

# Addressing the Global City

*A Lecture delivered in Houston, San Antonio and Austin, Texas in the Spring of 2002*

It's a great honour to be here with you and I'd like to thank all those, especially the Revd James Abernathy, who have been instrumental in creating this opportunity for me to visit with you and experience something of the wonders of this City and the State of Texas. This is my first visit to this huge oil-rich State and I'm loving it!

I must admit to a certain sense of trepidation in addressing you this evening. And that on a two counts in particular. First, I speak English. I mean English English. When I say, "I'm mad about my flat", I mean to say "I'm exhilarated by my apartment." So please feel free to translate as I go.

However, being English I do feel a close empathy with you as you continue to wrestle with the horrific events of 11th September 2001. When I was a young child in school, the teacher would point at the globe and say, "now children you see that on this globe, a third of the world is coloured pink. They are the parts that belong to you. That is the British Empire." So I've lived through the demise of an era, and through that time we have had to learn to be hated – to have our culture lampooned and rubbished and physically attacked. And all the time, we only thought that we were trying to bring prosperity and culture to a world which would be grateful. On that fateful day in September my elderly mother said to me: "Oh the poor dears, now it's their turn."

My second reason for feeling somewhat hesitant this evening is because I'm really not a specialist in this subject, "Addressing the Global City." I am primarily a theologian who happens to have an urban bias and a global interest. So I hope what I have to say is of use to you.

But first I'd like to tell you a little about my own experience. I lived the first fifty years of my life in the inner cities of Britain – born in East London and then twenty years of ministry in Birmingham – a strong industrial city in the heart of the nation. I studied for a year or so here in New York city too. But when I was made Bishop some nine years ago they moved me out of the city to London's suburbs, so for the first time in my life I've seen a new thing. I've realised in a deeply personal way just how inter-dependent cities are. How the people of the suburbs rely on the city, however much they may hate to live there. And how there are many people in the city whose lives – their education, their health, their incomes – are largely controlled by people who don't live there. And London is a city 'unto itself', as the bible would say. It's a global city that looks out to the world – that's where it's markets are, that's where its political allies and competitors are. Global cities look to other global cities. London doesn't any longer need the rest of the country of which it is supposed to be the capital. And the rest of the country feels that – and some sections of the country get angry about it. But that's global cities for you.

But now living where I do in suburbia, and also having responsibility for large rural tracks – well in your language, a series of tiny urban hamlets – I'm also learning that although I sometimes hear anti-urban sentiments expressed, I hear them expressed in very urban terms. Wherever they live, people's mind-sets seem to be dominated by the urban. But then, the TV they watch is urban controlled. The newspapers they read, the food they eat, the music they hear – it's all largely controlled and dominated from the urban centres. And because the cities are so much in competition one with another, the great global cities begin to dominate the mind-sets of the smaller cities which, in turn, act as what we call

"Core Cities" to their hinterlands. So this subject of how to address the global city is important for us all, wherever we live. The adage is abundantly true – as they say, "We are all urban now."

The 'Urban' has been around for a long time. And so, as a matter of fact, have theological musings about the urban. There are indications of this in our first known cities in Sumer – some 3000 and more years before the Christian Era. The advent of Cities and the advent of the written word, both seemed to come along at the same time. Indicating that perhaps both writing and cities are aspects of symbolic expression. The early Hebraic texts echo ancient ideas about cities as symbolic edifices. In the Book of Genesis, we are told the story that it was Cain the brother-killer who builds the first city. That just speaks volumes. And then comes the story of the Tower of Babel, pointing to the fear that cities think they are above God in their power and uniting complexity. They flaunt their wealth and power – so the tower is brought to dust.

'Babylon', 'Rome', 'Jerusalem', 'Baghdad', – each city name summoning up a whole realm of thought and emotion. Berlin, London, Dallas. The city never has been just a place, its symbolic nature is at its very heart and we do well in our time to remember this. In 1938, Louis Wirth wrote that 'urbanism' is not so much a place as a 'state of mind'. Just recently a Baptist minister in London said "urbanology is a mystical exercise in which you intuit the spirit of the place."

