

The Hospitality of God

Emerging Worship for a Missional Church

by Mary Gray-Reeves and Michael Perham

published by SPCK (Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge)

in Paperback

(978-0-281-06350-5)

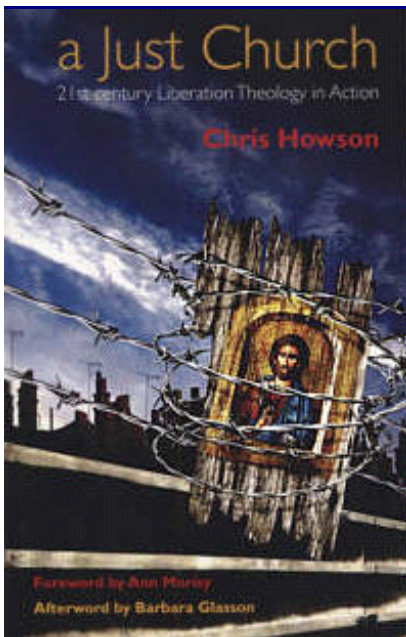
Mar 2011

at £12.99

Our God is a gracious, kind, welcoming and hospitable God. This title reveals a journey of exploration, celebration and compelling hope regarding our hospitable God. Sadly the church has grown weary or failed in sharing this hospitality to everyone and so this pilgrimage of theory and examples of practice regarding emerging worship for the missional church is a valued contribution. Analysis and cross-Atlantic resources and reflections are well mapped in this fresh and confident fusion of emerging and traditional churchmanship. -

A well informed book that sensitively handles the deeply rooted Anglican traditions and gathers them together, through participation and dialogue, with core missional convictions. There is room for questioning and engagement, with grace and generosity, with liturgy, and the worship life of Emerging and Fresh Expressions of church. Truly both inspiring and insightful!

Notes by [Johnny Douglas](#)



A Just Church

21st Century Liberation Theology in Action

by Chris Howson

published by Continuum

in Paperback (978-1-441-19992-8)

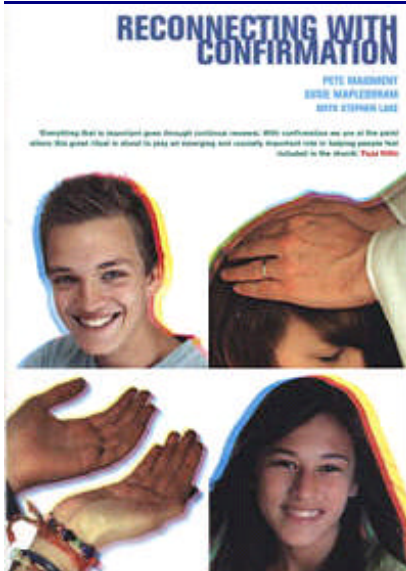
17/02/2011

at £12.99

This excellent book marks a detailed renewal in the field of liberation theology. It demonstrates how the church, especially the contemporary stream can learn from a 'theology of the poor'. It deals in practical ways of how Christians can respond to issues of conflict, climate change and the increasing global poverty gap. It links local and global contexts and throws a challenge to all people of faith to work with their neighbours to build fairer and more just communities. Gardening, demonstration protests, regeneration, peace-making, activities, reflection and theology are some of many core qualities that are unpacked beyond theory, rather in the context of a challenging northern urban emerging church expression. The reign of God finds excellent celebration and probable advance in Howson's chronicles.

Attractively delivered and fully justifiable of the subtitle's boast: 21st Century Liberation Theology in Action! Immensely readable, comprehensive, clear and compelling.

Notes by [Johnny Douglas](#)



New Monasticism as Fresh Expression of Church

Ancient Faith, Future Mission

by Graham Cray, Ian Mobsby and Aaron Kennedy

published by Canterbury Press imprint of Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd

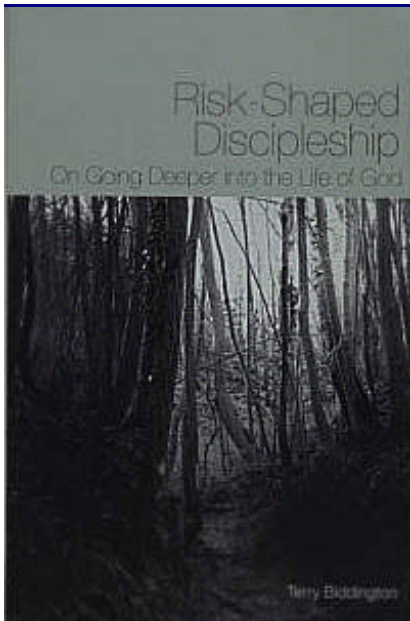
in Paperback (978-1-848-25044-4)

