

## New marriage guide from Church House

Church House Publishing publishes it's first marriage preparation guide in January.

*'Growing Together; a guide for couples getting married'* explores some of the issues being married can raise and offers down to earth advice on issues like money, conflict and sex.

The author, Andrew Body, a Relate counsellor for over 25 years, hopes the book will help couples plan for 'life after the excitement of the wedding day'.

Growing Together costs £6.99 (ISBN No: 0715140493) from Church House Publishing and can be ordered on line at [www.chpublishing.co.uk](http://www.chpublishing.co.uk) from Church House Bookshop or from other Christian bookshops.

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## The Rev. Ann Nickson, reviews: 'Honest To God 40 Years On'

'John Robinson' – the very name summons up a whole range of reactions and emotions.

For some, Robinson was the standard bearer of South Bank Theology, an icon of 1960's liberal thinking; for others he was the dangerous radical Bishop, undermining the faith of ordinary believers. In reality, Robinson was probably neither



of these, and so 40 years after the publication of 'Honest to God', the opportunity for reassessment is timely. This book is the fruit of a Clergy Study Day held at the Cathedral in March 2003, featuring scholars from across the theological spectrum and dealing with Robinson's most famous publication from a number of different angles.

The book begins with a typically trenchant contribution from one of Robinson's successors as

Bishop of Woolwich, the recently retired Colin Buchanan. Bishop Colin defends the concept of the 'upness' of God - which Robinson had dismissed as primitive - in his usual engaging and combative style.

Alister McGrath recognises Robinson's deeply held concern to communicate and express the Christian faith in a way which resonated for the world of the 1960s. However, both he and Jane Williams point up the weaknesses in Robinson's

Christology and his understanding of the cross. Williams suggests that the problems Robinson struggled to address may lie less in our traditional understandings of the person of Christ and his atoning work than in 'the poverty of our imaginations and our lives'. In other words, what is needed is not new theology, but new and imaginative ways of re-expressing and living out the central truths of the Christian faith.

One of the weightiest contributions to the volume comes from the late Christopher Ryan, who discusses the extent to which debates on language in post-modernity have taken forward Robinson's aims. Ryan's discussion of the concept of the 'ironic' mode of belief, characterised by qualities such as a quiet confidence, a generous pluralism, an

openness to change, a recognition of the hiddenness of God and the limits of human language, offers a helpful way of taking Robinson's legacy forward.

Martyn Percy is surely right to suggest that many of Robinson's supposedly radical thoughts seem tame today. He argues that Robinson's greatest contribution in an era of iconoclasm, was not so much the content of 'Honest to God', but the impact of the book in bringing theology out of church control, freeing people to question and giving space for doubt. Perhaps it was Robinson's questions, rather than the answers offered in 'Honest to God' which will prove to be his most lasting legacy.

**Honest To God 40 Years On - Colin SLEE (ed.) ISBN No: 0334029392. Price: £16.99**

## Resources for Lent

### Bishop Nick commends USPG Lent Course

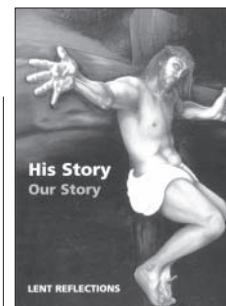
USPG is offering a free Lent course exploring the experience of Sudanese refugees.

There are an estimated 95,000 refugees in Ethiopia who fled civil war in Sudan. Their experiences explored in "Strangers in a strange land", USPG's Bible study course for Lent 2005. It contains a five-week course, background

material, prayers and pointers for action and discussion, supplemented by a CD with leaders notes, a PowerPoint presentation and worship material.

Bishop Nick Baines says "It offers a valuable opportunity to engage with the work of the world church. We have much to learn from the experiences of refugees - this course will help congregations to explore the gospel from their perspective."

To order your free copies of the leader's pack and individual booklets, ring USPG on 020 7803 3413 or e-mail [ruthn@uspg.org.uk](mailto:ruthn@uspg.org.uk).



The 2005 booklet - 'His Story, Our Story' - has been fashioned as a pilgrimage through Lent.

The idea of producing Lent Books was a result of a student's prayer. Many small groups have used them as a basis for discussion, and the college has had some remarkable letters telling them of profound experiences and understandings derived from the meditations.

'His Story, Our Story' can be viewed on the college website; [www.ridley.cam.ac.uk](http://www.ridley.cam.ac.uk).

Copies are available at a minimum donation of £3 for a single copy or £2.50 for two or more, from Lent Books, Ridley Hall, Cambridge CB3 9HG. (cheques payable to Ridley Hall).

### His Story, Our Story

For the fourth year running the students of Ridley Hall have produced a collection of Lent meditations.

## Opportunities

To advertise your vacancy in Canterbury, Rochester or Southwark Diocese, telephone 01634 401611

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**Daniel Mabior Achiek is one of those whose experiences are drawn on for the course.**

Today Daniel is an evangelist with the Anglican Church in Dimma refugee camp, in Ethiopia. As a young boy he fled southern Sudan as a refugee after government

troops attacked his village. Daniel says life is tough in Ethiopia's refugee camps. The United Nations provides some food and facilities, but malnutrition and disease are widespread and there is the constant threat of inter-tribal conflict. With insufficient medical facilities, life expectancy is low and child mortality is high. He says "We are praying for peace to come to Sudan; that's our only hope. We tell our people to look to the future."

### The Diocese of Canterbury Board of Ministry & Training

#### Pastoral Tutor

A collaborative post (lay or clerical) with responsibility for pastoral care of students and opportunities for teaching

Closing date for applications: Friday 11 February 2005.

For further details and an application form contact

Sarah Solly, Diocesan House,  
Lady Wootton's Green, Canterbury CT1 1NQ  
Tel: 01227 459401  
Email: [ssolly@diocant.org](mailto:ssolly@diocant.org)

## Lent with Luke

A new Lent book has been written by the Ven Dr David Thomson, Archdeacon of Carlisle, and published by Authentic Media.

'Lent with Luke' offers daily readings from Luke's Gospel with reflections, suggestions for prayer and study notes suitable for groups or individuals.

The 128 page book is illustrated with paintings of gospel scenes and the studies continue into the first week after Easter. This is David Thomson's second Gospel study - 'A Journey with John' was published in 2003. Lent with Luke (ISBN 1-85078-597-X is available from bookshops at £4.99.

## The Power of Small Choices

A new Lent course uses stories of two couples within the Diocese to highlight its theme.

'The Power of Small Choices', written by Hilary Brand, focuses on the idea of choice: 'Many of us feel that our lives are very small. But within our humdrum lives lie a million small choices - any one of which could have huge consequences for ourselves, for those around us and for the world.'

Besides telling these stories of choice on the human scale, the book looks at the broader picture, examining what science and contemporary culture have to say about notions of freedom and responsibility and the role of faith in enabling or inhibiting choice.

Group sessions are structured around the examination of two films, *The Shawshank Redemption* and *Babette's Feast*, highlighting how choice can be exercised even in the most limited of circumstances. All these themes lead back naturally to the Bible and how its ongoing story of grace and redemption allow Christ's followers the freedom to risk and make choices for good.

'The Power of Small Choices' by Hilary Brand, published by Darton Longman & Todd, price £4.95