Yes, the urban has been with us – and I've written elsewhere about the long history of its development, through the ancient empires of Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, Greece, Rome and on into the European medieval period. Then with the advent of the Golden Triangle of trade – as slaves were bought and sold and cotton and minerals and rubber and gold was transferred across the Atlantic – so Europe created a vast resource of investment capital upon which was founded the industrial revolution. So grew the earliest industrialised cities of Europe – of England in particular – and later your cities of the eastern seaboard, once the colonising beach-head towns of an earlier empire, grew to take on the world at its own game.

Cities have throughout their long history been the motors, or better – the nodal power-centres, of imperial control and expansion. Alexander the Great did it so well that the Roman Empire took up the model and founded cities all across its expanding Empire, we've got loads of them in England. And the Romans linked their controlling cities by building straight roads – I live on one of them – and utilising the common trading language of Koine Greek. What today we might call a super-highway. And people say that globalisation is new?

But although globalisation has come and gone through the ages, this time it has come with such a vengeance and with such velocity that we are overwhelmed by it. Well, what is it?

I believe globalisation to be the dynamic interplay of three factors, or better, motors. We could picture them as three swirling and interacting circles or spheres of influence.

The first is Technology.

In 1837, one year after the establishment of the Republic of Texas, the telegraph was invented. It eliminated for good and all the spatial problems of human communication. Ten years earlier, the first steam ship crossed the Atlantic, and in 1927 Lindbergh flew non-stop over it. – that ocean had at last become 'the pond'. It was in the 1980s that fibre optics were developed so that computers were now able to connect their digital signals almost at

the speed of light. It goes fast and it grows fast. In 1993 William Clinton came to the White House. In that year there were only 50 websites. What are there now? 400 million and growing?

And the effects of all this technology. Well it certainly made the world smaller. It extends the reach of the powerful. It extends markets, it sends goods and human beings scurrying across the globe. That means migration – bigger now than at any time in history. That means labour can be divided across continents. Research and management largely in the northern hemisphere and heavy production in the south. It means that the nodal cities of this network are more full of difference now than ever before. Different cultures, different languages, different religions.

It means the World Wide Web. But we must be careful here. It is reliably estimated that the internet is present to only 2 to 5% of the world's population. 80% of the world's population has never made a phone-call. World Wide Web? It's certainly here in the US, but even here it's 24% access if you're white, and only 7% access if your black. With internet connectivity it is possible for some to by-pass the local, and connect to like-minded entrepreneurs, producers and markets without spatial limitation – the term they use is 'band-width colonisation'.

So, remembering that cities revel in this stuff, now put technology together with the next motor of globalisation: Politics.

It was as long ago as 1989 – last century indeed! – that the Berlin Wall fell so symbolically registering in all our minds that the world was no longer bi-polar. Whether it was to become multi-polar now, or mono-polar, is still much disputed. But certainly it was a pivotal moment in world history. The Third World had been the poor, the Second World the Soviet sphere of influence and the First World the western capitalist nations. A good friend of mine, working for western military operations, said to me that with the Second World gone, they no longer knew who to point the missiles at. "We'll just have to find a new enemy if we're going to hold together," he said. Well, perhaps we have?

As well as this ratchetting up of the political and economic influence of the First World there has been another and related political motor to globalisation. I refer to the political alliance of Margaret Thatcher, Helmut Kohl and Ronald Reagan. And being rather naughty, I like to construct a mental picture of this political trinity clambering aboard Star-Trek's 'StarShip Enterprise', proclaiming, "there is no alternative", TINA, – no alternative to the demands of the market. They helped to construct a Neo-Liberal politics of market-forces, by uncoupling economics from its consequential social concerns and reducing the growing welfare orientation of politics.

Of late we have seen in Europe in particular a strong swing away from Neo-liberalism as the search for the elusive 'Third Way' takes. Margaret Thatcher is now referred to as "the Wicked Witch of the West", but the thrust of her market-led vision is still to the fore, and perhaps on both our continents.

But I promised you a third motor to globalisation alongside Technology and Politics, and it is of course Economics. I will own the fact, even in this esteemed company, that it was during a brief visit to Starbucks near Regents Park, London, that I was reminded that it was in 1773 that it all started in just such a coffee-shop. It was then that London market dealers decided to stop slurping coffee all over their documents and set up the London Stock Exchange at more commodious premises.

