

# Resources.

## Youthwork and the Mission of God

by **Pete Ward (SPCK;**  
ISBN: 0 281 05044 9 140pp; £9.99)

Youth work has been seen as the activity to keep the kids occupied while the parents do more serious things. In some quarters, however, this cynical view of what youth work actually is has been challenged. The 80s and 90s have seen a development of youth work in the Church that has been reflected by the growing concern of many churches to have a paid youth worker to look after "their" youth, meaning the young people who attend the church and the children of the members. *Youthwork and the Mission of God* by Pete Ward is a book that has given definition to aspects of youth work in the Church and in so doing has helped to organise the thinking of those in youth work and leadership of the Church.

The book begins by asking the questions who are we working with, what are we trying to achieve and are we aware of the potential consequences of our actions? The idea that churches have a group of young people inside who will become the missionaries to their friends as a result of years of training does not always bear out in practice. Equally the Church is not always welcoming to those brought in from outside as a result of work done with young people unaware of Church culture and practice.

Ward also sets out his own stall regarding what he perceives as being the real role of the Christian youth worker and that is to be Christ to the young people we are working with; an incarnational approach to youth work is what we require, he argues. The model he presents is Christian Relational Care (CRC). The cynic could say that this model has been around for a long time, getting alongside and building a relationship with a young person. The model is not one loved by all because by Ward's own admission the results can be a long time in coming and in today's

instant society church leaders and parents want converts now, not in five years' time!

In his final chapter Ward raises and admits to the difficulty of the right and wrongs of the youth church – youth congregation argument. The points he raises are good for any church youth leaders to use as a basis of discussion as to what is church and to answer the question "Is worship the natural response to mission?" The chapter demands questions about our practice and the expectations we have of Christian youth work.

It is a good book. Ward has worked through the traumas of adolescent thought in previous publications about youth work in the evangelical Church. Here we see the post adolescent with a clearly thought-out assertion of how he now sees youth work as a concept and practice within the Church.

Iain Hoskins

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## The Shape of Living

by **David Ford (Fount;**  
ISBN 0-00- 62 8035-8; 224pp; £6.99)

This is a book which is easy to read but is very profound and Christ centred. David Ford explores the theme of being overwhelmed by both the good and bad influences, and especially the people, which shape our lives. He does this in a way with which it is easy to identify, for it addresses the real issues that we face such as obsessions, desires, leisure and work, illnesses, falling in love, joy and feasting, depression, handicaps, death and so much more. These things shape our living as does being overwhelmed by the love of God and by the desire for God, all of which have implications which are spelt out by the author. We are reminded of the good and bad overwhelming that Jesus experienced. He was immersed in the Jordan at his baptism, overwhelmed by hunger in the wilderness and final-

ly overwhelmed by death and resurrection. It is a book I would put into the hands of a thinking person who is struggling to make connections between life as it really is and the gospel of Christ. No simplistic answers are given but David Ford makes those connections positively showing the relevance of the Christian faith and how it provides a shape for living. The reality of Christian joy (not necessarily happiness) which springs from resurrection makes this a hopeful book. David Ford uses the poems of Michael O'Siadhail to illustrate his points. This may work for those for whom poetry is evocative but I found this the least satisfactory aspect of what is a very good book.

I would commend this as a book for careful and thoughtful study. It is an appropriate book for personal or group study during Lent and at other times. At the end are printed discussion questions with a Scripture passage for meditation relevant to each chapter. The questions will make groups examine the content of each chapter and explore its present and personal application.

Judith Rose

*The Ven. Judith Rose is the  
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## Archbishop Derek Worlock – His personal journey

by **Geoffrey Chapman Cassell**  
(Knowles & Surnival; ISBN 0-225-66841-6; Mowbray 1998; 274pp; £20.00)

It was my good fortune to be in Liverpool at the time when both David Sheppard and Derek Worlock arrived within a few months of each other. I was able to observe at close quarters the growth of their partnership which was to attract widespread interest and bring much benefit to this great and bewildering city with its long history of sectarian strife.

Yet, much as I came to know and admire Archbishop Worlock, his personal shyness and the dignity with

which he held his high office in the Roman Catholic hierarchy meant that he always seemed to keep his distance. This is why some of his priests said that they found him unapproachable. I had hoped that this excellent biography might have helped me to understand him better. In this it was only partly successful. A more in-depth study of this fascinating character will have to wait a further lapse of time and a more independent biographer.

