

the next wave

By David Wraight

Reviewed by Andy Castle

'Empowering the generation that will change our world' – with a tagline like that I was intrigued as to what this book had to say and I wasn't disappointed.

David Wraight is International President and CEO of Youth For Christ. He grew up in Australia and one of the real strengths of this book is his reflection on youth ministry, not just in Australia, but within the southern hemisphere.

'The Next Wave' is a reference to surfing and 'catching the next big wave'. Wraight uses the analogy of surfers choosing which wave to surf – they may let several waves go past, unsure whether or not to try and surf them, but there is a danger of missing out on many a 'quality' wave. Using several illustrations to back up his argument, Wraight is convinced that there is a new wave of mission coming, spearheaded by young people, and it is up to the rest of the Church to decide whether they are going to surf this wave or miss out on being a part of a new focus of mission for the Church.

David Wraight is very skilled at retelling inspirational stories such as the Rwandan mother who offers redemption to the murderer of her husband and her

children by caring for him as if he is her own son when he is in prison. And the story of Irene, a Taiwanese girl, who had a vision to reach her peers by creating an online virtual world, having recognised that this is where all her peers already are. Although in one sense these stories merely highlight concepts and values we are already familiar with, there is something deeply inspirational about hearing how those in other cultures are changing the world for Christ, which acts as a powerful antidote to the weariness and stagnation many of us struggle with.

Wraight is clear that if the current generation of young people are going to be at the forefront of the next wave of mission then we as youth and church leaders need to empower, encourage, support and enable them as much as we can. 'We in the church have an enormous responsibility,' Wraight observes, 'to provide the fertile ground and the nurture they need to reach their full potential.'

The book takes us back to the heart of youth ministry, emphasising the centrality of relationships with chapters on loving people into the kingdom, investing in young people, and

mentoring and praying for them. (Wraight encourages the whole church to be prayer mentors: one adult praying for one young person). He also reflects well throughout on how we must look at our own lives and the model we offer for young people to copy, constantly challenging ourselves to grow more like Jesus. Finally, Wraight offers a model for measuring the effectiveness of what we do. Rather than looking at attendance, he offers a profile of a disciple and suggests we measure our young people against it to see how they might be growing.

I would really recommend this book to anyone who wants some fresh inspiration and wants to see young people fulfil their potential to change the world.