It was not however until the 27th October 1987, that the markets they had created more than two hundred years before, were de-regularised. This so-called 'Big Bang' liberated the London stock market and therefore the world financial market from their long confinement and, coupling them to the newly available technology, went into overdrive – 'Turbo-capitalism' had now certainly arrived. Now, capital could flow wherever it willed in milliseconds. It could chase cheap labour markets, invest and dis-invest at the wink of an eye, or the chance of a quick gain. 'Long-term' seemed to be a phrase that had had its day. Capital was now more likely to stay in one location on a short-term basis, which was often not long enough to stabilise the local community.

A term which is in vogue, since its invented by Jaron Lanier in 1992, is 'Virtual Reality'. And much of this globalisation seems to happen in 'hyper-space'. But to function it also has to have the hardware of people, places and machines. And that's where cities come storming back into the centre of the picture.

*"Cities provide the ground-level, integrated, close-proximity, back-up that international companies and their mobile workers look for: personal services, security, cleaning, child-care, food and entertainment...many of the new businesses and new jobs in cities feed off global activity."* Rogers and Powers p.213

And more than this.

Many of our cities have become the places where there is an extraordinary accumulation and concentration of this new capital, and from which the distribution of commodities and ideas is now organised. So they have become the command and control centres of global capitalism. The nodes that I talked of earlier, nodes that link across the globe to other cities of stature. Some contain the headquarters of the transnational corporations and finance services, and this of course gives those World Cities a distinct social style - offering their high-earning élites unparalleled access to the world's most powerful key players – be they politicians or competitors – and access too to business information – networking all this through corporate entertaining, diplomacy and electronic technology. Telecommunication aids the flow of ideas and finance and allows for the manipulation of the system through a global bureaucracy of banking and currency, insurance, accountancy, advertising, law and corporate drive – and all staffed by a new, often wealthy, meritocracy of middle-class achievers – another big feature of the 'world city'. These cities are still mainly to be found in the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Japan but they are being cloned all around the globe.

Our cities then, are the crucial lynch-pins of the system. And, let me say immediately, that this global capitalism which they serve and which serves them, has proved to be wonderfully creative. It has brought about scientific advance as never before, offering analysis and control of health, housing and social problems – tools unheard of in the past. There has been an explosion in democracy as the global media share that good news across the globe. Global capitalism has lifted millions out of poverty, has spread knowledge, and made decision-making for many much more informed and participative.

One of the very positive things about the ubiquitous urbanization – a consequence of globalisation – is that the size of the modern cities is such that they can sustain a rich variety of sub-cultures, offering the possibility of solidarity for those who otherwise might very well find themselves isolated. This great array of urban sub-cultures produces a rich pluriformity within a locality, at its best issuing in an exciting vibrancy – a kaleidoscope of cultural colour, sounds and tastes. There are many exciting benefits of urban life for those of us who just love our cities.

But, as we all know only too well, this is only one side of the picture. These advantages, as wonderful as they are, are only for the few – it might be a global society, but it's not global benefit. Some therefore argue that the obvious answer is to get everyone within the loop. Bring everyone into the global market so that all may benefit. Others would contend however that the problems are just as evident for those who are very much within the ambit of these global forces, and that what needs to occur is that we should find ways of controlling what we have unleashed – of bending the trends – rather than merely visiting them upon more people and places. Well, let's have a look for ourselves.

On the 11th of July 2000 in Payatas, in the city of Manila, a rubbish dump collapsed in the middle of the night. Homes built on the dump vanished and 218 people perished. In addition to that, 300 more were lost forever under the garbage. Lost under the trash of the global city. The daily plight of the new global urban poor is that they are at the mercy of pollution, over-consumption, the breakdown of urban infrastructure, the lack of tenure rights, exclusion from the benefits of the market, spatial segregation, poor health services and water mismanagement – and above all, sheer poverty. And all this whilst living within sight of flaunted affluence and power.

We might say, that it has nothing to do with 'the urban' or with 'globalisation', but more to do with their lack of development in the Philippines. But if we look at the developed cities of the west we see the same polarisation there. If you are a black man in the Bronx of New York City your life expectancy is lower than if you are a peasant living in Bangladesh. It would seem that the answer is not to bring everyone within the global system, for something is profoundly wrong within the system itself. What are the roots of this dysfunction?

First, I would suggest, the global city tries to rely on the Market for too much, whereas the Market itself has its limitations. It is remarkably good in some respects – better than any other system we have at creating wealth in abundance as I have already noted. But some incomes are too low for market forces to do their job of translating need into effective demand. Internationally, this is especially noticeable in the area of housing – in no country in the world does the market provide adequate housing for those unable to contribute financially to its provision. And indeed, how can it? It's not designed to. Social politics is designed to look after that but not all cities have good local governance. The Hebrew prophets were always quick to point that out.

