

Its multi-layered approach will certainly inform practitioners and resonate with much in their local experience. Much more than that, it is also likely to encourage and inspire – not only by the scope of the author's vision but also by the way it invests renewed, almost parabolic, significance in even routine opportunities to negotiate difference in the urban context.

Reviewer: Stuart Jordan

Review: Tristram Hunt Building Jerusalem. Weidenfeld & Nicolson 2004

The return of civic pride and the cultural renaissance of our cities have been much vaunted by the government and city leaders in recent years. The interest in competition for European City of Culture, the completion and planning of totemic buildings and venues, the return of the middle classes to city living are all cited as examples of a cultural change in our attitudes to cities, yet at the same time we see a rise in demand for suburban 'shoebox' developments; an increase in high security gated communities; and the gradual privatisation of supposedly public spaces in our urban environment.

Tristram Hunt, familiar as part of the new breed of media friendly historians, asks what were the underlying forces that made Victorian cities hives of creativity, civic dignity and philanthropy. It is an intellectual history – classical, gothic and renaissance architectural forms had significant philosophical rationales as the writings of Carlyle, Ruskin and Pugin reveal. It is also a religious history with the significant contributions to the shape and ethos of city being made by both anglo-catholic and non-conformists understanding a significant correlation between civic virtue and faith, as well as being concerned with the social and economic contradictions of urban living. Non-conformity was particularly apparent in the advance of Manchester and Birmingham, the latter led by the Unitarian Chamberlain family, Carrs Lane Chapel and a significantly radical and creative bourgeoisie. Hunt laments the demise of this connection between faith and civics, apparent in the emasculation of bourgeois non-conformity in its suburban captivity.

'... anti-urban sentiment ... contributed markedly to a breakdown in British civic pride. The city was decreasingly regarded as an arena to be celebrated, reformed or rebuilt along ideological or aesthetic principles but instead as a mode of existence best rejected altogether.'

The industrial revolution was a bad dream, the urban form was irredeemable. These attitudes were apparent in many of the movements we see as precursors of our own urban mission. Not least General Booth, who considered there to be little prospect for righteous living in the city and advocated the decanting of the urban poor to rural and industrial settlements, and the colonies.

'The Victorian urban world, "the age of great cities", was no longer a mark of

civilisation to be proud of. The Industrial Revolution was rewritten as a bad dream interrupting the natural civic flow from the elegant, urbane eighteenth into the town-country twentieth century.'

As well as being a historian Hunt has worked for the political think-tanks DEMOS and IPPR. The final section of the book is concerned with the legacy of the Victorian cities and the possibilities of an urban renaissance at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

'... it is again suggested that culture is the pillar of an urban civilisation. But there is a difference. Whereas nine-teenth-century middle-class civic culture was more often than not the product of a Nonconformist conscience, the culture of today's cities appears more of a branding and marketing tool than a reflection of civic identity. It is frequently the work of quangos and urban regeneration consultants rather than the organic outcome of any home-grown civic sentiment.'

Hunt puts his money on 'the knowledge economy of skills, technology, design and information providing the most viable route for urban industrial regeneration.' In many ways this is an inadequate conclusion to what is an inspiring and challenging account of critical moments in our urban story.

Reviewer: Andrew Davey

Stop Press

Caring for the Stranger

This moving digest of articles from the Observer and the Guardian covers 1999-2003 by Jim Hart is available from INCIT It is a mind of information with the stories of asylum seekers, refugees and economic migrants. **Contact: INCIT**

Review 2000-2003

Copies of this triennial report of the Churches' Commission for Racial Justice. It is an impressive record of Christian Action in this demanding area of collaborative ministry and advocacy and education.

Contact: CCRJ

Making Globalization Work for All

Copies of an important speech by Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, on 16 Feb 2004 are available. The Chancellor outlines the significant contribution being made by faith communities to 'delivering the Monterrey consensus'. **Contact: The Treasury**

Asylum & Immigration – A Christian Perspective by Nick Spencer

Hardly a day goes by when the explosive issues of asylum and immigration are not in the news. Exactly how should the powers that be handle this divisive and complex issue in a way that is both as wise as a serpent and yet as gentle as a dove? How should Christians think through these issues in ways that are true to their faith and

informed of the facts? Nick Spencer provides an intelligent introduction to the complexities of asylum and immigration bringing to light both the facts and the fiction. He guides the readers towards a biblical way of thinking that helps equip us to make integrally Christian responses. **Pub. by Paternoster Press ISBN: 1842272173 £7.99**

PROGRESSIVE CHRISTIAN NETWORK (PCN) CONFERENCE – Proclaiming and Sharing Progressive Faith 6-7 May 2005 at St. John's Church, Waterloo, London. Speakers include: Robert Beckford & Mona Siddiqui. **Marcus Borg will be visiting the UK in Nov. 2005:** St Mark's Sheffield 11-13th November; St. James' Piccadilly on Sunday Evening 13 Nov; Sussex University on Monday 14 Nov; Other times and venues still being arranged in Birmingham and Kendal. **Contact: Contact: Progressive Christian Network (PCN)**

YOUTH WORKS

The Russell Commission officially launched its consultation document on Monday 4 October and we welcome your input into the new national framework to increase volunteering and civic service by young people across the UK.

The purpose of this consultation is to test a number of questions about the measures to be contained in a new national framework. In doing so, the Russell Commission wishes to build on the existing strengths and expertise of voluntary organisations and businesses involved in community and mentoring activity.

The 12 weeks consultation closes on Friday 31, December 2004 and we would be delighted to receive your response by this date. Please find attached a copy of the consultation document and questionnaire which should be returned, in writing, to the following address:

Russell Commission Review Team,
3rd Floor, Allington Towers, 19 Allington Street, London SW1E 5EB
website www.russellcommission.org

You may be interested in circulating the Russell Commission's youth consultation postcards to young members of your organisation so that we are able to test ideas and seek their views. Visit www.russellmission.com

Youth Work Approaches to Gang Culture

In Nov 2003 the National Youth Agency hosted a one day seminar, chaired by Bishop Roger Sainsbury on 'The rise of gang culture and gang-related violence'. This report of the day is full of useful insight and good sense. Action points: Principles for youth workers tackling these issues and key methodologies; Involving young people in solutions; Messages for central and local government; Partnerships – who we work with and how they are run. **Contact: National Youth Agency, 17-23 Albion Street, Leicester, LE1 6GD. Tel: 0116 285 3700. Email nya@nya.org.uk**