Based in Belfast, he maintains close links with the Director of Communications in Church of Ireland House, Dublin. Mrs Jenny Compston continues as assistant to the Press Officer.

In the period following our last report to Synod 2001, the Press Office facilitated the Church's media response on continuing outbreaks of violence in Northern Ireland.

In September the Rev Canon Professor John Bartlett retired and the Rev Canon Adrian Empey was appointed as the new Principal of the Theological College. Other notable retirements included Bishop Hannon, Bishop Moore and Bishop Mehaffey. Each received significant tributes in the press.

The Armagh Synod address by the Archbishop expressed hope for political developments in Northern Ireland and drew strong media interest. However, this historic moment was rapidly overshadowed by the terrorist attack of September 11.

Following the destruction of the Twin Towers in Manhattan and the Pentagon people attended many special services and many clergy found themselves faced with the challenge of providing ministry through the mass media as well as through the traditional medium of services and individual counselling. The internet and our website proved invaluable in getting information disseminated quickly. This is one of the first examples of how this system can be used in a crisis where a rapid response is critical.

In the latter part of the year, doctrinal issues dominated the news. This offered a rare opportunity to explore our Anglican beliefs in more depth with the media. The debate involved laity as much as clergy and indicated that the media understood the importance of lay involvement within the Church of Ireland.

### **EVENTS 2001/02**

The General Synod in University College Dublin sustained media interest over the three days with a variety of photocalls supporting the coverage. Press facilities were, perhaps, basic, but the Press Office worked successfully. The Synod website provided a valuable service before, during and after Synod. Subsequently it received international commendation from other members of the Anglican Communion.

Diocesan Synods received good coverage, but some were overshadowed despite raising important issues. This is mainly due to overlap in terms of their timing. Some consideration might be given to the timing of synods so that all aspects of our commentary can be communicated to a broader public.

**BROADCASTING COMMITTEE****MEMBERSHIP**

Dr K Milne (Chairman)

Rt Rev WP Colton

Ms R Buchanan

Mr T Fleck

Rev Dr AW McCormack

Rev FJ McDowell

Director of Communications (ex officio)

The year has proved a busy one for the Committee and, through its course, the Committee has met in discharge of its obligations in Dublin and in Belfast.

Ms Janet Maxwell, Director of Communications, has been welcomed into membership.

**PARTICIPATION IN POLICY FORUMS**

As readers of last year's General Synod Reports may recall, the Committee recently participated in the Communications discussions launched in late 2000 by the United Kingdom Government and marked by a White Paper presented jointly in the names of the Secretaries of State for Trade and Industry and for Culture, Media and Sport.

Since the writing of last year's report a General Election has intervened in the United Kingdom and the entire ministerial staff of the Department of Culture, Media and Sport has been changed. This has retarded what ought to have been a relatively speedy consultation process. The Committee has worked through CACLB (The Churches Advisory Council on Local Broadcasting) to play a part in new discussions, particularly with regard to the notion of changes in media ownership rules (Appendix One and Two). The Committee has sought to maintain its general opinions as presented to the General Synod in 2001.

**BROADCAST TRAINING**

The preparation of clergy and laity to participate in the many opportunities still presented by the contemporary broadcast culture has continued to exercise the Committee. The Revd Tom Gordon is administering a scheme of graded training to encourage both clergy and laity to play as full a part as possible in the broadcast environment. Interested clergy are encouraged to make contact with the co-ordinator, Revd Tom Gordon.

**LOCAL BROADCASTING**

The Committee continues to appreciate the work of the many members of the Church of Ireland involved in local broadcasting. The Committee continues to contribute to the 3R syndication service which provides religious interest material for use by local stations. The committee has also monitored developments in the Dublin area regarding the possible launch of a new religious station and is active in exploring creative religious programme options with existing local broadcasters. At a national level in the United Kingdom context, the Revd Dr Alan McCormack assumed representation on CACLB. The Church of Ireland maintains representation on this body as part of its responsibility to speak to broadcast matters in the United Kingdom.