17/12/2010

at £14.99

Getting past the title of this volume of diverse contributions will enable the reader to look at one area of the Christian Family, and what might come under the heading of 'monasticism.' 'There are evidently four kinds of monks.' So begins St Benedict's famous definition, and the reader can analyse the new communities and movements in the book in terms of the saint's categories. Stability and time were the factors that either made monasticism flourish or wither, again according to St Benedict. How much the former is evident in the pages of this book can only be determined by time, and the time-scale for these movements so far, is uncomfortably brief. And so we must be patient.

Notes by [Ian Gibbs](#)



Risk-Shaped Discipleship

On Going Deeper into the Life of God

by Terry Biddington

published by Resource Publications from Columba

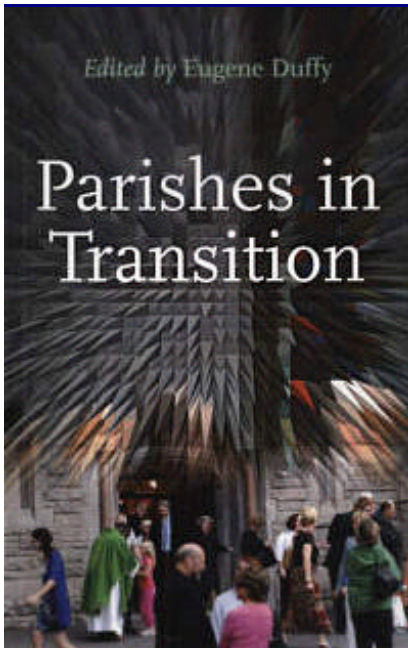
in Paperback (978-0-893-90693-1)

Aug 2010

at £18.50

Biddington offers us a chronological and theme based exploration of our faith that seeks to engage with the diversity, depth and dance of God. This book takes as its starting point the reality of change, and it seeks to explore how the church may see change positively. It also seeks to help reinvigorate its teaching and ministry and the way in which Christians understand their spiritual journey. Change is seen not only as a welcome dynamic of the life of faith, but also as the very source of unexpected and transformative encounters with God and the transcendent. - Through a strong scriptural base, Terry Biddington challenges Christians to redirect their faith in a proactive and risky manner, akin to the way in which Jesus lived out his life on earth. Complacency and a lackadaisical cloud have overtaken the modern day church, leaving little room for active discipleship or pre-emptive religious ministry. Biddington utilizes biblical examples to weave together an attainable and encouraging image of what discipleship within the modern church looks like — and it is a risky business. A flourishing world is the scale of what we are invited to engage with. It is a rigorous, risky, exploratory, hope-filled discipleship for a discerning readership! A gem of a resource for individual use or study groups, this book holds pearls of wisdom that offer revitalization and change to those willing to receive it!

Notes by [Johnny Douglas](#)



Parishes in Transition

Edited by Eugene Duffy

published by Columba Press

in Paperback (978-1-856-07706-4)

2010

at £12.99

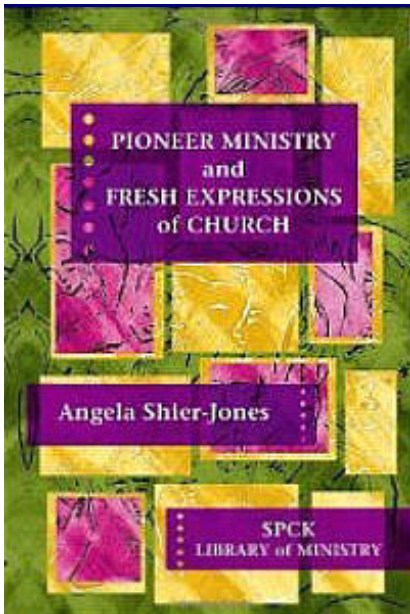
This collection of essays arises from a conference held in Limerick in 2008. While written for and from an Irish Catholic perspective, Christians in these Islands, and elsewhere, will be encouraged by the discussion and insights offered for the development of congregations. -

