

Conference Book Highlights



So what books were being highlighted at this year's conference? Here is a selection...



Exiles: Living Missionally in a Post-Christian Culture

by Michael Frost (Hendrickson, 2006, £11.99).

Frost writes from an obvious desire to see the people of God become what they are called out of the mainstream to be - exiles. His clear vision and theological perception commends this book to all those who cynically dismiss missional church as overly pragmatic and descriptive and too little concerned with theological reflection. This book is a welcome addition to the increasing volume of literature that addresses these deficiencies. (Darrell Jackson)

ISBN: 9781565636705

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Grace for Muslims? The Journey from Fear to Faith

by Steve Bell (Authentic Media, 2006, £8.99).

Steve Bell tells the story of his own physical journey from his conversion, through university to a teaching post in Nottingham. From the UK he went to Egypt for 10 years until the authorities there invited him to leave. Steve returned to a leadership role in Action Partners and latterly with Urban Vision. As Steve traces this physical journey he also traces and interweaves his spiritual journey as he comes to grips with Islam as a religion and moves from fear to faith in his reaction to Muslims.

This is a brilliant book. It is very timely and was written and published when many Christians are being forced to think again about their attitude and approach to the Muslims they meet at work, down the road, at the shops or at the school gate. Steve faces squarely the horrific evil that is planned and executed in the name of Islam and recognises the wonderful, generous and pious Muslims that have become his friends. The book is easy to read because of its story format. It should be read by all those who have Muslim contacts or who are struggling with their emotions when faced by atrocities done in the name of Islam. (Bryan Knell)

ISBN: 9781850786641

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Mission After Christendom

by David Smith (DLT, 2003, £14.95).

If you can get a look at this book before you buy it, its purpose and contents are laid out very carefully on page xii in the Introduction. The first chapter, 'Challenges Facing the Missionary Movement', suggests that a number of shifts in world history have opened up new frontiers for mission. It is imperative, the chapter argues, that we recognise these and grapple with them. These challenges are then broadly identified in chapters 2, 4 and 6 as secularisation, pluralisation and globalisation. After each chapter (i.e. in chapters 3, 5 and 7) there is a Biblical meditation. For secularisation it is based on Israel in exile, for pluralisation on the Cornelius story and for globalisation on the book of Revelation. A final chapter returns to the challenges of the beginning of the book and attempts to meet them in the light of the previous discussion.

Smith's book is quite simply the best brief treatment of mission available today (the best long treatment is still David Bosch's *Transforming Mission*). It is perceptive and real about the world we currently inhabit ('what kind of day it is today'). It is discerning about the big issues and puts them into historical perspective. It applies the Bible in fresh and relevant ways. It demonstrates familiarity with up-to-date writing about mission and the church. It is radical. It puts us on the spot. Consider: 'The nature of the relationship between the globalised, economic culture and the message of Jesus Christ has become the central issue requiring urgent theological and missiological reflection' (p.88) and 'the deepest cause of the spiritual weakness of Western Christians when confronting globalisation is the nature of their relationship with the ideology which has driven this culture' (p.89).

For us 'Western Christians' who want to be involved in God's mission and who are living in a 'globalised, economic culture', this is the book. (Jonathan Ingleby)

ISBN: 9780232524833

Purchase from [St Andrew's Bookshop](#)

Whose Afraid of Postmodernism: Taking Derrida, Lyotard and Foucault to Church

by James Smith (Baker Books, 2006, £11.99).

In five short and very readable chapters James K.A. Smith associate professor of philosophy at Calvin College provides a user friendly introduction to postmodern thought.

Rather than taking a defensive attitude towards postmodernism or a nostalgic view of modernism. Smith listens to the important contribution that Postmodern thinkers can provide to our understanding of both contemporary culture and church cultures. You won't agree with everything Smith says but he is still worth listening to as we seek for ways to express the never changing gospel in our ever changing times.

ISBN: 9780801029189

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