**ACCESS RADIO**

A current broadcast project 'Access radio' is underway in the United Kingdom. A number of pilot licences have been awarded by the Radio Authority for experimental non-commercial stations. These licences were due to activate in early January 2002. Two of the pilots have been awarded to stations in Northern Ireland- One, 'Vision', a community based station in Belfast, the other, 'Shine', an ecumenical religious station in Co Down.

The Honorary Secretary attended a briefing on the Access radio project by the Chief Executive of the Radio Authority in October 2001. The Committee is taking an active interest in the project - if it is judged a success and allowed to become a regular feature of the broadcast environment then many opportunities for religious programmes are likely to result.

**BBC**

The Honorary Secretary attended a seminar on current developments in religious programme making at the BBC led by Mr Alan Bookbinder, the new Head of Religion and Ethics. The thinking here has informed committee thinking in the subsequent period.

**RTE**

The Committee continues to appreciate the standard and regularity of broadcast Church services on RTE and records its thanks to the parishes of the Church of Ireland for their continued willingness to broadcast radio and television liturgies. This has been a year of considerable change in RTE and, in November, the Committee met with executives from RTE radio to discuss issues and options.

The Committee is heartened to see the development of a small choral group to provide assistance at broadcast Anglican liturgies and congratulates the Revd Tom Gordon on his initiative in setting up the group, and RTE for its willingness to help. (Appendix Three)

**VISIT TO STORMONT**

The Committee visited Parliament Buildings in Stormont at the invitation of Mr David McClarty MLA, the Member for East Londonderry. The Committee had a tour of the building, some discussions with Mr McClarty on the consequences of devolution for broadcast policy in Northern Ireland, and then had a regular meeting in Stormont.

**FELLOWSHIP**

The Committee has continued to explore the idea of setting up – in conjunction with a national broadcaster – a Programme-makers Fellowship. This would be a three month bursary which would enable a proven talent to develop a programme ready script on a religious/human interest topic.

Initial approaches to BBC, UTV and RTE led to a positive expression of interest from RTE. Further discussion has been shelved until the Committee knows whether it is in a position to offer the necessary funding for the joint - development of the Fellowship. An application has been made to the Priorities Fund in the current cycle.

**INTERNET COMMITTEE****MEMBERSHIP**

Ven RG Hoey (Chairman)

Rev M Graham (Co-ordinator)

Ms M Carter

Mr M Larmour

Mr K Cinnamond

Mr RH Sherwood

Director of Communications (ex officio)

*In attendance*

Media Officer

The Internet Committee advises the Central Communications Board on the use of the Internet in the Church of Ireland.

The Internet Committee works in three main areas:

- maintaining and developing the Church of Ireland websites
- encouraging the use of the Internet among Church members
- supporting Internet users in the Church of Ireland

**CHURCH OF IRELAND WEBSITES**

The Church of Ireland was the first Anglican province to have an official website (<http://ireland.anglican.org>) which was launched in 1997. Other provinces had unofficial sites which they continue to have but the Church of Ireland very quickly realised the potential of this new communications medium both for spreading the Gospel and for internal and external Church communications.

The website continues to attract thousands of visitors, the number of visitors reflecting the explosive growth in the use of the Internet over the past four years. In 1998 it was reported that the site was attracting 400-500 “sessions” (or visitors) per week. 1999 saw this number remain fairly constant over the year. In 2000 the number of visitors had risen to about 1000 a week. By the end of 2001 this figure had risen to over 7000 visits per week. The opportunities this gives for evangelism and education through the use of the Internet are immediately obvious.

Once again the Internet Committee established a General Synod website (<http://synod.ireland.anglican.org>) for Synod 2001 held in the O'Reilly Hall, University College, Dublin. This website attracted great acclaim from within the Church of Ireland and beyond, to such an extent that the Anglican Church in Australia used its structure as a model for its General Synod 2001 website.

