Ecclesiastical products of consumerism. Presently most fresh expression in Britain tend to be dominated by the middle class both in their prevailing culture and leadership. This book is a good reminder that we do need different models and churches to reach all peoples.

What comes across in Eleanor's studies is that we are only in the initial stages of a process in which the Church develops what it means to be missional in a post modern and post Christian culture. There are green shoots of hope with many churches becoming mission shaped but will the future see churches going beyond that in creating new models to take on the mission of the church? I was also struck by the heroic vision, commitment and sheer stick ability of these initial pioneers.

The book ends with a number of appendices including further details of both Eleanor research projects.

I think this book is a great resource for those thinking theologically and practically about fresh expressions. By necessity most of the research is Anglican and English but I think wider research would find many similar results.

It will be important for the future of the movement to see more detailed research which helps us discover whether fresh expressions are really reaching people outside the church or if what is being created are fresh expressions of worship for disillusioned Christians. I also think we may also learn more from some historical analysis of mission in the urban context to see how this might inform our future planning. Lastly I think we need more theological debate about the dichotomy of attractional and incarnational church. I wonder if this supposed divide, which I often hear repeated in most of the literature, really exists either in the contemporary church or in church history.

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Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity

How should theology be done? How should it be done here, now, and for this particular group of people? These are the questions that Craig Ott and Harold Netland's
Globalizing Theology aims to equip us to answer. It does so in the light of the historical fact that Christianity is no longer a peculiarly Western phenomenon, but is truly global, more extensive and universal than any other religion in history (p.15). The book is also a festschrift for Paul Hiebert (who died not long after its publication). He was one of the most influential missiologists of our time and encouraged many, myself included, to take culture and context seriously in cross-cultural ministry. Hiebert’s name may not be well known to some readers of JYT, but some of his ideas have been widely used in the study of youth ministry, e.g., the importance of critical contextualization, or the understanding of the category “Christian”, not as a “bounded set” by the attributes of its members, but as a “centered set” defined by the members’ relationship to Christ.

The book’s message may be summarized in the words of the concluding essay by Ott: “the theology of the church must move from conformity to specifications of a bygone age (the narrow parameters of the Western or other theological traditions) and beyond a patchwork (of local theologies) without regard to the overall design... to become a genuinely multicolored fabric with various threads (from diverse perspectives) chosen and refined by the Designer adding to the luster and strength of the whole” (pp.314-315). Thus, the authors advocate that to reflect the cultural and social diversity of today’s Christianity we must attend to the voices of the whole church. For them this does not mean embracing alternative, contradictory theological understandings as much as gaining a richer, fuller understanding.

The fourteen papers of the book are written by various well-known colleagues of Hiebert and are arranged in three parts, bracketed by Netland’s introduction and Ott’s exemplary, summarizing conclusion. In the first part, Tite Tiénon, Darrell Whiteman, and Andrew Walls focus on implications of the global spread of Christianity, relating this to the general phenomenon of globalization. Tiénon’s paper is particularly impressive: he argues trenchantly against the hegemony of the palefaces in theology (let the reader take note!).

Kevin Vanhoozer, David and Cynthia Strong, Steve Strauss, Charles Van Engen, and Robert Priest provide the second part on methodological issues for globalizing theology. Vanhoozer complains about our “big, fat, Greek method” (p.88), and argues for a way of doing theology that is as appropriate in the post-modern West as it is in Latin America, Africa and Asia. He creatively and engagingly develops the meaning and significance of what many Evangelicals would say: that Christians should act faithfully to the script of the Bible and still improvise for their context (pp.112-115). The contributions of Van Engen and Priest are also particularly noteworthy as they, in