Second, the market externalises costs to people living elsewhere or to those who will live in the future, and it is not its job to care for the long-term future or social integration. Again that is the job of those who would control the market.

Third, competition is of course necessary for any market to flourish. So if a city is to flourish it must compete with and against other cities by restructuring itself and re-inventing itself repeatedly, so that it appeals to global investors. Some cities are prepared to undergo what amounts to repeated plastic surgery in order to be attractive to investors. To do so, whole communities are bulldozed and displaced. In Europe we call it 'social cleansing.'

Scottswood is a neighbourhood in Newcastle on Tyne, an English city close to the Scottish boarder. And in this post-Fordist era, Newcastle is in trouble. The bottom has fallen out of ship-building – the capital for that has gone to other parts of the world where labour and materials are cheaper. This means that within the Newcastle city limits there now remain great wedges of very poor dilapidated housing, of which Scottswood is one. It may be poor, but through generations there has grown up around the ship-building industry, the sort of

close-knit and supportive community that some would give their back teeth for. But Newcastle needs international capital and to attract that it has to compete. It's doing so very effectively – plastic surgery all along the water front. It's beautiful. Part of the new development cuts right across the heart of Scottswood. The locals thought this was exciting because it put them in line for the investment of the new infrastructure and thoughtful regeneration which were being talked about by the planners. The local church community had played its part in discussions and had raised money to refurbish the church plant so that it could be ready for the New Jerusalem. By chance the local minister heard that a local government meeting was taking place to talk about their local school. Out of the blue they were told that the school building was showing such signs of age that it would have to be demolished – but no plans seemed to be in place for its replacement. What was happening? To cut a long story short, if you take away a community's school, you take the living heart out of a community. Eventually, and only after hard-fought fights, the local people were shown the substantive plans for the area – which indicated that Scottswood was indeed going to be at the heart of the new development but only after the wholesale bulldozing of all the houses and buildings of the community. In their place was to be built the sort of development which would attract an altogether different class of people with new skills, new understandings, life-styles and highly-taxable incomes. The old community of Scottswood, having taken generations to build, was to be demolished at a stroke. Just one example of the 'social cleansing' which is going on all around the world in cities which want to compete for a chance to prosper. Meanwhile, Nick the brilliant church minister who helped build that community, is entering into acute depression as he sees his house and his church building come down with all the rest of his community friends.

You might blame the city governors for their bad management of the situation, but you cannot deny their dilemma. To succeed for their city at large, they have had to shift from being social managers to being the attracters and enablers of enterprise. It has created fragmentation of the highest order all around the world and this because in our system we rely upon competition, and competition means that some win and some lose.

With capital now being so foot-loose, that's why debt has become such an intractable additional symptom of our global village. Jubilee 2000 has taught us all about it and other Non Governmental Organisations are teaching us how debt at the micro level links into debt at the macro level. Pakistan now pays no less than 60% of its annual budget to service its debts. Because of the instability that results, another 25% goes on military expenditure, leaving only 8% to be spent on education and health. Competition has its benefits – undoubted benefits – but if unregulated and un-policed, it can end up in the ultimate competition of war. And this is what we fear most both internationally and at a less extreme but just as frightening at another level, on the streets of our own cities. In the USA, the single largest cause of death for black men is homicide. In our cities people cite crime and violence as the most pressing problem of all. Of course, we can blame the individuals because individuals are bad – but this is worse.

There is a felt lack of security, but more unseen there is the increasingly pressing danger of a lack of fundamental sustainability for our global cities. Surely they cannot go on forever eating our natural resources and pumping out waste, gases and particulate matter as if there were no tomorrow. Because there won't be. Three quarters of the world's commercial resources are consumed in cities (OECD 1995) And the resources are not infinite. They say the oil price will probably destabilise in another ten to twenty years. With global warming we can expect urban smog, an increase in urban water-borne disease and, what some feel even more keenly, the loss of massive amounts of waterside real estate!

Now, why don't we recognise all this more readily? Well, I suspect it's because those who have the power to make real changes for the good are largely shielded from the realities of not only the causes of this malfunction, but even from the symptoms. One of the ways that this is happening is through the creation of what has become known as the 'dual city'.