**USE OF THE INTERNET BY CHURCH MEMBERS**

The Church of Ireland Internet Committee continues to offer Internet Services to all members who are already on-line including official email addresses and web site hosting. Currently the Internet Committee hosts 130 domains on its servers, an increase of 68% on last year.

These services are at present available free of charge to Church of Ireland organisations. Those interested are asked to contact the Internet Co-ordinator (email: [hostmaster@ireland.anglican.org](mailto:hostmaster@ireland.anglican.org)) if they have any queries.

To date 100 parishes have web sites, an increase of 38% since last year. Six dioceses have diocesan websites (Cork, Cashel and Ossory, Down and Dromore, Tuam, Meath and Kildare, and Dublin and Glendalough). At the time of writing all diocesan offices and/or secretaries are or soon will be officially on-line.

### **SUPPORTING INTERNET USERS IN THE CHURCH OF IRELAND**

The Internet Co-ordinator continues to provide ongoing support for Internet users throughout the Church of Ireland. A new website, <http://www.churchofireland.net>, was launched to help answer some of the more common questions posed by users and to provide up-to-date information on internet security (such as virus threats and action to be taken if infected).

The Internet Co-ordinator also maintains the Church of Ireland Email and Resource Directories. The Email directory contains over 600 entries, once again an increase of 20% over last year. On-line email and parish directories are maintained (<http://churchofireland.net/directories>) and are generally accessible to Directory members.

Investigation is ongoing with regard to the implications of recent changes to the Data Protection Acts in both jurisdictions, and it is hoped that these directories can be made public in the near future, allowing changes in parish personnel to be quickly communicated.

Work has begun on material related to the safe use of the Internet, especially by children, material which can be disseminated to parishes and schools.

The requirements of the United Kingdom *Disability Discrimination Act 1995* for websites and Internet Service Providers have also been noted and are under consideration by the Internet Committee.

### **THE WIDER ANGLICAN COMMUNION**

The Church of Ireland continues to play a part in the development of a world-wide telecommunications strategy for the Anglican Communion. Following the recommendations of the International Advisory Council for Telecommunications in the Anglican Communion (IACTAC), the Council was about to start the next phase of their work, ie the drafting of a constitution to allow the formation of a Standing Commission on Telecommunications for the Anglican Communion. This constitution would state how that commission will work and function within the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC).

This initiative is being driven by the staff of Trinity Church, Wall Street, New York, and a conference call to begin the work was scheduled for Wednesday, September 19th. Sadly, Trinity Church was caught in the maelstrom which resulted from the terrorist attack on the United States on September 11th and the work was postponed. Happily Trinity has reported that it is once again getting back to normal after those tragic events and it is hoped that the work on the constitution can start in the near future.

Following the terrible events of September 11th, many churches throughout Ireland held special services to remember the victims of the attack. The Church of Ireland website was used to communicate these services to the community, proving how quickly the Internet can respond to such happenings.

### **LITERATURE COMMITTEE**

#### **MEMBERSHIP**

Rt Rev MHG Mayes (Chairman)

Rt Rev Dr MGStA Jackson

Very Rev Dr SR White

Rev Canon MC Kennedy

Rev Canon JW McKegney

Rev B Treacy OP

Rev SA Pragnell

Dr K Milne

Ms C West

Dr R Refaüssé (Honorary Secretary)

Director of Communications (ex officio)

It was agreed that the Honorary Secretary and the Dean of Cork, the Chairman being unavailable, would represent the Committee at the Central Communications Board.

#### **GENERAL SYNOD ROYALTIES FUND**

The Committee recommended the following grants:

- Liturgical Advisory Committee: up to IR£500 per annum for the purchase of reference books, providing a copy of each item purchased was also deposited in the RCB Library.
- Publication of Prayer Book Committee: up to IR£5000 to fund the production of copies of *The Calendar and Collects* for distribution to incumbents, curates and diocesan readers.
- Central Director of Ordinands: up to IR£2000, in the first instance, to facilitate the production of a short guide to ordination.
- APCK: IR£3,500 to publish and distribute three leaflets on *The Bible, The Eucharist and Mary*.

