‘Seek The Welfare Of The City Where I Place You Into Exile’

Towards A Transformative Strategy For The Church’s Engagement With Urban Development

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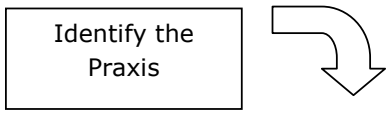

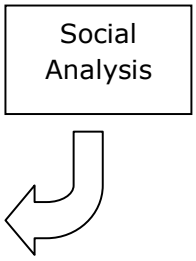

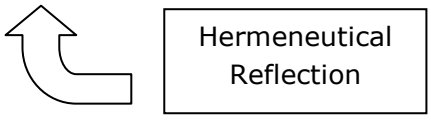

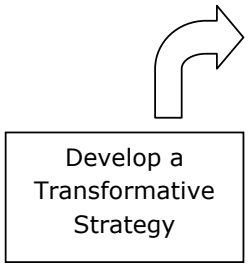

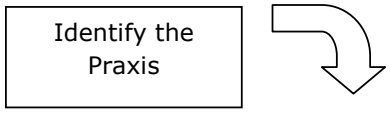

Abstract

As a former urban development manager and now a minister in the Church of England, I offer this thesis as a theological reflection on the church's engagement in the urban development process. By bringing together an understanding of urban policy with a hermeneutical reflection, a missional rationale is offered to the church in the context of urban change.

The Pastoral Cycle model of learning is used based on five key stages:

First, through immersion in the experience of the church's interaction with London's Thames Gateway project, three core themes are identified: promoting human flourishing, mediating tension and representing hope.

Second, an understanding of these three core themes is explored in a social analysis of urban development policy and the Church of England's engagement with urban development in the past.

Third, a Biblical hermeneutic is offered based on Jeremiah. 29v7 where God calls on his people 'to seek the *shalom* of the city where I place you into exile.' Links are made with the three core themes, as the community of God are called: to seek not only human flourishing but *shalom*; to mediate the tensions of a city that is not their own; and to represent God's hope in the midst of change.

Fourth, the core themes are developed into a transformative strategy based on partnership with others to promote *shalom*, helping foster civil society by mediating tension and creating social justice, and representing God's hope for their future. Three agents of transformation who deliver this strategy are then identified: the workplace chaplain, the church based community worker and the parish priest.

Finally, in a return to praxis, the transformative strategy is re-evaluated based on the learning experiences of these agents of change in Longbridge, Birmingham. This leads to a call for a collaborative approach to church engagement.

Lessons learned here will help the church engage better with the urban development agenda. As a result, the church's agents of change are better able to work closer together to promote shalom, mediate tension and represent hope.

KEY WORDS

Urban development
Church engagement
Promoting shalom
Mediating tension
Representing hope
Workplace chaplain
Church based community development worker
Parish priest

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PART ONE: Identifying the Praxis

Chapter One: An Introduction

Cities are in a constant state of flux with new building programmes commonplace. The late 20th Century and early 21st Century have witnessed a particularly intense time of change with an increasingly globalised and urbanised world. These motors of change in the global economy and in the nature of society have led to demand for new housing developments often amidst existing urban areas. Populated either by waves of inward migration, or upwardly mobile professionals in newly gentrified neighbourhoods, these new urban neighbourhoods have become social melting pots in what Sandercock calls Cosmopolis.[1] To live in such a city can generate great excitement and vitality but it is also a place of uncertainty where one is often disorientated by change, as familiar landmarks are destroyed and social relationships become strained. Yet amongst this dislocation and unease; property developers, public officials and politicians dream of creating a greater sense of community and economic well being.

Those involved in shaping urban development come from a range of professions including planning, urban design and architecture. It has also drawn researchers in political science, sociology, community psychology and geography. The author himself has engaged directly in this process. Being a former urban development manager, he was trained in history, geography, town planning and then worked in urban development areas for ten years from 1993 to 2003 prior to ordination as a minister in the Church of England.

Drawing on this experience, the author has noted how the church has tended to focus on helping people out of poverty but has been less engaged in planning and shaping new development. Yet, as Archbishop Desmond Tutu once said, 'Christians shouldn't just be pulling people out of the river. We should be going upstream to find out who's pushing them in.'[2] It is this thesis' contention that the church therefore needs to play a greater role in shaping urban areas at the planning and development stage - helping to form places where humans flourish, tensions are addressed and people can live in hope for the future.

However, 'if the church is to be invited into new partnerships and patterns of engagement … this needs to be underpinned by church's resources and theological thinking.'[3p.2] This thesis offers such theological thinking by seeking a means for the church to respond positively to the challenges presented by the changing urban environment and generating what Freire calls a critical awareness that 'questions

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[1] SANDERCOCK, L. *Towards Cosmopolis.* Chichester: John Riley & Sons, 1998.
[2] Cited by SCHWEIGERT, C *A Journey Up River* [Online] Human Needs and Global Resources Symposium 2012. Available at http://www.wheaton.edu [20th October 2012]
[3] URBAN BISHOPS' PANEL. *The Urban Renaissance and the Church Of England.* London: General Synod Of Church Of England, 2002.

fundamental ideas and situations ... to fully perceive, interpret and criticise them, before finally transforming the world around them.'[4p.25]

This critical learning is the basis of practical theology which seeks to enable the church and its community to ask what are the forces that are shaping 'its context on the one hand, and on the other have a better understanding of the biblical faith and Christian tradition.'[5p.1] This is therefore a practical theology thesis, as it offers the church tools to reflect on the factors affecting urban development.

As a result of this learning, it is hoped that the church can be better equipped to 'enter into alliances with others who share their interests so that they can not only be shaped by the urban development process but can also begin to shape it themselves.'[6p.12]

a) The Challenge For The Church In Urban Development Areas

At this stage, it is important to clarify what one means by urban development. Davey[7p.16] notes that this can be more problematic than it seems, for different countries have different definitions of urban. In the UK context, Lord Rogers offered the following definition of 'an urban area ... as an area with land use that is irreversibly urban in character. Pre-requisites for inclusion of settlements are continuous areas of land extending to 20 hectares or more with a minimum population of 1,000 persons.'[8p.16] While the Urban White Paper published in 2000[9p.15] defined urban as any settlement over 10,000 people. These are very statistical definitions of urban and it may also be appropriate to identify areas as urban if they share a similar value and lifestyle. Often such cultural values emerge from the economic activity in urban areas that tends not to be dependent on agriculture or the extractive industry (such as mining) but rather on manufacturing or the service sector.

If this is a definition of urban, what is meant by development? This also is a word with a wide range of meanings. Here it is used as the technical term for the process of building on or preparing for building, on land. This process of change can range from building an extension to a house to creating a new town. When any development takes place on an individual site, there are often conflicting views as to the merits and shortcomings of any planned scheme which can cause local contention. This is why development is regulated by through the Development Plan and the Development Control functions in the land use planning departments of the Local Planning Authority.

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[4] MAYO, M. *Imagining Tomorrow.* Leicester: NIACE, 1997.
[5] BILLING, A. *Thinking Theologically About The City.* Oxford: Oxford Institute For Church And Society, 1985.
[6] DAVEY, A. *Urban Christianity And Global Order.* London: SPCK, 2001.
[7] *Ibid*
[8] ROGERS, R. cited in *Ibid*
[9] DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT AND REGIONS. *Our Towns And Cities: The Future.* London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

Having clarified the definitions of urban and development, what does urban development mean? It refers to any process whereby an urban area grows. This could be through urbanisation that is 'the movement of people in search of social and economic well being.'[10p.420] More specifically it refers to the process of urban change whereby either green fields or former industrial land (known as brown field sites) are built upon. This can be instigated by private developers or by the public sector in a deliberate act to stimulate development in an area.

Such public sector stimulus has been given different names at many different time periods including renewal, regeneration and renaissance. These terms all imply a restoration of something that was lost, a repair of a damaged or broken place or community.[11p.420] Major public funding, both capital and revenue, has been poured into development areas including offering new opportunities for training and education, economic development, community safety, housing, environmental enhancements, health care and transport facilities. Each of the different facets has been popular at different times under successive governments but the 'regeneration process is incorrigibly diverse and intertwined linking change to places, communities and individuals.'[12p.1]

Urban development therefore involves many different actors from the public sector and private businesses as well as local people. Each have their own aspirations and hopes within the new development. As Lovell puts it,

> Men have always worked and sacrificed for and attempted to make the ideal out of the actual. Prophets, reformers, politicians, social workers, planners, and architects have all used different approaches as they seek to improve and perfect an area; motivated by their vision of utopia, their compassion for people and their desire for a better world.[13p.1(sic)]

The church therefore also has a role in urban development areas. Past responses have included: a desire to address the causes of urban poverty, a perceived need to build new churches in the new urban development areas and a desire to live among the poor and offer signs of hope.

This thesis asks both the church and the urban development professionals some fundamental questions: What are the ideologies and policy solutions posited by those engaged in urban development? What is the church's response? And where is God in this context?

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[10] DAVEY, A. 'Urban Mission.' In ED. CORRIE, J *Dictionary Of Mission Theology.* Nottingham: IVP, 2007. pp.419-422

[11] FURBEY, R. 'Urban Regeneration: Reflections On A Metaphor.' In: *Critical Social Policy* 19:4, 1999. pp419-445

[12] TORRY, M. Introduction. In ED. TORRY, M. *Regeneration And Renewal.* Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2007. pp1-8

[13] LOVELL, G. *The Church And Community Development.* London: Avec 1981.

Through meetings with practitioners working in such areas and theological reflection on God's nature and his call, this thesis proposes an emergent integrated strategy for the church's engagement in urban development areas.

b) A Transformative Strategy Based On Jeremiah 29

This thesis does not argue that the church needs 'to have a social strategy rather that the church is God's social strategy.'[14p.43] It is called to seek God's heart and work towards transformation in urban development areas.

This insight is drawn from an analysis of the underlying ideologies and processes that underpin urban development and its interaction with the work of the church. This is then reflected upon through the lens of the Christian tradition and Biblical revelation. In particular, a theological reflection is offered on the experience of the Jewish exilic community in Babylon in the 6th Century BC. For in this period, the Jewish people faced a similar period of profound change and uncertainty to that created by urban development. For all that was familiar to the Jews had been destroyed, their socio-political understanding undermined and their faith in God shaken.

How does God respond to the exiles' sense of dislocation? Through the words of Jeremiah, he sends them a letter which is recorded in Jeremiah 29. In this letter God calls on his people to: 'Seek the shalom of the city where I place you into exile.' The community of God is given: a new task to seek welfare, flourishing and well being; a new commission to mediate tensions in a city that is not its own; under girded by a promise of hope that God is with them - that they are part of something bigger than the chasm of despair they have fallen down.

This threefold call forms the basis for an emergent transformative strategy for the church in urban development areas. This strategy is based on forming a partnership to promote shalom, fostering civil society through mediating tension and representing hope for those affected by urban dislocation.

Who then are the agents of transformation in delivering this strategy? They include workplace chaplains who have sought to work with the developers and planners to promote what human flourishing. The church based community development workers who have brokered change in their neighbourhoods. Finally, the parish priests who offer hope, through pastoral engagement to the community in the midst of change, while seeking to represent their needs and aspirations to the developer or planning authority.

The challenge has been to seek integration between these three different approaches. For it is as one recognises that these three different approaches are gathered together

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[14] HAUERWAS, S and WILLIMON, W. *Resident Aliens.* Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989

in Jeremiah's one command, we see the beginning of an integrated approach. This collaborative approach mirrors the work of the Holy Trinity and offers a role to the church.

This thesis argues that bringing these strands together 'enables the community of faith to give a critical and public account of its purposeful presence in the world and the values that give shape to its actions.'[15p.195]

c) Structure Of The Thesis

The following chapter outlines in detail the methodology that has led to transformative strategy for the church's engagement with urban development. In summary, the thesis is based on five distinct stages of theological reflection: First, through meetings with ministers seeking to engage with urban development, the existing praxis of the church in urban development areas is identified. Second, a social analysis is made of the ideologies and policy directions underlying the urban development process and the church's engagement in the past. Third, a hermeneutical exploration is offered to strengthen the church's theological and missiological rationale for engagement with urban development. Fourth, a new transformative strategy for the church's engagement is developed and tested against the church's response to urban policy in the first decade of the 21st century. Finally, in a return to praxis and another series of meetings with practitioners, the strategy is refined by those in practice.

[15] GRAHAM, E, WATSON, H & WARD,F *Theological Reflection: Methods.* London: SCM Press, 2005.

Chapter Two: Outlining The Methodology

a) Anchored In Practice Of Practical Theology

This thesis is concerned with the interaction between theory and practice, between theology and urban development, so that the people of God may be better equipped to engage with the world around them. Given it is pertaining to enhancing the practice of church and its ministry it is a thesis anchored in the discipline of Practical Theology.

The study of practical Theology 'as a recognized discipline, is a relatively new phenomenon.'[1p.18] As recently as the 1980s, there were doubts as to whether practical theology actually constituted an academic discipline. It is appropriate therefore to offer a brief historical overview.

The father of practical theology is often cited as Schleiermacher[2] who was the first theologian to explore the movement from historical theology to its application in practice. His approach has been summarised as applied theology in which concepts are developed and then their 'authenticity and validity of theological discourse assessed by its outworking.'[3] This 19th Century practical theology was largely concerned with morals and polity; it then moved on to be primarily focused on pastoral practice and much of its work focused on reflecting upon the models of pastoral care.

In the 1950s and 1960s, however, scholars began to challenge the way practical theology was restricted to the application of doctrine to pastoral situations. 'Influential and diverse scholars in philosophy and political theory such as Habermas, Geertz, Macintrye and Ricoeur turned to practical theology with new interest.'[4p.2] These scholars re-constructed Practical Theology as the study of engagement between theory and practice brought together in critical reflection. They encouraged ... the academically orientated to venture some practical life application of the knowledge they have gained; and urged the practically minded to draw more widely on the resources of the academic disciplines in reflecting on the meaning of concrete human involvement. [5p.xvi]

This approach was based on building a community of learning. An idea promoted by the Brazilian educator and social activist Paulo Freire who argued that education should 'not be about explaining how the world worked but rather a dialogue with

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[1] CAMERON, H BHATTI, D DUCE,C SWEENEY, J AND WATKINS, C *Talking About God In Practice: Theological Action Research And Practical Theology.* London: SCM Press, 2010.
[2] SCHLEIERMACHER, F. *The Christian Faith.* London: T&T Clark, 1830.
[3] PRYCE, M. *Researching Poetry In Practical Theology* Paper delivered at the Bishop's Round Table Theology Group, Birmingham: 1st February 2010.
[4] MILLER-MCLEMORE, B The Contribution Of Practical Theology. IN*:* ED MILLER-MCLEMORE, B *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion To Practical Theology.* Chichester, Wiley-Blackwell, 2012, pp1-20.
[5] OGLETREE cited by MUDGE, L and POLING, J. *Formation And Reflection.* Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987.

people about their actions.'[6p.35] Such an approach is not about teachers imparting knowledge to their students but a more mutual approach whereby 'the teachers and students together engage in critical thinking and a quest for mutual humanization.'[7p.56] This means teachers no longer solely teach but learn themselves, through the experience of dialogue. Freire's thinking has influenced the postmodern understanding of education. For postmodernism 'points to the importance of community in perceiving reality and … in the postmodern paradigm, the relation of theory to practice is no longer linear but interactive – theory and practice inform and influence each other.'[8pp.20-21]

Such an approach to education has influenced theological education where there is now an emphasis on forming reflective practitioners. Practical Theology has been at the vanguard of this process equipping its students with skills that are 'reflective, intuitive and synthetic … always contextual and contingent on a particular situation, where action and reflection are intertwined.'[9p.4] This acceptance of Practical Theology's contribution in education institutions over the last three decades has calmed doubts about the veracity of Practical Theology and its acceptability as a research discipline. So Pattison is able to argue with little opposition that 'any issue of practical contemporary human or religious concern may become a focus for practical theological considerations.'[10p.8]

In this respect, this thesis is fundamentally a work of Practical Theology for it brings together the ideas of urban development into dialogue with the principles of theology. 'It is concerned with practice and it is an academic discipline; it seeks to serve both the mission of the church and the needs of the world; it touches that which is most personal and engages with that which is most public.'[11p.158]

b) Theological Reflection And The Turn To Praxis

Having stated that this thesis is concerned with the interface between theory and practice, it is important to understand the process of theological reflection for this is the primary task of a reflective practitioner. Theological reflection is defined as the means by which 'people of faith give an account of their choices and convictions ... to enable a connection between human dilemmas and divine horizons to be explored by drawing on a wide range of academic disciplines.'[12p.5-6]

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[6] FREIRE, P. *Pedagogy Of The Oppressed.* 2nd Ed. London: Penguin, 1996.
[7] *Ibid.*
[8] ANDERSON, R. *The Shape Of Practical Theology.* Downers Green: IVP, 2001.
[9] GRAHAM, E ET AL. 2005. *Op. Cit.*
[10] PATTISON, S AND WOODWARD, J An Introduction To Pastoral And Practical Theology. IN: ED. WOODWARD, J AND PATTISON, S *The Blackwell Reader In Pastoral And Practical Theology*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000.
[11] LYALL, D. So What Is Practical Theology? *Practical Theology,* 2009 *2(2),* p157-9.
[12] GRAHAM, E ET AL. 2005. Op. Cit.

A wide range of methods, techniques and strategies have been developed to assist with theological reflection and cement the 'construction of our understanding of the relationship between theory and practice in our theological work and the distinctiveness and connections between the theoretical positions and practical knowledge that figure in that relation.'[13p.xvii]

Following the groundbreaking work of Tillich[14] correlation emerged as the most popular approach to relate doctrine and modern life. This led to a number of correlation based models. The most significant in recent times being Browning's revised critical correlation approach[15p.47] where a contemporary context is first described and then a similar context uncovered in scripture and finally a fusion is made between the two horizons. It is hoped that a reasoned reflection on this application can offer transformation of the contemporary context. There are some dangers associated with the correlation based approach in that there often is a low understanding of the full meaning and context of a situation and a high awareness of the biblical text. This means that there is 'a movement from a disciplined interpretation of an authoritative past to a casual and impressionistic grasp of the present.'[16p.10]

If correlation models are biased towards an application of theory to practice, an alternative methodology is that based on praxis. This suggests that it is in 'the performing of tasks that meaning is discovered ... and that truth is not something to be applied but to be discovered.'[17p47,49] So praxis based methodology starts with practical engagement and the theology arises from a critical reflection on that reality, in the light of our understanding of the scripture.

The essence of this understanding returns to the idea of Freire who affirmed that human beings are essentially beings of praxis, in that all humanity seeks to objectify and understand the world. For unlike animals, 'whose primal urge is to adapt to the world ... [humanity] is always looking for a means to humanise, to transform the world.'[18p21] This reinforced his pedagogy for he believed all 'human activity consists of action and reflection and this is praxis - it is seeking the transformation of the world.'[19p106]

c) The Influence Of Liberation Theology

This approach to theological learning and study is in direct contrast to traditional academic approaches to theology, for it suggests all humanity has the capacity to engage in theological thought and offer insight and even assistance to

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[13] OGLETREE cited by MUDGE, L and POLING, J. 1987. *Op. Cit.*
[14] TILLICH, R. *Systematic Theology Volume 1.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973
[15] BROWNING, D. *A Fundamental Practical Theology.* 2nd Ed. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1991.
[16] FURLEY, E. *Interpreting Situations*. In: MUDGE, L & POLING, J. 1987. *Op. Cit. pp1-26*
[17] ANDERSON, R 2001. *Op. Cit.*
[18] FREIRE, P. *Critical Action For Freedom.* London: Penguin, 1972.
[19] FREIRE, P. 1996. *Op. Cit.*

God's transformative work in the world. It is also contrary to the traditional missionary model, which suggests that Christians have a monopoly on truth and it was their task to share this truth with the world. As Kirk argues,

> Western theology is ill equipped to sustain the consideration of the ways in which the Christian Gospel should interact with concrete social, political and economic realities ... it has not learnt how to engage hermeneutically with relationships between the revealed faith and the network of opinions and structures and patterns of life that make up our society.[20p15]

One place where Freire's new pedagogy has been explored in practice is in Latin America, where missionaries established new communities of learning – the base ecclesial communities. These communities became the birthplace of Liberation Theology where 'the function of theology as critical reflection on praxis became clearly defined.'[21p.6] Learning from their experiences, Liberation Theology has shaped practical theology in two ways:

First, as these pastors came alongside the poor in their joint reflection on their struggle for justice, they discovered that they had strong connections with 'a faith that transforms history.'[22p14] This led to a distinctively practical edge to their theological reflection – for though it began with reflection on their actions, it ultimately ended in a clear plan of action. Liberation Theologians hence became characterised by their 'concern with human well being and an understanding of the church's mission which included practical measures for human betterment whilst embracing the theologians as co-workers.'[23p.xiii]

The second distinctive dimension to Liberation Theology is the way it has readily embraced the tools of social theory and social analysis to help them explore God's revelation to humanity today.

As Segundo argues,

> The fundamental difference between traditional academic theologians and Liberation Theology is that the latter approach feel compelled at every step to combine the disciplines that open up the past with the disciplines that help explain the present.[24p.8]

This is why this thesis has drawn heavily on sociology, planning, philosophy and political theory alongside biblical and doctrinal sources. For through theological reflection on these disciplines it is possible 'to enact such a conversation that entails speaking both for the Bible and for the contemporary situation, listening to both and allowing them to challenge one another.'[25p.75]

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[20] KIRK, A. A Different Task: Liberation Theology and Local Theologies. In Ed. HARVEY, A *Theology In The City*. London: SPCK, 1989. pp15-31
[21] GUTIERREZ, G. *A Theology Of Liberation.* London: SCM, 1974.
[22] BOFF, L AND BOFF, C. *Introducing Liberation Theology*. London: Burns and Oates,1987
[23] ROWLAND, C. *The Cambridge Companion To Liberation Theology.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
[24] SEGUNDO, J. *Liberation Of Theology.* Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1975.
[25] DUFFIELD, I From Bible To Ministry Projects. In: ED ROWLAND, C AND VINCENT, J *Bible And Practice.* Sheffield: Urban Theology Unit, 2001, pp.68-76.

Liberation Theology has therefore fundamentally changed the approach to Practical Theology. Its focus on how theology is developed in community from below, rather than through transmission of ideas imposed from above, has had ramifications well beyond the base ecclesial communities. Theological reflection has become focused on exploring the 'dilemmas and questions generated from practice so that theology is about practical problem-solving that illuminates and empowers every member of the church.'[26p.5]

d) The Research Method

This empowering of every member of the church was central to the choice of the research method for this thesis. It was considered essential to explore the views of church leaders and regeneration practitioners who were seeking to understand how the church could best engage with urban development. This is why this thesis begins and ends with a period of extended interaction between the author and groups involved in shaping the church's engagement with urban development areas.