Thirteen chapters cover the historical setting, geographical, demographic, social and economic factors, experiences of Parishes in Ireland, Germany and the Netherlands, what is being done and is being proposed about Parochial organisation, and leadership. -

'Clustering of Parishes', under various 'models, is seen as the way forward, a cluster being defined as 'a group of parishes committed to the long term relationship of collaboration to plan and provide for the spiritual, sacramental and pastoral needs of their respective communities.' (p. 93); this sixth chapter, on 'Practice and Theology', underpins the authors' thesis. -

The tone is 'upbeat', the contributors wishing to strengthen rather than diminish the life of Christian communities. Lay members of Parishes are given responsibilities, while flexibility and appropriate responses to different situations are required to replace the forms of pastoral ministry and Parish life which are no longer possible, or, sometimes, desirable. An excellent contribution to the continuing search for effective Parish ministry.

Notes by [J.Nicholas Latham](#)

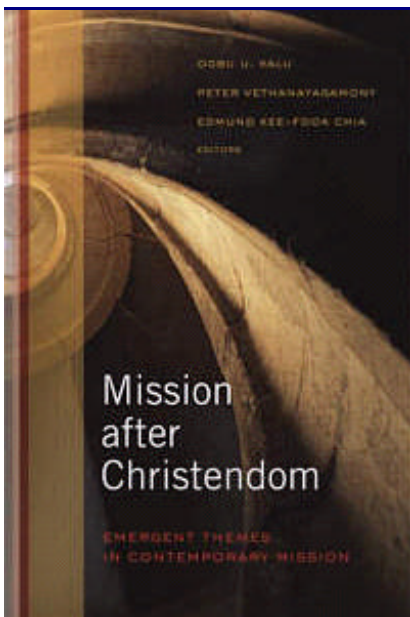


Pioneer Mission and Fresh Expressions of Church

by Angela Shier-Jones
published by SPCK (Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge)
in Paperback (978-0-281-06113-6) 19/11/2009
at £12.99

Here is a book about the Fresh Expressions movement which is prepared to ask questions and provide helpful and informative answers. It is in two parts - the first for the pioneer minister and the second for the congregation. Written from a Methodist perspective, Dr Angela Shier-Jones breaks open all sorts of stereo types like, all pioneer ministers are 'young, energetic, IT savvy, wear jeans'. She also gives advice for people who feel called to start something new outside the church, often with quotable quotes like 'thinking outside the box is best done outside the box' (p33) and 'the church needs to consider how its buildings can be the burning bush that draws people closer' (p89). Lots of stories and advice is offered, for pioneer and congregation alike to consider. This is very helpful as hundreds of churches consider how to reach out to people outside the box.

Notes by [Jim Currin](#)



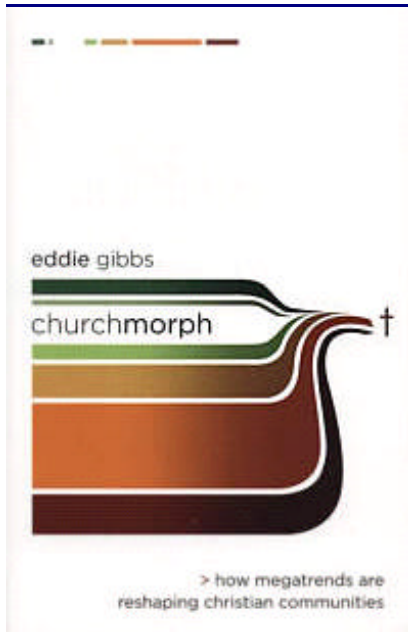
Mission After Christendom

Emergent Themes in Contemporary Mission

edited by Ogbu U. Kalu, Peter Vethanayagamony and Edmund Kee
published by Westminster John Knox Press from Alban Books
in Paperback (978-0-664-23465-2) May 2010
at £16.99

- Mission after Christendom - provides a very illuminating update on mission theology and praxis a centenary on from the 1910 World Missionary Conference. Here is a collection of essays looking at mission now being 'bottom up' and about 'dialogue', and 'from everywhere to everywhere', with such contemporary topics considered as globalisation, the environment and migration. This is more than welcome. It is a valuable contribution to the study of mission and world Christianity today. The contributors come from a wide academic spectrum and the topics tackled are from a practical as well as theological and biblical base - here is an insight into various parts of the world and the 'emergent themes in contemporary mission': it may be broad in its application, but important to address none the less.

