

GENERAL SYNOD**Fresh Expressions and Church Growth****Report by the Mission and Public Affairs Council**

1. Over the past ten years the Church of England has supported the Fresh Expressions team and the wider movement of fresh expressions across the country. This was supported by the Archbishop of Canterbury and Synod after the report *Mission Shaped Church* was brought to General Synod in 2004. The team is an ecumenical group that has acted as a catalyst for this work, the result of which has been the planting of many fresh expressions of Church.
2. A fresh expression of church is one that is intentionally created to reach people who are currently not attending inherited churches. They are started by Christians practising cross cultural mission in this country, through listening to the people outside of our normal circles of church. These missionaries or pioneers create church in a 21st century context.
3. The movement has produced over 1,000 fresh expressions of church in the Church of England and nearly 2,000 in the Methodist Church. The new people attending fresh expressions in the Church of England account for 3% of our national attendance figures; these are people who were not previously attending “inherited churches” (i.e. established patterns of church life and worship). In two dioceses in the Church of England, where the planting of fresh expressions has been adopted as a clear part of their growth strategy, 10% or more of their attendance figures are those attending fresh expressions of church.
4. This is a movement that has produced numerical growth in our Church and therefore should be further encouraged as a key part of our on-going mission strategy for the next decade.
5. This report, *Fresh Expressions in the Mission of the Church*, is the result of a joint Anglican and Methodist working party, called together by those churches’ respective faith and order groups, to study the ecclesiology of fresh expressions of church. The report looks at the received ecclesiology of our traditions and the emerging ecclesiology of fresh expressions and how these fit together forming one dynamic tradition creating a mission-shaped church.
6. As the second phase of the Fresh Expressions team comes to an end in 2014 the Archbishops’ Council has commissioned a review of next steps. This will be made available to the General Synod before July 2014. This review will discuss the future of the work of the Fresh Expressions team, how this is becoming embedded in the life of the church, and what may be required nationally to sustain the momentum.
7. The Fresh Expressions team has been a partnership with the Methodist Church for most of its existence, and is now welcoming new denominational partners

from the Church of Scotland, the United Reformed Church, the Salvation Army and the Baptist Union. From the beginning the movement has been supported and partnered by Church Army and the Church Missionary Society (CMS).

8. The report before Synod is concerned specifically with the ecclesiology of fresh expressions, but the debate offers us an opportunity as a church to celebrate the contribution which the Fresh Expressions team, and the numerous local fresh expressions of church, have made to the life of the Church of England over the last decade, and to affirm the place of fresh expressions as an intrinsic part of our mission and ministry.

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