#### **DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS**

The Committee welcomed the appointment of the Director of Communications and particularly the fact that the Director would have a responsibility for publishing within the Church of Ireland and would be, ex officio, a member of the Committee. The Committee has begun the process of defining its role in relation to the Director of Communications. Among the issues which the Committee has begun to address are a review of publishing, publishing formats and the concept of a Church of Ireland house style.



**APPENDIX ONE****CACLB RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION ON MEDIA OWNERSHIP RULES****DEPARTMENT FOR CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT****NOVEMBER 2001****INTRODUCTORY REMARKS**

The Churches Advisory Council for Local Broadcasting (CACLB) was formed in the late 1960s when local radio started, for the advancement of the Christian religion through broadcasting on radio and television. It is a charitable trust and an ecumenical body, being a formal network of the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI), and an agency of Churches Together in England (CTE). In light of recent developments in the media industry, recognising the blurring of distinctions in cross-media ownership and between local and national issues, CACLB is working towards becoming the Churches' Media Council, and is already working in those wider areas.

The Council brings together the churches, Christian broadcasters, the broadcasting authorities and trainers. This response is submitted on behalf of the Council's representatives of the member churches and Christian broadcasters and is the result of an ecumenical conversation between them. Individual institutional churches will also be making their own responses to this consultation.

CACLB welcomes this consultation and is grateful for the opportunity to respond. Media ownership needs to facilitate freedom of speech and expression. This must be done on a 'level playing field', in accordance with conventions on human rights. Nevertheless it is recognised that positive content regulation is required to ensure that broadcast material is not inflammatory, racist, sexist, or otherwise illegal.

Plurality and diversity are reflected in the multi-faith community in which we live, of which Christianity is a major part. Churches, like public houses, shops and doctors surgeries amongst others, are at the heart of local communities and the nation. They are no threat to democracy. On the contrary, when democracy was threatened by the terrible events of 11 September 2001 people flocked to the churches for reassurance and a sound base from which to move forward. Much religious material was broadcast locally and nationally, as the churches acted highly responsibly, promoting and participating in multi-faith approaches.

Indeed CACLB believes that the public interest is well served by religious broadcasting which promotes social stability, family values and mutual respect for all people regardless of race, creed and colour.

In general we wish to see a media ownership regime which:

- Creates a level playing field
- Establishes a single pot for radio frequencies and a single pot for television frequencies and single sets of criteria for their allocation

- No additional restriction on religious broadcasting and broadcasters
- Irons out the existing anomalies and inequitable restrictions
- Promotes Access Radio, the new third tier of community radio, and
- Encourages care and provisions for disabled, elderly and disadvantaged people.

If the cross-media ownership rules are modified, they must nevertheless ensure that real diversity of sources of views and information remain available to listeners, viewers and readers. The quality and range of television and radio services offered must be maintained and protected.

The consolidation of the ownership of local radio stations into the hands of a small number of dominant large groups is a great concern. This is bringing a rapid growth in standardization of programming and a reduction in local content and involvement. OFCOM should be required to maintain local autonomy and coverage in radio, and television.

Our comments are linked to the paragraphs in the Consultation Document, reference numbers as quoted.

- 1.1 Mainstream Christianity has been at the heart of the development of this nation's democracy throughout the modern era. Indeed as recently as the 1970s and 1980s broadcasters were asking the churches to provide a range of religious material, items and programming for them.
- 1.4 We are particularly concerned to protect the localness and diversity of local broadcasting. Experience shows that when large companies take over local stations, the amount of local coverage diminishes to a noticeable and large extent. Yes, there will and should be economies of scale in the support; but the broadcasting must retain its local character and not become a satellite transmitter of centrally produced, often without human content, material.
- 1.7 Multi-media ownership must not lead to centralization of news and concentration of editorial control into few hands. Varied news agendas must remain the norm.
- 2.2 The rationale for general restrictions must be the subject of regular and rigorous review as this is always a diminution of free speech.
- 3.4 As far as possible legislation should set the principles and standards. Schedules, which can adapt quicker to the increasingly rapid developments in the media, should be used as far as possible so that the inevitable delays whilst awaiting time for primary legislation do not cause such a great hindrance.
- 3.5 The Christian broadcasters in the UK have created a new sector of business already worth £25mpa in just six years.
- 3.7 We agree that as deregulatory an approach as possible should be applied.