Even thirty years ago when I worked in Harlem, New York City, I remember being intrigued by the fact that those commuters who took the train from the wealthy white highlands each day to downtown Manhattan could see from the windows of their train some of the realities of Harlem. Yet whenever I related to them that I was encountering drug addiction, gang warfare and violence on the streets of Harlem, they simply did not believe me. They were intelligent and caring, but did not see what their eyes were showing them each commuting day. As Jesus often declaimed, "eyes have they, but they do not see, ears have they but they hear not." It took miracles to get his contemporaries to see.

Today people are so separated one from another in the global city. The really wealthy live in gated citadels, viewing the city 'out there' as a place of control and prestige. Some older parts of the city have been turned into gentrified quarters for the new class of professionals, managers and technicians who do well but serve others. They benefit from the tightly-clustered, professional down-town offices and from 'fun-city', where you can club into the night, and where local historical sites and community identities have been Disneyfied and turned into consumable delights.

The old working-class quarters still have quite a mix of poorer personnel, but some have been turned into 'ethnic enclaves' where those who are most at the mercy of global migration cling to one another for support and cultural identity. Suburbia burgeons, and here in the States new Edge Cities sprout up, that are totally independent of the city centres for their life and commerce. Here in the States too are the new abandoned quarters where reside the permanently unemployed in long-term poverty and exclusion. No longer a reserve army of labour, they are relegated to the unconscious realms of the city.

This is the 'dual city' where people live in their separated quarters, bumping into one another in the daily flows of 'layered' city life, but not in any registered and responsive manner. Whatever that enigmatic word 'community' means, this is not it! Kofi Anan referred to this polarisation, in his Toronto address to the World Bank in 1997, as "Squalor amid Splendour". But he brought a positive shine to the problem by remarking, "*The global dilemma of squalor amid splendour is a creature of human agency, and ... it can be reversed by human agency.*"

So what is there that we can do? How can we major on the Splendour and minimise or even eradicate the Squalor of our global cities? And this, I firmly believe, is where our Christian religion (and other major religions too) and our Christian Theology in particular, can and must play their important part.

I have argued that globalisation is the dynamic amalgam of Technology, Politics and Economics – and that whole dynamic is a cultural phenomenon. There is no technology which does not influence and is not influenced by culture. It is a child of culture and it brings its own culture with it. And the same goes for all three of those motors of globalisation. They are dynamically cultural.

Cities are cultures. Multiple cultures of great diversity, sometimes in mutual hostility, and always in profusion. And a culture has extraordinarily powerful influences upon our sense of identity, our reason for living, and what we do with our lives. That is why a culture not critiqued is the most dangerous thing on earth. And that is why a Godly culture is the most

beautiful society in which to live. Christians call it the Kingdom of God. "Thy Kingdom come – on earth as it is in Heaven." And in case we think Jesus was meaning something whimsical by that, let us remember that he himself was living in a society overwhelmed by the global urbanising Roman Empire.

Jesus travels through the farms of Galilee where the Romans had developed a suffocating agri-business. Here, debt ruled the tenant farmers, and absentee landlords dominated fruit and wine production. (He uses those examples all the time in his teaching) He made his way to the fishing families of the Kinneret, the great Sea of the Galilee, where he found fishermen ready to give up their trade to follow him. Fishing on the open sea had now to contend with the Roman introduction of great salt-packing factories in Magdala. The introduction of this technology allowed the global empire to trade salted fish of the finest quality. It was of benefit to all, except those who now caught the fish at reduced prices, together with the labourers who fled from the vineyards and depleted farms to work in the salt-packing factories of the city.

Jesus himself had been schooled in a Nazareth carpentry and masonry shop. No doubt his family had been attracted to the area when they came from Egypt, because of the availability of work now that Herod was re-constructing the demolished city of Sepphoris. (You may remember that it had been demolished because of an uprising of local Galilean anti-Roman sentiment) Then, when Jesus was just twenty, up the road, work began on the new city of Tiberias – and the only reason for the existence of that city was to divert foreign magnates and traders to the west of the Lake in order further to integrate the Galilee under Herod Antipas into the global trade-structures of the empires.