Yet it gives a readable account of the stages in Worlock's personal journey – his upbringing and education, his early passion to enter the priesthood, his appointment as secretary, chaplain, and personal aide to three successive cardinal archbishops of Westminster, his time as a parish priest in the East End of London, his calling to be bishop of Portsmouth. These varied experiences placed him at the centre of ecclesiastical power which he much enjoyed. It was also an ideal preparation for him to become a distinguished Archbishop of Liverpool.

In a sermon preached in Portsmouth Cathedral, Derek Worlock described his ecumenical commitment as joint action with other Churches in such areas as poverty, unemployment, housing, care of the elderly, world hunger and international peace. In Liverpool he found plenty of opportunity to put these ideas into practice in partnership with his Anglican opposite number, David Sheppard. Whenever a serious crisis arose in the city, the two bishops would be there making their presence felt. To Worlock this was the heart of ecumenism. He once said that he really believed that no obstacles were insurmountable provided the Churches worked together.

There was a tendency to put on one side the theological and ecclesiological differences which continue to keep the Churches apart. The founders of the World Council of Churches fifty years ago described their experience of meeting together as "receiving correction from one another in Christ". Joint social and

political action can bring the Churches to a better understanding of one another. It can teach them to trust one another better. But it leaves the basic questions of faith and order unsolved. It is precisely because ecumenical encounters on a theological level may lead participants to a re-appraisal of their own beliefs and ethics by the process of "receiving correction from one another" that Churches which rely for guidance on authoritarian or fundamentalist sources, prefer to fight shy of more profound implications of ecumenism. It is here that Derek Worlock with many of his fellow Roman Catholic bishops would prefer to draw the line. But if the ecumenical movement is to continue to move (or move more quickly) those who are involved in Churches Together both on the national and local level need not only to work together, worship together and witness together but, of equal importance, they must be prepared to think theologically together. And that inevitably will lead to change.

Derek Worlock was very conscious of the authority which had been invested in him, first as a priest, then as a bishop. We are told that even when he was made a prefect at school, it gave him a sense of responsibility which did not enhance his popularity among his fellow pupils. When he left his first curacy in Kensington and went to bid farewell to the Mother Superior of a local convent, her parting advice to him was to remember always that the only sure way of doing the will of God was to obey his bishop promptly. It was his firm trust in the magisterial authority of the Roman Catholic Church that made him distrust public debate on matters of faith and morals.

One of the major events of his Liverpool years was the National Pastoral Congress held in 1980, at Pentecost, in his Metropolitan Cathedral. This was a very impressive assembly of bishops, priests and lay men and women, widely representative of Roman Catholics in England and Wales. In the small working groups into which the Congress was divided, there was much radical talk on such issues as married priests, the ordination of women, inter-communion, contraception, divorce, the more adventurous involvement of Roman Catholics in ecumenism, and giving greater responsibility in the Church to lay men and women. In the final report, in which the influence of Derek Worlock was clearly discernible, these dangerous themes were largely discouraged or ignored. Instead there was a strong emphasis on the authori-

ty of the bishops, and on the responsibility of lay people "to show loyal and respectful acceptance of their teaching". Derek Worlock often declared his suspicion of democracy in the Church which "is neither a centre for higher studies nor a debating society".

It is probably for this reason that this biography shows little interest in the work of such important Roman Catholic theologians as Rahner Schillebeck, Hans Kung and others who have raised essential questions about faith and morals which provide necessary material for all Christians who have a concern for the faith and witness of the Church in the coming century. But this was not "Worlock territory". Yet an ecumenism which neglects the best insights of contemporary theology will find that it has no sure foundation for the future.

Edward H. Patey

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## The Sky is Red

by Kenneth Leech (DLT 1997; ISBN 0232 521 670; 256pp; £13.95)

Kenneth Leech's new book, *The Sky is Red* is a powerful and prophetic analysis of the state of the Christian Church and contemporary society at the end of the 20th century. For those already familiar with Leech's provocative and incisive style of writing evidenced in previous books like *Soul Friend* and *The Social God* he needs no introduction. For those who are likely to discover him for the first time it is well to recognise that here is an iconoclast who is difficult to situate within the contemporary Christian landscape. This is at least partly due to the fact that his own personal and theological debts originate on the margins of much contemporary Christian experience and thinking.

