metaphorically.' 'I am not so sure.' Gandhi counters. 'I have thought about it a great deal, and I suspect Jesus meant it.' A turning point for me in urban ministry was as a youth worker in the 1960's being punched on the face by a club member who had been excluded from the club in Liverpool for fighting. Without thinking, I turned the other cheek and invited him to hit me again. He backed off and went away. At a club reunion I met him earlier this year. He not only remembered the incident vividly but said 'It made Christianity real for me.'

In E.C.U.M. we have committed ourselves in 2005 to explore the subject of Prophetic Evangelism. Chalke sees Jesus as a prophetic evangelist not primarily a preaching evangelist: 'He was more a prophet than a preacher. He didn't stand in a pulpit, on a street corner, or aloft a soapbox, ranting and raving; instead he did things. He did extra-ordinary things, pro-active, arresting, intriguing and enticing things. His actions challenged assumptions and made people think. Then, having gained their attention, he would comment on what he had done.

The most controversial section of the book, that has received wide media coverage, is on the Cross and his questioning of certain expositions of the doctrine of substitutionary atonement with the statement: 'the cross isn't a form of cosmic child abuse.' He believes this contradicts the clear biblical statement 'God is Love' and he sees the cross primarily as: 'a demonstration of just how far God as Father and Jesus his Son are prepared to go to prove that love. The cross is a vivid statement of the power-lessness of love.' I shall always remember, during an evangelistic mission, going into a Working Men's Club in Dagenham and being confronted by a a man who said to me: 'Bishop if you say to me, "Smile God loves you," I will punch you on the nose.' His son had died after a boxing accident, his wife was dying of cancer and he was very angry with God. After two beers and a lot of listening I was able to share the text of Jesus' cry on the cross 'My God, My God, why have you forsaken me' (Matthew 27.46) Chalke sees this text as a key to understanding the cross: 'Jesus' cry of abandonment mirrors those of countless millions of people who suffer oppression, enslavement, abuse, disease, poverty, starvation and violence: 'If God really is love, then where is he? Why has he abandoned me? Why do I feel alone? However, while suffering may cause us to believe that God has abandoned us, the reality is that he is always right there with us, in the suffering. The truth is, Jesus was born into a messy world and died in a messy world. The cross is often portrayed as the bridge over the chasm that separates heaven and earth. It is our means of escape. But the reality is that it stands at the centre of our decaying world — thrust into the dirt to proclaim GOD IS HERE!' The man in the Dagenham club could accept that kind of love.

Reviewer: Bishop Roger Sainsbury

Cosmopolis II: Mongrel Cities of the 21st Century by Leonie Sandercock. Published by Continuum
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Originally intended as an updated version of 'Towards Cosmopolis' (1998), Cosmopolis II is an almost entirely new book, including only two, revised, chapters from the earlier work among its present ten. The result is an energised, and energising, account of the possibilities and prospects for urban living. Sandercock writes out of her professional and academic expertise in urban planning, but also as an urban dweller committed to help create vibrant and sustainable multi-cultural cities – the Cosmopolis of her title.

This dual perspective informs the whole book. In a wide-ranging approach Sandercock embraces historical analysis and futuristic evocation, urban theory and local case study. The synthesis is creative and lucid – and always tested against a concern to address the practical opportunities and challenges for planner and citizen alike.

Sandercock's starting-point is the desire to offer 'a better understanding of the emergence of cities of difference in the context of globalization'. Far too often, she believes, the impact of globalization is interpreted in exclusively economic terms. Her complementary focus is on the 'demographic restructuring' which has also taken place on a global scale – resulting from the combination of international migration, postcolonial discourse, the resurgence of indigenous people and the new politics of social movements. As a consequence, she argues, 'difference' has become the dominant characteristic of the contemporary city, and 'negotiating difference' its most urgent task. From this initial perspective Sandercock launches her ambitious project.

It leads her first into a critique of modernist urban planning in which planners have been cast in the role of 'spatial police regulating not only land uses but who…might use the land'. The inadequacies of such a functionalist model – based as it is on an ideology of reason, control and a supposedly neutral reading of the 'public good' – are fully exposed in the city of difference where new voices are heard and alternative social dynamics are at work. Not that difference has ever been absent from the modern city but, as she shows, the official history of urban planning has managed until now to exclude 'all but white, professional males as the actors on the historical stage'. Such is the extent of contemporary difference, however, that the alternative 'contested and multiple histories' of our cities must now be affirmed, and with them the different kinds of knowledge – street-level knowledge often derived from experience, intuition or symbol – by which they are informed.

In the second part of the book Sandercock looks ahead to consider the future implications of 'mongrel cities' (a metaphor adapted from Salmon Rushdie) 'in which difference, otherness, fragmentation, splintering, multiplicity, heterogeneity, diversity, plurality prevail'. She rejects models that adopt an uncritical and essentially nostalgic view of community, ignore the realities of urban 'aggression, violence and paranoia' or (with the Home Office) speak too glibly of community cohesion without acknow-ledging those factors that militate against 'shared values and a shared sense of place'. She believes that the crucial issues of identity and belonging are inevitably contested and need to be renegotiated; examines the ambiguity of the term multiculturalism and seeks to reclaim it from her own perspective. In elaborating that perspective she identifies nine aspects that could usefully illuminate many a sterile discussion – including the dynamic and hybrid nature of culture itself, the inevitable political contestation of a process derived from 'an unfinished decolonization project', the need for active citizenship committed to daily negotiations of difference and, not least, 'a sense of belonging based on a shared commitment to political community'.

In all of this there is a healthy pragmatism which eschews ideological posturing and acknowledges the complexity of the task. Those qualities are further reflected in Sandercock's telling discussion of fear and its consequences for the multicultural project. She argues that such fear – of the other, the stranger – is as potent at the symbolic level of 'psychological displacement' as at the level of 'economic displacement' and shows how it too readily informs public policies. Equally importantly she outlines more positive policy directions and cites examples of urban initiatives in which creative alternatives have been enacted.

The final part of the book advocates the need for a new 'planning imagination'. Specific examples of urban transformation are used to suggest new paradigms, including 'therapeutic planning' and 'empowerment planning'. Crucial elements are identified, such as grass-roots participation, 'space for stories (not least contested stories) to be told', the importance of mobilising hope as well as resources, of negotiating fear and affirming collective memories. Planners themselves are invited to develop five qualities – political, therapeutic, audacious, creative and critical – and to embrace a new planning language that speaks of memory, desire and spirit. This is more than just a final rhetorical flourish – here as elsewhere the author's flights of imagination are rooted in the knowledge of what some have already achieved, reflecting a consistent commitment to 'practise utopia', as well as to dream it.

No brief summary can do anything like justice to the passion and power of Sandercock's writing. Her analysis of contemporary urban trends is clear and authoritative, while full of nuanced insight and detail. The discussions of fear and of the post-colonial legacy sound important notes of realism, while the reframing of what might constitute multiculturalism provides the springboard for an imaginative leap into future urban possibilities. This is an important manifesto that deserves wide readership.