- 4.2 The UK's religious restrictions do not exist in any other country listed in the table, which includes most of the world's most developed democracies, economies and media sectors.
- 5.1 The multi-faith agenda, for example as promoted by the BBC, ensures plurality and diversity. Christianity plays a big part in that rich and varied spectrum.
- 5.2 The Churches are constantly adapting to changes in society, as well as in science, technology and the economy.
- 5.3 The underlying Christian message provides a stable faith base, which offers some certainty and predictability for people's lives.

#### 6.1.6-8 Ownership of licences by religious groups

- 6.1.7 We welcome the Government's commitment to remove the anomaly of the disqualification of religious organisations from the ownership of local terrestrial digital licences.

We recognise that ownership by religious bodies raises specific concerns and that there must be safeguards. We also recognise that where spectrum is limited the awarding of a licence to one religious organisation could be perceived as unfair or discriminatory in relation to other religious bodies.

We note the views of the Commission for Racial Equality that the current situation in which national licences are awarded to the highest bidder could be potentially divisive with different religions bidding for a licence.

Finally, we acknowledge that there may be legitimate concerns about awarding a multiplex licence to a religious organisation.

We believe, however, that these concerns can be met and that the ban on religious bodies bidding for ownership of national analogue and digital licences should be lifted. Subject to safeguards, religious organisations should be able to bid for and hold licences for a national analogue service, a national digital sound programme service and local digital sound programme services.

#### ***National Analogue Licences***

Given the present continued restricted availability of national analogue spectrum we recognise the argument that it could be seen as unfair to award a licence to one particular religious body. This objection could be met if the following safeguards are introduced:

- Licences should not be awarded simply on the basis of the highest bid, as this would, as the consultation paper says, raise the potentially divisive prospect of "a bidding war between different religions".

- OFCOM should have to apply a vetting process applying principles similar to those presently used by the Radio Authority to determine whether or not religious bodies are potentially fit to hold local analogue licences.

These guidelines take into account: (1) whether the body would be able to adhere to the appropriate programming, licensing and sponsorship codes; and, (2) whether the current aims and practices of the body are compatible with the current programming, licensing and sponsorship codes;

In addition, OFCOM would be required to oblige the body to supply detailed information about its aims, objectives and beliefs;

OFCEM would be required to seek the widest range of advice about the credentials of the religious body applying for a licence. OFCEM should consider applications only from those bodies which could demonstrate good ecumenical and multi-faith relations. Membership of the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland might be one such criterion.

OFCEM should be obliged to take into account the extent to which the licence application commanded widespread support. If and when the availability of spectrum increases the extent of wider support required by a potential licensee might be adjusted.

In general, the competitive criteria of economic viability and command of audience share should always be applied.

#### ***National and Local Digital Sound Service Programme Licences***

We have already welcomed the promise to remove any restriction on religious ownership of local digital programme licences.

Our comments on national analogue licences would apply to national digital licences as well. However, given that digital radio offers the potential, in the long run, for substantially increasing the number of stations available, the importance of demonstrating widespread support is lessened.

However, applicants should still be subject to approval by OFCEM, which would be required to take appropriate advice.

#### ***Multiplex Licences***

We do not wish to see religious groups excluded from bidding for multiplex licences but we are conscious that the award of a licence to a religious body would raise the same fears of restricting freedom of speech as awarding a licence to a political party or pressure group. The ownership of a multiplex by one religious body or group of bodies would inevitably raise questions about giving such groups an unfair advantage.