Notes by [Jim Currin](#)



Churchmorph

How Megatrends are Reshaping Christian Communities

by Eddie Gibbs

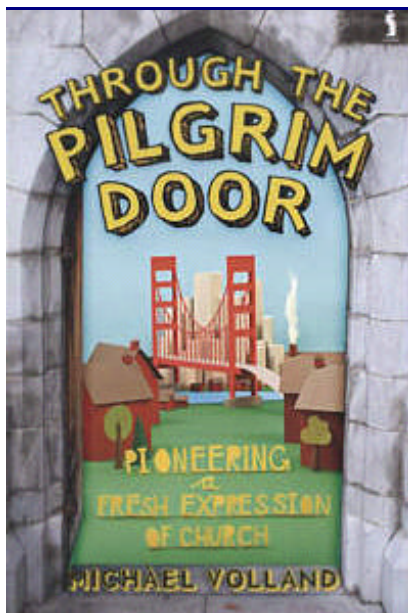
published by Baker Academic imprint of Baker Publishing from Lion

in Paperback (978-0-801-03762-7) 2009

at £10.99

Eddie Gibbs is well placed to look at the 'megatrends' in mission and church life and writes a classic about how major trends are reshaping our churches. Academic but straightforward to read, illustrated with stories from around the world, and recognisable in our English context he looks at such topics as post-Christian churches, Fresh Expressions, the megachurch in America, urban engagement and resurgent monasticism. Granted he is a research observer, but this is a valuable piece of work for those interested in mission and evangelism. I was surprised to read, for example, that 25% of people surveyed in a megachurch felt spiritually 'stalled' or 'dissatisfied and considered leaving p96. This study gets under the surface and offers insight and information for missiologists and church leaders alike.

Notes by Jim Currin



Through the Pilgrim Door

Pioneering a Fresh Expression of Church

by Michael Volland

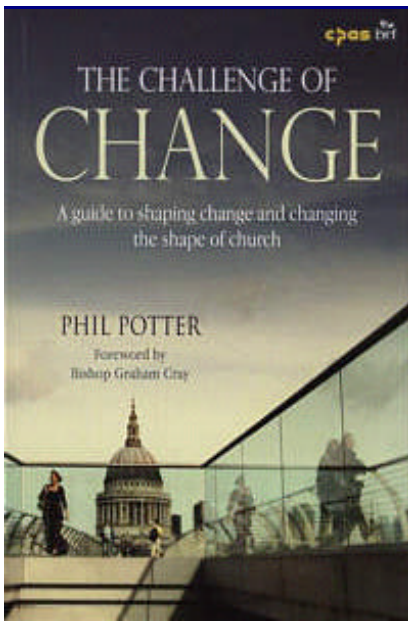
published by David C Cook from Kingsway

in Paperback (978-1-842-91399-4) 2009

at £7.99

This is a page turner about a new 'fresh expression of church'. Telling the story as it is still unfolding; Michael Volland is a young family man and newly ordained priest appointed to start a new congregation linked to Gloucester Cathedral. It is well told, illuminating, and entertaining in parts. You certainly get a feel for the people and the fledgling project, together with some exploration of the issues faced. Although autobiographical this is not self conscious. The Cathedral Dean says it is a 'privilege' to have Michael on the staff team, while Michael says a Cathedral has a lot to offer the Fresh expressions movement. Here is mutual respect at its best, with risks being taken on all sides, and an outcome developing naturally which must be a joy to see. Anyone can read this and gain insights from the story.

Notes by Jim Currin



The Challenge of Change

A Guide to Shaping Change and Changing the Shape of the Church

by Phil Potter

published by BRF (Bible Reading Fellowship)

in Paperback (978-1-841-01604-7)

Summer 2009

at £7.99

As I started to read this book it struck me that it had arrived on my desk about two years too late. I found myself thinking time and again as I read this book, "If you had told me that earlier I could have saved myself, and others, much time and trouble." -