In seeking to understand the views of these groups, the traditional case study method based on 'learning from a concrete slice of reality and human experience ... utilizing a structured outline of subjects and questions'[27p.91] was not pursued. This rejection was based on two counts: First, the amount of time required to generate a large enough dataset to enable experience significant learning and avoid a partial or simplified account of any situation; and second the 'difficulty of generalizing from one case to another.'[28p.99]

An alternative method based on ethnography was therefore explored. This would enable the author to focus on the connections between 'theology and practice historically in a particular setting and situation' [29p.224] that was in some manner emblematic of urban development. This method involves immersing oneself in a particular group in order to gain understanding of the social and theological motivations behind the approaches adopted by each group in their engagement with their urban development context.

There are however, problems associated with ethnographic research in that the researcher cannot deny one's own knowledge of a situation based on one's own education, socio-economic status and experience. Taken together these act as filters on one's research and it means that it 'can be all too easy to manipulate the stories

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[26] GRAHAM, E ET AL. 2005. Op. Cit.
[27] SCHIPANI, D. Case Study Method. IN*:* ED MILLER-MCLEMORE, B *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion To Practical Theology.* Chichester, Wiley-Blackwell, 2012, pp.91-101.
[28] *Ibid*.
[29] CLARK MOSCHELLA, M. Ethnography. IN*:* ED MILLER-MCLEMORE, B *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion To Practical Theology.* Chichester, Wiley-Blackwell, 2012, pp224-233

and insights so that they fit the researcher's predetermined frames and violate the privacy and integrity of others.'[30]

This is particularly the case when one begins to combine ethnographic research with elements of autobiographical data in both explicit and implicit ways to create what is known as auto-ethnography. A strong sense of objectivity is therefore required to 'analyse the setting and researcher's personal reflections as an outsider and what prism that they are looking through.'[31p.216] This reflexive questioning forces the researcher not only to examine the grounds upon which they claim to know their subject but also to recognise the limitations of their knowledge.

The problem with this ethnographic method is that it results in a 'tension developing between an ethic of responsibility for the production of accurate accounts and the ethic of conviction that motivates us to do so in the first place.'[32p.19] For one of the purposes of this research, identified in the introductory chapter, was that it should not only provide a means for practitioners to reflect upon their actions but also help them find a means of transformation in their context.

An alternative methodology was therefore finally adopted, that of participatory action research. This is participatory in that it recognises the value of including practitioners, community members and active citizens. It is action based as it is intended that the research contribute directly to change efforts of the participants. Finally, it is an accepted means of research as it is seeking to add to the collective knowledge.[33p.324]

The main focus of this research method is its emphasis on enabling both the researcher and the case study participants to together find theological meaning in the urban development context. The participatory action research method 'demands that researchers adopt a variety of roles: organiser, catalyst, educator, facilitator and participant so that there is no conflict in roles and tasks'[34p.240] between those seeking to understand their praxis and the role of the church in their context.

This means that the 'insider knowledge' of the researcher is no longer considered something to be distrusted as something that risks distorting the understanding of the research subject.[35] Rather it is something to be celebrated as it adds to the collaborative nature of the research method for it helps the researcher and

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[30] SCHAREN, C AND VIGEN, A. Theological Justifications For Turning To Ethnography *IN:* ED. SCHAREN, C AND VIGEN, A. *Ethnography As Christian Theology And Ethics.* London: Continuum, 2011, pp58-76

[31] HESSE-BIBER,S AND LEAVY, P. *The Practice Of Qualitative Research*. London: Sage, 2011

[32] MAY,T WITH PERRY,B. *Social Research And Reflectivity.* London: Sage, 2011.

[33] CONDE-FRAZIER, E Participatory Action Research: Practical Theology For Social Justice. IN: *Religious Education* 101 (3), 2006. pp321-329

[34] CONDE-FRAZIER, E. Participatory Action Research. IN*:* ED MILLER-MCLEMORE, B *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion To Practical Theology.* Chichester, Wiley-Blackwell, 2012, pp234-243

[35] GREENWOOD, D AND LEVIN, M. *Introduction To Action Research.* Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2007

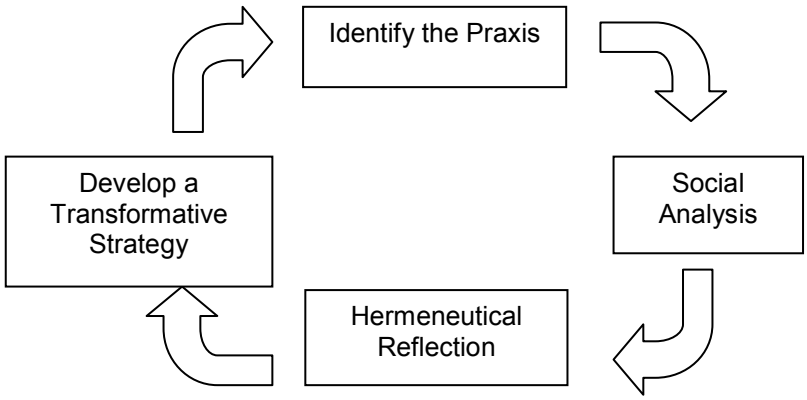
practitioners to 'defend the conclusions they reach so they can make desired changes to their practice or the meaning they attach to those practices.'[36]

There are potential weaknesses in choosing this research method. The first being that it is once again highly contextually specific; hence, as noted above, the choice of a particular setting must in some way be emblematic of the urban development in general. The second danger is the continued problem of reflexivity where the beliefs and values underpinning the actions of the researcher can disrupt power relations with the agencies being researched – hence as part of the reporting of the fieldwork, the author has included a reflection on his own role within the discussions.

e) The Model Of Theological Reflection

The participatory action-reflection method is designed to assist reflective practitioners in their quest to 'discover God, the kingdom, the expression of faith within the experience as opposed to a pre-determined theology.'[37p.36] However, there has been no universal agreement on the best action-reflection model. In part, this is because each reflection must by definition take place within its own context with its own set of practitioners. Having said this, one model that has gained much currency is the Pastoral Cycle of 'action and reflection that reinforcing an understanding that social change is an integral part of Christ's mission for his church.'[38p.171] Yet even the Pastoral Cycle model has many different forms.

Figure 2.1 The Pastoral Cycle



Source: HOLLAND, J and HENRIOT, P. *Social Analysis: Linking Faith & Justice* Maryknoll: Orbis, 1990.

The approach adopted in this thesis is that posited by Holland and Henriot (Figure 2.1). This involves four distinct stages which form the structure of this thesis:

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[36] CAMERON, H BHATTI, D DUCE,C SWEENEY, J AND WATKINS, C. *Op. Cit.*
[37] NASH, S AND NASH, P. *Tools For Reflective Ministry.* London: SPCK, 2009.
[38] GRAHAM, E ET AL. 2005. Op. Cit.

First, it identifies the key overarching themes. These are identified in praxis in that 'it does not start with words (those of the Bible) and end in words (in theological formulations) but stems from actions and struggles to work out theoretical structures to throw light on these actions.'[39p.23]

As noted above, the praxis for this thesis begins with an extended interaction with representatives of the church seeking to be involved in urban development.

In terms of reflexivity, it is important to recognise the role the author played in these discussions. It was similar to the one which the pastors engaged in the base ecclesial communities where as Gutierrez identified 'the theologian does not work in some kind of ahistorical limbo. His or her reflection has a milieu, starts out from material bases and addresses a precise location.'[40p.212] In this context it is best to see the researcher play the role of what Gramsci calls an organic intellectual[41] who not only observes the situation but also enables the group to seek to understand the issues they are experiencing.

The second stage of the cycle is social analysis. This involves linking the themes identified in praxis with a fuller understanding of the urban development process and its implementation in urban policy. This involves a detailed analysis of the ideologies that underlie urban development theory. This is why it is important to give due attention and respect to the understandings of other academic disciplines especially sociology and urban planning whilst remaining critical of their underlying assumptions. At the same time, the social analysis stage reviews not only the urban development process but also the specific interaction and responses of the Church of England with urban policy. So by fully appreciating the role of the church in the past, one can be better informed to offer insights into the present.

The third stage in the cycle is what Moltmann calls a political hermeneutic[42p.107] designed to mediate between the themes uncovered in the socio-economic context and the historic sources of the Christian faith. Liberation Theologians have drawn on many of the great themes of the Biblical tradition to make connections between the biblical text and their contemporary situations. In particular they have drawn on the Exodus story and the books of the prophets. This thesis draws on the exile motif and the instruction given in Jer. 29:7 'to seek the welfare of the city where I place you into exile.' The tools of the hermeneutical mediation will be explored in depth in chapter 7 at the beginning of this stage; but in summary, hermeneutics offers a series of steps focused on application. 'It seeks to discover the transforming energy of the biblical text, then to place the text in its historical context, in order to construct a translation to

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[39] BOFF, L and BOFF, C. 1987. Op. Cit.
[40] GUTIERREZ, G. *The Power Of The Poor In History*. London: SCM Press, 1979.
[41] KELLY, J. *Parish Priests As Organic Intellectuals: Reflections From Gramsci On Ministerial Identity And Function* Paper presented to a research seminar at St John's College, Nottingham: 20th June 2005.
[42] MOLTMANN, J. *On Human Dignity.* London: SCM Press, 1984.

our own context.'[43p.34] Though this model is about making connections between historical events and the contemporary context it is not mere correlation. For the eschatological dimension to the Christian faith leads to the belief that God is also in charge of the future. This shifts the focus of the hermeneutic to one based on action and even transformation. For, God calls on his church 'not to stop at reflecting on the world but rather try to be part of the process through which the world is transformed.'[44p.107]

This leads to the fourth stage of the cycle where the themes that have evolved through theological refection begin to be formulated into a transformative strategy. Such a process needs to be anchored in the 'concrete decisions of life through a critical and transformative reflection on actual activity; making the connection between theory and praxis.'[45pp.140-141] So a particular time period is chosen (from 1997-2010) to explore how the themes of the transformative strategy are reflected in the Church of England's engagement with urban development policy. The church's agents of transformation (the workplace chaplain, the church based community development worker, and parish priests) are then identified and their role explored in the church's response to urban development over the same time period which further sharpens the understanding of the transformative strategy in the light of that interaction.

The final task is to return to praxis to explore how the transformative strategy is considered by those involved in practice. For as the Liberation Theologians recognised, it is only through intentional engagement with the world and responding to the questions and issues facing practitioners, that theology can truly be called 'a transformation of faith seeking understanding.'[46p.153] The transformative strategy is hence presented to another group of practitioners seeking to be involved in urban development. This discussion helped the practitioners and the author together to understand the dynamics undergirding their context.

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[43] BOFF, L and BOFF, C. 1987. Op. Cit.
[44] MOLTMANN, J. 1984. Op. Cit.
[45] CHOPP, R. *The Praxis Of Suffering.* Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1986.
[46] *Ibid.*

Chapter Three: Immersion In The Experience

a) Introducing The Case Study

Having clarified the methodology of this thesis, this chapter shifts the focus to the experience of urban development, to identify the salient issues that occur in such locations. To assist in this task, a case study is examined. The area in question is the Thames Gateway, which covers the development areas along the Thames estuary from central London into South Essex and North Kent.

The reason for choosing this as a case study is because the author was formerly the Development Manager at the Thames Gateway London Partnership (TGLP) that represented a number of the key players in this project including local authorities, development agencies, health authorities and education bodies. Initially this role had a sizable budget attached to it (£200,000) and this meant the author was able to attract many of the actors involved in urban development within this flagship regeneration programme to a series of networking conferences and seminars. The author's own prior knowledge based on his training as a Town Planner and work in the London Borough of Newham on major projects such the Channel Tunnel Rail Link and developments in London Docklands, meant he was well placed to share with practitioners in an informed manner.

Hence, when in the latter half of 2003, a number of faith groups approached TGLP for briefings and advice on the proposed development programme, the author was well placed to support their research. However, he was due to commence study at theological college to train for the ordained ministry. It was however, agreed that he be retained as a consultant once a month, for approximately a year to build links between the Thames Gateway project and the Faith Communities. This unique combination of continued interaction with key players in urban development and full time study in theology meant that the author was well placed to immerse himself in a period of participatory action research.

This chapter begins by outlining the case study experience. The faith communities' reflections are then explored in three contexts: meetings with the Industrial Mission to reflect on the role of human flourishing, meetings with Archdeacons to explore potential tensions with the existing communities, and a national conference held in the Thames Gateway looking at the impact of regeneration on local communities.

The Thames Gateway is a vast area covering 24 local authorities, which 'offers great opportunities for investment, business and jobs growth, new homes and a high quality environment.'[1p.4] In the 2003 Greater London Plan, the 10 boroughs and

[1] SORENSON, E Ambitious Plans For The Gateway *Re:New,* 2004 20, pp.4-5

City of London that lay within the London part of the Thames Gateway were identified as the main growth area for London. By 2016, an estimated 330,000 new jobs were expected and a population growth of approximately 500,000 was anticipated.
However, as Torry remarks 'to name such a large area the Thames Gateway makes it sound like a single project – there is not, each part contains their own different developments.'[2p.166] These developments were clustered in twelve so called Opportunity Areas and Areas of Intensification. Area Development Frameworks were prepared for these areas in 2003 in partnership between the local authorities, the London Mayor's office and London Development Agency.

b) Globalisation And Human Flourishing

As is often the case, the first faith body to appreciate the significance of the Thames Gateway as a significant development project was the ecumenical industrial mission. This may be because industrial chaplains better appreciate the macro-economic changes in an area and so are more aware of potential changes. Alternatively it could be because they have traditionally tended to work in heavily industrialised areas. This means they have firsthand experience of the decline of these sectors and the impact on local people; so they tend to be more attentive to potential plans for redevelopment of such areas.
This may be why in 2002 and 2003 the Essex and East London Industrial Mission facilitated discussion on the Thames Gateway project and the role of the church in urban development.

The theme of the 2002 forum was the impact of globalisation. This term is used to describe the dynamic interconnectedness of the modern world which leads to what Davey describes as an 'intensification of worldwide social relationships.'[3] Discussion emanated around such themes as the advance in modern Information Technology and Telecommunications through e-mail, the World Wide Web, texts and mobile telephones.
In economic terms this globalisation has led to dramatic deindustrialisation of large parts of the United Kingdom. For manufacturing is no longer focused on a single production line following the so called Fordist model. Rather production is now across continents. Examples include the large multinational corporations who trade at the London Stock Exchange, manufacture components in South East Asia and assemble the parts at different assembly plants across Europe and the USA. Globalised trade also takes place on a micro scale when tailors in Tower Hamlets take your

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[2] TORRY, M. Thinking Wider. In *Op. Cit.* pp153-167
[3] DAVEY, A. *The Nature Of Urban Mission* Lecture at St John's College, Nottingham: 26th February 2004

measurements and have a suit made personally for you in Bangladesh and then shipped back to their shop in a week.

What is the significance of globalisation to urban areas and to the form of urban development? These globalised networks of economic activity have as their nodes the major cities and they are connected by flows of information. This means that urban spaces are no longer defined by who lives there but the flows that go through them. Cities are not portrayed 'primarily as geographical spaces or by historical or cultural events but as the nexus of complex global human and structural relationships.'[4p.viii]

In practice, this means that the global population is becoming increasingly urbanised with a growing proportion of people living in cities. It also means cities are becoming increasingly multi-cultural. The growth of the Thames Gateway is therefore not likely to create new housing for white Anglo Saxon families but is more likely to be occupied by individuals from a wider range of ethnic identities from Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe. This is expressed in the large number of single occupancy apartment blocks being built. It is also reflected in the services offered on a typical East London or Essex shopping centre with an increasing number of fast food outlets from a number of different cultural tastes, international telephone centres, cyber cafes and computer training centres.

The 2003 forum explored the flipside of this globalisation process. It was increasingly recognised that though more people are living in closer proximity than ever before, these new development areas tend to be very inhumane places. They are characterised by the drive for material success while those who fall by the way side are increasingly marginalized. At the same time, loneliness has increased as social interaction has reduced with a privatised form of entertainment.

The focus of the forum's debates therefore surrounded the question 'How can we promote human worth?' This led to a wide-reaching discussion on the purpose of life as Dostovesty said: 'The secret of man's being is not only to live … but to live for something definite. For without a firm notion of what a man is looking for, man will not accept life and will rather destroy himself.'[5p.2] The problem facing modern society is that it offers more opportunity for choice than ever before but post-modernist culture has colluded to say that there is no agreed answer to life. As Guinness puts it, 'the trouble is that we now have too much to live for and too little to live for.'[6p.3]

Reflecting on how these issues impacted upon urban development areas, the forum examined Lovell's contention that 'planners, architects and social engineers use their latest knowledge and skills to create what they consider to be the ideal environments for modern living. They are able to create the conditions but they cannot create

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[4] GREEN, L. Forward to DAVEY, A.2001 *Op. Cit.* pp.viii-xi
[5] Cited in GUINNESS, O. *The Call.* Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1998.
[6] *Ibid.*

community spirit.'[7p.2] An example was offered of Wapping, an area historically associated with the London docks and shipping. Then when the docks closed, the area was abandoned only to be redeveloped as luxury flats. The problem is these smart apartment blocks are only yards away from high density council flats.

The Industrial Mission Forum reflected on how Wapping's redevelopment epitomised the way in which local people often felt isolated and disenfranchised by urban development. They lived in London's biggest urban development area yet they had no jobs and no prospect of getting any of the new jobs in finance that were being created in the new banking headquarters at Canary Wharf. At the same time, new wine bars were built for the people living in the new housing developments who did not frequent the local public houses. These areas were not conducive to creating human flourishing. They did not help people on either side of the invisible line to feel valued or part of the new community of Wapping.

c) Integration Of Old And New Communities

The twin ideas of promoting human flourishing in new development areas and a need to manage the tension between the new and old residents raised initially by the Industrial Mission Forums became a key theme in the Thames Gateway faith communities' consultancy programme from 2003 to 2004.

This consultancy programme began with a briefing meeting between the Thames Gateway project staff and senior clergy within the Anglican Dioceses that interacted with this geographical area. This group convened by the Archdeacon of Lewisham brought together Archdeacons and lead officers for regeneration in North Kent, (Diocese of Rochester), Essex (Diocese of Chelmsford) and North and South London (Diocese of London and Southwark).

At this meeting, it became clear that the different dioceses had all been engaging at different levels with development in their area but they had not joined up their efforts or shared their experiences across their borders even though the Thames Gateway project was much larger than any one archdeaconry. The Thames Gateway staff, on the other hand, sought to present the big story of how the region's regeneration was linked to the competitiveness of the UK in the European economy and London's role as a world city. This meant that the government was now considering the area as a strategic whole rather than a series of isolated local schemes for it was considered unsustainable for each site to be considered separately. The Archdeacon of Lewisham 'felt meetings to consider strategy with her counter parts across boundaries was equally crucial and a sensible way forward for the church of England.'[8]

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[7] LOVELL, G. 1981 *Op. Cit.*

[8] Christine Hardman at *Thames Gateway Briefing Meeting.* London, 20th October 2003

It was agreed that there was an un-realised level of opportunity for the church in this area. For it became clear in this meeting that the church had much to offer in sharing its experience of working with major development schemes. Furthermore, due to its own geographical reach and parish structure it could act as a neutral means of communication between the development and the local community. This led to a series of meetings being set up between the Archdeacons to share best practice and identify common concerns.

One of the first considerations was the problem of social infrastructure. It was noted that the scale of the developments being planned in the Thames Gateway would put a strain on current health and education provision as well as basics like supplies of water and electricity. Although some consideration had been given to these issues by partners at the TGLP, there had been less time devoted to the need for social programmes to promote human welfare in the new development areas. As Davey, the Urban Policy Advisor to the Archbishops' Council who attended these meetings commented in an earlier work,

> Too often planners concerned with infrastructure are solely concerned with design. They would assume that the community that was to follow would somehow be formed by itself. But there is a need for the history of the area to be shared and a new history created and recognized.[9]

In response to this concern, the group explored how the faith communities could help create this sense of community and human flourishing. However, as Torry reflected, 'where it is working as it should, the church can be an important community builder in new and changing communities and can itself be significantly enriched by the changes going on.'[10p.4] Torry cited the example of the work which he and his colleagues had carried out with the Meridian Delta Company in shaping the future development of the Greenwich Peninsula. How they had formed a multi faith forum to work in the Millennium Dome and that this group had given him the opportunity to engage with the developers at an early stage. Similar experiences were accounted of negotiations with private sector developers who were developing master plans around the proposed two new international stations on the Channel Tunnel Rail Link - the Eastern Quarry site near Ebbsfleet and the Stratford City development that is now the 2012 Olympic site.

The second issue considered at the Diocesan Thames Gateway Briefings was social cohesion between the new developments and the surrounding areas. It was recognised that since the new developments would 'potentially be very high density there are questions about how the new and renewed communities would integrate to

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[9] DAVEY, A. 2001 *Op. Cit.* p52
[10] Malcolm Torry attended the Thames Gateway briefing meetings but this comment is a retrospective reflection in TORRY, M. 2007. *Op. Cit.*

create a real social mix.'[11 p.164] The Archdeacon of West Ham cited the example of the proposed Barking Reach development[12] where plans for 10,000 new homes would bring 30,000 new people into the area. Given half of these houses would be for people on the affordable housing list it was likely that a large number of people living within the new development would come from the inner London boroughs housing lists and represent a wide range of ethnic minorities. This should not in itself be a problem, except that the Barking Reach development site is immediately alongside the Thames View estate, a large council estate made up of white working classes with a reputation for racism. It was known that the British National Party (BNP) was active in the area and BNP local councillors had been elected in Barking and Dagenham council elections. There was therefore huge potential for social and racial tension in the area. This potential lack of social interaction between two communities was similar to the issues discussed by the Industrial Missioners when they looked at Wapping. The Archdeacon of Hackney expressed his dismay,

> There was evidence to show that some disastrous errors occurred in the Docklands development when the Church and other faith communities did not engage early enough with the area. Lessons needed to be learnt for the new development or we will be doomed to repeat the same mistakes.[13]

Having said this, the group recalled the highly positive role played by the church through its community development programmes and grassroots activism that succeeded in diffusing social tension on the Isle of Dogs when significant development occurred there in the early 1990s.