However, given the existence of safeguards to prevent discrimination by any multiplex owner on the grounds of belief we believe that religious organisations should be able to hold a multiplex licence.

If it is decided, however, that religious bodies cannot hold national or local digital radio multiplex licences then we would expect to see stringent safeguards to ensure that the multiplex operator was not able to exclude providers of sound programme services from the multiplex on grounds related to belief.

With the development of web-based internet broadcasting, it is already possible for religious organisations to deliver radio and television services in that way. That opportunity is likely to increase rapidly within the lifetime of this proposed legislation. To deny religious organisations access to mainstream broadcasting may be counter-productive as it may mean that they would broadcast anyway but be subject to less management and regulation as to standards.

- 6.2.7 Our preference would be for plurality.
- 6.3.6 We reiterate our concerns about the maintenance of the local flavour, and are aware that this also needs to be protected in areas with a less well developed choice of radio services as well.
- 6.3.8 We strongly support the development of access radio stations, as a key means of providing very local community radio. The social gain from involvement in such stations is also going to be significant, as it has already proved to be the case in RSLs in places like Moss Side in Manchester.
- 6.3.13 We believe OFCOM should be required to review the onward sale of local licences to reduce the risk that new owners move uniformly towards a middle ground of national taste.
- 6.3.14 We believe that OFCOM should be able to prevent the onward sale of a licence throughout its term if it were believed a change of control would jeopardise the character of the station as set out in the winning licence application.

It is appreciated that the situation is different in Scotland; and we recognise that the particular circumstances of Northern Ireland may require further consultations there.

**APPENDIX TWO****CHURCH OF IRELAND SUBMISSION ON MEDIA OWNERSHIP RULES**

**[nb: An abstraction of relevant text in the report received by the General Synod in 2001]**

Sir,

Further to the current consultation on proposed changes in the media ownership codes I send the following relevant abstractions from the Church of Ireland Broadcasting Committee's submission regarding the original consultation paper on communications, 'A new future for communications'.

[I also append the entirety of our initial submission.]

With thanks

Revd Dr Alan McCormack  
Honorary Secretary, the Broadcasting Committee  
February 2002

**“OWNERSHIP ISSUES**

We approve of the proposed correction of the current anomaly regarding the ownership of radio licences by religious bodies (4.9.1). However, we resist in the strongest possible terms any relaxation in the ownership prohibition of the sort proposed in 4.9.2. It is our opinion that the interests of religious broadcasting are best served by a strengthening of PSB requirements and that an authority such as OFCOM should act to encourage and ensure the presence of religious stranding on all PSB channels - a “mixed ecology” (5.2.12) of programming is a surer defence for the witness of the religions than a niche which is in reality a ghetto. Furthermore we believe that religious stranding in PSB channels should be fairly placed in schedules and not relegated to slack periods.

We consider that TV channels owned by religious organisations may pose a potential danger to the balance between the celebration of one religious tradition's identity and the discommoding or discomforting of another. We suggest that there is a difference in kind between the predictable aspirations of religious organisations involved in broadcast production and supply and their commercial correlates which would require much further study and reflection. There are sufficient examples in the transatlantic context of the unseemly scramble of religious identities into channel ownership to mandate further reflection before any change in policy is effected.

If the outcome of the white paper response process is in fact to permit a relaxation in the conventional ownership prohibitions, then we suggest strongly that this must have no bearing whatsoever on the continuing provision of religious programmes in the ecology of PSB services.”

**APPENDIX THREE****RTE BROADCASTING (RADIO)**

This year has seen a wide-ranging shedding of posts and a radical curtailment of basic enterprises as the most immediate outcomes of the serious financial crisis at RTE. This has led to an immediate review all the station's operations and programming and it is the case that no aspect of RTE's functioning and public service has been protected from critical examination and serious financial cutback. All this has had dramatic consequences throughout the year for all aspects of programming of which the churches themselves are a long-standing part.