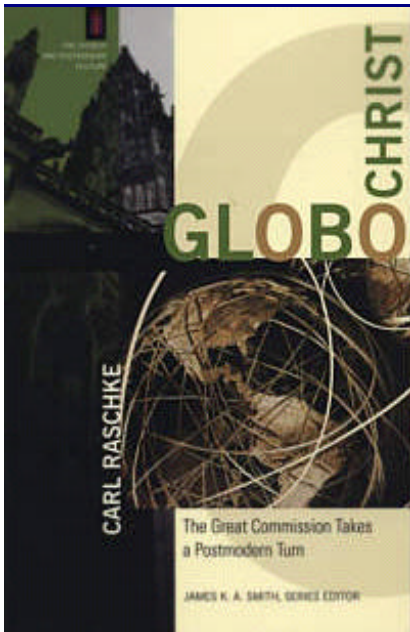
Change is an ever present reality and the church is no more or less resistant to its pressures and enticements than any other group. Phil Potter gives pointers on how to approach change. This is not just a 'how to' book (though it does have some useful practical tips), it is, as the subtitle states, a guide to shaping change. In a series of easy to follow steps Potter helps the reader to assess change. He give solid guidelines on avoiding change for change's sake but embracing it when that is what is required to fulfil God's mission. -

Potter's approach is clear and logical (maybe a bit too logical seen from the inside of the storm that can quickly blow up around change), with a satisfying mix of the practical and the theoretical. He doesn't lose sight of the spiritual issues involved, yet keeps his feet on the ground. -

This book is not restricted to those who want to move towards a cell-church model. Anyone facing change and wondering how to steer a path through troubled waters, not just avoiding dangerous rocks but looking for opportunities to learn and grow, should take a look at this book. - -

Kevin Dare, Minister, Beeston Baptist Church, Nottingham

Notes by [Guest reviewer](#)



GloboChrist

The Great Commission Takes Post Modern Turn

by Carl Raschke

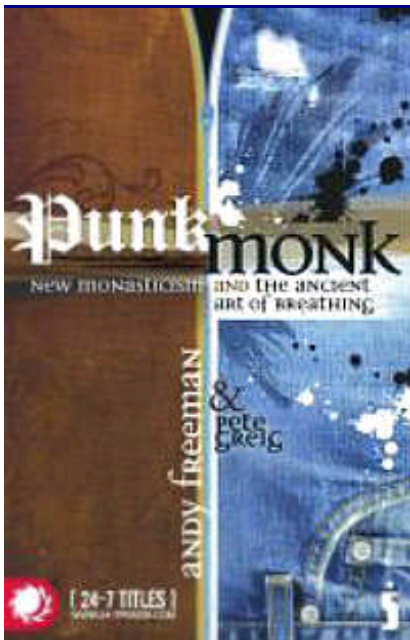
published by Baker Academic imprint of Baker Publishing from Lion

in Paperback (978-0-801-03261-5) 2008

at £9.99

- The Great Commission takes a postmodern turn - is the sub heading to Carl Raschke's book with the strange title - GloboChrist - . Technical text which some may call dense, this is none the less an exciting book to read if taken slowly. It explores a number of concepts which were new to me, like 'Semiotics' and Augustine's suggestion that the order of signs and language be studied to understand the Biblical text and context better. - GloboChrist - is shorthand for 'Global Postmodern Christianity' and the image and theology of Christ as understood in different parts of the world. 'The coming of the - GloboChrist - is far better appreciated by anthropologists and historians of religion, who happen to be specialists in cultural sign-systems ... than theologians.' (p26)The book provides a flavour and scope of this work which will not be a popular read so much as an important contribution to mission studies. Get past the jargon and irritating invention of new words and you will find this an informative and stimulating study.