This discussion highlighted the third issue which was who was leading on taking forward the Thames Gateway project. It was noted that though the public sector promoted the Thames Gateway idea and wanted a say in its planning, it was the private sector that was largely expected to pay for it. Especially as the road building and utilities are in the hands of private companies or private finance initiatives. This was particularly a cause for concern as the government was proposing a new Thames Gateway Urban Development Corporation (UDC) to give greater focus, simplified planning powers and an ability to generate increased private investor's confidence. It was the government's intention that though 'the UDCs core role will be as a catalyst for physical regeneration and development, the existing community will be at the heart of the UDC's programmes.'[14]

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[11] *Ibid.*
[12] Michael Fox at *Thames Gateway Briefing Meeting.* London, 6th January 2004
[13] Lyle Denman at *Thames Gateway Briefing Meeting.* London, 20th October 2003
[14] OFFICE OF DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER *An Urban Development Corporation for London Thames Gateway A Consultation Paper* [Online]. [viewed 2nd January 2004]. Available from: http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_urbanpolicy/documents/downloadable/odpm_urbpol_025760.pdf Paragraph 2.8

The Archdeacons' group's caution was on the impact on the existing community. Many people live in estates adjacent to the new development sites but there was no opportunity for the representation of these communities to shape the UDC's development process. The group therefore reflected on the extent that faith communities could play a representative role in local development schemes. For, it was recognised, that developers and even elected local authorities struggled to understand the role of faith groups. A letter was therefore sent in response to the consultation on the UDC highlighting a Local Government Association's report which observed that

> Faith communities are representative of all sectors of communities. Their membership includes people from all walks of life and through their places of worship are in contact with many people who are not active in public life.[15]

Examples of the potential contribution of faith communities offered to the UDCs reflected the earlier discussions of the group. First it considered social infrastructure and human flourishing highlighting that 'building places of worship offer an important community resource, and that building up of new communities that lack this element can be places that lack coherence and community spirit.'[16] Second, it identified that faith community buildings could enable greater engagement and take up of consultation by the wider community. A third issue that was not written in the response to the government but was implicit within its response was recognition that in some way the faith communities could be seen as a representative of the local communities.

d) Debates About The Nature Of Representation

In July 2004, the University of East London and TGLP hosted the national Industrial Mission Association conference. The aim of this conference was to 'explore the impact on people and communities in an area earmarked for regeneration, to ask who are the real gainers and losers and what the underlying values are in play.'[17] However, very quickly it became clear that the most live issue was that of representation and the degree of influence that the church could really have on urban development within the Thames Gateway.

The author gave the opening speech at this conference, positing some key questions for the conference delegates: What are the underlying assumptions behind urban development? How can the church become more of a conversation partner to help the government grapple with issues such as - the forms of community can be developed? How can the church impact on the community cohesion agenda? How can the church use its communal spaces to foster community representation?

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[15] LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION *Faith Communities: A Good Practice Guide for Local Authorities* [Online]. [viewed 12th December 2003]. Available from: www.lga.gov.uk
[16] HARDMAN, C. *Letter to Thames Gateway Strategic Executive;* Response to Consultation on Thames Gateway Urban Development Corporation. 3rd February 2004.
[17] SLADEN, P. *Initial Outline Of The Proposed IMA Conference.* 4th June 2003

This marked a shift from challenging the pastoral role of the church in new communities and the practical means whereby the church could help with community consultation to challenge the church to become more prophetic. For the industrial chaplains often have a role at the table with other public agencies to help shape the impact of change. The question raised was to what extent the church makes use of this opportunity. One chaplain's response at the conference was simple, 'we need to make a nuisance of ourselves, always asking the question why? And how does this impact people?'[18] Or as Torry puts it, 'sometimes we are a leader, sometimes a servant, sometimes an advocate, sometimes a reconciler and sometimes a prophet.'[19p.169]

These themes were picked up on study tours to Canning Town, an area of re-development within an existing community and to North Greenwich to look at the impact of the Meridian Delta development and Millennium Dome legacy. As the groups walked around these sites, questions as to the pastoral, practical and prophetic roles of the church again emerged. However, a key role highlighted by Malcolm Torry in relation to the Greenwich Peninsula was that the church must not forget its role to 'worship God and serve the community. We need to create spaces to worship God within our new developments.'[20p.165] This primary role of the church must not be neglected as one seeks a role for the church in urban development areas, 'the vision and priority for our faith community must be for grace to flourish, in re-shaping our spaces, our relationships and our church environment infusing them with God's seeds of hope.'[21p.125]

This led the group to discuss whether it should be seeking new church buildings as part of a new development area or whether the new forms of worship need a fixed building or worship. Or could just as easily take place in a cafe. Michael Fox, the archdeacon of West Ham noted that in the wasteland of the Royal Docks area, some of the only buildings left in the area were the historic churches. He noted existing communities valued them even if they didn't attend them – they had become a sign of hope, representing continuity in the midst of dislocation caused by the dock closure.

e) Summary Of Part One – Identifying The Praxis

Having immersed oneself in the development experiences of the Thames Gateway, it is now possible to identify the praxis for the church's engagement with urban development. These are seen in three key areas which are represented diagrammatically in Figure 3.1 at the end of this chapter.

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[18] Angela Overton Benge - Swindon Industrial Chaplain. In conversation with author, 13th July 2004.
[19] TORRY, M. 2007 *Op.Cit.*
[20] Malcolm Torry raised this issue at the walk about, but this quotation is taken from his book - TORRY, M. 2007 *Op.Cit.*
[21] DAVEY, A. 2001. *Op.Cit.*

The first is an interest in promoting human flourishing in new urban areas brought about by globalisation and the need for major new housing. It is important these new developments are not soul-less or lack a sense of community. This cannot be solved by good design alone. It needs a sense of justice and equity that all may share in forming that community. The experience in Thames Gateway shows a deep concern for creating well being for the new residents and employees. 'The Christian's unique contribution is we are charged with the command to help one another to work out God's ordained destiny for each of us and that improvement must be in such a way that all involved mature and develop.'[22p.37]

Second, there is an interest in mediating the tension between new and old communities. There is recognition of a somewhat inevitable apprehension on behalf of the existing residents about incoming communities. However, these anxieties could potentially be exacerbated if the two communities represent a different social or ethnic group. There is a clear need for greater social cohesion and community integration to avoid violence and discontent. The Thames Gateway experience has shown that, when it is at its best, the church is already there in such places working amongst the existing communities. This means that the church, both its staff and congregations, will often be the amongst the first to see how the 'dreams, politics, powers, human well being and economics are all deeply contested as one builds human settlements and God is most certainly concerned and active within this process.'[23p.3]

Third, there is an interest in representing hope. This is a combination of the pastoral, missional and prophetic roles of the church serving an area affected by dislocation caused by urban development. There are questions of power and legitimacy of the church to take on these roles. Church leaders are often asked to join regeneration boards and be part of the consultation process. If the church is truly to represent hope, it needs to provide neutral space to allow all sections of the community to participate, whether they share our faith, have another faith or none at all. The experience of Thames Gateway also shows that though the presence of a church building in a community is primarily to help people worship God, it is important these church buildings and the people representing the church act as symbols of hope in midst of change – to be 'the hope bearer.'[24]

To enable the church to take on these three roles, a thorough social analysis of the ideas and themes that underpin urban development is needed - to engage with the forces shaping these communities. To open a dialogue with planners, economists and social analysts; it is to this task this thesis now turns.

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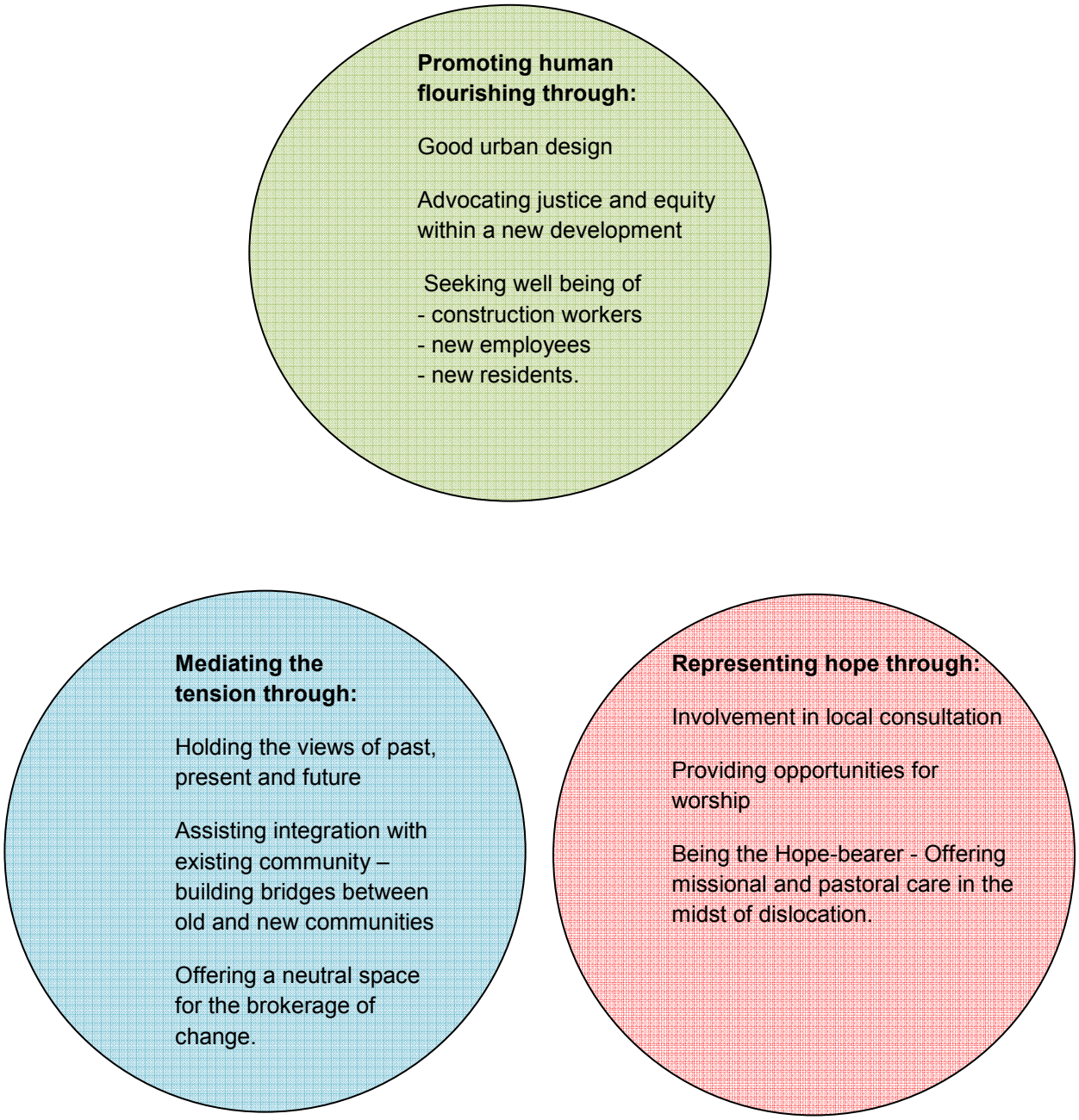
[22] LOVELL, G. 1981 *Op. Cit.*
[23] GREEN, L. Postcards From Utopia. In ED. GREEN, L AND BAKER, C *Building Utopia?* London: SPCK, 2008. pp1-21
[24] This phrase was used by Bishop Andrew Watson preaching in Birmingham, 1st May 2010

Figure 3.1 What Is The Praxis For The Church On An Urban Development Site?



PART TWO: Social Analysis

Chapter Four: The Need For Critical Social Analysis

Having identified the overarching themes from the praxis on which this thesis is built - Promoting human flourishing, mediating tension and representing hope - this chapter introduces the second part of this thesis: the Social Analysis. This second stage of the Pastoral Cycle is 'aimed at gaining a deeper critical understanding of the immediate experience.'[1p.189] This reflects the Liberation Theology roots of the Pastoral Cycle methodology, which is committed to 'theology that is a form of "talk about God" that begins with an analysis of the social context.'[2p.185]

This thesis does not therefore argue for uninformed church engagement with urban development. Instead, it takes seriously the contextual nature of theology. Therefore, this section will progress from the praxis of engagement with urban development (as outlined in the Thames Gateway case study) to an understanding of the theories which underpin urban development.

Chapter five commences this social analysis by drawing on sociology, planning, philosophy and urban geography to sketch an overview of the ideas that have shaped English urban development over the last hundred years. In so doing, 'it examines causes, probes consequences, delimitates linkages and identifies the key actors.'[3p.8]

However, there are risks associated with utilising so called secular sources:

The first is the fact that although every effort is made, it is never entirely possible to offer a full account of their positions, which would be considered fair and accurate by those who promote them. It is important therefore that sufficient space is given to outlining the ideological as well as the theoretical positions taken by politicians and urban development professionals. It is hoped that this will enable greater understanding and more opportunities for church engagement with urban policy.

The second risk in adopting secular understandings is being insufficiently critical of their underlying ideologies. This risk was identified by the Roman Catholic Church in its conversations with Liberation Theologians over their use of Marxist ideology. When the Vatican 'drew attention to the ... risks of deviation damaging to Christian living, that are brought about by forms of Liberation Theology which use in an insufficiently critical manner, concepts borrowed from various currents of Marxist thought.'[4p.199] It should be emphasised that the Catholic Church did not object to Liberation Theology per se,

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[1] GRAHAM, E ET AL. *Theological Reflection: Methods.* London: SCM Press, 2005.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] HOLLAND, J AND HENRIOT, P. *Social Analysis: Linking Faith & Justice.* Maryknoll: Orbis, 1990
[4] Cited by TURNER, D. Marxism, Liberation Theology And The Way Of Negation. In ROWLAND, C. *The Cambridge Companion To Liberation Theology.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. pp.199-217.

rather they raised a general principle - that is significant to this thesis - that in embracing secular ideology, it is important to be aware of the praxis of that ideology.

This recognition of the interaction between social policy and the church is the starting point for chapter six which reviews the Church's engagement with urban policy from its 19th Century inception through to the landmark *Faith in the City* report[5] and formation of the Church Urban Fund.

In recounting church engagement with urban development this thesis seeks what Swinton calls

> A critical and constructive reflection on the acts of the church whereby ... secular sources are drawn upon not only to improve technique but to clarify the nature of the ecclesial praxis, will uncover meanings that lie behind and are present within the praxis of the church – even to challenge and clarify the particular understanding of theological concepts.[6p.59]

Just as with the engagement with secular sources, there is a risk with a critical social analysis of the church's actions. In this case, it is to be aware as 'theologians dialogue with various theories of interpretation and models of transformation they require a reflective awareness and critique of their own value and commitments.'[7p.137] This is not to disown one's own viewpoint but to enable what Freire called 'a constant dialectic of experience and action with reflection and learning.'[8p.184]

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[5] ARCHBISHOP'S COMMISSION ON UPAS. *Faith In The City.* London: Church House Publishing, 1985.
[6] SWINTON, J cited by ANDERSON, R. *The Shape Of Practical Theology.* Downers Green: IVP, 2001.
[7] CHOPP, R. *The Praxis Of Suffering.* Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1986.
[8] Cited by GRAHAM, E ET AL, 2005 *Op.Cit.*

Chapter Five: Exploring The Nature Of Urban Development

This chapter analyses the ideologies and ideas that underpinned those who have sought to promote urban development in the English urban context over the last hundred years. In so doing, it seeks to deepen appreciation and understanding of the three overarching themes identified in this thesis' praxis: promoting human flourishing, mediating tension and representing hope.

It begins by looking at the development of modern town planning, starting with the social visionaries of the late 19th Century and Modernists of the early 20th Century who argued that 'a vital function of the planner is to provide alternative vision of the socially desirable city.'[1p.x] This saw a rise in planned settlements and a significant role adopted by planners and architects.

When social problems beset these planned developments in the late 1960s and 1970s, there was a direct challenge to the state led planned settlements. Policy and ideology shifted dramatically under the Thatcher Government back towards a market led economy. This Neo-Liberal or laissez faire approach to planning led to urban development being characterised by property led regeneration.

A growing concern about inequality in urban development and lack of balanced communities arising from property led regeneration caused a resurgence of interest in urban design. This was shaped by the ideas of New Urbanism originating in the United States but took a particular expression in the English context as Urban Renaissance and planning of Sustainable Communities.

These swings in urban policy between a planned approach and a market led solution have been analysed by contemporary urban sociologists who have developed the idea of a contested city with different players seeking to make their impression and that the greatest creativity results when these different groups meet in the so called public square.

a) Planning Utopia

This section reviews the roots of modern town planning by looking back to the 19th Century planning visionaries who drew on the ideas of utopia and Modernism to imagine a different urban future. In particular, it evaluates how these ideas shaped two of the most influential figures in 20th Century planning – Howard and Le Corbusier, who both left a lasting legacy on the nature of urban development. These figures saw planning as the means to deliver their utopian visions, so this section also examines the genesis of town planning in England.

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[1] BUDER, S. *Visionaries And Planners: The Garden City Movement And The Modern Movement.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.

The 19th Century visionaries like Morris, Blatchford and Bellamy were concerned about the rapid industrialisation and urbanisation. As these cities grew, there was little control over standards of buildings or sanitation. The image of the 'Dickensian slum' led to widespread concern for the poor level of human flourishing in these new urban communities. Given the prevalence of the Judaeo-Christian faith at the time, it is not surprising that these social commentators used religious language to describe the disorder of the city. They highlighted so called evils of the industrial city – 'its pollution, waste, poverty and lack of values. They saw a city of despair and equated it with Babylon.'[2p.14]

In contrast to the problems in the city around them, these visionaries produced 'secular versions of the Celestial City or Mount Zion.'[3p.2] These ideas of building a better city drew on the ideas of the New Jerusalem, Plato's republic and More's idea of utopia. Here they found a means to describe a discontinuity with the past and through the power of imagination, 'to transcend the social structures and seek to change things.'[4p.175] In utopia, they found a means to subvert the existing order and offer the possibility of a better future.

This is the focus of almost all utopian visions. It is the imagined flourishing of all peoples especially through an improvement in relations between humans: An imaginative leap into a new world where there is an end to oppression, reconciliation with the earth's natural powers and a sense of communal well being. These utopian visions countered the present world and could appear fanciful; indeed many were originally depicted in fables and fairy tales – one of the earliest accounts of utopia is in Aesop's fables. In more recent times, science fiction has made similar leaps of fantasy depicting ideal worlds and images of inter-planetary harmony. This connection between fantasy and utopia is noted by Wilson, who described utopia as 'a human yearning to organise his world, to further the limits of planning while the persistence of demand for fantasy reminds us of the fragility of our complex social order.'[5p.504 sic.]

The earliest accounts of planned urban settlements arose from this social utopian movement with their purpose being to promote human flourishing. People like Owen, Fourier and St Simon designed new worlds to criticise their existing society. However, perhaps the most significant legacy for 20th Century town planning in England is Howard's Garden City design.[6]

Interestingly, when Howard first published his work, it was called '*Tomorrow: The Peaceful path To Real Reform'.* This title reflects Howard's utopian ambition rather

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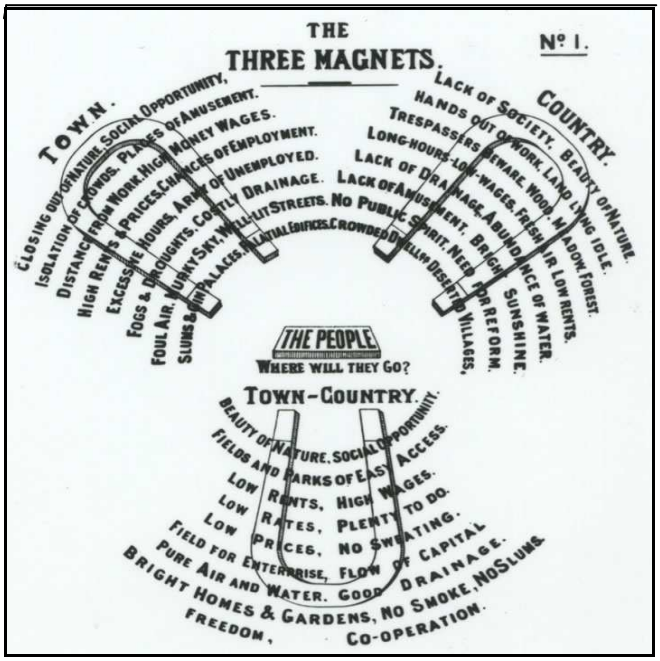
[2] NEWMAN, P. *Theology And The City: Babylon and Zion.* Murdoch: Institute of Sustainability and Technology Policy, 2000.
[3] HALL, P. *Cities Of Tomorrow.* Oxford: Blackwell, 1996.
[4] RICOEUR, P 'On Mannheim' In: ED. TAYLOR, G. *Lectures On Ideology And Utopia* New York, Columbia University Press, 1986. pp.159-180
[5] WILSON, B. *Magic And Millennium.* London: Heinemann, 1973.
[6] HOWARD, E. *Garden Cities For Tomorrow* 3rd Ed. Builth Wells: Attic Books, 1985.

than just the building of new houses. For his vision 'blended socialist sentiment, anarchist ideas, the notion of reform and social responsibility.'[7p.19] He saw 'The industrial city as the antithesis of social well being, living evidence of extreme inequality … salvation was to be found in the creation of Garden Cities that would challenge the assumptions of unbridled capitalism.'[8p.56&60]

Interestingly, religious language remains strong in Howard's analysis. In his Three Magnets concept (See Figure 5.1) he describes the town as a place of anonymity populated by the damned and deviant.[9p.158] Whereas the country symbolises God's love and care, a source of health, wealth and knowledge.[10p.131] There is resonance with this thesis' identification of a tension in city building. Howard resolves this tension by proposing a third magnet, the Garden City, which combined the attractions of town and country. This mixing of human and divine ambition created a vision of human flourishing and communal well being.

Figure 5.1

Howard's 'Three Magnets' Concept



Source: HOWARD, E. *Garden Cities For Tomorrow* 3rd Ed. Builth Wells: Attic Books, 1985.

This continued use of religious language has led researchers to seek a religious conviction in Howard's work. Ward notes that Howard moved in 'earnest circles of non conformist churchmen and other less orthodox religious enthusiasts.'[11p.33] While

[7] HARVEY, D. *Contested Cities:* Social Process And Spatial Form in ED. JEWSON, N AND MACGREGOR, S. *Transforming Cities.* London: Routledge, 1997. pp.19-27
[8] HARDY, D. *Utopian England: Community Experiments 1900-1945.* London: E&F Spon, 2000
[9] HARVEY, D. *Spaces Of Hope.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.
[10] GORRINGE, T. *A Theology Of The Built Environment.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
[11] WARD, S. *The Garden City: Past, Present And Future.* London: E&F Spon, 1992.

Macfadyen[12p.3] notes that Howard was at one time secretary to Dr Parker, a radical preacher. However, it is Buder who offers the most interesting insight; he argues that Howard was influenced by Richmond, a Christian Science Minister who offered a high view of human potential. This may explain why 'Howard believed he had acquired knowledge of a God given harmonious order of the universe and that humanity must travel to reach this higher civilisation promised by grand design.'[13p.13]

On the other hand, it could be argued that Howard's elevation of the idea of human progress maybe more a reflection of the Modernist movement than Christian Science. The Modernists drew their ideals not only from utopian visions but from the assumptions of the Enlightenment – that period of western thought which began with scientific breakthroughs and the French revolution's declaration of liberty, equality and fraternity. This ideology was characterised by progress and the idea that humanity could ultimately reach out for perfection. It was a belief system predicated on a 'dedication to human reason, science and education as the best means of building a free society.'[14p.35]

The biggest proponent of the Modernist Movement in 20th Century urban planning was not Howard but Le Corbusier, a European architect who devised a dream city in the 1920s called the Radiant City. This idea of a city is again rooted in the ideas of social utopia. However, Le Corbusier did not only look to the past for his inspiration. Rather as an architect he saw the potential of technological progress to devise an idealised physical urban structure that was 'so brutal and so overwhelming, we burn our bridges with the past and can only lead to a magnificent ripening of civilisation.'[15pp.17-18]

This was because he placed his hopes in his grand designs - blueprint planning where large swathes areas of old city street forms would be cleared to create a new Radiant City. New tower blocks with very high densities (approximately 1,200 people per acre compared to 150 people per acre in Victorian London) were proposed across an extensive space populated by trees and parkland; for like Howard, Le Corbusier saw the value of a mix of town and country.

