

GENERAL SYNOD

Archbishops' Council response to Richard Moy's Private Member's Motion on Visual and Video resources for worship

1. The (amended) motion below was carried by the General Synod in July 2010. The debate was supported by papers from the mover of the motion and from Bishop Graham Cray on behalf of the Fresh Expressions team (GS1795B).

'That this Synod request the Archbishops' Council to identify sources of funding for the production of an on-line library of visual and video resources for worship, so that hard-pressed local worship leaders may access and use them in both mission and congregational contexts.'
2. This work was taken up by the Communications Office and the Mission and Public Affairs Division. Reports were made to the Archbishops' Council in May and November 2011.
3. It was quickly realised that, without a detailed business plan, approaches to potential funders would be fruitless. The task therefore became one of scoping ways to achieve the desired library of resources.
4. After many months work, examining many possible ways forward, and having looked in detail at the Church Army's review of its *Share* project which had many points of similarity, we found three very significant barriers to achieving this goal:
 - a) There was, at best, only lukewarm support for the idea among the practitioners who produce visual and video worship resources. They argued that such resources only work well when they are designed and produced locally to serve the needs of very specific local contexts. They did not believe that their work could (or should) be transferred straightforwardly, via a website, to other church contexts. The box below gives some typical comments from practitioners.

Creating the resources was a part of people's journey to faith.

In my experience, it was the process that mattered, not the end result. ... It would, of course, be ramshackle. But it would be OUR ramshackle.

This well intentioned proposal could unhelpfully reinforce ... the "meals on wheels" view of worship/liturgy – cooked centrally and consumed locally. ... Pre-packaged worship will implicitly carry values – but they may not be the ones we most need.

Does this meet a real need? No. It meets a perceived need. But there is a better way, which involves unchurched people creating the worship instead of a Christian leader downloading it.

- b) Questions arose about quality control on a site carrying the Church of England "brand". It was impossible to square the desire for open access and free sharing of materials with the need to ensure that material was not posted which would bring the church into disrepute. Moreover, questions of

copyright were equally intractable without a disproportionate (and ultimately self-defeating) level of policing.

- c) The experience of the *Share* review was that people do not use the web in predictable ways. Take up of *Share*'s comparable website was too low to be sustainable. The *Share* review concluded that: "it is not another website that is needed" but signposting to what is already available on the web.
5. Taking our cue from that final point, we have looked for a straightforward way to signpost potential users to the materials that already exist on the web. The following proposal was put to the Archbishops' Council at its meeting in November 2011 and approved by the Council:

MPA's regular *Start the Week* e-bulletin could be used to draw attention to new visual resources and central support could be given to an independent attempt to overcome the obstacles to the proposal.

6. The *Start the Week* e-bulletin is about to be redesigned to be more comprehensive and to reach a wider audience. **We will use *Start the Week* in its new form to alert readers to materials which can be accessed from the web, which will resource imaginative worship, and which have been "road-tested" successfully in worship. Where possible, we will indicate the context which gave rise to the material and in which it has been used.**
7. This process will be only as good as its informants. If you have used good visual and video worship resources, do share them with others by alerting us at MPA.
8. You can receive *Start the Week* on a regular basis by contacting Dr Rachel Jordan (National Mission and Evangelism Adviser) at MPA on: rachel.jordan@churchofengland.org.
9. As the proposal accepted by the Archbishops' Council indicates, we would still be glad to hear from an independent group which wished to take forward the proposal in the original PMM. An independent group might be less constrained in the kind of material it could endorse and would have greater freedom to experiment compared to an "official" Church of England site. MPA and the Communications Office would be glad to negotiate the support we could give to such an independent proposal.
10. This paper has been discussed in draft form with Richard Moy prior to the Synod mailing.

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