As the situation has developed over this past year, the following specific points are the result of decisions taken at the highest level in RTE in consultation with *the Co-ordinator of Broadcasting Involving the Protestant Churches* (The Revd Tom Gordon). The situation has been discussed within the Broadcasting Committee which itself has fully supported the consequent outcome:

1. **RTE & the Churches:** RTE (Radio) is emphatic in its continuing commitment and time allocation to the broadcasting of Sunday worship from the mainstream churches. No cutback in this time allocation is envisaged in the short or long-term nor is there any change in policy towards the churches.
2. **Immediate Curtailment of Geographical Coverage:** The financial situation which has arisen over the past year makes it impossible to continue live coverage from across the country, North and South. Such live broadcasts can now only come from a tightly restricted area within the Dublin environs due to the considerable expense involved in sending production staff further afield. There may be the possibility of the very occasional exception to this curtailment but this must be under unique circumstance and cannot be considered in the immediate term. (Broadcasts from Northern Ireland are now particularly difficult in this regard given the additional expense involved.)
3. **Recent Consultations with Church Representatives:** The present crisis has been discussed at length with the RTE authorities. The character of these meetings was completely supportive of the churches and the tone was one of (i) clearly communicating the exact dimensions of the financial situation through direct contacts with senior RTE administrators, (ii) trying to establish the basis for a collaborative approach in dealing with the present crisis and (iii) inviting the submission of a creative, although urgent, response to the immediate issue of programming for 2002.

**IMMEDIATE RESPONSE**

The speed and seriousness of developments made a speedy response a priority in order meet the pressing need to resource a schedule for 2002. In doing so however, a proactive response was needed from the Church of Ireland which might also correspondingly address a number of serious pre-existing issues largely to do with the standard and quality of the broadcasts themselves. The following therefore are responses which have been put in place for the 2002 Radio Schedule as relating to services of the Church of Ireland:

**SUMMARY OF GENERAL POINTS**

That the Church of Ireland in its broadcasting commitments will ensure:

- (a) **The continued maintenance of a regular Sunday broadcast liturgy from a Church of Ireland place of worship undertaken to standards of excellence in music, liturgical competence and homiletic effectiveness.** This will be achieved through:
- (b) **The continuing (although restricted) use of appropriately resourced venues within the Dublin area to provide services along the lines as previously existed.** These will form a percentage of the total yearly allocation. Existing difficulties in this geographical usage should be noted however, due to the current television policy of geographical restriction where an already small pool of Church of Ireland resources is heavily relied-upon.
- (c) **The establishment of a small liturgical ensemble of professional/semi-professional singers to resource a wide range of ‘radio-specific’ services from the Church of Ireland College of Education in Rathmines.** This group will be capable of providing a standard of genuine excellence within a broad range of liturgical forms and styles.
- (d) **The broadcasting of parishes and church organisations from the Rathmines venue who have been ‘invited in’ (rather in the manner of the current RTE television practice).**
- (e) **The establishment (through (a), (b) and (c) above) of a much wider ‘repertoire’ of liturgical forms and to ensure an appropriate and thoroughly professional presentation of the Book of Common Prayer, the Alternative Prayer Book and the new material leading to the Book of Common Prayer [2004].**
- (f) **The establishment (through (a), (b) and (c) above) of a more inclusive geographical/provincial/diocesan representation of the Church of Ireland through the use of invited preachers specifically and regularly selected for this purpose.** This will have particular relevance for Church of Ireland/RTE’s representation of rural dioceses and also representation from Northern Ireland. This latter has been an increasingly problematic issue because of the costing issues highlighted above.

The above outlines the picture as presently exists. It will be, however, open to further development as the situation unfolds either positively or negatively. The financial crisis has presented great difficulties this year in scheduling and broadcasting management for 2002. Doubtless, not all change will be received easily although the resulting correspondence to the new regime has been significant in volume and has overwhelmingly positive. Television broadcasts remain the same although tight geographical restrictions imposed a few years back remain strictly in place.

Revd Tom Gordon

*(RTE Co-Ordinator of Broadcasting Involving the Protestant Churches)*