To accommodate such large numbers in his tower blocks Le Corbusier had no time for individual idiosyncrasy. He devised a 'house machine which is both practically and emotionally satisfying and designed for a succession of tenants.'[16p.131.] This sounds egalitarian and akin to the ideas of flourishing and promoting well being identified in this thesis' praxis. However, developing solutions to the tensions associated with

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[12] MACFADYEN, D. *Sir Ebenezer Howard And The Town Planning Movement.* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1933.
[13] BUDER, S. *Op. Cit.*
[14] SANDERCOCK, L. 1998. *Op.Cit.*
[15] LE CORBUSIER, C. *The City Of Tomorrow.* London: Architectural Press, 2nd Ed, 1947.
[16] Cited by GORRINGE, T. 2002. *Op.Cit.*

community integration played little part in Le Corbusier's plans. He was concerned that 'the plan must rule.'[17p.7] It was a very mechanistic approach, where the rights of an individual were sacrificed to the desires of the whole, leaving little room for personal hopes and dreams.

The principle of sacrifice again has echoes of religious imagery but it is worth noting that, unlike Howard, religion played little part in Le Corbusier's thinking. For Le Corbusier believed, 'architecture holds the key to everything'[18p.12] – it was the hope for progress and the clean lines of the skyscrapers symbolic of social and spiritual expectations of a new civilisation. Boyd Whyte calls this a 'secularised eschatology.'[19p.9] There are clear links to the Modernist approach which placed their faith in the power of human progress. As Le Corbusier argued technical conventions had to be 'so brutal and so overwhelming that we burn our bridges with the past and witness a ripening of civilisation.'[20p.17]

Both Howard and Le Corbusier saw the importance of the state, to delivering their vision of a new urban design. Howard argued that state led planning had an integral role with a belief that 'every significant detail must be ordered and controlled by the planners from the very start and then stuck to.'[21p.30] It was this principle that led to the creation of town planning departments while Le Corbusier's argument for an 'international style' of architecture, characterised by rationality, austerity and efficiency, led to formation of publically funded city architects departments.

In a specifically English context, town planning first emerged during the early 20th Century as a unit within the Department of Health, reinforcing this link between planning and fostering human flourishing and well being. By the 1930s it was primarily linked to housing. However, it reached its zenith in the post war period, with a surge in interest in city building, not just to rebuild after the devastation of World War Two but it also represented the hopes of Britain's great socialist experiment. The Town and Country Planning Act of 1947 can be directly associated with the development of the welfare state and National Health Service. As Alves notes, 'World War Two was seen as a Satanic invasion, an unwanted abnormality, the end of the war made it possible to reassert the worldview of liberation, dreams and hopes of a new future.'[22p.183] This is reflected in the 4 million publicly funded houses built 1945 and 1969. Many of these are easily identifiable by the tower blocks dominating the skyline following Le Corbusier's 'international style.'

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[17] LE CORBUSIER, C. *The Radiant City.* 2nd Ed. London: Faber and Faber Ltd, 1964.
[18] Cited by BOYD WHYTE, I. *Modernism And The Spirit Of The City.* London: Routledge, 2003.
[19] *Ibid*.
[20] LE CORBUSIER, C. *The City Of Tomorrow.* London: Architectural Press, 1947.
[21] JACOBS, J. *The Death And Rise Of Great American Cities.* Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1961.
[22] ALVES, R. *Tomorrow's Child.* London: SCM Press, 1972.

It is worth reiterating at this stage the close relationship between Modernism and the first planning professionals employed in the first half of the 20th Century. Belief in progress convinced the Modernists it was possible 'to transform an unwanted present by means of an imagined future'[23p.40] and planning was the means to create a better urban society and improve conditions for the urban poor. As Beauregard notes, 'Modernist planners believed in a future in which social problems were tamed and humanity liberated from the constraints of scarcity and greed.'[24p??]

First impressions suggest resonance with the promotion of human flourishing theme within this thesis' praxis; but as one examines the approach taken by Modernist planning, differences with the praxis' reflections become apparent. Sandercock[25 p.27f] identifies the following pillars of Modernist planning wisdom: the dominance of rationality and order; a comprehensive, integrative and co-ordinated approach that allows little room for individual expression; the view that human thoughts and actions have the power to change society. In adopting this approach, the planners not only sought to create order but thought they could organise the lives of the populace in a belief that they were working for the 'public interest'. This is not a mediation of the tensions of city but an almost blind faith in the objective power and influence of the town planner.

This near deification of the planning profession is reflected in Webber's speech to the Town Planning Institute when he stated 'planning is acquiring the status that the priestly arts once enjoyed.'[26p.161] Alas this form of priestly art appears less concerned with glorifying God and more to do with mediating the power of humanism with its echoes of utopia.

This section has sought to relate the themes identified in this thesis' praxis to the ideologies postulated by the early town planning movement especially Howard's Garden City Movement and the Modernist architecture of Le Corbusier. Synergies have been identified in that their ideologies are a direct response to the problem of the city and a desire to promote human flourishing and a sense of well being. It could be argued in the case of Howard that there is also a distinctly spiritual dimension in seeking to bring forth God's love and care; while Le Corbusier seeks a more egalitarian sharing of health, wealth and happiness.

On the other hand, the urban visionaries inspired by Utopian or Modernist dreams cannot live with the tension of building a new city within the present city with all the problems associated with community integration. As Harvey notes 'modernism is both

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[23] HOLSTON, J. '*Spaces of Insurgent Citizenship*.' IN: ED. HOLSTON, J Cities and Citizenship. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999, pp.155-173.
[24] Cited by HOBSON, J. 1999 *Op. Cit.*
[25] SANDERCOCK, L. 1998 *Op. Cit.*
[26] Cited by COX, H. *Cities: The Public Domain.* Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1976.

destructive and optimistic in its pursuit of a utopian future.'[27p.12] For there is impatience and an incalculable tendency to want to recreate, which starts with clearing large swathes of the city.

Finally, there is little room for representatives of the church to get involved. Power is in the hands of humanity not the divine. Planners and architects have become the priests. For 'as in all utopias the right to have any plans of any significance appears to belong to the planner and those who are in charge.'[28p.27] The church's role is diminished along with that of the wider community and both are sacrificed to a greater vision. The representation of individual hopes and fears is glossed over and the reality is that people are often left hopeless rather than hopeful.

b) Crisis In Utopia

Urban development in the early to mid 20th Century was focused on physical planning and production of architectural blue prints. However, by the 1970s, 'the planning movement was turned upside down and inside out and during the 1980s it seemed at times almost on the point of self destruction.'[29p.343]

Mortally wounded by the hopelessness of the realities it was delivering in practice, there was a questioning of the self belief of planning and architects and a development of Neo-Liberal philosophy of the free market.

Yet 'as each generation of humanity searches for its own utopia, it stands a good chance of creating along the way, forces which themselves begin to undermine their best laid plans.'[30p.1] For, in retrospect market led solutions have similar problems as there is insufficient concern for integration of communities and this has generated a sense of fear and separation rather than any sense of human flourishing.

This section initially examines how the post war architectural, socio-economic and philosophical consensus was challenged. It then looks at the changed roles of planning and the state in the Neo-Liberalism model, before turning to look at its key critiques. In examining this shifting role of urban development, connections are again made with the themes identified in praxis: 'the concern for the political, ideological, spiritual and physical well being;'[31p.12] an understanding of the tensions inherent in city building and a desire to represent hope.

The most apparent challenge to the Modernist's approach was the civil rights riots in the USA during the mid 1960s. A similar expression of discontent was seen

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[27] HARVEY, D. *The Condition Of Postmodernity.* Oxford: Blackwell, 1989.
[28] JACOBS, J. 1961. *Op. Cit.*
[29] HALL, P, 1996. *Op. Cit.*
[30] GREEN, L. *Postcards From Utopia?* In ED. GREEN, L AND BAKER, C. *Building Utopia?* London: SPCK, 2008. pp1-21.
[31] *Ibid.*

later in the UK with the 1981 inner city riots in Toxteth and Brixton. The reasons offered for this unrest were an interaction between poor urban design, inadequate social policy and racial overtones.

In design terms, it was self-evident that an emphasis on cheapness in post-war house building had been at the expense of quality. However, critics argued that the design itself was at fault. Writing in the 1960s, Gans' quipped that designing a city on geometric lines so it 'looked attractive from an aeroplane'[32p.36] bore no resemblance to the needs and aspirations of the occupants. Newman, criticised tower block design suggesting, 'the sheer scale of modern developments piled up on different layers led to a lack of social interaction and little ownership of common areas.'[33p.14] He then defined indefensible space against criminals such as internal corridors, alley ways and dark stairwells. Wright notes how such a 'bleak urban landscape is a message that constantly whispers that you are not worth much'[34p.243] - what a contrast to the human flourishing which the visionary planners and architects had sought to develop.

Poor design was not the only reason behind the failure of the utopian dream; social policy had made these inner city estates with their 'anonymous and intimidating environments – the dumping ground for those who were found surplus to society's requirements.'[35] Local Government Housing and Planning Departments were no longer seen to be concerned with creating a new model city but as agents of a welfarist agenda set up 'to tackle the problems of individual, family and community malfunctioning.'[36p.50] No longer was the city itself seen as a problem, but the people within it. The new estates were seen as overrun by a dangerous underclass that people needed to be protected from. Given the increasingly oppressive and blighted nature of high rise flats, the predominantly white middle classes felt 'they had no other option but to … flee to the suburbs as quickly as they could.'[37p.31] Rather than creating integrated communities, the failed Modernist experiment was exposed by an ever increasing demand for housing in suburbia.

The growing post war affluence masked this growing dichotomy between the prosperous suburbs and an emerging underclass that lived on the council estates, and felt 'subjugated, oppressed, alienated and depersonalised.'[38p.10] Furthermore, since the majority of people placed into the public housing estates came from ethnic minorities, racial integration became a key issue epitomised in Enoch Powell's infamous speech in 1968 about 'rivers of blood.' The Modernist experiments were

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[32] GANS, H. '*Planning For People, Not Buildings.'* Environment and Planning A, Vol. 1, 1969, pp. 33-46

[33] Cited by COLEMAN, A. *Utopia On Trial.* London: Hilary Shipman, 1985.

[34] WRIGHT, N T. *Surprised By Hope.* London: SPCK, 2004.

[35] SMITH M, WHITELY J AND WILLIAMS N. *Greening The Built Environment.* London: Earthscan, 1998.

[36] COCHRANE, A. *Understanding Urban Policy.* Oxford: Blackwell, 2007.

[37] JACOBSEN, E. *Sidewalks In The Kingdom.* Grand Rapids: Bazros Press, 2003a.

[38] BEAUREGARD, R. *Voices Of Decline: The Post War Fate Of US Cities.* Oxford: Blackwell, 1993.

therefore increasingly dismissed as 'naive, over rational, end driven'[39] and not serving the interests of the whole community. The church began to develop a role alongside the social critics of the time in articulating the hopelessness of these estates. For instance, Bishop Laurie Green, formerly a minister in Aston and in Poplar wryly notes, 'the utopian dreams of our forebears … created a world they thought would end in contentment but, instead we find that their dreams can now so easily culminate in human tragedy.'[40p.1]

The near deification of planning and architects noted in the previous section can now be seen as a high water mark in Modernist thinking. For it became increasingly hard to perpetuate a model of progress in the face of economic decline, social disparity and urban decay. One of the biggest intellectual challenges to the Modernist ideal was Jane Jacobs' book *The Death and Rise of Great American Cities* and this 'remains arguably one of the most important books on planning theory since World War Two.'[41p.46]

Jacobs attacked the assumptions behind large scale urban planning. In particular, she criticised the Modernists' fixation with utopian visions that only saw cities as places of disorder and 'itches to erase it, standardise it and suburbanise it.'[42p.460] This, she argues was far too simplistic and symbolic as it failed to take into account the views of the residents. As Jacobs argued elsewhere, the 'sin of Le Corbusier lay not in his designs but in the mindless arrogance in the way planners imposed his ideas on people not giving a modicum of thought to how people were going to live in their cities.'[43p.240] This challenge to the Modernist mindset has resonance with this thesis' reflections from praxis. For in a similar manner, the church has expressed concern at the tensions created if new developments are planned for an area that fail to engage and take on board the views of the existing community. This is especially disturbing if these people are poor and powerless.

Reportedly, Jane Jacobs' attack on city planning was at the top of the reading list given by Keith Joseph to senior civil servants when he took over at the Department of Industry in 1979.[44p.93] This influential thinker is often considered to be one of the architects of Thatcherism and this abandonment of faith in planning was just part of a significant shift in ideology towards Neo-Liberalism.

Neo-liberal ideology was to become the dominant influence behind Anglo-American policy through the 1980s and 1990s and remains highly significant in public

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[39] STROMGREN, A. *Planning, Modernity And The Question Of Change* Paper presented to the ENHR Conference, Cambridge July 2nd-6th 2004
[40] GREEN, L 2008. *Op. Cit.*
[41] TAYLOR, N. *Planning Since 1945.* London: Sage Books, 1998.
[42] JACOBS, J. 1961. *Op. Cit.*
[43] Cited by HALL, P. 1996. *Op. Cit.*
[44] THORNLEY, A. *Urban Planning Under Thatcherism.* London: Routledge, 1991.

policy thinking in the early 21st Century. This was focused on individualism, a rolling back of the state and a transfer of power to the private sector. The free market was seen as the saviour and means to overcome structural decline. Yet this focus on economic well being found expression in the marketing of a place rather than addressing people's social needs.

A property-led regeneration was postulated where the state's role was to address problems with the perception of place and the invisible hand of the market would lead to prosperity for all. This led to a significant shift away from state funded solutions with large city planning and architecture departments. Instead, new regeneration divisions were charged with 'levering in private property investment with the consequential transfer of power from the public to private sector'[45p.4] and especially to the larger corporations. The most infamous example of this in England and Wales was the Urban Development Corporations (UDCs). These UDCs did not work from a publicly adopted development plan rather they developed the idea of a non-plan. This was an area where planning controls would cease to exist, allowing greater freedom for the market to decide the nature of the development.[46] This model was seen as one means to resolve the tension between a city that was perceived to be a social problem and a desire for a better city based on economic flourishing. Both these aspects again reflect the themes identified in this thesis' praxis.

It is also interesting to note the way property developers repackaged the ideas of modernism - the skyscrapers of Le Corbusier and public spaces of Howard. Indeed, when Harvey read the promotional literature explaining how redeveloped industrial wastelands and former dockyards could be transformed into waterfront marinas surrounded by high rise apartments and office blocks, he described it as 'commercialised utopianism.'[47p.181]

This model of regeneration initially appears to represent greater hope, with the devolution of power enabling people to seek their own flourishing rather than an imposition of state led solutions from above. It is perhaps little wonder, that having,

> …been denied the right to choose their own housing and having been forced to live in a disastrous design, that there was a growing clamour in the late 1970s and early 1980s for a return to the free market and a reduction in public intervention in housing.[48p.184]

On the other hand, this shift away from a public social policy towards a private economic driven policy was not without its critics.

First, it was noted that the diminution of the role of the state did not lead to power for local people. For when power was taken away from local councillors and local

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[45] IMRIE, R AND THOMAS, H. *British Urban Policy: And Evaluation Of The Urban Development Corporations.* London: Sage Pub, 2nd Ed. 1999.
[46] Such as in Simplified Planning Zones and Enterprise Zones.
[47] HARVEY, D. 2001. Op. Cit.
[48] COLEMAN, A. 1985. *Op. Cit.*

government officials it was not devolved to localities but rather centralised at Whitehall. A growing sense of injustice and discontent at the lack of representation and the perceived inequitable manner in which the free market appeared to favour London and the South East led some Labour led councils in places like Liverpool and Sheffield to challenge the Neo-Liberal agenda. Instead they promoted a policy that combined community work with planning, education and training. This became known as the New Urban Left. There are correlations between the more egalitarian policy agenda of the New Urban Left and the reflections on human flourishing identified in this thesis. However, the impact of these more egalitarian policies seems to have done little except mitigate the most significant impact of Neo-Liberalism and it may have actually made it easier for their ideas to be implemented. Although the obvious tensions in city building have already been identified in this praxis, to compare the shared promotion of human flourishing with the widening inequalities of Neo-Liberalism seems more problematic if not 'morally wrong, economically unwise and politically short-sighted.'[49p.176]

A second critique of Neo-Liberalism has been its over-reliance on property led development programmes, which has led to gentrification - the creation of wealthy enclaves within areas of poverty. These modern estates hidden behind high walls and gates led to feelings of segregation and exclusion by reinforcing a sense of inequality in an area. As Allen notes, 'it defines and limits who mixes with who, the powerful groups have super-imposed their rhythm on others.'[50p.90] This retreat into privatised communities and an unwillingness to engage with others has ironically produced the very lack of hope that Jane Jacobs challenged in 1965. 'Instead of creating greater security in the inner city, there has been an increased fear of crime due to a decline in communal trust and mutual support across communities.'[51p.74] This desire for safe neutral places for the community to mix and share in dialogue reflects the discussion of the praxis about the need to mediate the tension between different communities.

A third critique of the Neo-Liberal approach is that it is over reliant upon economics and the market to achieve its aims. For the capitalist economy only works when there are winners and losers. However, Neo-Liberal thinkers like Keith Joseph and Milton Friedman dismissed 'concepts such as social justice, fairness and equality … as detrimental to wealth creation'[52p.208] and the working of the market. The reflections developed in part one show strong resonance with this critique and its challenge to the 'concentration of privilege, wealth and impunities that democratises misery and

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[49] LAWLESS, P. *Britain's Inner Cities.* London: Paul Chapman Pub, 2nd Ed, 1989.
[50] ALLEN, J. 'Worlds Within Cities.' In Ed. MASSEY, D, ALLEN, J AND PILE, S *World Cities* London: Routledge, 1999, pp.53-98.
[51] COCHRANE, A. 2007. *Op. Cit.*
[52] THORNLEY, A. 1991. *Op. Cit.*

hopelessness.'[53p.73] Such a market driven solution will never represent hope to all but to the few.

The final critique of property led redevelopment was that it appeared to bypass any concern the local community's ambitions or dreams. Urban development became increasingly seen as serving the interests of capitalists and developers as opposed to assisting the less well off. As Dear puts it, 'the utopian in urban discourse has been smothered by reduced city planning ideals and been made subservient to the property development market.'[54p.4]

In any urban development programme 'the balance must be struck between the rights of wealth and property and the duties and loyalties towards the community that have to live there.'[55p.51]

This section began by noting the rejection of Modernist planning and the fragility of the utopian approach. Synergies were found between the reflections on praxis, in that the Modernist designs contributed to crime and social unrest rather than the promotion of human flourishing, while so called 'white flight' to the suburbs led to disintegrated communities rather than a mediation of community tensions. Finally, far from representing hope, the paternalistic social policy was imposed from above, and this did not lead to a consideration of the interests of the whole community.

The Neo-Liberal solution was a property led regeneration which promoted less state planning and greater freedom for the market to find its own solution. This approach also struggled to find this balance as it appeared too focused on the needs of capitalists and developers. So far from representing hope it reinforced the widening inequalities in society - not that this affected the Neo-Liberal policy with its view immortalised in Margaret Thatcher's phrase that 'there is no such thing as society, only individuals and their families.'[56p.1]

Connections between the Neo-Liberal approach and the reflections of this thesis' praxis have therefore been largely negative. The lack of power for people to help themselves led to calls for greater social justice, while the increasingly privatised public space led to a desire for neutral places for social interaction.

What was increasingly demanded was a solution that moderated the market by offering moral rules and a place for engagement. This offers room not just for religion but for planning to create places where people can meet, as well as allowing the freedom of the market. This was the seed tray of New Urbanism.

c) New Urbanism – A Means To An Urban Renaissance?

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[53] Zapatista Army for National Liberation cited by HARVEY, D. 2000. *Op. Cit.*
[54] DEAR, M. *The Postmodern Urban Condition* Oxford: Blackwell, 2000.
[55] THORNLEY, A. 1991. Op. Cit.
[56] THATCHER, M cited in *Ibid.*

The previous section noted that 'a perfectly free market city might be profitable but is it a thing of beauty? … Without a mixture of regulation with de-regulation there is no basic order and surely such a city lacks a spirit.'[57p.20] As a result of this unease in the USA, the New Urbanism movement emerged that 'advocated the use of traditional design to build walkable, mixed use neighbourhoods that emulate places of enduring quality and provide an alternative to low density, single use, automobile dependent sprawl.'[58p.213]

In an English socio-political context, the ideas of New Urbanism were developed by the New Labour government from 1997-2010 as part of its vision of an urban renaissance. This was a vision of creating sustainable communities by 'transforming whole areas into a new townscape through an integration of housing, shopping, culture, open space and employment policy.'[59p.443]

This section explores the ideas behind New Urbanism and how these were delivered in an English context, before outlining some of its critics. At the same time parallels are considered with the themes already identified in praxis: the promotion of human flourishing, mediating tension in city building and representing hope.

The roots of New Urbanism are similar to Neo-Liberalism in that there was dissatisfaction with the Modernist plan led approach which segregated land use and specialised functions in one place. It is claimed that this approach led to 'soulless subdivisions, residential communities that lacked communal living, big box stores with barren seas of parking, antiseptic office parks that become a ghost town after 6pm and clogged up collector roads.'[60p.x] This failed Modernist experiment was blamed for fragmenting society and breaking down the bonds of community as the 'suburban dream of privacy, mobility, security and ownership had become the suburban nightmare of isolation, congested freeways, a decrease in vitality of downtown and environmental degradation.'[61p.xii.]

This lack of a sense of well being, which is so crucial to human flourishing, is similar to the themes identified in praxis. It also echoes the challenge to the Modernist assumptions outlined earlier in this chapter. Hence, Krier, one of the founders of New Urbanism is scathing in his attack on modernism. He calls it 'a totalitarian ideology that is a systematic rape of man's physiological and psychological makeup which has incapacitated people's autonomy and ability to think individually.'[62]

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[57] GLANCEY, J. **'**Exit From The City Of Destruction'. *The Independent,* 23rd May 1996.
[58] BOHL, C. 'To What Extent And In What Ways Should Governmental Bodies Regulate Urban Planning?' In: *Journal Of Markets And Morality* 6(1), 2003 p213-226.
[59] SMITH, N. 'New Globalism, New Urbanism.' In: *Antipode* 34, 2002, pp427-450.
[60] DUANY, A PLATER-ZYBERK, E AND SPECK, J. *Suburban Nation: The Rise Of Sprawl And Decline Of The American Dream.* New York: North Point Press, 2000.
[61] CALTHORPE, P. The Region. In: ED. KATZ, P. *The New Urbanism: Toward An Architecture Of Community.* New York: McGaw Hill, 1994. pp. xi-xvi.
[62] Interview with Leon Krier, 5th November 2001, www.planetizen.com/node/32 (sic.)

