

dialogue with other world faiths have earned him unique authority. This is a true prophetic, gospel ministry, identifying with exiles, outcasts and the marginalised. These challenging pages gain valuable corroborative material from the author's regular visits to similar milieux in North America.

Even as this review is being written, a large part of the handsome Spitalfields fruit and vegetable market is menaced by demolition for office development. Like the notorious Docklands scheme, this would be yet another invasion of the East End by those with financial power who care little for local people or the vitality of the locality. Ken Leech's book leaves apolitical Christians nowhere to hide from issues like this. Do we not, in the words of *Our Lady*, worship the God who humbles the mighty? Fr Leech reminds us by his example and his words that Christians are called upon in solidarity with the poor to resist insufferable and insolent power.

TONY CROSS

THE CHILD IN CHRISTIAN THOUGHT edited by Marcia J Bunge, *Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.*, Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, UK, 2001 Pp 513, pbk. £15.99.

This book consists of a collection of seventeen essays, and forms part of the Religion, Marriage and Family series from Eerdmans. It is prefaced by an introduction that sets in brief the current thinking on children, and then continues by justifying the publication in terms of its purpose and scope. Three general claims are made by Bunge as to what the volume attempts to encompass.

First, it contains 'Contributions to the History of Christian Thought and of Conceptions of Childhood'. This claim is more than adequately justified if one examines the list of chapters. Chapters range from the child in the New Testament, through Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Wesley and right up to contemporary feminist theology. Other theologians are also mentioned, both in separate chapters and in a substantial index. A cursory inspection of any of the chapters will also show the thoroughness with which the subject matter is treated. Both historical and contemporary references are brought to bear on the work of the theologian in question — for example, the references as to how Mennonites might now understand the teachings of Menno Simons with regard to the breaking of a child's will refers to original sources as well as to Menno Link, an e-mail chat group.

A second claim of the book is that it aims to consider 'Perspectives on the Nature of Children'. Again, this claim is justified not just by considering the contents of each chapter, but also by reading the relevant section of the introduction. In contrast to many introductions in similar books, this introduction can also be used as a quick reference by those interested in looking up certain aspects of theology relevant to children, such as, for example, original sin. A subject index at the back of the volume covers the multitude of other topics concerning the child in theology.

The third claim is possibly of greatest interest to those who are not directly involved in theology, but may be involved in work relevant to the

social sciences. It is entitled 'Insights into Obligations to Children', and links theory to practice or, at least, to what theologians advocate with regard to children. An example of this in action is the essay by Riggs on African American children. Here the work and writings of Mary Church Terrell are given prominence in relation to the upbringing and education of children. Another example would be the references to how Rahner's thinking influenced Church teaching on original sin and baptism in post-Vatican II theology. So the book does more than adequate justice to the claim, both in these examples and in the many other ones in each chapter.

In addition to the introduction, seventeen chapters, and indices (including one on scriptural references), the book also contains a bibliography referring to primary and secondary sources. Each chapter is meticulously annotated throughout, so that further investigations on the part of the reader are facilitated rather than hindered. The book is on the whole excellently well-presented and would be useful not just to academics but also to anyone working in fields related to children. I warmly recommend it.

RUDOLF LOEWENSTEIN OP

MADE FOR HAPPINESS, Discovering the Meaning of Life with Aristotle
by Jean Vanier, Translated by Kathryn Spink, *Darton, Longman and Todd*, London, 2001 pp. 288, £8.99 pbk.

The sure mark of a good question, lies not just in the quality of the answer it generates, but in its own durability. Thus, the fundamental questions of our lives and of our world do not finally go away, for our answers are always provisional: each successive generation, pondering the possibilities of its times and circumstances, poses the old questions anew. Of perennial relevance, therefore, is this one asked by Aristotle almost two and a half millennia ago, in Athens: how can we live together happily? Is happiness even possible, and in what might it consist? This new book on his thinking, by Jean Vanier, lucidly presents the answers he arrived at then, and proposes convincingly that they are still of relevance today.

Our own context for addressing the issue of human happiness altered on September 11th. The attacks on America then, and on Afghanistan to the present day, have brought home two naked truths: first, with the distance between normal daily life and death either by terror or stray bombs now shrunk, our global village has acquired a sinister new dimension. Secondly, tolerance alone has proved too wishy-washy an ethic to provide the strong, cohesive foundation our village-society needs in order to undergird the broad cultural diversity that is our chief hallmark.

The author of this book suggests Aristotle may provide some of the answers we are looking for. While Aristotle's thinking has been enjoying a revival in recent years, his usual exponents are—not surprisingly—academic philosophers, who tend to assume a well-developed knowledge base in their readership. What sets this book apart, therefore, is that Vanier makes no assumptions about the reader's background knowledge. Instead, careful explanations of technical terms in lay language ensure that it passes muster