

Submission on Terms of Reference by

BETHANY SURVIVORS'

CAMPAIGN

AND

SURVIVORS OF PROTESTANT

CHILDREN'S INSTITUTIONS

To James Reilly TD Minister for Children and Youth Affairs
on Proposed Inquiry into 'Mother and Baby' homes

12 November 2014

The Minister has an opportunity to establish a definitive narrative of this dark aspect of our history and establish, finally, the centrality of victims to that narrative whilst offering, on behalf of the whole nation, a gesture of compensation and reconciliation to them.

PROPOSALS

Bethany survivors, locked out of consideration for many years, assert that the culture of exclusion must end. A new model of inclusion should be put in place.

In order to accommodate a just outcome, the 2002 Redress Act scheme should be re-opened to admit excluded institutions.

The methodology of the Northern Ireland inquiry into institutional abuse should be adopted. A survivor of institutional abuse, or their representative, may independently contact that inquiry and ask that their evidence be considered. Former residents here in the south should not be precluded by non-inclusion in a pre-determined list of institutions.

The group therefore calls for:

- Re-opening the 2002 Redress Act scheme and admission of all excluded institutions;
- Separation of necessary historical investigations from survivors' (their families and representatives) documented claim for redress, which must be given priority;
- A time limited inquiry into:
 1. Abuse, neglect, of children throughout their lives
 2. Inspection regimes,
 3. Mortality and associated illness,
 4. Forced and illegal adoptions,
 5. Cross border movements of children and pregnant women, involving structured co-operation with the inquiry into institutional abuse in Northern Ireland,
 6. Movements of children to Britain, the US and elsewhere.
 7. Sectarian regulation of Roman Catholic and Protestant communities,
- A properly resourced modular or divisional type inquiry in which the various elements may be investigated simultaneously and therefore in both an efficient and timely manner;
- Creating a statutory basis for handing over of all records of affected institutions to a public body with a scheme of access for survivors, their families, and bona fide researchers (with adequate safeguards).

This submission reflects the experience of survivors of,

The Bethany Home

Westbank (Mayil) orphanage

The CofI Magdalen Home (Denny House)

The Nurse Rescue Society

Additional homes of which survivors are aware: Avoca House Orphanage (Wicklow), Havergal Home (Limerick), Braemor House, Cork. There are others.

MOTIVATION FOR OUR PROPOSALS

The proposed inquiry must consider the experiences of all victims equally. To do that it is necessary to understand how they were treated differently.

The system of sectarian separation and regulation of women and children, which the state inherited, but also facilitated and encouraged, has, up to now, rendered Protestant experience invisible. The proposed inquiry should reject the approach to members of the Protestant community adopted by the 1937 Cussen Report, the 1970 Kennedy Report and the more recent Ryan Commission Report.

Following Cussen (1937), Kennedy (1970), page 3, section 1.5, stated:

'There is now no Certified School under Protestant management... the last closed in 1917. Children other than Roman Catholics who come before the courts are entrusted, through the local Gardai, to the

charge of the local pastor of their own denomination, who sees to it that they are placed in the care of suitable families or schools'.

The Ryan Commission (childabusecommission.ie/rpt/04-03.php), asserted:

Protestant children

3.56 *The last Protestant Industrial School closed in 1917 so the only institution to which a child could be committed was Marlborough House. Children who came before the courts were usually entrusted, through the local Gardaí, to the care of the local clergyman or minister of religion concerned and he assumed responsibility for having them placed in the care of a suitable family, school or home.*³⁷

3.57 *In regard to children who were not committed by the courts but needed to be in care, many of the Protestant homes situated in the State were closed or amalgamated. Although the numbers of children for which the*

remaining homes had to provide was greatly reduced, so, were the sources of their finance. Sometimes, the closing of a home or sale of a redundant building resulted in the creation of a fund which was applied for the support of children in the remaining homes or in ordinary boarding schools. Money from these and other charities was used to assist needy parents to keep their children at home, each diocese having its Protestant Orphan Society, which made such grants. Dr Barnardo's Homes also provide grants for Protestant orphans living in Ireland. Another relevant factor is that there was a waiting list of would-be adopters.

That is all these three reports state about vulnerable Protestant children within a sectarian system.

Where Ryan elaborates, above, the report is inaccurate.

There is no evidence that 'needy' children born out of wedlock, were kept 'at home'. They were institutionalised like Roman Catholic children, for instance in the Bethany Home, the Church of Ireland Magdalen Home, or in the Westbank orphanage. Barnardo's in fact part funded the Bethany Home. It also took Bethany Children out of the state (but refuse to declare how many or what became of them). In addition 'Would-be [Protestant] adopters' were prevented from adopting children in the Westbank Home, where children stayed sometimes into their 20s.

Protestant children were institutionalised, but state institutions ignored the abuse that accompanied their institutional treatment.

The narrative with regard to institutional abuse has tended to focus on the Roman Catholic Church, to the exclusion of state responsibility for a sectarian system of regulating women and the poor, affecting both Roman Catholics and Protestants. Many Protestant institutions were (some still are), for this reason, invisible.

This sectarian system of regulation, in which marginalized Protestants were invisible within the larger community and also within their own, left them with no voice, official, academic or popular. Their narrative has emerged from the margins, from Derek Leinster's two-volume auto-biography (*Hannah's Shame* and *Destiny Unknown*) in 2005 and 2008 and follow-on research and testimony his pioneering efforts encouraged.

There is an all-island dimension to this issue, which must not be ignored. There must be cooperation with the Northern Ireland inquiry into institutional abuse, by examining extensive systemic cross border movements of women and children, for the purpose of adoption, confinement, giving birth, and fund raising. The experience of many survivors cannot be adequately understood if this is not done.

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