The New Urbanists therefore accepted the need for a more laissez faire approach based on the individual. At the same time they sought to create a 'supportive community and improvement of physical environment.'[63p.8] This meant that the New Urbanists were also critical of the privatised approach of Neo-Liberalism suggesting it was as 'subtle as a swaggering white cop, with its creation of pseudo public spaces – its sumptuous malls marketed as a cultural acropolis with invisible signs warning off the underclass.'[64p.180] There are close associations between the New Urbanist's critique and the themes of this thesis' praxis in that they both see the market as accentuating difference rather than brokering social change to ensure that the cityscape benefits everyone.

The New Urbanists' desire to combine a resurgence of social policy with some aspects of the neo-Liberal approach fitted the principles of the New Labour vision of a Third Way. For the policy shift under Tony Blair and his deputy John Prescott was towards an approach to urbanism that combined measures to address social exclusion with a means to assist the property market by promoting cities as 'dynamos of the national and regional economy.'[65p.9] This narrative of the city represents hope as it sees urban areas as opportunities for economic transformation rather than liabilities.

The New Urbanism approach can be summarised by three key elements.

First, in an attempt to reduce pollution, congestion and social isolation, they re-orientated urban development towards creating so called walkable environments with ready access to amenities and public transport. This concept of walkabilty 'recognised the need for a vibrancy of street life and opportunities for personal interaction thereby creating a sense of community.'[66p.207] This approach to the renaissance of the city to encourage greater social interaction is similar to the idea delineated in the earlier exploration of praxis, when it noted the importance of creating neutral spaces to foster a sense of community.

Second, in a desire to increase social interaction, New Urbanists not only sought a quality public realm but the creation of a mix of land uses and tenures in a neighbourhood while ensuring appropriate social facilities. In a desire to create more liveable or holistic developments, they proposed so called urban villages that sought 'to re-create a world where the built landscape encourages community integration instead of separation.'[67p.54] This idea of mixing uses to encourage liveability has some

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[63] BARNETT, J. What's New About New Urbanism? IN: ED. LECCESE, M & MCCORMICK, K. *Charter For New Urbanism*. New York: McGaw Hill, 2000, pp. 5-10.
[64] DAVIS, M. City Of Quartz. In: ED. LEGATES, R AND STOUTE, F. *The City Reader* 4th Edition. London: Routledge, 1996. pp178-183.
[65] OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER. *State of the English Cities.* London: HM Stationary Office, 2006.
[66] BEAUREGARD, R. 1993. *Op. Cit.*
[67] COCHRANE, A. 2007. *Op. Cit.*

resonance with the concept of promoting human flourishing through creating desirable urban spaces that offer cultural and scared enrichment.

The final principle behind New Urbanism is a move towards what has been termed Traditional Neighbourhood Design; though this terminology can be misleading as it covers much more than neighbourhood design but also looks at the overall form of the city. For the New Urbanists had rejected the brashness of the Le Corbusier 'international style' and returned to the urban design values of Ruskin and Howard that sought human flourishing. The New Urbanists were also aware of the social divisions created by utopian designs so they sought 'to combine the best elements of utopian ideas with greater heterogeneity.'[68p.15]

The introduction of New Urbanist ideas into the English context was clear when John Norquist, the president of the Congress for New Urbanism was invited to speak to the 2002 Urban Summit.[69] By 2005, when the Urban Summit had been renamed the Sustainable Communities Summit, the Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott was able to state, 'I have seen the New Urbanism working in communities like Milwaukee, Washington and Seaside. Like us they are connecting city building with making of new communities.'[70] While at the International City Futures conference in Chicago, Prescott was even more explicit in describing his approach to urban regeneration as 'New Urbanism with a British accent.'[71]

As a result the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister created a 'diverse landscape of strategies and initiatives collectively described as a renaissance of urban economies, communities and metropolitan life.'[72p.4] This urban renaissance was evident in two major urban development policy initiatives.

The first was the Urban Task Force (UTF) chaired by the architect Lord Rogers. The UTF's remit was to 'recommend practical solutions to bring back people into our cities.'[73] Their report offered a vision of an urban renaissance akin to New Urbanism based on principles of design excellence, social well being and environmental responsibility within a viable economic framework creating what they termed 'spaces of hope rather than spaces of despair.'[74p.3]

Such language of hope places the UTF squarely in the stream of utopian planning thought discussed above. Like the key figures in 20th Century planning, the UTF

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[68] CALTHORPE, P. *The Next American Metropolis.* New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1993.
[69] The author attended this summit and the connection between Norquist's thinking, New Urbanism and subsequent themes developed by government ministers were obvious.
[70] JOHN PRESCOTT MP *Speech at Sustainable Communities Summit*, Manchester, February 2005
[71] Cited by HAMBLETON, R. 'US Urban Plan Set For UK Import.' In: *Planning*, February 2005.
[72] JOHNSTONE, C AND WHITEHEAD, M. *New Horizons In British Urban Policy.* Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2004.
[73] URBAN TASK FORCE. *Towards an Urban Renaissance.* London: HM Stationary Office, 1999.
[74] JOHNSTONE, C AND WHITEHEAD, M. 2004. *Op. Cit.*

believed it was possible 'to plan out disorder through rational urban design.'[75p.5] At the same time, in line with Third Way thinking, the UTF embraced the free market, seeing new development 'based on conspicuous consumption enclaves designed for and to attract the middle classes.'[76p.71] Such a policy failed to challenge the inequality of the market to promote flourishing for all. Rather, it created 'an urban policy that is no longer concerned with guiding economic growth, so much as to fit itself into the grooves already established by the market in search of the highest economic returns.'[77p.441]

The problems associated with the excesses of the property led regeneration of the 1980s such as inequality of access for some social groups and the tensions created between communities in a development area appear to have been forgotten. Rather, there was a pragmatic sense that in the long run it had worked to bring in 'entrepreneurs and middle class professionals as agents of transformation.'[78p.vi]

One of the key ideas behind the UTF report was a renewed focus urban design to create 'special places that provide respite from pressure, small oases where people can meet, watch others, and hold conversations. Places where people can feel comfortable with one another - A civilised environment, a caring pace.'[79p.58] This vision represents hope except that far too often such transformation took place behind closed gates, preventing the unruly classes destroying their new found sense of community. Smith argues therefore that 'the language of urban renaissance has helped encourage the private market of gentrification.'[80p.438]

The second major urban development policy of the New Labour administration was the Sustainable Communities Plan which radically introduced a new regional dimension to urban development policy. For the main issue the Sustainable Communities Plan addressed was that by the turn of the millennium, there were some areas of England – especially in the north and west - where demand for housing was so poor that houses could not be sold; so houses had been boarded up and in some cases whole streets had been vacated. At the same time, in areas of the south and east, the cost of living had risen so quickly that middle income earners could not afford to buy a home.

The Sustainable Communities Plan was designed not only to re-invigorate declining communities making them more attractive for property investment but to build entirely new settlements in the so called overheated south east. These four growth areas were

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[75] COCHRANE, A. 2007. *Op. Cit.*
[76] LEES, L. 'Visions Of Urban Renaissance' IN: ED. IMRIE, R AND RACO, M. *Urban Renaissance? New Labour, Community and Urban Policy.* Bristol:, Polity Press, 2003, pp61-82
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[77] SMITH, N. 2002. *Op. Cit.*
[78] AMIN, A MASSEY, D AND THRIFT, N. *Cities For The Many And Not The Few.* Bristol: Policy Press, 2000.
[79] Cited by GARNER, R. *Facing The City.* Peterborough: Epworth Press, 2004.
[80] SMITH, N. 2002. *Op. Cit.*

Milton Keynes, the M11 corridor from London to Cambridge, Ashford and by far the largest in the Thames Gateway area - which was the development area considered in chapter three.

Hence the themes developed in praxis are pertinent in understanding the critiques of the Sustainable Communities Plan. The first issue is the need for a more holistic strategy for human flourishing. For despite its roots in New Urbanism, the Sustainable Communities focused on housing numbers and offered little detail on how the government planned to promote urban design and more significantly how it planned to deliver the necessary social infrastructure such as health and education. A credibility gap emerged between the holistic rhetoric and delivery of urban development in practice.

The second critique surrounds the New Urbanist idea of creating a balanced neighbourhood; Raco argues that though the 'Sustainable Communities agenda ostensibly represents a modernisation of spatial planning, its new vision is the creation of mixed, diverse and balanced communities.'[81p.229] The problem with this vision its tendency to be imposed from above – 'local consultation is given hardly a passing nod and the cost of regeneration is born by the individual and local community.'[82p.43] This problem was evident in the case study visit to Canning Town identified in praxis. Here a low income council estate was partially cleared to make room for new apartment blocks designed for higher income groups. This claimed to create mixed use neighbourhoods and increase local income to sustain local services. This did not take place; rather it led to social tension as the area became unaffordable for local people.

Finally, the biggest criticism of the Sustainable Communities Plan is that it has once again resorted to a utopian plan led agenda. It has offered physical solutions to social problems and failed to engage with the complexity of the physical, mental and spiritual needs of people it purports to work with. This limitation is recognised by the New Urbanist idealists like Krier who maintain that urban development 'cannot save souls, or give meaning to empty lives … it does not ensure happiness but facilitates the pursuit of happiness.'[83] However, the experience of many of the new communities of the 21st Century is that far from raising hope and aspiration in an area, these so called sustainable communities have instead been characterised by battles over the role of the place in the popular imagination and political arguments over the rights of individuals. Rather than representing hope, such places were characterised by increasing despair.

This section has considered the ideas of New Urbanism and how they were developed in an English context. Its inspiration was for a third way between the social

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[81] RACO, M. *Building Sustainable Communities.* Bristol: Policy Press, 2007.
[82] GARNER, R. 2004. *Op. Cit.*
[83] Interview with Leon Krier *Op. Cit.*

segregation of modernist planning and the economic inequality. The emphasis on urban design and a return to traditional forms of architecture and cities that promotes walkability and livability has some resonance with ideas of promoting flourishing through creating spaces for social interaction.

However, the reliance on the market and developers to implement their ideas of an urban renaissance has been highly problematic. As Jacobsen noted 'the difficulty is that though the market has been the New Urbanists' greatest ally, it has also been its greatest Achilles' heel.'[84p.64]

In a similar reflection to that developed in praxis, problems are identified in creating a sense of community in that one needs not just physical spaces for brokering change but opportunities for facilitating local social networks that foster potential opportunities for community interaction.

d) The Contested City

The earlier sections in this chapter have sought to explore different approaches to urban development from the utopian ideals of the early 20th century to the market led approach of Neo-Liberalism and finally to the ideas in New Urbanism. In each case, it was noted how 'almost every attempt to build an ideal city from the ground up has been an absolute failure … the best we can hope for is a better understanding of what is good about the city.'[85p.76]

Postmodern planners are therefore moving away from rigid plans and shifting the power back to the people who live in the city. In a similar reflection to that discussed in this thesis' praxis they identify the city as a place for social interaction. However this interaction is often a source of friction due to the competing interests at work in the city. It is argued that this tension is not a bad thing, for 'all local acts and agents leave their mark on the city but through their inter-personal relations, the city becomes a product of mediations.'[86p.107] However, for such tensions to be resolved, there is a need for an intermediary, so the role of the town planner is being redeemed as a mediator.

This section explores the ideas of Postmodern planning and the principles of the contested city. At the same time, in keeping with the rest of this chapter, it seeks to link these principles with the key themes identified in praxis – the promotion of human flourishing, mediating of tension and representing hope.

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[84] JACOBSEN, E. Receiving Community: The Church And The Future Of The New Urbanist Movement. In: *Markets and Morality* 6(3), 2003b, pp.59-79.
[85] JACOBSEN, E. 2003a
[86] LEFEBVRE, H. *Right To The City,* 1991. Translated by KEFMAN, E AND LEBUS, E as *Writings On The City*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996.

It has already been highlighted that the genesis of urban planning has been ideologically linked with modernism with its spiritual roots linked to the ideals of the Enlightenment and the search for the rational and sense of order. However, the Modernist mindset is increasingly being challenged by an emerging Postmodern philosophy. This shifting conviction sees 'truth as inseparable from the process and people involved in determining it.'[87p.5] In other words there is no objective truth or overarching meta-narrative. Rather understanding is found through conversation and mutual dialogue, when people share stories and accept another's experience rather than imposing their own. This was the experience identified in this thesis' praxis where ideas of well being and flourishing are deeply contested as one builds a new part of a city.

This image of a fragmented city where people live together from a range of different backgrounds is linked to the idea that the city is a place of dense interaction. The shift in the sociological thinking that underpinned this change began with a short but oft quoted pamphlet by Amin, Massey and Thrift called 'Cities for the many and not the few.' In this article, they argued 'cities represent intense networks of social interaction … and citizenship is nurtured through social contact in places you return to and value as a meeting place.'[88p.8,37] This marked a radical departure from the Neo-Liberal thinking with its focus on the city as a place for economic transactions. Instead it returned to the idea that the city was primarily a place of social reproduction. In so doing, they drew upon two strands in sociological thinking to focus on the nature of the city.

The first strand was the idea that cities are transformed not by creating segregated places but places of interaction. These daily interactions can be through friendships, chance encounters or commercial transactions; taken together they create networks that generate the inter-connectedness of the city. Social analysts such as Harvey argue that different people have different levels of interaction and each person will 'put down layer upon layer of relationships like an archaeological site.'[89p.77] Over time these layers shift and 'different relationships come into view as different groups of people come into proximity and different kinds of world meet or glance off each other.'[90p.55]

In the case of this thesis' praxis, a former industrial area is cleared and new apartment blocks are built, the single class relationships built on the factory floor will be disturbed and people are confronted with new neighbours from a different class, profession and worldview. The question raised in praxis is whether conflict engendered by the intrusion of new communities, depends on the level of 'institutional thickness'[91p.117]

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[87] DEAR, M. 2000. *Op. Cit.*
[88] AMIN, A MASSEY, D AND THRIFT, N. 2000. *Op. Cit.*
[89] HARVEY, D. 2000. *Op. Cit.*
[90] ALLEN, J. 1999. *Op. Cit.*
[91] AMIN, A cited by COCHRANE, A. 2007. *Op. Cit.*

created by previous layers of interaction. This analysis argues that where interaction is high, a shared understanding is possible leading to greater reciprocity, increased levels of trust and a human flourishing.

The second strand of sociological thought behind '*Cities for the many and not the few*' is a view that 'the sheer density of interaction and juxtaposition of so many differences generates excitement and exhilaration but it can also create anxiety and a desire to withdraw.'[92p.165] This fear of the stranger is epitomised by the people on a London tube train who sit in close proximity, in silence, desperately avoiding eye contact. It was in the 1970s that Sennett challenged the underlying belief of Modernist tower blocks 'that closeness between persons is intrinsically morally good'[93p.259] since it had led to homogeneous neighbourhoods. Sennett's challenge echoes the findings of this thesis' praxis that argued for neutral public spaces where people can meet and dialogue can occur, so that the stranger is no longer someone to be feared but an alternative worldview to be enjoyed.

One of the key aspects of encounters with strangers is that they are dynamic rather than stable. It is not surprising therefore that the analogy of archaeological layers in a fixed landform has been revised as it presented the idea that the community is somehow stable. Instead it is argued that 'the micro politics of everyday social contact and encounter create relations that by their nature are fragile and temporary.'[94p.66]

This fragility, Castells argues has meant that any 'sense of space, of historical, regional or cultural identity is increasingly being dissolved by what he calls a space of flows.'[95p.23] This has been particularly heightened with the advances in technology, which as was noted in chapter three, has enabled flows of information and flows of capital all around the globe. Such 'capital investment and its associated service industry no longer depends on the characteristics of any specific location for the fulfillment of their fundamental goals.'[96p.384] Rather, it is the movement of these flows that now dominate our economic, political and symbolic life and cities are built around 'command and control centres designed as control hubs to coordinate and manage these networks of flows.'[97p.420f]

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[92] MASSEY, D. On Space and the City in ED, MASSEY, D, ALLEN, J AND PILE, S. *World Cities.* London: Routledge, 1999.
[93] SENNETT, R. *The Fall Of Public Man* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976.
[94] AMIN, A. cited by COCHRANE, A. 2007 *Op. Cit.*
[95] GORRINGE, T. *A Theology Of The Built Environment.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
[96] CASTELLS, M. *The Informational City: Information Technology, Economic Restructuring And The Urban-Regional Process.* Oxford: Blackwell, 1989.
[97] CASTELLS, M. *The Rise Of The Network Society.* Oxford: Blackwell, 2nd ed. 2000.

The combination of increased of fragility in people's personal life and the dynamic nature of these flows means that that 'urban space is increasingly differentiated in social terms while being functionally interrelated.'[98p.433] This introduces a new sociological concept which is fundamental to the reflections on praxis - that of tension. This is not just the tension between different people but also a tension between the fluidity of these relational flows and the fixed nature of urban form that is built to last at least one generation.

If it is accepted from praxis that the city embodies a tension between fluidity and stability, how is this friction resolved? Earlier in this chapter it was noted that Howard and Le Corbusier both sought to disentangle the different urban uses and create a rational sense of order. Jacobs' critique of the Modernists was that homogenous places became places of fear and social unrest. There have been two further responses to this question explored in this chapter: First, the privatised approach of Neo-Liberalism has responded to individualism and colluded with people's fears by drawing walls around themselves and living in gated communities. At the other end of the spectrum, the New Urbanists sought to reduce car use and encourage greater walkablity, deliberately seeking to create opportunities for social engagement.

The Postmodernists not only rejected the Modernists' approach but also challenged the Neo Liberal and New Urbanists for looking for resolution to the tension of the city solely in the built form. They proposed that the human flourishing was only possible through 'a transformed and better society based on the encounter in the city when strangers are thrown together.'[99p.316] Such encounters it is argued are characterised not by positive social virtues of well being and flourishing but by living with the tension of a community that is characterised by 'un-decidability and indeterminacy.'[100p.255] One of the key thinkers here is Foucault who devised the idea of a heterotopia which was like utopia except that it allowed for diversity and difference. This he argued was not some idealistic notion of how the city could be, but rather 'an enacted utopia – representing the place in which we live.'[101pp6-7] It is noteworthy that Foucault only identified two places where he felt that a heterotopia could exist. The first was in places that allowed mental deviance such as a psychiatric hospital or care home; the second was in the wonder of sacred space that celebrated and enabled transition. For instance, Harvey promotes the Christian Base Communities stemming from the Liberationist movement as a model of his dialectical utopia.[102pp.239-253] This has clear resonance with the discussion of this thesis' praxis that explored a potential call on the

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[98] *Ibid*

[99] YOUNG, I. *The Ideal Of Community and the Politics of Difference.* In ED. NICHOLSON, L *Feminism/Postmodernism* London: Routledge, 1990. pp300-326.

[100] WATSON, S AND GIBSON, K. Postmodern Politics And Planning: A Postscript. In ED. WATSON, S AND GIBSON, K. *Postmodern Cities And Spaces.* Oxford: Blackwell, 1995. pp254-264

[101] Cited by SOJA, E Heterotopologies: A Remembrance Of Other Spaces. In *Strategies* 3, 1990, pp6-37.

[102] HARVEY, D. 2000. *Op. Cit.*

church in urban development areas to enable their church buildings 'to be sacred spaces available for that moment of encounter ... in which it mediates God's hope so that sacred space becomes bound up with event, with community and with memory'[103p.40] for people caught in the midst of urban change.

To talk about the church as the sole source of hope is anathema to the Postmodern understanding of a contested city. Instead they argue there is a need for constant negotiation between the multiple narratives of the future of the city. As one of its leading exponents Lefebvre wrote 'to think about the city is to hold and maintain its conflicting aspects: constraint and possibilities, peace and violence, meetings and solitude, gathering and separation, trivial and poetic, brutal and functional.'[104p.22]
Lefebvre argues that urban space is constructed through the interaction of these social relations such that their ideas and aspirations 'project themselves into space, becoming inscribed in space and in the process of producing that space itself.'[105p.129]
Urban sociologists have therefore began to identify a new utopia not linked to the Modernist idea of progress. For, as Levitas notes, 'the main reason why it is difficult to locate a utopia in the future, credibly linked to the present, with a feasible transformation, is that our image of the present does not identify an agency or process for change to occur.'[106p.265] On the other hand, Lefebvre's idea of a socially constructed space offers a means to explain the agencies of change in any given locality.
Soja states 'all social relations remain distinct and unrealised until they are concretely expressed and symbolically inscribed in the landscape.'[107p.102] This was recognition that social interaction does not take place in a vacuum but in a specific spatial context. The nature of that place has become of great interest to those involved in urban development. It needs to be a place that allows for difference, a contested space where the different flows of people can interact. As Massey has argued 'we are increasingly living not in a space of places but in a space of flows.'[108p.167] This means such places need to be less segregated and must avoid dominance by any one socio-economic group.
This is why the Postmodernists, like the New Urbanists, challenge the Neo-Liberal urban development with its sleek shopping malls policed by security guards to keep the undesirables away, creating an artificial shared space. Rather, they argue that truly public spaces are those that capture the excitement and interaction of a city

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[103] GORRINGE, T. 2002 *Op. Cit.*
[104] LEFEBVRE. 1985. *Op. Cit.*
[105] *Ibid*
[106] LEVITAS, R. The Future Of Thinking About The Future in BIRD, J ET AL *Mapping the Futures* London: Routledge, 1993. pp257-266.
[107] Cited by GRAHAM, E AND LOWE, S *What Makes A Good City?* London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2009.
[108] MASSEY, D. 1999. *Op. Cit.* pp157-172.

street. They are seen as a third place between the place of residence and place of work 'that promote the pleasure of lingering, the serendipity of the chance encounter and the public awareness that these are shared spaces.'[109] Examples include a park, communal garden or the continental style public squares. Such places need to be open and inclusive 'allowing the diversity to come together and dwell side by side, giving to and receiving from one another.'[110p.319]

The problem in creating third spaces is that especially in "the multi-cultural city, such spaces are perceived as more of a threat than an opportunity. The threats are multiple: psychological, economic, religious and cultural. It is a complicating experiencing of fear of the other.'[111p.4] For such places to be a positive experience and not simply a place of conflict, there is a need for negotiation and translation. In other words someone needs to act as a mediator of the tension.