Notes by Jim Currin



Punk Monk

New Monasticism and the Ancient Art of Breathing

by Andy Freeman & Pete Greig

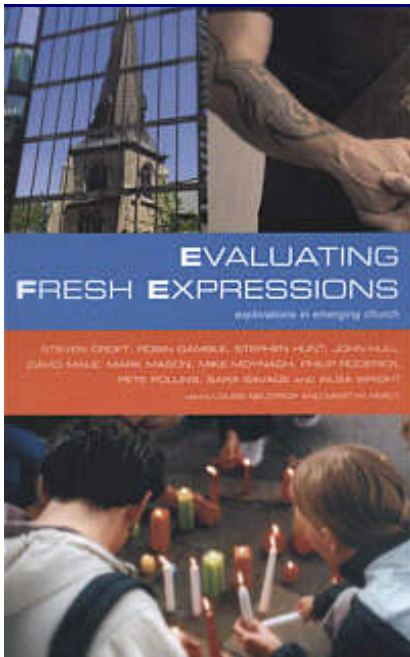
published by Survivor from David Cook

in Paperback (978-1-842-91330-7) Summer 2009

at £6.99

This book covers the development and thoughts behind the world wide 24-7 prayer movement, including its blend of the earliest forms of monasticism - the Desert Fathers and the Celtic Church - with 21st century life, including Punks!
- - 24-7 as a prayer movement, like monasticism, involves round the clock prayer. Members have formed themselves into cells, but not in enclosed communities, but in unlikely places engaging with the world. As one prays, one 'breathes in' and makes contact with God to centre and then 'breath out' and engage with the needs of the world.
- - A new way of being Church, and good to hear of a positive and dynamic side to Christian life.

Notes by Carole Burrows



Evaluating Fresh Expressions

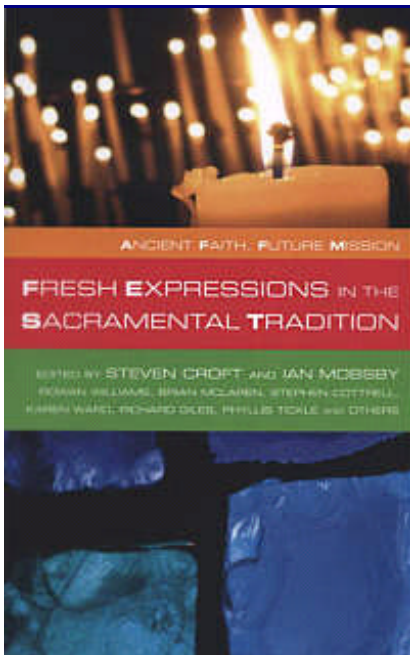
Explorations in Emerging Church

Edited by Louise Nelstrom and Martyn Percy

published by Canterbury Press imprint of Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd
in Paperback (978-1-853-11816-6) 2008
at £16.99

Brilliant. This book has added value. I thought it would be a Haynes Manual exploration and say whether a new Mums and Toddler group counts as a 'Fresh Expression'. It does explore definitions and examples in the first chapter, but then offers far more. It was such an exciting read I couldn't put it down! The different contributors bring extra dimensions and ask critical questions. They bring wonderful insights in to the relationship between 'inherited' and 'emerging' re Rowan Williams phrase about the need for a 'mixed economy'. The social and psychological studies relating to 'new and traditional', as well as 'large and small', were particularly stimulating, while the theological and practical questions were explored head on. My copy was well read and margin marked on many pages. A sign of a good book is that it makes you want to write another one. I wish I had the time, as - Evaluating Fresh Expressions - certainly provided the inclination!

Notes by Jim Currin



Fresh Expressions in the Sacramental Tradition

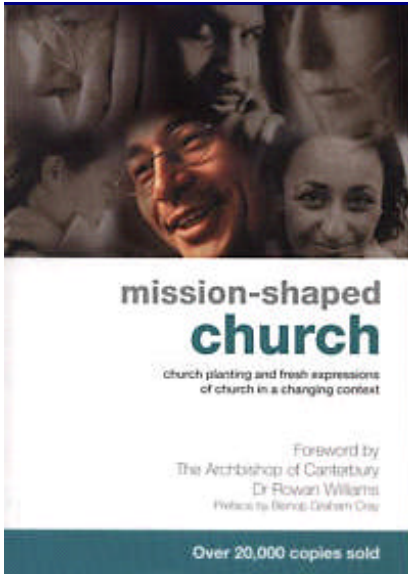
Ancient Faith, Future Mission

Edited by Steven Croft and Ian Mobsby

published by Canterbury Press imprint of Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd
in Paperback (978-1-853-11973-6) Summer 2009
at £16.99

Starting with the address at a national pilgrimage for Fresh Expressions by Rowan Williams, this book builds on his interesting and inspiring words to provide various examples of how 'FX' works out in the 'sacramental Tradition'. It may be a surprise to many that it does but here we have a variety of examples from ancient Celtic in 'Contemplative Fire' to a Eucharist based around U2 and the Millennium Development Goals: called U2charist! This is a highly informative and well written book by a collection of contributors who make the more technical theological explanations very accessible. It is a valuable insight and addition to the various books on 'FX' which illustrates how it is becoming accepted, and understood within the wider church context. This should open more doors for churches to engage with the Gospel and Culture questions today, and reach out with greater clarity and effectiveness. Commended by the Archbishop of Canterbury, this book will do just that and I am grateful that the 'FX' team have brought it together.