So Jesus clearly lived in a Galilee where local culture and traditional economic relationships were now being overwhelmed by global forces and foreign development, where all roads led to the city – Rome, the global city *par excellence* whose footprint of influence and trade spanned the world. And Jesus, having earlier benefited from this global empire in the carpenter's workshop, then makes the decision to leave the trade and take local fishermen with him into a new relationship with the powers that be, urging the populace to search for a wellbeing for themselves and society which starts from a premise of a radically different nature. As it says in that pivotal chapter of Luke's gospel, Luke 9:51, "he resolutely turned his face towards [the city of] Jerusalem."

And Jesus comes at the globalised daily experiences of his day by engaging cultural issues at every turn. Sabbath laws, Purity Codes, Taxation structures, Family and Community norms. And he does this by acting locally, but in such a sacramental fashion that his every local act has global significance – indeed this is not just 'acting locally and thinking globally', as the adage has it. For his local particular actions in fact participate in the global – as any Sacrament must. So he was acting and thinking both locally and globally, since the very best actions and thinking operate at both levels simultaneously. And his local/global acts shake the city to its foundations. Jesus weeps for the city of Jerusalem and says, "if only you had recognised today the way to Peace – but in fact it is hidden from your eyes!" (Luke 19:42) They have not critiqued their culture, they are subjected to it. The truth is hidden from their eyes.

I am arrested by the words of Jürgen Moltmann: He writes, "*We are not theologians because we are religious; we are theologians because in the face of this world we miss God. We are crying out for his righteousness and justice and are not prepared to come to terms with mass death on earth.*"

In the face of this world we miss God. But he then goes on to say this:

*"But for me theology also springs from God's love for life – the love for life that we experience in the presence of the life-giving Spirit and that enables us to move beyond our resignation and begin to love life here and now. These are also Christ's two experiences of God: the kingdom of God and the cross, and because of that they are the foundations of Christian theology as well: God's delight and God's pain. It is out of the tension between these two that hope is born for the kingdom in which God is wholly in the world and the world is wholly in God."*

[*'Theology in the Project of the Modern World'*, in *A Passion for God's Reign*, ed Miroslav Volf. Eerdmans 1998]

My plea then, in response to all that I've said about the global city, is that we centre in on a theology of the Kingdom of God – where we sense "God's delight and God's pain" – where we sense that "God is wholly in the world and the world is wholly in God."

Let me sketch out briefly therefore what I mean by this Kingdom Theology – and I know that even the term itself may be a little galling in this brave republic – so maybe you will allow me to use what may be a more accurate translation of Jesus' phrase: 'the Reign of God'.

It starts with awe. Awareness of the overwhelming transcendence of God. And therefore an awareness that we are not transcendent and holy. Being in awe of God gives us something to measure ourselves by – makes us realise that we don't do as well as we'd like to pretend. Repentance. That's the word the bible uses to translate the Greek: *metanoia*. And a better translation of *metanoia* is "new mindedness which results in a complete re-tuning of our lives to another network". It's about thinking out our values again.

Global cities have dominant cultural values. I've just got time to mention three.

First, Commodification.

Because we're largely market driven, things must be given a price. Health, education, infrastructure must be costed. But this culture of commodification begins to dominate our cities so that people get costed too. Costed in or costed out – the dual city, the abandoned city. The dominant city value of commodification gives everyone and everything their price but maybe not their true worth.

Kingdom theology, Reign of God theology, demythologises the Market. In Revelation 13, the mark 666 was placed upon the forehead for only one reason and I quote – it "*made it illegal for anyone to buy or sell anything unless he had been branded with the name of the beast or with its number.*" 666 is about the culture of market-place commodification – the number. The word the New Testament chooses for 'Church', *ecclesia*, was however the word the Greeks used for an assembly in the market-place, the agora, in which the whole community decided upon community issues together. The Church was an alternative non-commodified way of being in the market-place.

Second cultural value: Efficiency as quality.

If you are not efficient, then to the wall you go. Yes, that culture has its place, but not every place surely. But in the global city it's every place. Jesus reminds us, indeed the bible demands of us that we think of quality not merely as efficiency. It speaks of weakness as

strength. Do you know people who cannot recognise their weakness? They're not too good to know. Do you recognise cities that don't recognise their weakness? They're not good to live in. Especially if you prize values which cannot be commodified.

And after efficiency I would mention another dominant value of the global city: 'Information' rather than Wisdom. We have information over-load, but where did Wisdom go? Information makes us think that truth is a statement. Know this, believe that and you've got it. But the Christian Gospel says that truth is not a statement – it's not information – it's a relationship. "I in you and you in me. Just as I am in the Father." In the bible, the word "to know", means loving intimacy, not a load of information, even as helpful as statistics are in their right place. Truth is not a statement, it's a relationship.