In a remarkably ironic twist, the Postmodernists have chosen to turn back to the maligned Town Planner to act as an mediator on behalf of the community. There are echoes of the near deification of Planners in the mid 20th Century but no longer are planners expected to have all the answers to life's social ills. Rather they are now expected to have an infinite capacity for wisdom. As Forester argues, 'the planner now needs to mediate between interests as well as negotiate with them in a collaborative process searching for both-gain outcomes and at the same time empower the powerless.'[112]

This new role poses a challenge to the planning profession that remains largely dominated by a white, middle class, male outlook trained in the Modernist mindset that the detached reason of the planning professional would always act in the public interest. For, as Sandercock argues, Postmodernism has caused 'an epistemological shift away from a monopoly of expertise and insight by professionals to an acknowledgement of the value of local or experiential knowledge.'[113p.175] As was acknowledged in the reflection on praxis, the new approach is concerned with facilitating the community to find a solution to its own problems. As Sandercock continues, 'we have moved away from the le Corbusier vision of a state directed future to an opposing vision of a fragmented metropolis driven by a chariot of community self determination.'[114p.175]

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[109] SANDERCOCK, L. *Cosmopolis II: Mongrel Cities in the 21st Century.* London: Continuum, 2003

[110] YOUNG, I. 1986. *Op. Cit.* pp300-326.

[111] SANDERCOCK, L. 2003. *Op. Cit.*

[112] FORESTER, J. *Planning In The Face Of Power* Berkley University of California Press, 1989, pp100-103.

[113] SANDERCOCK, L. *The Death Of Modernist Planning* In ED. DOUGLASS, M AND FRIEDMANN, J. *Cities For Citizens – Planning And The Rise Of A Civil Society.* New York: John Riley & Sons, 1998, pp163-84.

[114] SANDERCOCK, L. 1998. *Op. Cit.*

In this thesis' reflection on praxis it was tentatively posited that the church has the potential to mediate this tension; for churches are one of the few places that mix class and mix age from across the community.[115p.53] However, as with the professionals reflected in the planning profession, church leaders need to ensure as they engage 'in post modern urban space that they honestly acknowledge their potential for creating social breakdown as well as social cohesion.'[116p.25] It is imperative that they do not misuse their position of power and influence to exclude other people from the conversation on the basis of whether they share our faith, have another faith or none at all. In this respect, if the church is to be truly a 'steward of a public space'[117p.162] it must enable different flows of people to meet and mediate that space and even enable people to experience the transcendent.

This section has considered the Postmodern view that the nature of the city is primarily a place for social interaction and due to the competing interests at work in the city this interaction is often a source of friction. However, where interaction is high, shared understanding is possible leading to increased trust and potential for a human flourishing.

It was also noted that this interaction embodies a tension between fluidity and stability and that the city must therefore embrace difference. This has echoes of the thoughts expressed in this thesis' praxis about the tensions inherent in the city. However, questions were posed as to whether this tension was concerned with holding the paradox but progressing nowhere; or whether the tension could be mediated and hope created in the public square.

e) Learning From Urban Development

This chapter has analysed the theories and ideologies that underpin urban development to further the understanding of the themes identified in praxis – the promotion of human flourishing, the mediating of tension in city building and the representation of hope.

It was highlighted that the ideas of planning and state led change originating from a utopian ideology influenced by Modernist thinking. A commonality was identified in the desire to promote human flourishing and sense of well being. However, the Modernist approach tended to solve the tension of building a new city within the present city by sacrificing the hopes and needs of the individual to the interests to the corporate whole.

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[115] BESS, P Civic Art And The City Of God In: *Journal of Markets and Morality* 6(3), 2003, pp.33-57

[116] BAKER, C. *The Hybrid Church In The City*. London: SCM Press, 2009.

[117] JACOBSEN, E 2003a *Op. Cit.*

By the mid 20th Century, Modernist planning had been discredited for creating disintegrated communities resulting in crime and social unrest rather than promoted human flourishing. The Neo-Liberal solution was to promote property led regeneration. However far from representing hope; this market led approach reinforced the widening inequalities in society. There was demand for greater social justice and a moderated market offering moral rules and a place for neutral engagement in the public square.

This was seen in the hope of New Urbanism for an urban renaissance which sought salvation in an urban design that promoted walkability and livability. This has some resonance with ideas of promoting flourishing. However, the fact the New Urbanists needed to rely on the market to deliver their vision meant New Urbanist developments often failed to create the social interaction and sustainable communities they hoped instead they continued to create clinical soulless places.

Finally, Postmodern planning has argued that the tension and friction in social interaction can actually lead to an increased trust and potential for a human flourishing but there is a need for an independent mediator of change and a safe space for such flourishing to take place.

When Cochrane considered this Postmodern view he argued for an 'urbanism of hope'[118p.142] as he saw a reclamation of the public spaces as places of negotiation of social justice. The reflections in this thesis' praxis posited the suggestion that 'Christians could be allies in their quest to find ways of building urban settlements that encourage all to flourish and none to be oppressed.'[119p.8]

This potentially transformative role of the church as the steward of contested space means the ideologues behind urban development may need 'to look beyond the vanguard of architects, builders and government policymakers … to listen to the voices of teachers, psychologists and yes, even pastors.'[120p.73] But if the church is to be a representative of hope in the development of a new community it must also consider the extent it embraces those around them. So it is important that this social analysis now look at how the church has previously engaged with urban development.

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[118] COCHRANE, A. 2007 *Op. Cit.*
[119] GREEN, L. 2008 *Op. Cit.*
[120] JACOBSEN, E. 2003b *Op. Cit.*

Chapter Six: Learning From The Church's Past Response

This chapter considers the church's engagement with the urban development ideologies identified in the previous chapter. Until this chapter, the word 'church' has been used to describe the actions of the universal church regardless of denomination. At this stage, however, due to the confines of this study, it is necessary to limit the field of enquiry. Given the Church of England's position as the established church and because of the author's own direct experience, it seems appropriate at this stage to focus solely on the Church of England. In analysing how the church has spoken into these different urban development situations in the past, it is hoped to uncover the theological understandings that lie behind this engagement. In so doing, it offers us 'an opportunity to think theologically about some of the fundamental political realities of our own day and the different values which underlie those realities.'[1p.69] Hence, this analysis seeks to augment the consideration of this thesis' praxis by continuing to make links with the key themes identified in part one, namely: promoting human flourishing, mediating tension and representing hope.

The analysis begins by looking at the church's engagement with the expanding Victorian cities. A threefold approach combined measures to alleviate poverty, a church building programme and a growing number of professional people moving into urban areas to minister to the poor. The thesis then notes a similar approach was developed in the mid 20th Century when the church (particularly in the 1977 paper on *Planning and the Community)* began to question the role of planning. This is followed by a more detailed examination of the 1985 *Faith in the City* report which not only posited a strong critique of the neo-liberal focus on individualism but also encouraged the church to be more involved in its neighbourhood. Finally, this chapter looks at the influence of the *Faith in the City* report and in particular the role of the Church Urban Fund. This chapter does not examine the church's engagement with urban development post 1997, as this will be a subject of a deeper enquiry in part four of this thesis

a) The Victorian Church's Response

The previous chapter noted that early town planning texts often used Judaeo-Christian language to articulate an anti-urban bias and a zeal for reform. Such language was also used by church preachers. For instance, the American preacher

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[1] PLANT, R ET AL. Conservative Capitalism: Theological and Moral Challenges. In: ED. HARVEY, A. *Theology in the City. A Theological Response to Faith in the City.* London: SPCK, 1989. pp68-97

Moody is reported to have visited England in the 1870s and stated 'the city is no place for me; it is a menace to be resisted and re-directed.'[2p.162]

This theological depiction of the city as a place of evil meant that 'churches were slow starters in responding to the flood of urbanisation.'[3] This was evident in the way church leaders described the church's role in promoting flourishing in these rapidly growing cities of Victorian England. They still assumed 'a close fit between church and society that, the nature of authority, social life and political participation would circulate around the church.'[4p.xi]

This somewhat nostalgic view that the church had a pre-ordained role in forming a sense of community is not surprising given the church's dominance in agrarian society, but it failed to see how urbanisation had already begun to dramatically change people's working lives. As Davey notes whether in the past or present, 'those who move to the city in search of social well being find severe challenges, when such expectations are not met, difficulties as strangers are encountered, and the way they understand their identity and belonging fades.'[5p.419] This sense of dislocation, Wirth[6p.150] argued, meant ideas of community were being replaced by non-community, the sacred by the secular and accepted norms by a life without norms. Wirth argues that the use of religious language shows the church had a continued role in smoothing the tensions in creating new communities, by presenting ideologically polarised symbols and stereotypes. On the other hand, Gill argues 'the churches simply failed to provide the sort of supporting network (especially for the new industrial working classes) that might have preserved religious communities in urban areas.'[7p.4]

This criticism may be somewhat harsh, as there were non-denominational groups and institutions led by people like Booth and Maurice who were concerned about the changes in urban living. Their initial response was to conduct a series of social enquiries. Their findings are to be applauded as they confronted the church's anti-urban bias arguing that the 'city is to be lived in and not escaped from.'[8p.7] This led to a challenge to the church to pay more attention to the needs of the city. Booth went on to form the Salvation Army that combined mission and welfare; while Maurice was instrumental within 'proletarian movements for social and political change that played a significant role in the founding of Unions and socialist societies'[9p.420] and the forming of the Christian Socialist movement.

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[2] Cited by: CONN, H AND OTIS, M. *Urban Ministry* Downers Grove: IVP, 2001.
[3] SHEPPARD, D. *Built As A City.* London: Hodder and Stoughton p112
[4] SEDGWICK, P. Mapping An Urban Theology in: ED. SEDGWICK, P. *God In The City.* London: Mowbray, 1995. pp.xi-xix
[5] DAVEY, A. Urban Mission in ED. CORRIE, J *Dictionary Of Mission Theology.* Nottingham: IVP, 2007, pp.419-422
[6] WIRTH, L. 1938. Urbanism As A Way Of Life Reproduced as IN: ED. SENNETT, R. *Classic Essays On The Culture Of Cities.* London: Prentice-Hall, 1969. pp.143-164
[7] GILL, R. *The Myth Of The Empty Church.* London: SPCK, 1993.
[8] GARNER, R. *Facing The City.* Peterborough: Epworth Press, 2004.
[9] DAVEY, A. 2007. *Op. Cit.*

On the other hand, the reformers' language conveyed not just concern about urban poverty but also 'revulsion at the irreligiosity of the lower classes.'[10p.164] This was confirmed by the 1851 census which identified that about half of the population did not regularly attend church. This figure shocked both Church of England and Non-conformist church leaders out of their complacency. It was quickly identified that the largest section of the population not attending church were the urban working classes.

The mainstream church's response to this census was not to respond to the tensions of being church in an urban society but to argue that there were insufficient churches in the new urban areas. The consequence was a series of funding appeals so 'it was claimed that by 1888 that the Church of England had collected in voluntary contributions £80,500,000. £35million of this was spent on church building programmes.'[11p.113] Sadly this led to competition between denominations to see who could build the largest churches. Gill suggests this was fuelled by large donations from wealthy industrialists whose churches aimed to dominate the local landscape rather than serve the locality. This led to churches never being fully occupied leading to 'the disastrous effect of raising attendance rates while making churches themselves appear distinctly emptier.'[12p.186]

It would be unfair to claim that the Victorian church saw the solution to urban irreligiosity solely in building new churches. There was a third response led by movements within both the Evangelical and Anglo-catholic tradition to bring religious people of professional standing into the new urban areas. For instance, the Christian Socialist Samuel Barnett saw 'the solution to the central conflict between Christianity and a concern for the dispossessed was to come into physical contact with the poor.'[13p.73] To give concrete expression to this idea, Barnett established the Settlement House Movement as 'a means by which men or women may share themselves with their neighbours ... where the condition of membership is the performance of a citizen's duty; a house among the poor, where residents may make friends with the poor.'[14p.26] This was the beginning of the social gospel movement that attracted young theologians to emulate Jesus in bringing hope, by living among the poor.

It is noticeable that when Barnett wrote about this approach to promoting human flourishing in his book 'The Ideal City'[15] he adopted a utopian tone calling for 'a community of tomorrow where the desire for education would rule over the desire for

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[10] CONN, H AND OTIS, M. 2001. *Op. Cit.*
[11] SHEPPARD, D. 1974. *Op. Cit.*
[12] GILL, R. 1993. *Op. Cit.*
[13] THOMAS, J. The Inheritance And The Future Of Learning In East London. In *Rising East* Volume 4:2, 2001. pp.71-79
[14] BARNETT, S. University settlements IN: ED. W. REASON. *University And Social Settlements.* London: Methuen, 1898. pp.11-26
[15] BARNETT, S. 1893. *The Ideal City* Reproduced by MELLER, H. *The Ideal City.* Leicester: University of Leicester Press, 1979.

money, and with education, welfare and housing covered by the state.'[16] This near utopian vision has resonance with the work of Howard and Le Corbusier discussed in the previous chapter and reflects the way social reform was linked to moral regeneration by the Victorian reformers.

b) Church And Planning In The Mid Twentieth Century

These responses to urban development - a desire to address the causes of urban poverty, a perceived need to build new churches in the new urban development areas and a desire to live among the poor and offer signs of hope - continued to characterise the church's response to the extensive house building programmes of the mid 20th Century. A rather simplistic analysis of these urban mission approaches by Conn and Ortiz[17p.167] identifies: the Liberal approach as focused on understanding the causes of urban poverty; the Evangelical emphasis was on planting new churches in the centre of new developments; and the Catholic approach was characterised by seeking to celebrate God's hope in an area, expressed most fully in the presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

However, this is an over-generalisation as church engagement. It is probably more nuanced. This may be because Conn and Ortiz were writing in an American context; whereas the breadth of ecclesiology even within the Church of England means there is a more complex and multifaceted approach to church engagement. This is particularly evident in the three research studies carried out by the church in the mid 20th Century: The 1968 *People and Cities* conference organised by Coventry Cathedral, the Evangelical Alliance New Town Study Group report in 1971 and the Church of England Synod report in 1977 entitled *Planning for Community*.

Verney[18p.19f] writing on the Coventry *People and Cities* conference reflects on his personal struggles when seeking to engage with urban development.

First, he recalled frustration at politicians and city officers who seemed to be adopting a paternalistic approach to the planning of cities. This reflected his contemporary social critics[19] who were beginning to challenge the designs of 'the faceless concrete machines for living into which the inner urban population of Britain had been decanted in waves ... and the destruction of traditional community combined with inhumanity of these new schemes.'[20p.166] However, it was only with hindsight that Verney realised

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[16] COLLINS, M. Wired for vision *The Guardian*, Wednesday 28 May 2008
[17] CONN, H AND OTIS, M. 2001 *Op. Cit.*
[18] VERNEY, S. *People And Cities.* London: Fontana, 1969.
[19] Most notably Jane Jacobs as outlined in the previous chapter.
[20] NORTHCOTT, M. Urban Theology 1960-90 Part I in *Crucible* Oct-Dec 1990, pp161-170.

that 'politicians and city officers were just as puzzled and anxious and they needed to be drawn into the discussion to enable people to find solutions together.'[21p.19]

Second, Verney recognised the attendant danger in promoting the church as a separate social organisation with its own idealistic community arguing instead that the 'church can be a midwife for a wider sense of community.'[22p.20]

Given these profound reflections, it is interesting to note how Verney and the *People and Cities* conference identified the problem with city planning departments. They argued that planners were too focused on resolving problems of overcrowding and often ignored the human need to promote places of interaction and spaces for people to meet each other. In this respect, the conference was already identifying issues that will shape the postmodern approach to planning outlined in the previous chapter. This is evident in the conference's view that the church is uniquely qualified to create such places of interaction in three ways: First, because it is ubiquitous across the nation - crossing class and cultural boundaries. Second, because it is neutral, providing a meeting space where people can be open. Third, it is a bridge builder as its primary purpose is to help people meet each other and meet God.

In recognising the complexity of urban development and seeing that the church's role is to work in service of the city, the *People and Cities* conference draws similar solutions to those posited in this thesis. For they concluded that the church should focus on 'helping people to meet each other ... to show the reality of forgiveness is only known through tension and agonizing self awareness ... that men may come to a full recognition and acceptance of God's Love.'[23p.129(sic.)] Such an approach reflects the themes identified in this thesis' praxis and avoids the false separation of personal evangelism, addressing the causes of urban poverty and conveying the message of hope in the midst of change.

Interestingly, when the Evangelical Alliance brought together a New Town Study Group to look at new development areas, they also recognised these themes. They noted that new developments were characterised by weakened kinship ties and a lack of social and cultural facilities which offered 'an opportunity for Christian friendship and evangelism.'[24p.15] They also identified the benefits of churches being placed in new housing areas 'from the start so they could provide the manpower for social and community work.'[25p.39(sic.)]

On the other hand, the Study Group's main strategy remained heavily mission focused with much of the report dedicated to exploring how new church buildings could meet

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[21] VERNEY, S. 1969 *Op. Cit.*
[22] *Ibid.*
[23] *Ibid.*
[24] EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE NEW TOWN STUDY GROUP. *Evangelical Strategy In New Towns.* London: Scripture Union, 1971.
[25] *Ibid.*

the needs of the wider community. It is worth noting, however, they do advocate churches leaders work alongside 'Council Development Workers to play an active part in developing the new community.'[26p.24]

This desire for the church to be more engaged in the shaping of these new communities seemed to gather momentum during the 1970s as at the 1973 Church of England's General Synod, a Mr Godin 'drew attention to the mission opportunities in areas of urban development but he also exposed the emotional and spiritual consequences of ill conceived and inadequate planning.'[27p.7]

This led directly to the 1977 report by the Church of England entitled *Planning for Community* which argued for a 'systematic conversation and study of how one relates Christian belief to issues of planning and community.'[28p.7] This report questioned the planned approach to urban development that had dominated English Planning since 1945 with its implied assumptions that social well being and human flourishing were inevitable products of good physical design.

The *Planning for Community* report therefore marked a significant change in tone regarding the established church's engagement with those affected by urban development. Previously the church had presented itself as a key ally to the state led planning, for example the 1944 report 'The Church and the Planning of Britain' had contributed to the shaping of the post war planning acts and it had encouraged Christians to share in the activity related to town and country planning. On the other hand, the 1977 report developed a more critical edge as it questioned the role of planning in bolstering the power of the ruling elites. It argued that 'the state has been promoted as the agency responsible for remodelling competing interests, but the difficulty has been that the apparatus of state operates in such a way to confirm in power a ruling elite.'[29p.13]

There is great irony here, for as noted above 'the Church of England in particular has never had a good relationship with the urban working class. It has been seen as traditionally aligning itself with the powerful and privileged.'[30p.28] Yet in contrast to the Victorian Church approach that had sought to reinforce old social orders, the 1977 report actively sought to re-align itself with those who argued for a more community development or grassroots approach based on resolving local tensions through promoting a participatory planning system.

Identifying itself with disadvantaged groups represented a significant shift in the church's position, it is important therefore to understand what led to this change in

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[26] *Ibid.*
[27] Cited by WORKING PARTY OF THE BOARD OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY. *Planning For Community.* London: CIO Publishing, 1977.
[28] *Ibid.*
[29] *Ibid.*
[30] ARCHBISHOP'S COMMISSION ON UPAS. *Faith In The City.* London: Church House Publishing, 1985.

perspective. In part, it was a growing connection with the ideas of the Liberation Theologians discussed in chapter two. Rooted in the struggles of Latin America the Liberationists argued that, 'if the church wishes to be faithful to the teachings of the God of Jesus Christ, it must become aware of itself from underneath, from among the poor of this world, the exploited classes, despised ethnic groups and marginalised cultures.'[31p.211] However, this shift in the church's perspective on their involvement in the city crossed traditional theological differences for it is also reflected in the book 'Bias to the Poor'[32] written by the more evangelically minded bishop, David Sheppard.

This perspective that the church should represent hope to the poor and marginalised was reflected in the 1977 *Planning and Community* report, which argued that 'struggles about planning are often struggles about power and about how to share resources ... The church has resources of hope and salvation which enable people to face complexity with simplicity and the future with hope.'[33p.35]

This idea of the church representing the needs and concerns of the marginalised clearly has deep resonance with this thesis' idea of representing hope. This was evident in the growth of new styles of working among the poor and dispossessed.

> Whereas in the sixties and early seventies they had been primarily interested in working with key people, with the decision makers, mangers and union officials; by the end of the seventies, they had begun to involve themselves in schemes for the unemployed and in campaigning and lobbying both church and society and about the effects of unemployment.[34p.167]

Likewise, the local church became less preoccupied with understanding the needs of the poor but began to act from the perspective of the poor. 'Churches employed church based community workers in an attempt to halt or even reverse the demise of community resources and showed solidarity in dealing with the opportunities and challenges of poverty.'[35p.167]

c) Faith in the City and its impact

This concern with urban poverty and a bias towards the poor continued in the 1980s with the appointment of an Archbishop's Commission to report on the church's strategy for the inner city. The bias is reflected in the makeup of the Commission. It was chaired by Richard O'Brien, the previous head of the Manpower Services Commission (a creation of the state led corporatist approach of the 1970s) and the vice chair was Bishop David Sheppard. Other members included Revd Alan Billings, the Deputy Leader of Sheffield Council which promoted the radical ideas of the New Urban Left as discussed in the previous chapter.

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[31] GUTIÉRREZ, G. *The Power of the Poor In History*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1983.
[32] SHEPPARD, D. *Bias To The Poor* London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1983.
[33] WORKING PARTY OF THE BOARD OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY. 1977. *Op. Cit.*
[34] NORTHCOTT, M. 1990. *Op. Cit.*
[35] *Ibid.*

The prophetic principle that the church should stand in solidarity with the poor is seen in the introduction to the *Faith in the City* Report:

> The church does not have a particular competence or a distinguished record in proposing social reform. But the Church of England has a presence in Urban Priority Areas and a responsibility to bring their needs to the attention of the nation. ... As a national church we need to show our support and solidarity with them and make them a high priority in our policies, actions and prayers.[36p.xiv&p.xvi]

This approach reflected that of the Victorian social reformers and the 1977 *Planning and Community* report. However, the Archbishop's Commission sought to 'move away from being a protective helper for individual victims to becoming a protagonist of social change – challenging those in power and risking losing one's own power.'[37p.49]

This challenge to those in power was particularly directed at the Thatcherite government of the time, which as the previous chapter has already identified, had promoted a neo-liberal policy agenda. This had led to a significant shift in urban policy, away from a public sector led social policy towards a private sector economic driven policy. Such a shift saw the focus of policy not on the structures of society but on the role of the individual. Given the divergent views of church and state, it is not surprising tension would develop. The publication of the *Faith in the City* report was greeted by with a major stir in government circles. One anonymous minister was said to have called it thoroughly Marxist[38p.31] while the Daily Mail called the report 'a flawed gospel that is beneath contempt.'[39]

The unintended consequence of these attacks was that the *Faith in the City* report received far more publicity than previous church reports. It ignited a national debate not just between the church and government but with a wider audience that included the business leaders, universities, unions, and local authorities. Reflecting back on the debates, Billing saw it as an opportunity for the church to review its representative role - no longer to be seen as part of the establishment but to 'become the authentic voice of the voiceless in some of the country's most deprived areas.'[40p.13]

Dyson in a review of the report at the time felt it represented 'the repentance and rebirth of the Church of England'[41p.486] and its role in shaping the political and integrity of English society.