Notes by Jim Currin



Mission-shaped church - second edition

Church Planting and Fresh expressions of Church in a Changing Context

by C of E's Mission and Public Affairs Council

published by Church House Publishing (CHP) part of Hymns Ancient & Modern

in Paperback (978-0-715-14189-2) 2009

at £10.95

This is a superb overview of the changing social trends over the past 30 years, the nature of church planting and an exploration of new expressions of church as it is happening around the country and a challenge to develop a missionary church. It's a scholarly, but not heavy going, read and a must for church leaders and leadership groups to brainstorm their own mission in the locality.

It is very much an Anglican study, there was a Methodist on the working group but the other 10 were Anglican – so there's little mention of how the free churches have also pioneered imaginative initiatives while addressing the same social changes. That aside, the book is a huge encouragement to the Anglican Communion and those free-churchman that might quip about sleepiness in that denomination. Thoroughly recommended.

Notes by [Paddy Beresford](#)



Messy Church 2

Ideas for Discipling a Christ-Centered Community

by Lucy More

published by Barnabas imprint of BRF

in Paperback (978-1-841-01602-3)

Nov 2008

at £8.99

- Messy Church 2 - is a great follow on book – make sure you read - Messy Church - first! -

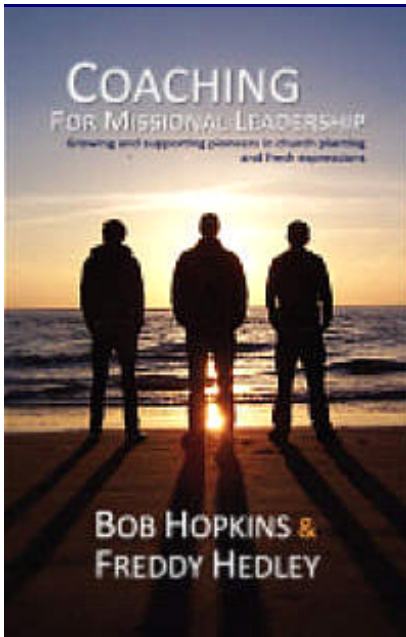
The concept of - Messy Church - is that families come together once a month to enjoy each other's company, eat together, make things together and worship together. -

Because the idea of - Messy Church is that it is church in its own right and not means of increasing Sunday morning congregations, - Messy Church 2 - sets out to address the issues that will arise once a - Messy Church - is up and running. Much of the book is focussed on how to disciple people and move them on in their Christian journey when - Messy Church - meets monthly and the worship session lasts only 15 minutes. The book suggests forming smaller groups to meet in between times, and also has lots of ideas for families to try at home which will help them to pray and learn about God together. It gives much to think about for a new - Messy Church - community and shares lessons already learnt (both successes and failures) by those that have been established for a while. -

If you are buying this book because you have already used all the craft ideas, meal suggestions and worship outlines in - Messy Church - , then fear not! The back section of the book is loaded with ready to roll ideas and recipes and will take you through your second year and beyond. It even includes a - Messy Church - Communion and a - Messy Church - Baptism! -

The beauty of these two books is that they really are packed with do-able crafts and worship suggestions. We have been running for a year and have found there have been more than enough ideas for each session in the book, meaning that busy people can do - Messy Church - without needing to do lots of planning! Well done to Lucy and her team for paving the way for the many - Messy Church - communities now springing up around the Country!

Notes by Kathy Bland



Coaching For Missional Leadership

Growing and Supporting Pioneering in Church Planting and Fresh Expressions

by Bob Hopkins & Freddy Hedley

published by Anglican Church Planting Initiatives (ACPI)

in Paperback (978-0-955-93631-9)

Summer 2009

at £7.99

Growing and supporting pioneers in church growth and fresh expression projects is a major task. Bob and Mary Hopkins are well experienced, and together with Freddy Hedley they make all that experience available for a wider network of people who could coach others. Carefully written and straightforward to read, this is a practitioner's handbook. Not everyone will be coaching pioneers, but many of the principles are transferable for the material presented is easily transferred to other contexts as people can be coached in any task. Every detail is carefully explored in the depth that gives you sufficient information and illustration to feel more confident in coaching others. Specialist it may be but with the principles transferable I warmly commend this book, together with the biblical discipleship material it is based on, the advice it offers, the models it explores and the positive approach it takes. - -

Available from www.acpi.org.uk. See our Links page

Notes by [Jim Currin](#)



Building Utopia?