First then, theology helps us get our cultural norms right. To re-assess our global urban values. And then repentance makes sure we do something about it.

Reign of God Theology, as well as being about repentance (Mark 1:15) is about being good stewards of Creation. Britain, after giving strong support to the USA in its pursuit of terrorism, was keen to receive support in return, for one its main concerns – ecology. We are such a small island – and so crowded (the third most crowded country in the world) – that we are worried about global warming, gas emissions and all the consequences. We're a very tiny and crowded test-tube. Our newspapers ran headlines about President Bush's new alternative policies to the Kyoto agreement – not all favourable headlines I have to say. All the major USA newspapers had the story hidden away on inside pages. There wasn't even the interest.

The bible demands that we get interested in caring for Creation. It's the only one we've got and it belongs to our children's children. Although it's a world issue, it's essentially a city problem and it's an issue that is the first to be mentioned in the Bible, even if not in the Washington Post.

The bible declares that matter matters to God. That's what Incarnation is about. It's about God getting down-to-earth with us. That's why wealth creation is beautiful – it is part of God's economy. But the New Testament makes abundantly clear that God's economy (the oiko-nomia of God) is underpinned by abundance and extraordinary generosity. It is not an economy predicated on scarcity. Because in reality the basic and good things of life are not scarce. They are only made so by our system which cannot get distribution right even though we have all the technology to do it. Why should people who live in the same city and make the same city go round, get such uneven shares. Here in USA just 1% of your population owns more personal wealth than the bottom 95%. The UK is not much better. We are agreed that global competition has given us great benefits – but when the disparities get so extreme, those who are left out usually decide to rebel. And because our cities are global, the rebellion and terrorism is no longer merely national, but international. There is abundance in God's creation, and wealth creation is beautiful but why at the expense of other people and cultures and at the evident expense of the planet? Christ's body has been scourged enough, and our cities cannot be sustained this way.

Kingdom or Reign of God Theology also delights in Otherness. And our global cities are most certainly places of otherness. You never know what you're going to see next! International migration, born of the three motors of globalisation, brings the Empire back home to the mother land – that's how it is in British cities. And for different historical reasons, intense diversity and otherness is the mark of the modern global city everywhere. I wish we had time to speak at length about ethnicity, about class, about gender and

sexual differences. The city is the place to learn about them all. and the city is the place to see the tensions between them.

But the Gospels teach us that difference in creation is not a design fault. God doesn't despise it, God creates it. Christians believe in a God who is a society of differences. Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Spirit. And that difference is a fact. But so is the absolute Unity of the Godhead, who is three. Diversity and Unity.

Otherness can certainly be found in our global city – but *God* is the ultimate Otherness. Love God and Love your Neighbour – you cannot have one without the other, because the essence of God is three different neighbours. God's Kingdom is cosmopolitan.

Finally, for me the Kingdom or Reign of God is about Structural Righteousness and Structural Sin.

Yes, the city has always left open great opportunities for corruption, violence, and injustice. And the global cities have a lot more power and anonymity to get corrupt about. As the New Testament letter to the Ephesians has it: we must put on "the whole armour of God.. for it is not against human enemies that we have to struggle but against the principalities and the ruling forces who are masters of the darkness in this world." (Ephesians 6:11f) Structural Sin.

Let me offer an interesting example: what we call the 'leaky bucket' syndrome. A poor area is visited by regeneration. Countless millions are poured into the locality – new buildings, refurbishment, new schools, new shops. It looks just fine – a lot of benefit has been poured into the bucket. If you then undertake an intensive analysis of just who has benefited, you find that most of the money has gone to consultants, builders, designers, teachers, welfare organisations, and shop-keepers who have taken their winnings away from the community to where they themselves live and shop, and they've spent it there. The community's actual benefit is only a minuscule proportion of the resources that on the surface have been ploughed into the locality. The 'leaky bucket' syndrome. Or structural sin.

Yes, and there's violence and crime too. And so structured is it that when a local kid on the city street engages in small-time drug dealing, or when we see the prostitute in the doorway or hear the micro-arms of the street gang or get worried about the paedophile – we are not just observing a local reality, but in each case, just the tip of the iceberg which is international, globalised urban crime and corruption in the city. To be engaged with a drop-in shop front ministry is to be face to face with global forces.