Behind much of his diagnosis stands a lifetime's experience of ministry in contexts of social deprivation and poverty, as well as a personal spirituality and theological vision nurtured in the Anglo-Catholic tradition. The latter he regards as still decisively relevant to the current perilous state of the Christian Church for a number of reasons. They are one, the ability of this tradition to espouse intellectual freedom and contemporary cultural engagement; two, its openness to a synthesis of the mystical, sacramental and social approaches to theology and life in general; and three, its ability to offer an alternative route to what he regards as the

Babylonian captivity of other ecclesiological traditions. For instance, the pre-Enlightenment legacy of Eastern Orthodoxy and the Vatican-induced authoritarianism of contemporary Roman Catholicism. (p.61)

The proof of the pudding is in the eating, however, and Leech proceeds by applying these theological principles to a series of particular issues he regards as essential to the future well-being of both Church and society. These concerns are worth listing because they exemplify the prophetic natures of the book and hence their importance to any dialogue with contemporary culture. They are the threat to the integrity and survival of human persons posed by the continued nuclear crisis and the imminence of ecological disaster; the present fragmentation and isolation of much contemporary theological reflection; the disturbing rise of both Christian and secular forms of fascism; the shift to a prevalent culture of nihilism and despair evidenced in widespread drug abuse and the cynical acceptance of radical economic inequality; the equally disturbing alliance between much fashionable spirituality and the narcissism of the present age; the apparent inability of the Christian Church to come up with a credible and humane vision of social transformation to counter the limits of political liberalism and the widespread acceptance of capitalism as the only way to conduct our economic affairs; our failure to engage with the social nature of liturgy and the consequent trivialisation of much contemporary worship; the virtual extinction of the Christian Church as a prophetic agent in society; the incipient individualism of much contemporary discipleship produced by our inability to appreciate the importance of what is sometimes called "lived traditions of social discourse"; and finally the tendency to understand the nature of Christian ministry in terms of professional and managerial models of leadership with the consequent loss of all that is distinctive about the notion of priesthood.

The book gives the impression of having been written in a hurry, his style is discursive and many of his conclusions are controversial. There is a need at times for a fuller more clearly nuanced analysis. For instance, just what does Leech mean by "Christian socialism in the context of modern democracy"? and his contribution to the current debate on human sexuality leaves much to be desired. Nevertheless the concerns of this book will be with us well into the

next century. If there is a recurring theme it is the recognition that only out of a radical confrontation with our own complicity, doubt and despair will we rediscover the spiritual resources to be a community of hope and faithfulness to the gospel. He writes:

"In the apostolic age, the most powerful element in evangelism seems to have been the quality and witness of the Church's own life as a community of the resurrection. The power of God, which created the Christian movement as a resurrection force, has to be experienced in the hope of a new order and a new humanity which stands beyond extermination."

Colin Greene

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## Changing World, Unchanging Church?

**An Agenda for Christians in Public Life**  
Edited by David Clark (Mowbray 1997; ISBN 0-264-67421-9; 198pp; £12.99)

This book contains many of the position papers written for Christians in Public Life (CIPL). CIPL is a loose network of people who are concerned to further the exploration and expression of the Christian faith in the public domain. Its editor, David Clark, has been at the hub of this network, since its inception in 1992 when he was a Senior Lecturer at Westhill College of Education. He is now CIPL's co-ordinator, which includes co-ordinating "The Human City" initiative which in Birmingham is seeking to implement at least some of the ideas within this book.

A fundamental perspective for this book is that Christian truth is about persons in relationship and is intensely communal; hence the search for "The Kingdom Community" can be considered a linking theme of this book.

I believe that this book is about profoundly important issues, seeking as it does to provide theological reflection, applied theology for our society and the outworking of these in practical ways for Christian people and churches. It is, however, by no means an easy book to read!

There are several reasons for this. Primarily there is the problem of the origins of the material. This means that the book has around 50 contributors, providing many levels and styles of writing. It also means that discerning a cohesive development of thought is not easy, even though David Clark makes a valiant attempt to

provide contexts for each major section. A further emblem is that many of the contributions are very short, leading to a certain sense of frustration that nothing is developed adequately.

