

Special Agenda III: Private Member's Motions: Fresh Expressions Resources (Richard Moy)

A Background Paper from the Fresh Expressions Initiative, prepared in consultation with the Liturgical Commission.

'That this Synod invite the Fresh Expressions team in consultation with the Liturgical Commission to produce 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.'

The Fresh Expressions Initiative and members of the Liturgical Commission welcome this proposal in principle. The mission of the church in general and the development of fresh expressions of church in particular, would be greatly enhanced by such a resource. However, from our perspective it is the financial and administrative implications of the proposal that need detailed consideration.

The Liturgical Commission is of the opinion that the proposer's background paper fails to acknowledge the full extent of the resources already available for use. Last October the Commission produced (for posting on its website) a very basic list of some of the available visual resources, some of which might form part of such a library. The Commission is of course supportive of the principle of the Church having access to the best available worship resources.

The Fresh Expressions Initiative substantially agrees with the Commission, but notes that the majority of material on its list is produced in North America and only part is suitable as a resource in the UK. There is, in their view, a shortage of good digital material for fresh expressions of church. Secondly, what is available (in and beyond the Commission's list) is scattered all over the web. In addition some material available online is of poor quality and of dubious copyright legality. A web site and portal which made quality, UK commissioned material available, and which only provided links to legal material of sufficient quality, would be an asset.

The Fresh Expressions Initiative and the Liturgical Commission are both concerned that, should the motion be adopted as it stands, it would commit the Church to a far greater expenditure of energy and finance than is currently possible because of limited resources. Although the Fresh Expressions Initiative believes the project to be desirable, it is not funded for this task and has no capacity to take it on, without full additional funding.

If the Fresh Expressions Initiative were commissioned and funded to undertake this work in consultation with the Liturgical Commission, the following would be necessary:

1. More detailed research of what is already available, and of its suitability, quality and legality. This would inform a decision about the scale of the need for newly commissioned material.

2. The identification of the right people to commission for the creative task, including recommendations from the Liturgical Commission.
3. A business plan to ensure financial feasibility. This should become an income stream.
4. A review mechanism to assist with the future development of the resource and the evaluation of its effectiveness, particularly in relation to the changing contexts of mission.

In addition, this could be more than simply an Anglican resource. Fresh Expressions is an ecumenical initiative and would need to work also with our Methodist and URC partners and their patterns of governance and accountability. The Liturgical Commission also works ecumenically.

We recognize that the national church is unlikely to be able to fund this project but would encourage the identification of external sources of funding. A pertinent example of this partnership approach is the current collaboration between the Liturgical Commission, the Education Division and the National Society in exploring the resourcing of schools' worship and which has resulted in a web-based project, similar to that envisaged by Richard Moy but project managed and funded from outside central church structures. Any external funders would expect to see a business plan based on a feasibility study, which, in our view, may be the best route for the Synod to take.

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and Leader of the Fresh Expressions Team
June 2010

**Published by the General Synod of the Church of England
and on sale at the Church House Bookshop,
31 Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BN**

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£1