

Protestant pioneering in the polder

Mixed Economy of Church and church renewal in the Protestant Church in the Netherlands

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DEFINITION

Mixed Economy of Church as a strategy for transforming into a Mission-Shaped Church

First used by Archbishop Rowan Williams in the foreword to a Church of Wales report:

"We may discern signs of hope. These may be found particularly in the development of a mixed economy of Church life . . . there are ways of being church alongside the inherited parochial pattern."
(Cited in Church of England Report Mission-Shaped Church, 2004:26)

A Mixed Economy of Church means that fresh expressions and inherited forms of church existing alongside each other, within the same denomination, in relationships of mutual respect and support.

<https://www.freshexpressions.org.uk/guide/about/mixedeconomy>, 07-04-2016)

QUESTIONS

1. What do you see as the most pressing question concerning Mixed Economy of Church as a strategy in practice, related to issues of bridging inherited and fresh expressions of Church? How would you describe the key issues on this terrain?
2. What are your experiences working in a Mixed Economy Church – both on a national level or in a local context? According to you, what are the key issues?
3. Do you know examples of practices where proposed elements of Mixed Economy of Church (f.e. cross-fertilization, mutual fellowship between inherited and Fresh Expressions of Church) are being realized in practice? How do these examples contribute to a mission shaped church as a sharing place of different forms of church?

DEVELOPMENT OF FRESH EXPRESSIONS IN THE NETHERLANDS



AIM

The aim of this part of my research is to clarify the conceptualization of Mixed Economy of Church and to examine its usability in practice. I want to show the impact of developing Fresh Expressions as – an effectuation of the strategy of Mixed Economy – on transforming practices, meanings and definitions of church. The aim for ecclesial practice is that this research will provide useful reflection for future designing of the church community to a more adequate and meaningful 'sharing place'.

PROVOCATIVE THESES AND QUESTIONS

The concept of *Mixed Economy of Church* turns out to be nothing more than pocket money for pioneers and a good night sleep for the established church.



The concept of *Mixed Economy of Church* fuels the conversation about the nature and mission of church, but its assumed condition of mutual commitment turns out in practice as a source of friction – and can thus lead to an internal focus on stabilizing church organization.



To realize a Mission Shaped Church with a Mixed Economy strategy good management is both lacked and needed.



Innovation starts at grassrootlevel. Therefore, the task of policy officers, practitioners and researchers is to listen and facilitate, not to prescribe, plan and control.