This radical view of the potential of the report is reflected by Plant and others who argued that 'the authors of *Faith in the City* are assuming the worst off members of society have a right based on justice for some rectification of their condition. It is

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[36] ARCHBISHOP'S COMMISSION ON UPAS, 1985. *Op. Cit.*
[37] *Ibid*.
[38] Cited by HOBSON, P. *A Voice In The City*. Warwick: CPAS / Scripture Union, 1993.
[39] JOHNSON, P. in *Daily Mail* 3rd December 1985
[40] BILLING, A. 1985. And The Day War Broke Out in *Church Times*, 3rd December 2010.
[41] DYSON, A. 'Review of Faith in the City' in *Theology* LXXXIX/732, 1986.

precisely this which New Right thinkers deny.'[42p.72] This was because the New Right ideology was not based on the redistribution of resources but on 'trickle down' theory that 'government should leave it to the market to govern distribution and let its outcomes lie as they fall. The poor may be poorer in the end but their freedom will not have been diminished.'[43p.54] This contrast between individual freedom and social justice meant the Commission's view 'that the nation is confronted with a grave and fundamental injustice in UPAs was using a yardstick of injustice which was not necessarily shared by the policy makers they hoped to influence.'[44p.53]

Whether the original commissioners saw the report in such a politically charged manner is unlikely. Garner ponders whether the 'Commission failed to appreciate the shift in ideology and that the Prime Minister was wedded to the notion of competition and individualism'[45p.30] rather than deliberately setting out to challenge the fundamental injustice of the New Right policy. While Dyson in a more reflective mood, ten years after the publication of the report, notes *Faith in the City* rejects both market capitalism and bureaucratic socialism. He therefore argues that '*Faith in the City* is rooted in the traditions of pragmatic social science which had provided the backbone of the post 1945 consensus.'[46p.217]

The *Faith in the City* report certainly drew a significant line in the church's engagement with the city. It was meticulously researched and based on extensive factual and statistical analysis. In this respect, 'it reinforced the anti-poverty lobby that has been saying for years that there has been a growth of urban poverty.'[47p.137] This was seen in the large amount of space devoted to social issues relating to poverty, unemployment, education, health and crime.

On the other hand, the report 'failed to engage with the unpredictable processes that create a modern city.'[48p.32] This meant that there is comparably little discussion of urban development and especially the impact of the Neo-Liberal policy on the built environment. The majority of the discussion on urban policy appears focused on the impact of the Urban Programme and Inner Urban Areas Act that predated the Conservative government; while, there is little reference to planning or the property led regeneration policy. This significant shift in urban policy is covered in a section on the economy and is focused on a critique of the Urban Development Corporations set up to lever private capital into places like Docklands.

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[42] PLANT, R. 1989. *Op. Cit.*
[43] RUSSELL, H. *Poverty Close to Home. A Christian Understanding.* London: Mowbray, 1995.
[44] *Ibid*.
[45] GARNER, R. 2004. *Op. Cit.*
[46] DYSON A. Faith In The City Ten Years On In *The Way* Vol.34, 1994. pp210-220.
[47] LEECH, K. *Struggle In Babylon.* London: Sheldon Press, 1988.
[48] GARNER, R. 2004. *Op. Cit.*

The Commission did express 'serious reservations at the lack of participation and consultation'[49p.193] and it argued for a more partnership based approach that recognised tensions and conflicts in local opinion over the future of their area but argued for greater engagement with the local voluntary and private sector in a more bottom up than top down approach.[50pp.185-187] It has already been noted in chapter five that the church was not alone in making these criticisms and many of their criticisms were accepted by subsequent governments.

It is important to remember that the *Faith in the City* report did not simply offer a critique of government policy of its time. As Archbishop Runcie himself noted a few years later, 'it seems to be forgotten that there were far more recommendations addressed to the church than to the nation.'[51p.v] A large part of the report represented a call to the church to get involved in the concerns of what they called Urban Priority Areas (UPAs). So it is important to assess the *Faith in the City* report's recommendations that the local church get involved in shaping their community, and the extent to which the recommendations reflect the threefold approach of promoting flourishing, mediating tension and bringing hope.

On the issue of promoting flourishing, Garner argues that one of the things that 'made the report so exciting was its conviction that a vision of human flourishing and community was still to be found in inner urban areas.'[52p.28] Indeed, the report actively encouraged the local church to be more committed to work in their area and with other local organisations such as the police, schools, Local Authority and other voluntary sector groups. They recognise that 'definitions and methods may differ, but the idea of generating some 'sense of community' remains of value and is generally agreed to be desirable.'[53p.57]

Second, it argued that the church must work with the disadvantaged, rather than for them. The report promoted 'community work as a legitimate lay ministry ... integrally linked to discipleship and worship.'[54p.288] The report therefore faces head on the frustration and tensions between serving the needs of the community and the local congregation. It actively promotes a local, outward-looking church that seeks to participate in the transforming of its neighbourhood. Paid Community Workers are commended to work in sustained collaboration with other local players to 'foster a sense of shared attitudes and strengthen the experience of human esteem and belonging.'[55p.288]

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[49] ARCHBISHOP'S COMMISSION ON UPAS, 1985. *Op. Cit.*
[50] *Ibid*
[51] RUNCIE, R. in *Forward* to GRUNDY, M. *Light In The City.* Norwich: Canterbury Press, 1990
[52] GARNER, R. 2004. *Op. Cit.*
[53] ARCHBISHOP'S COMMISSION ON UPAs. 1985. *Op. Cit.*
[54] *Ibid*
[55] *Ibid.*

Finally, there are some lengthy chapters on the nature of worship and the need to train Priests who are better able to minister to the different needs of the UPA parishes. More informal worship is advocated that is more flexible in meeting the needs of the local population. Acknowledging the harsh reality of life in a changing urban neighbourhood, the report 'recognised the importance of the symbolic power of the local congregation living out such a witness as a pre-figuration of a more perfect vision'[56p.199] to be a tangible expression of God and represent his presence through 'celebration, confession, compassion and judgement'[57p.17] in the community where it is set.

One of the main criticisms of the *Faith in the City* report is that it has lacked a strong theological underpinning. Harvey argued that '*Faith in the City* is too practical and pragmatic with a weak and incoherent theology.'[58p.1] While Frank Field MP, a significant Labour spokesman on issues associated with poverty felt the 'theological analysis was tacked on at the end and it failed to offer God's vision of the world.'[59p.4]
This critique is not totally fair for, as Leech[60p.147] notes, it is actually addressed in chapter three in the *Faith in the City* report. In this chapter, the Archbishop's Commission focused on the role of structural injustice and called for a theology based on 'bearing one another's burdens and solidarity with the poorest and most vulnerable.'[61p.15] Furthermore the final paragraph of the report makes it clear:

> We know that there is a transforming power present in human affairs bringing new life into desert places. If we dare to affirm Jesus Christ then we must also offer a commitment to create a society in which everyone benefits and burdens are shared. Any attempt to base a society on any other foundation carries with it the nemesis of suffering, bitterness and social disintegration. We must stand alongside the risen Christ with those who are poor and powerless.[62p.360]

This is a courageous theological statement that underlined the report's call for the church to be a voice for those with the least power; seeking to create 'a Christian community is one that open to and responsible for the whole of society in which it is set and proclaims its care for the weak, its solidarity with all and its values which lie beyond mere satisfaction of material needs.'[63p.59]
There are clear links to Liberation Theology. One cannot under estimate the influence of this ideology on urban theology at this time. For the continued focus on the 'preferential option for the poor'[64] is writ large in the theological method of the report

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[56] GRAHAM, E. *Words Made Flesh.* London: SCM Press, 2009
[57] HOBSON, P. 1993. *Op. Cit.*
[58] HARVEY, A. Introduction: An Alternative Theology in ED. HARVEY, A *Theology In The City.* London: SPCK, 1989. pp1-14
[59] FIELD, F. cited by GRUNDY, M. 1990 *Op. Cit.*
[60] LEECH, K. 1988. *Op. Cit.*
[61] GRAHAM, E. A Decisive Message *Church Times*, 3rd December 2010
[62] ARCHBISHOP'S COMMISSION ON UPAs. 1985. *Op. Cit.*
[63] *Ibid*
[64] This phrase is accredited to GUTIÉRREZ, G. 1983. *Op. Cit.*

that lauds Liberation Theology as the means to 'open up the possibility that new priorities as well as new methods can restore us to a theology that is truly relevant to the needs and aspirations of people today.'[65p.9] The trend continued in the further report by the Archbishop's Commission in 1990 entitled *Living Faith In The City.* This report saw the role of theology as primarily enabling Christians to seek out where God is at work and through theological reflection make the connections with God's word in a communal and collaborative manner. This approach, 'brings together in utmost seriousness: the present practice, the revealed Word of God and the reality in which people live and then through reflections in community there emerges a need for action based on the hope of God's coming kingdom.'[66p.12]

This sign of hope is linked to another theological metaphor that was explored at this time - the idea of the church as sacrament. This was the reflected in Archbishop Runcie's speech at the launch of the *Faith in the City* report to General Synod quoted earlier, when he called for 'the church to be truly a sign of the Kingdom and love of God present in our midst.'[67p.24]

This idea has its origins in Augustine who postulated that 'the church is a sign for and a foretaste of the Holy City.'[68p.12] However, the commissioners themselves questioned the appropriateness of this image in the 1990 *Living Faith in the City* report. For they felt that the 'sign of the sacrament is deeply flawed if the church does not reflect liberation but power and control, and remains associated not with the poor but privileged and powerful.'[69p.12] The problem of focusing on this theological notion was that such a 'vision of the City of God must not represent an unrealistic future hope but spiritualised in our world.'[70p.15]

The *Faith in the City* report has been described as 'a watershed in English Christian social thought.'[71p.191] It focused the attention of the church and state on the needs of Urban Priority Areas even if it did not directly address issues of urban development. Its focus on the preferential action for the poor and marginalised highlighted a clear link to Liberation Theology; while its call for greater intervention by both the church and state identified a new role for the local church in supporting urban communities. Direct connections can therefore be made between the Commission's recommendations and the themes of human flourishing, mediating tension and representing hope which have already been identified as central to the praxis of promoting urban development.

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[65] ARCHBISHOP'S COMMISSION ON UPAs. 1985. *Op. Cit.*
[66] ARCHBISHOP'S COMMISSION ON UPAs. *Living Faith In The City*. London: General Synod Of The Church Of England, 1990.
[67] Cited by GARNER, R. 2004. *Op. Cit.*
[68] ARCHBISHOP'S COMMISSION ON UPAs. 1990. *Op. Cit.*
[69] *Ibid.*
[70] *Ibid.*
[71] GRAHAM, E, 2009 *Op. Cit.*

d) Church Engagement Post *Faith In The City*

In presenting the *Faith in the City* report to church and nation at the General Synod, the Archbishop of Canterbury commented:

> This report makes pressing claims on the church's mind, heart and will. We are beginning to grasp that if the church is truly to be a sign of God's kingdom and God's loving presence in our midst, then longer implications and changes are required.[72p.24]

It is important therefore to trace the long term response to the *Faith in the City* report by both the church and state, to assess whether it did in fact move the issues of the urban poor and the role of the Church of England into the centre of discussion about urban policy in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

It is interesting to note that despite the initially hostile response to the report, the Archbishop's newly appointed advisor on UPAs (Pat Dearnley) held many meetings with senior government officials and ministers.[73p.17] Dearnley has argued in retrospect that these discussions contributed to the shift in government policy and Margaret Thatcher's comment upon re-election in 1987 that 'we have a lot of work to do in those inner cities.'[74p.17]

On the other hand, Bowpitt argues that 'a superficial look at the Conservative Party manifesto at the 1987 general election reveals some sort of commitment to just four of the twenty three recommendations to the Government.'[75p.29] This gap between the government's commitment to revisit its policy on inner cities and the willingness to commit to the recommendations of the *Faith in the City* report may have less to do with ongoing political differences between church and state and more to do with the scale and pace of change. As McCurry reflects ten years after the publication of the report:

> 'The pace of change in society has been rapid: hardly was *Faith in the City* published than its recommendations in fields such as housing, education, social services, welfare benefits, health were out of date. During these ten years we have had a government which called itself radical: it set out to change society and fast; and the institutions of human society can be destroyed much faster than they can be built.'[76p.4]

Having said this, many of the recommendations that urban policy become more socially minded were heeded. The promotion of human flourishing did appear much more obvious in the new policy initiatives such as the Single Regeneration Budget, Housing Action Trusts, Estates Action and promotion of Housing Associations as the solution to the need for greater social housing.

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[72] Cited by GARNER, R. 2004. *Op. Cit.*
[73] DEARNLEY, P. Something Had To Be Done in *Church Times*, 3rd December 2010.
[74] Cited in *Ibid.*
[75] Cited by BISHOPS' ADVISORY GROUP ON UPAs. *Staying in the City.* London: Church House Publishing, 1995.
[76] MCCURRY, R. Ten Years On in Ed. SEDGWICK, P. 1985 *Op. Cit.* pp3-8

The state therefore took on board some of the direction of the *Faith in the City* report. At the same time the Church of England began to take forward the thirty eight recommendations for change in its own approach to promoting flourishing in UPA parishes. For as Davey notes, 'unlike many reports, this one seemed, at least for a period, to have been read and taken to heart ... It established a lasting impression of the church's commitment to a sustained presence and engagement in marginal communities.'[77] This commitment required two things: to work more closely with local people and to raise greater financial resources.

These two things came together in 1987 with the plans for the Church Urban Fund (CUF) which was launched in April 1988. It was originally intended that CUF would receive an annual grant of £1 million from the church commissioners and raise a further £4million a year. A national campaign sought to raise £18million. In fact, the publicity around the *Faith in the City* meant that within eighteen months of its launch CUF had raised an astonishing £12million and by 1999, £31million had been raised.[78] Some of this funding came from large corporate donations, but most of the monies raised were through voluntary donations and a genuine desire to 'do something for their fellow citizens trapped in high-rise flats and soul-less council estates.'[79] Many suburban churches began to understand the needs of their cities better. In this respect the report did break down the social divides within the church. For instance, the Diocese of Sheffield twinned churches in the UPAs with church in suburban and rural locations to enhance understanding of each other's social context.

The launch of CUF enabled the national church to translate the political rhetoric of *Faith in the City* into action. 'A direct outcome was that many churches tried to relate more closely to their neighbourhood through opening up their buildings to greater community use and or specific social and community projects.'[80p.248] The hallmark of CUF's work was not on initiating action rather in helping to alleviate the financial constraints that prevented local people carrying out actions in their own neighbourhoods. A national network of Diocesan link officers was appointed and each Diocese was asked to facilitate local parish audits to enable local churches to be better informed about the issues in their neighbourhoods. Individual parishes could then apply for CUF funds through their Diocese.

An evaluation of the CUF funded projects identified that CUF projects not only responded to the challenges of *Faith in the City* but were also 'shaped by the longer Anglican social tradition'[81p.2] that was noted earlier in this chapter. So CUF funded projects reflected previous church engagement in that they were focused on the

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[77] DAVEY, A. On Not Taking The City For Granted. Talk at the *How Should We Live In Cities Now*? Conference January 17th 2011, Leeds.
[78] ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL. *Review Of The Church Urban Fund.* London: General Synod Of The Church Of England, 2000.
[79] DEARNLEY, P. 2010. *Op. Cit.*
[80] RUSSELL, H. 1995 *Op. Cit.*
[81] FARNELL, R ET AL. *Hope In The City?* Sheffield: CRESR, 1994.

adaption and re-development of many UPA churches to serve the needs of the local community. The development of so called broad-based organising, with paid community workers who worked as 'church without walls'[82] – led to an increase in the level of trust in the church and strengthening the community by seeking to reduce tensions in their neighbourhoods. These innovative programmes tackled poverty and plant 'seeds of hope.'[83] Once again there are clear connections with the themes identified in this thesis' praxis.

The majority of CUF projects were aimed at alleviating poverty. However, there have been fewer projects related to urban development, though some projects did lead to the church becoming a partner in urban development in their locality. One such project is based in the London Borough of Newham and is linked to reflection in praxis referred to in part one.

The Newham Council Church Liaison Group was set up in response to the property developments orchestrated by the London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC) during the 1990s. As noted in chapter three, the 'LDDC experience was a warning of what may happen when private property developers are given free rein.'[84p.111] The Beckton housing estate in the Royal Docks housed many tenants from Newham's council housing waiting list but it was built with inadequate community facilities. The streets soon became scenes of potential unrest as youths were involved in acts of anti social behaviour. It was noted earlier that the Commissioners in the *Faith in the City* report challenged the lack of overall planning and the democratic deficit in the workings of the LDDC. The view of the local church ministers was that 'from the perspective of the poor inner city resident, the whole operation seemed unjust and irrational.'[85p.111]

The church therefore called on the local Council to help them work with the LDDC to build a community centre (part funded by CUF). The centre was built and it became a key local community location and was followed by a Doctors' surgery, library and local service centre. The success of this project led to the Church Liaison Group being rolled out across the whole borough.[86]

The success of this project shows what can happen when the local church begins to engage in shaping its locality. However, there were questions raised in the 1990s as to whether the national 'Church of England would keep its nerve and use the work of the fund as an arm of its social lobbying or back off into the quieter waters of

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[82] COOPER, S. CUF funded Community Development Worker, in conversation with author 3rd July 2006.
[83] This was the title of the CUF fund raising campaign in 2009.
[84] LEECH, K. *Through Our Long Exile* London: Darton Longman & Todd, 2001.
[85] *Ibid.*
[86] This case study was made possible, as the author advised this group from 1997-99.

simply doing good.'[87p.125] The 1994 evaluation report discussed above, identified a lack of strategy behind the fund and in particular an unwillingness to engage with issues such as: the economic structural change associated with a shift towards a post industrial society; political marginalisation of the poor; continued racial injustice.[88p.5] This is not too surprising, for the Commissioners behind *Faith in the City* had noted that 'while members of the church have generally found it congenial to express their discipleship by helping individual victims of misfortune, fewer are willing to rectify the injustices in the structure of society.'[89p.49] Garner goes further to suggest that it was a preference for a 'theology of good works as opposed to a theology of transformation.'[90p.28]

These questions would continue to be debated throughout CUF's grant making programmes but when its funding resources began to diminish, critics such as Russell questioned the lasting commitment of the Church of England suggesting that the 'channelling of specifically raised CUF monies to UPAs allowed the church to duck the challenge to re-order its mainstream budgets or relinquish power to UPAs. CUF is a smokescreen to carry on business as usual.'[91p.248] It is interesting to note that the Bishops' Advisory Group on UPAs addressed this critique head on in the *Staying in the City* report published ten years after *Faith in the City* where they noted that 'the church's presence in these areas gives it authority to speak but it also needs the church's continued commitment to resource this presence.'[92p.48] Once again there is a need to hold the tension between those in power and the powerless. As Russell argues 'the signs of hope only arise when one works not just for the poor but with the poor.'[93p.269]

e) Conclusion And Summary Of Part Two – Social Analysis

This part of the thesis has focused on the social analysis phase of the pastoral cycle. The previous chapter explored the evolution of urban development ideas while this chapter has identified the trends behind the church's engagement with urban development. These key themes are now added to the three circles diagram presented at the end of part one to form the new Figure 6.1 at the end of this chapter.

The three squares show how urban development theory has interacted with the key themes identified in praxis.

The ideal of promoting human flourishing was adopted by both the state led Utopian ideology (influenced by Modernist ideas) and later by the New Right or Neo-liberal

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[87] GRUNDY, M. 1990 *Op. Cit.*
[88] FARNELL, R ET AL. 1994.
[89] ARCHBISHOP'S COMMISSION ON UPAs. 1985. *Op. Cit.*
[90] GARNER, R. 2004. *Op. Cit.*
[91] RUSSELL, H. 1995. *Op. Cit.*
[92] BISHOPS' ADVISORY GROUP ON UPAs. 1995 *Op. Cit*
[93] RUSSELL, H. 1995. *Op. Cit*

focus on market led solutions that celebrated individual freedoms. Post modern planning has also sought a middle path to create social capital and a sense of well being by promoting flourishing neighbourhoods.

The need for an external body to mediate the tensions created by urban development was why the state was co-opted by the Modernists to create the planning profession to work in the public interest. Its critics suggested that the state sought the cheapest option and preferred market led solutions leading to a property-led regeneration but these policies too have had their critics. A middle path is again emerging that sees some kind of friction as inevitable in social interaction and post modern planners see this as a means to create justice and equity.

The idea of representing hope is linked to the idea that planning is concerned with balancing the hopes of the individual vis-à-vis the corporate whole. However, in seeking to create room for the conversation about what is in the public interest, an urbanism of hope is promoted. This sees the reclamation of public spaces, such as churches as places where social interaction can take place. Although, these places will need facilitators to enable the negotiation of social justice so that the decisions create hope for all and not just the few.

This social analysis has therefore helped to develop an understanding of the ideology and theoretical perspectives that underpin urban development. This chapter has then sought to make a connection with the church's engagement in urban development.

It has been argued that though the church was a slow starter in responding to urbanisation, a threefold pattern of church engagement has emerged over time based on: seeking to address the causes of urban poverty; building new churches in new development areas; promoting initiatives to live among the poor and offer signs of hope.

It was also recognised that though initially the church had tended to align itself with those in power and sought to shape the new urban communities from a position of dominance, this position had changed over time as the church increasingly began to position itself alongside disadvantaged groups. In part, this was fuelled by a growing connection with the ideas of the Liberation Theologians who focused not just on understanding the needs of the poor but seeking to act from the perspective of the poor.

Reflecting back on the church's engagement with urban areas, meaningful links can be made with a praxis based on: promoting flourishing for all; helping people hold tension; a desire to show the power of hope.