Seeking the Authentic Church for New Communities

by Laurie Green & Christopher R. Baker

published by SPCK (Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge)

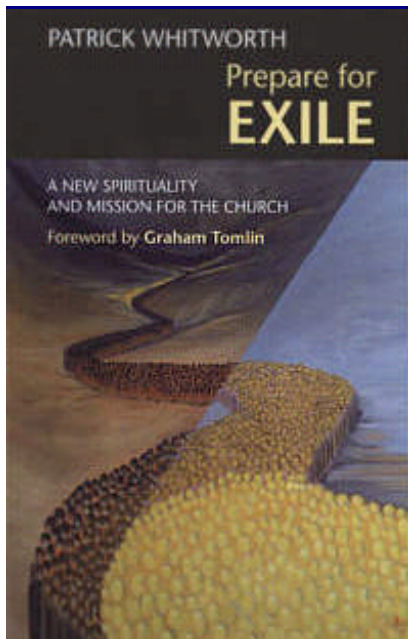
in Paperback (978-0-281-05867-9)

20/11/2008

at £14.99

The clever title of this book works on different levels. Are we - Building Utopia - when putting up new housing estates? Can utopia be found in a 'Building'? Can regeneration produce a utopian community? This book explores these issues as it tries to address 'seeking the authentic Church for new communities'. New communities in this context means housing and urban regeneration not Polish migrant workers. P117 interested me as I did not know that Utopia means 'no place' and the positive connotations came with the later alternative spelling 'Eutopia' meaning 'good place'. The tension is explored in the text which leads to models and recommendations for different styles of church engagement in the new urban context. This book raises as many questions as it answers but I found it an interesting, helpful and clear read of some important contemporary issues.

Notes by [Jim Currin](#)



Prepare for Exile

A New Spirituality and Mission for the Church

by Patrick Whitworth

published by SPCK (Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge)

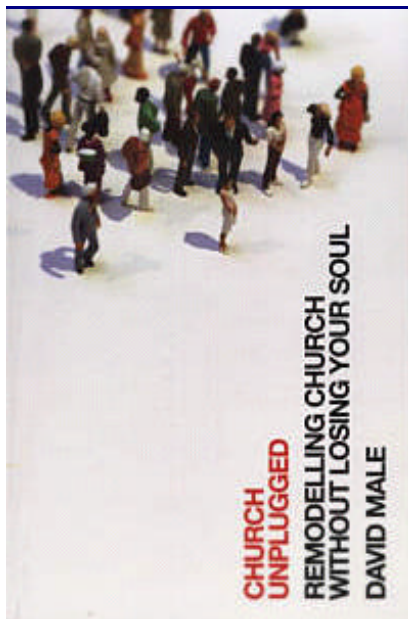
in Paperback (978-0-281-06003-0)

20/11/2008

at £10.99

- Prepare for Exile - offers an engaging and readable overview of the history of the church, focussing particularly on those periods when to be Christian has meant to live at odds with the values of society. Patrick Whitworth suggests that this experience of 'exile' is one which characterises the life of the church today, and should not be feared but rather welcomed as the key to renewal and new growth: 'exile', he says, 'is the church's best friend'. Patrick writes, as ever, with experience and wisdom - this is a realistic and encouraging contribution to the discussion on the challenges facing the church today.

Notes by Alison Morgan



Church Unplugged

Remodelling Church Without Losing Your Soul

by David Male

published by IVP(Inter Varsity Press)

in Paperback (978-1-850-78792-1)

10/10/2008

at £8.99

This is a story well worth telling. It is about starting a church from scratch. 'if you belong to a church already, this church is not for you', said the website for The Net. It was a new kind of church for people who do not go. Dave Male was supported by the Anglican Church to be the pioneer minister to fulfill the vision. 'Church Unplugged' tells the full story including the trials and tribulations, but generally describes a success story with pointers for other people to follow. It is a good example of doing what some would say is impossible. This realistic and well written story gives the reader confidence to think that, under God, it could happen anywhere. Highly recommended if interested in Fresh Expressions: this book has principles that any church can put in to practice. I'd commend it to anyone.

Notes by Jim Currin