This is the theology of 'crucifixion' – God in the bad place. The sheer vulnerability of urban living. The dis-location of the body on the cross is the beauty of the treasured place now turned to the obscenity of the coerced space. The fragmentation of community, crying out for redemption. Redemption Song.

But the Kingdom of God is also the promise of a New redeemed Jerusalem. There is Structural Sin, crucifixion, God's pain in the city, but there is also Resurrection, the Reign of God in the city, Structural Righteousness. For whereas Liberation Theology made a big play of the Exodus story, Jesus does not actually major on Exodus and escape, but rather he enacts 'engagement with the forces of slavery'. He doesn't run away to find the pure place – as many of our up and coming urban Churches seek to do – but Jesus looks the city in the face and engages with it in Righteousness. That's our task. Religion can be used as a

defensive barrage against the presence of God, but Jesus attacks that abuse of religion and draws us to see that true religion is not fanatical antagonistic purism, but critical engagement and determined, alternative community life-style.

And that Kingdom life-style begins with Praise – Praising Open the City. Worship and Praise points us to the transcendent in the midst – even of the harsh city – and ‘praises open’ the situation and lets the light in. If you don’t have the dream, don’t bother coming down from the mountaintop. You won’t be much use to us here on the plane – at sidewalk level. Prayer, praise and worship are fundamental to getting the global city right.

The mountain-top of praise gives us the Kingdom Vision. A vision of affordable housing, accessible services, environmental sustainability, local democratic governance, the embracing of our differences, shared abundance, the honouring of the transcendent. You’ve got to have the Kingdom Vision for the city.

And it’s got to be an inclusive vision for the city – made from the spirit-inspired insights of all its people. Fragments gathered from the excluded and alienated as well as from the beneficiaries of the city. Fragments gathered – just as the remaining fragments were gathered into twelve baskets after the miracle of the loaves and fishes – the miracle of sharing and abundance for all. These fragments form a new tapestry of truth – the Kingdom truth – the new shared value-base of the global city. A new way of being Catholic. A city for the many not just for the few.

With that lens, we will better understand our global cities – and that is the first step to their redemption. To understand them.

We will understand that cities are no longer primarily places – they are processes of relationship and interaction. Nodal point of global powers – boulevards and ally-ways of cultural difference, celebration and conflict.

We will understand that cities are processes but also spatially dynamic, moving and quartering, fracturing, uniting and isolating.

We will understand that our global cities are market-based competitors which consume people and resources, and which are now spatially distanced from their footprint – the area they impact upon and upon which they rely.

They are engines of growth and agents of change.

We will understand that cities are where the majority of human beings in today’s world find their identity, their culture and their destiny.

With this more mature, gathered, understanding and with our Kingdom vision to guide, we will move into debate and action.

Remembering that democratic governments are the only legitimate brokers between the many stakeholders – the many fragments – we must engage politically. Political vigilance is a theological must. We must put back the link between the market, and the politics of social care. . In this way we must help to establish a political will. For it is only the will that is stopping us. Economically it’s not beyond us.

We must learn to deal socially with migration. And in this, Europe has a lot to learn from the States.

We must enhance the integrity and strength of the Civil Society. 'Capacity Building' is the phrase – building up the ability and the capacity of communities to care, to govern, to share, to create wealth. 'Capacity building' is the new phrase, but the Holy Spirit has been doing it for centuries.

As Jesus did, we must enact, locally and regionally, parables of the Kingdom. Projects, long-term programmes, structures, relationships, which speak loudly of the new catholicity of the fragments

Jesus rode into the city on a donkey and turned the city's values on their head. Jesus sat and ate with those who collected Rome's taxes. Jesus became one of the city's poor and marginalised.

It's a Kingdom way of life which is not just a concept but swallows up all our actions and our lives. That God's will may be done on earth as it is in heaven, and that will mean sacrifice – but whenever did love cost nothing?

The letter to the Hebrews, Chapter 13, verse 13.

*"Let us go outside the camp, and bear his humiliation. There is no permanent city for us here; we are looking for the one which is yet to be. Through him, let us offer God an unending sacrifice of praise, .... Keep doing good works and sharing your resources, for these are the kinds of sacrifice that please God."*

Well, 'Amen' to that.

*Bishop Laurie Green*