Perhaps cohesion should not be expected in a book which claims to provide an Agenda, rather than any full discussion, let alone answers. The great value of this book, however, is that it does represent a lot of hard and careful thinking in some very difficult areas of modern life. The result is that most people will find several sections which will helpfully challenge them to develop their own thinking and praxis, whether their primary concern is theology, ministry within the Church, social involvement, economic policy, public service or much else besides.

The great and the good make their contribution, people such as George Carey, Lesslie Newbigin, Helen Oppenheimer and Michael Taylor, but there are many significant contributions from people who will be less known to most of us.

For anyone who is concerned to help our churches make sense of and contribute appropriately to a rapidly changing and often confusing world, this book is a great asset. But it is a learning tool for a learning organisation; a book to refer to often, rather than to read at a sitting.

**David Spriggs**

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## Promise of Future Glory: Reflections on the Mass

**by Vincent Nichols (DLT 1997; ISBN 0232 5222 94; £6.95)**

This is a book to which I instinctively warm. Bishop Nichols relishes the means of grace. He lingers with the language of the liturgy. Each act in the great drama of eucharistic worship is energy to his spirituality. *Promise of Future Glory* explores each in turn.

It is our need of God that draws us together. God's offer is a new quality of life, communion with him and each other. Nichols doesn't isolate Word from Sacrament. "The Liturgy of the Word is a most solemn aspect of every Mass." Luther will be cheered with his insight! In the effective proclamation of the Word "the light of the Gospel suddenly touches the reality of our life and transforms it into a conscious experience of the action of God." He gives insights into Gospel and culture (with an acknowledgement to Paul Hiebert) through

seven steps; to be, to do, to know, to relate, to play, to suffer and to worship.

For Nichols the mass is a confessional sacrament. The proclamation of the Creed is the liturgical moment when we declare God's authority over all principalities and powers. It also has an ecumenical dimension. It pulls together Christians of different persuasions. Centuries of saints, those in heaven as well as earth, are drawn into a profound identity.

Christ is the key. (In support of his argument he appeals to Vanstone's "The Stature of Waiting" but his memory deceives him. Vanstone's thesis is based not on Luke's Gospel but on Mark's.) In and through Christ we enter into Trinity. Here is an Orthodox as well as a Catholic perspective. Christ is made flesh that we might be divine. And here is a testimony that should raise an Evangelical "Amen". "The work of forgiveness is fulfilled in the shedding of blood".

The closing words of the mass "Ite, missa est", "Go, the Mass is ended", are not a finale, argues Nichols, but a commission. ("Missa" and "mission" have the same etymological root.) So the sacrament of unity is an imperative to "new patterns of partnership and joint action between Christians". We are sent out to roll up our sleeves and get involved in the construction of a "more just and peaceful society".

I like his intimations of everlasting life. Freedom of speech – so in heaven we never stop singing God's praise! The instinct to participate – he reminds us of the winding queues in the hot South African sun – the newly enfranchised waiting to vote. Participation, he tells us, is the measure of our human dignity. Is Nichols setting down a marker for lay participation in the ordering of the Roman Catholic Church? Longings of the human spirit – We look to the "kingdom of truth" where all life's ambiguities are resolved; where conflicts of authority and struggles for power end; where our sexuality is integrated. This kingdom is essentially pure gift, extravagant love, the heavenly banquet. Every celebration of the mass is an earnest of the age to come. And every celebration offers transfiguration.

Wherever we are coming from, we will benefit from reading this book. One day, pray God sooner than later, hereafter if not here, we'll sit at the same table.

**Barrie G. Cooke**

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## Can our Children Worship?

From p.11

between Church and society. Ritual is important in everyone's life. But meaningless ritual is the death of the spiritual life.

The challenge for those leading school worship is to be able to engage with the cultural world of modern youth in a meaningful way. Their goal is to create an awe-filled silence through which God can speak, rather than the bored silence that is so often found in school assembly halls and which drowns his voice. Fortunately there are increasingly numbers of gifted Christians, including teachers, clergy and schools workers, who can cross the cultural gap between Church and young people and lead school worship. We should be offering them all the support we can in their pioneering work.