

Witness Name:  
Statement No.:  
Exhibits:  
Dated:

**THE INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE**

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**EXHIBIT JD / 10**

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DRAFT

# **THE DISCIPLINARY TRIBUNAL of THE CHURCH IN WALES**

## **IN THE MATTER of a REFERENCE CONCERNING**

### **THE REVEREND RICHARD HART**

26 January 2009

1. The Disciplinary Tribunal sat on the 26 January, 2009 to consider a complaint referred to it by the Investigatory Committee on the 6 October 2008.
2. The complaint alleged that the Reverend Richard Hart, in breach of Chapter XI, Section 18(1)(c) of the Constitution of the Church in Wales was guilty of conduct giving just cause for scandal or offence in that he made, took and possessed indecent photographs of a child or children between 1991 and 2008.
3. The complaint exhibited 21 specimen examples of such making, taking or possession of photographs and the evidence indicated that when recovered by police, his computer contained no fewer than 56000 images and a further 378 prints of images were recovered from his home. Of these, the majority fell into Category 1 (on the guidelines provided by R v Oliver) but several thousand fell within the Category 2 – 4 and 5 in Category 5, the most serious.
4. The Reverend Hart declined to attend the hearing or to be represented and, accordingly, we heard the matter in his absence. He provided a written statement in which he did not deny the charge – albeit that he did not admit it either.
5. The evidence put before us comprised the results of the police investigation which had resulted in his appearing before the Cardiff Crown Court in September 2008, and upon his plea of guilty, receiving a total sentence of three and a half years imprisonment.

6. In addition to the discovery of the images and prints as outlined, the investigation also revealed his contacts with child abuse internet sites and his downloading of many stories involving sex with children. We were also made aware of the reactions of two of his own children to his arrest and these discoveries.
7. From the evidence put before us **we were in no doubt that the allegation that the Reverend Hart was guilty of conduct giving rise to just cause for scandal or offence was overwhelmingly proved.**
8. In the light of the immense seriousness and depravity of the offences, involving as often they did, images of very young children, the length of time over which they had been committed, the absence of any clear statement of regret or apology – still less understanding of the gravity of his conduct and thus the danger he still poses to children – we were unhesitatingly of the view that by reason of his conduct it was wholly inappropriate for Richard Hart to remain a cleric and accordingly we  
**ORDER that Richard Hart be deposed from Holy Orders and expulsion from the Office of Cleric of the Church in Wales.**

**Gerard Elias QC**

**President**