In terms of supporting human flourishing, church leaders have sought to shape town planning since its inception but by 1977 the Church of England had began to

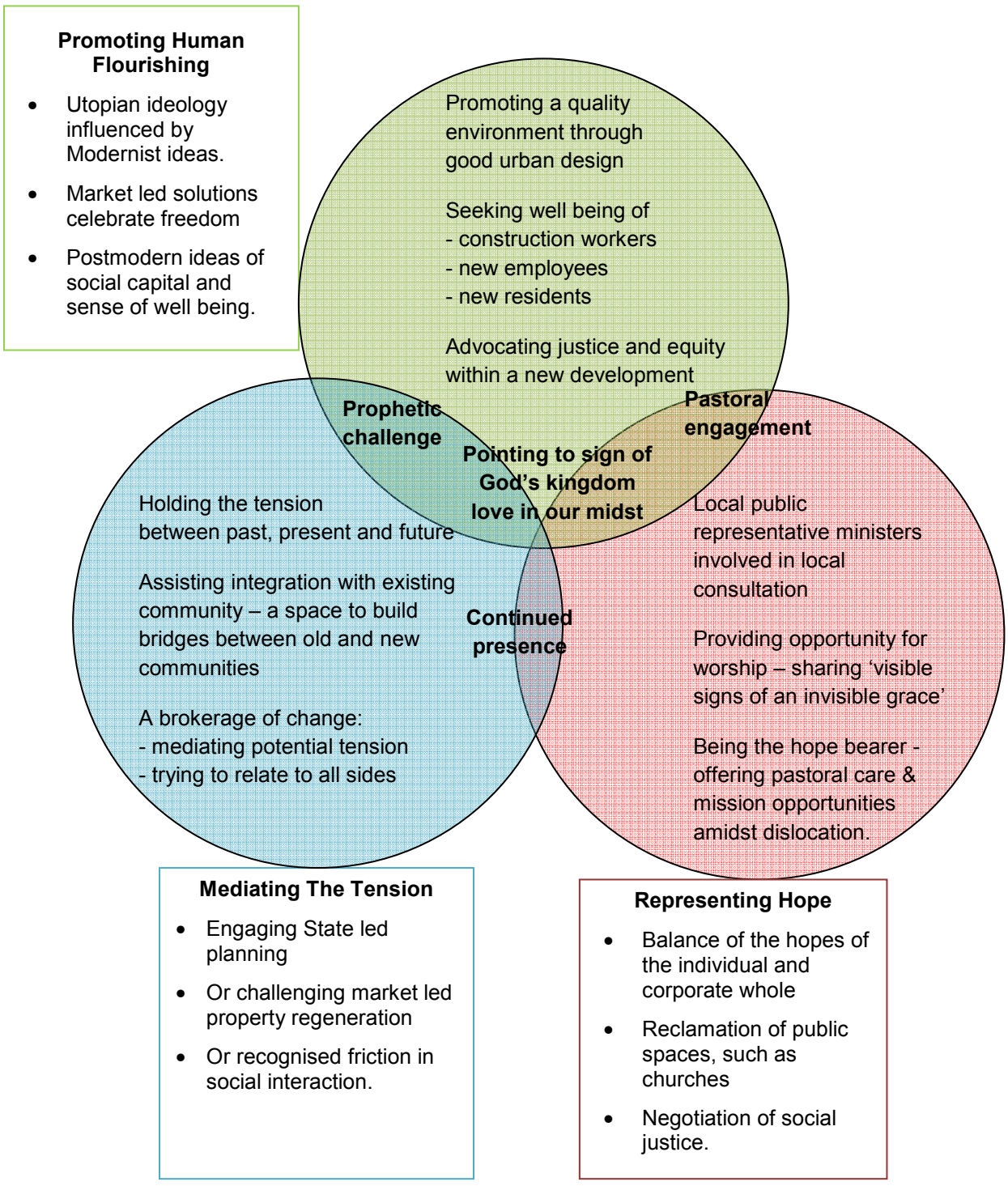
challenge the planned approach to urban development with its assumptions that social well being was the inevitable product of good physical design. Whilst the *Faith in the City* report saw value in local projects that generated a sense of community, leading to the launch of the Church Urban Fund whereby local churches were able to part fund projects to promote flourishing.

This outward-looking approach engages people who live in the local area but has also exposed the church to the tension between those in power and the powerless. This has led to some leaders challenging those in power about injustice whilst encouraging churches to relate to changes in their neighbourhood and open up their buildings to greater community use. Community Development Workers have been at the forefront in holding this tension, employed in the new towns that saw the church emerge as a champion of the participatory planning system; while *Faith in the City* argued for the Community Development Workers to engage with the local voluntary and private sector to promote transformation in the neighbourhood.

In terms of representing hope in new urban areas, the church has a strong pedigree in standing alongside those who are disaffected and struggling with the effects of change, for example the social gospel movement with its roots in the Settlement Houses of the Victorian period. The *Faith in the City* report called for the church to explore new forms of worship to seek to offer a tangible expression of God at work and so enable people to face an uncertain future with hope.

This means that though the church's role can be mapped against the themes identified in praxis (see Figure 6.1 at the end of this chapter) the key themes are beginning to overlap for the church is also present at their interface based on: offering prophetic challenge, continued presence, and pastoral engagement. Taken together, the church is charged with pointing to signs of God's kingdom love in our midst.

FIGURE 6.1 Linking Praxis To Social Analysis



PART THREE: Hermeneutical Reflection

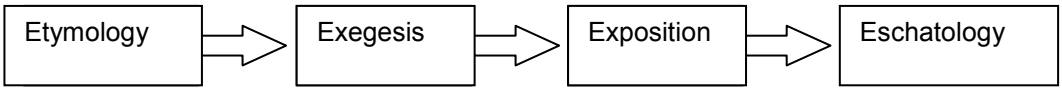
Chapter Seven: Introducing A Political Hermeneutic

a) A Note on Methodology

The first two parts of this thesis have sought to outline the context of urban development and the church's experiences in engaging with this process. Three overarching themes have been identified from praxis: Promoting human flourishing, mediating tension and representing hope. Having listened to the stories of past engagement and then analysed their ideological and theoretical underpinnings, the third stage of the pastoral cycle methodology is to bring these themes 'into creative interaction with the resources of Christian history and spirituality.'[1p.23]

This interaction will be explored using the tools of hermeneutics. These tools have developed over time in both philosophical and theological reflection and different methodologies have been promoted. The four stages of hermeneutical reflection used in this thesis are those offered by Moltmann in what he terms a political hermeneutic. These stages are shown in figure 7.1 below.

Figure 7.1 A political hermeneutic



Source: MOLTMANN, J. *The Experiment Hope.* Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975. p9

This first stage is etymology, which is used to determine the literary sense of the text or symbol in its overall Biblical context. This requires a careful understanding of the historical context to identify what Gadamer calls the 'historical horizon' for he argues that:

> When we want to understand sentences that have been handed down to us, we engage in historical reflections, from which it is determined just where and how these sentences are said, what their actual motivational background is and therewith what their actual meaning is. When we want to represent a sentence as such to ourselves we must, therefore, represent its historical horizon.[2p.44]

The development of the historical horizon continues in the second stage, which is an exegesis, an interpretation the practical meaning of the text or symbol in its specific Biblical context. This involves taking seriously the Biblical texts and what is meant in that particular context, as well as beginning to assess whether this is a similar context to that already identified in praxis.

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[1] NORTHCOTT, M. 'Urban Theology 1960-90 Part II' in *Crucible* Jan-Mar 1991, pp17-24.
[2] GADAMER, H-G 'What is Truth?' in WACHTERHAUSER, B *Hermeneutics and Truth* Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1994. pp42-65

This reflects the Liberation Theology roots of the Pastoral Cycle methodology which draws together the scriptural and contemporary context. This approach differs from Biblical Studies methodologies which prefer to focus on historiography based solely on the Biblical context. This has often meant deconstructing the Biblical texts using the tools of Biblical criticism. There has therefore been 'a certain discomfort with contemporary applications ... compared to historical analysis and textual evidence.'[3p.2] In the author's mind, the value of the Liberation Theological approach is it carries a conviction that 'the Bible offers a source of alternative value systems and … provides a resource for the current task and place of the church.'[4p.x, p.xii]

This claim that the Biblical text can speak into the contemporary context forms the basis of the third stage, that of exposition, whereby, a dialogical relationship is established between the Biblical past and present context. This enables the present reader not just to explore the meaning of the historical horizon but also to begin seeking an understanding of present context through what Gadamer refers to as 'the fusion of horizons' whereby:

> The horizon of the present is being continually formed though encounter with the past and the understanding of the tradition from which we come... this process of fusion is continually going on, for there old and new continually grow together to make something of living value, without either being explicitly distinguished from the other.[5p.273]

This fusion stage is crucial to hermeneutical reflection. Brueggemann argues it creates a 'double loyalty to scholarship and to the community of faith.'[6p.33] Brueggemann therefore advocates a hermeneutic based on the prophetic imagination which seeks a dynamic equivalent between sociological contexts in the Biblical time and the present. Where 'the text offers an imagined alternative to the established ideology … it can lead the reader or listener beyond the presently discerned reality to a new reality formed at the moment of speaking or hearing.'[7p.17]

This future orientated approach leads to the final stage in the political hermeneutic - the seeking of an eschatological meaning behind the text. This is a particular focus of Moltmann's approach to hermeneutics for he argues that the eschatological dimension to the Christian faith has been sidelined by both scholars who focus solely on Biblical text and by practitioners who are too quick to seek application in the present. Instead, Moltmann argues for a focus on God's promise of a

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[3] SMITH-CHRISTOPHER, D. *A Biblical Theology Of The Exile.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002.
[4] KLEIN, R. *Israel In Exile: A Theological Interpretation.* Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979.
[5] GADAMER, H-G. *Truth and Method.* London: Sheed and Ward, 1979.
[6] BRUEGGEMANN, W. *Like Fire In The Bones.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006.
[7] BRUEGGEMANN, W. *A Commentary On Jeremiah: Exile And Homecoming.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmanns, 1998.

future hope, so that Christians live in the hope of a 'future that is announced and is anticipated.'[8p.95]

Moltmann's approach carries a political responsibility for it drives the reader towards a transformative strategy based on new and practical action. Once again this has links with Liberation Theology that takes 'the utmost seriousness: present practice, the word of God revealed, the reality in which people live, reflection on that community, a need for action and a hope for God's kingdom.'[9p.12]

Interpreting a Biblical text through these four stages of the political hermeneutic enables this thesis to link praxis, social analysis and the text's history in an approach that Ford and Green express as forming a 'theology improvised out of an unpredictable interplay of Bible experience, urban sociology, political analysis and involvement.'[10p.21]

b) Drawing On An Exilic Theology

The Biblical context chosen to explore the links with the themes already identified in praxis (promoting human flourishing, mediating tension and representing hope) is the Jewish exile to Babylon and in particular God's words about the situation recorded in the book of Jeremiah. When the Jews were placed into exile they struggled to find meaning in their situation. The certainties in their way of life, of government and of worship were thrown into turmoil. This led to a painful reflection on their predicament and re-examination of God's word in the past, which 'left a deep and permanent imprint on Jewish literature.'[11p.289]

In a similar way, communities facing change caused by urban development, whether they be residents who have been there a long time, or newcomers re-orientating to their new surroundings, need a period of reflection on those changes. This again is the driving force behind the Liberationists' approach – as Gutierrez argues 'all Christian people as individuals and certainly as communities engage in theological reflection, in that they seek to understand their faith in the light of their experience and their experience in the light of their faith.'[12p.3]

The surprising result of the Jewish reflection in exile was that it led not to 'the end of the existence of God's people but to the beginning of a new phase of them

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[8] MOLTMANN, J *History And The Triune God: Contributions To Trinitarian Theology*. London: SCM Press, 1991.
[9] ARCHBISHOP'S COMMISSION ON UPAs. *Living Faith In The City.* London: General Synod Of The Church Of England, 1990.
[10] FORD, D AND GREEN, L. 'Distilling The Wisdom' In ED. SEDGWICK, P. *God In The City* London: Mowbray, 1995. pp16-24.
[11] TORREY, C. *Ezra Studies.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1910.
[12] Cited by BILLINGS, A. *Thinking Theologically About The City.* Oxford: Oxford Institute For Church And Society, 1987.

relating to God.'[13p.262] This thesis therefore stands in the traditions of authors such as Brueggemann, Yoder and Hauerwas who have sought an 'exilic theology that promises to offer a provocative, creative and helpful set of ideas that modern Christians can derive from the ancient Hebrews and reflect on in their experience.'[14p.6] Such a practical focus is seen particularly in Jeremiah's letter to the exiles in Jer. 29v4-14. This hermeneutic therefore focuses predominantly on Jeremiah's letter; and in particular, as the title of this thesis suggests, on verse 7 expressing God's call through Jeremiah to 'seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile.' Clearly one needs to recognise that this letter is addressed to the people of Israel. However, links can be made between the Jewish exilic experience and the three themes identified in praxis and the social analysis - promoting human flourishing, mediating tension and representing hope.

Connections are therefore made with Jeremiah's threefold command.

First is a call to work together to seek welfare. This reflects the call to promote human flourishing while adding a deeper meaning beyond the merely human definition of flourishing by including a fulfilled relationship with God.

The second is the command to engage with the city. This prevails against any approach to stand aloof from the life of the city but rather God calls his people to mediate the tensions and interactions that shape the city. This requires sensitivity and understanding of the city's needs as well as a clear comprehension of one's own vision of the future.

Finally, there is a link with the command to recognise God in the situation and that he has a vision for shaping society. The role of the church is therefore to seek God in the situation, join his mission and through worship, humbly represent God's hopes in that place, for a particular time.

Hence, rather than dedicate a chapter to each stage of the political hermeneutic, the four stages of the political hermeneutic are used in the following three chapters to explore the three themes of the verse 'Seek the welfare of the city where I place you into exile.' (See Figure 7.2) In so doing, connections are made between the Biblical text and the themes identified in praxis: promoting human flourishing, mediating tension and representing hope.

Figure 7.2 Structure of Reflection	**a) Etymology**	**b) Exegesis**	**c) Exposition**	**d) Eschatology**
Chapter Eight Seek the welfare...				
Chapter Nine ... of the city ...				
Chapter Ten ... where I place you into exile.				

Chapter Eight: 'Seek the welfare …'

This chapter focuses on God's call through Jeremiah to seek and pray for welfare (the Hebrew word is *shalom*). In so doing connections are made with the concept of promoting human flourishing identified in praxis.

First, using the tools of etymology, the range of meanings of the word *shalom* is explored. This involves a review of specific Biblical literature to examine a wide range of meanings in different Biblical contexts before exploring their applicability to the understanding of *shalom* today.

Second, the study turns to an exegesis of Jeremiah and the letter to the exiles. This explores how God guides his people as they enter exile, by both advising how to live in exile and giving them courage to seek a way home from exile.

Third, through means of prophetic imagination, connections are made between contemporary ideas and values of those working in urban development and the concept of *shalom* as it is used in Jeremiah 29.

Finally, the eschatological dimension of *shalom* is identified as having a potentially transformative effect on people of faith actively leading to their greater contribution towards the development of society.

a) Biblical Understanding of Shalom

Shalom is one of the most prominent theological concepts in the Old Testament. However, its etymology can be problematic as *shalom* has become 'a general expression of such a comprehensive nature, there is something imprecise about it.'[1p.402] For instance, the lexicon offers a wide range of meanings including 'completeness, soundness, welfare and peace.'[2p.1022]

To fully understand the etymology of *shalom* it is important to look at the different contexts in which the word is used. Bibleworks software identified 267 occurrences of the word *shalom*. However, a number of these occur in people's names and in a compound form, leaving 195 occurrences of *shalom* as a word on its own. Of these 195 occurrences, four meanings can be identified:

The first meaning is a material or secular one, linked to ideas of welfare or peace based on material well-being. This is by far the most common use of *shalom,* occurring 79 times (predominantly within the Old Testament narrative). The second meaning reflects harmony or cohesion arising from a relationship with one another and with God. This occurs 46 times and is often found in relation to the Mosaic

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[1] VON RAD, G. 'Shalom in the Old Testament' IN: ED. KITTEL, G *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964. pp.402-406.

[2] BROWN, F DRIVER, S AND BRIGGS, C. *A Hebrew-English Lexicon.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952.

covenant and in the Psalms. The third meaning of *shalom* is related to safety and security, occurring 49 times, it is linked to the affairs of post-Davidic Jerusalem where *shalom* came to mean order, based on the reign of Yahweh. Fourth, and finally the prophets preached *shalom* as an eschatological hope of restoration based on the fulfilment of God's promises of salvation. This occurs 21 times in the prophets and is common in Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

The material or secular meaning is linked to the stem of *shalom* – the verb *shalem* that means 'to make something complete, whole or holistic.'[3p.19] Von Rad argues *shalom* should therefore primarily be related to a state of physical well-being and he defines *shalom* as 'a condition of fullness or wholeness evident in an external, palpable, material sense of well-being.'[4p.402] The key to this interpretation of *shalom* is that it is a condition or state which can be attained and enjoyed. Richardson argues a similar case for s*halom* meaning 'someone's condition in life and is manifest in bodily health, long life, posterity and abundance.' [5p.165]

Van Gemeren[6p.131f] offers two Biblical contexts to help explore this use of *shalom*: First, in Gen. 29v6 Jacob asks after Laban saying 'is it well with him?' Second in Gen. 43v27 Joseph inquires after his brothers' welfare and also asks 'is your father well?' In both these cases *shalom* is translated 'well'. There is no specific religious meaning rather it is an everyday question about wellbeing. The equivalent to a modern day 'how are you?' In fact, *shalom* is still used as a Jewish greeting today.

There are two dangers in applying this material understanding of *shalom*. First, there is a problem that ancient Hebrew thought does not have a non-religious context akin to today. There is always some element of sacred meaning even in what we may consider the most secular thought. It may therefore be wrong to suggest a material understanding in mere secular terms.

Second, the focus on the end state of well-being can lead to a personal interpretation of well-being and neglect the social dimension. As Moltmann[7p.151] noted, defining *shalom* as one's own good lifestyle can lead one to ignore others' impoverished lives.

This is perhaps unfair to those scholars who focus on this meaning, as they argue *shalom* encompasses social well-being and relational health. For instance, Westermann argues, 'in the vast majority of instances in the Old Testament *shalom* means wholeness or completeness as expressed and affirmed in an encounter

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[3] WESTERMANN, C. **'**Peace (Shalom) In The Old Testament' in ED. YODER, P AND SWARTLEY, W. *The Meaning Of Peace* Louisville: John Knox Press, 1992, pp16-48.
[4] VON RAD, G. 1964. *Op. Cit.*
[5] RICHARDSON, A. *A Theological Work Book Of The Bible.* New York: Macmillan, 1950.
[6] VAN GEMEREN, W. *New International Dictionary Of Old Testament Theology And Exegesis.* Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1997.
[7] MOLTMANN, J. 'Peace, The Fruit Of Justice' In: MOLTMANN, J AND METZ, J. *Faith And The Future.* London: SCM Press, 1995, pp. 147-158.

between persons.'[8p.19] However, the focus on the end condition and not the relational process means they see *shalom* only as something to be attained when the world is 'whole, together and well.'[9p.10]

Eisenbeis[10pp.568-573] parted company with Von Rad's material definition as he concluded the meaning is not a condition to be obtained but rather it is a process based on building one's relationship to God. This leads to the second meaning of *shalom* which is concerned with one's relationship with God rather than an abstract material state. The Quakers similarly describe *shalom* as the means 'by which we come to flourish and become whole. As a process, this implies personal, social and spiritual growth … allowing a place for conflict, grief, death and ignorance alongside birth, love, joy, wonder and freedom.'[11]

This understanding of *shalom* as relationship is linked to the idea of God's covenant with the people of Israel and the promise of a land as a gift from God. For instance, Laird Harris, Archer and Waltke[12p.931] argue that nearly two thirds of the occurrences of *shalom* in the Old Testament can be linked in one way or another to the fulfilment of the covenant, and *shalom* is seen as the imparting of God's blessing. For instance, the blessings of the Promised Land listed in Deuteronomy 28 do not directly include the word *shalom* but reflect the material attributes noted earlier including: security, growth in family, abundance of food, wealth, health and peace.

There are two difficulties with applying a relational understanding of *shalom*. First, this meaning sees *shalom* as being given by God in response to a specific human community's relationship with God, making it harder to apply beyond the Jewish nation. However, Brueggemann[13p.181] argues that *shalom* is evident whenever a community is in covenant with another and is applicable to any civil community committed to the well-being of all. Moltmann argues that 'Israel is nothing more than the promise made flesh of *shalom* for the nations and the whole of creation.'[14p.150]

The second problem with this understanding is its focus on the quality of relationship, which is less easy to gauge. Pedersen helps here as he argues relational *shalom* needs to be seen as a measure of corporate activity:

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[8] WESTERMANN, C. 1992 *Op. Cit.*
[9] YODER, P. *Shalom: The Bible's Word For Salvation, Justice And Peace.* Newton: Faith And Life, 1987.
[10] EISENBEIS, W. *A Study Of The Root Of Shalom In The Old Testament*. Ph.D. thesis: University of Chicago, 1969.
[11] GEE, D *Peace – Flourishing In Relation To One Another* [online]. Quaker Peace And Social Witness, 2005. Available at http://www.quaker.org.uk [16th November 2005]
[12] LAIRD HARRIS R, ARCHER G AND WALTKE B. *Theological Word Book Of The Old Testament.* Chicago: Moody Press, 1980.
[13] BRUEGGEMANN, W. *Living Towards A Vision – Biblical Reflections On Shalom.* Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1982.
[14] MOLTMANN, J. 1995. *Op. Cit.*

> *Shalom* in this context denotes harmony, agreement and a psychic community so firmly unified that they are penetrated by one will … *a* common responsibility, a common aim and one does not speak for himself but the whole.[15p.265&271]

This corporate nature of *shalom* is linked to the third meaning common in, the cultic community which emerged in Jerusalem under the monarchy. This understanding sees *shalom* as 'God's intention for creation from the beginning … for it is God the creator who brought order out of chaos and the character of that order is the harmony and wholeness of *shalom*.'[16p.1115-6] Rather than seeing *shalom* as a distant ideal to be attained or a relational process, this meaning sees *shalom* is the reign of Yahweh as 'sole author and guarantor of the order of creation – the giver and sustainer of life.'[17p.430]

The origins of these ideas were based on the concept that Yahweh had chosen Jerusalem as his dwelling place and it was 'the responsibility of the King to act as God's temporal regent to uphold social order through executing justice.'[18p.431] The following chapter will explore in more detail how the city of Jerusalem shaped Jewish thinking before the exile.

A potential problem with the cultic understanding of *shalom* is the same problem as that identified above, namely a limitation of the concept to the Jewish community. However, this is to misunderstand the scope of the vision of the Jewish faith. As noted earlier, God's vision is for Israel is wider as he wanted the nation to show his glory to the nations. This *shalom* focuses on all of creation, embracing spiritual, political and economic well being, including that of the foreigners, widows and orphans. All residents of Jerusalem now gain from the social justice and so *shalom* is no longer seen as dependent on the covenant relationship but living under God's order.

The final 31% of the uses of the word *shalom* occur in the prophetic writings, and these tend to refer to a future happiness rather than current well being. It is noticeable that the word *shalom* rarely occurs in the 8th Century prophets and only becomes significant in the 7th Century BCE. This means that it is just linked to the salvation oracles rather than the predictions of judgement. The exception to this is the early part of Jeremiah where the prophet taunts the false prophets who preach 'peace, peace but there is no peace.'[19] It is arguable that at this point, Jeremiah is subverting the cultic understanding of *shalom* culminating in the terrible indictment in Jer. 16:5

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[15] PEDERSEN, J. *Israel: Its Life And Cultures 1-11.* Oxford: Oxford University Press 1926.
[16] BIRCH, B 'Old Testament Foundations For Peacemaking In The Nuclear Era' In: *The Christian Century* December 4th 1985, p1115-1119.
[17] SISSON, K 'Jeremiah And The Jerusalem Concept Of Peace' In: *Journal Of Biblical Literature* 105 (3), 1986, pp.429-442.
[18] *Ibid*.
[19] Jeremiah 6v14 and 8v11

that God's well-being had left his people. This is a terrible thought for the Jews who were taken into exile and represents a major theme throughout this thesis.

Having rejected the previous understanding of *shalom*, Jeremiah and the 7th Century BCE prophets offer a new meaning linked to the promise of a future divine salvation in passages like Jer. 9v11, Isa. 9v1-6 and Zech. 9v10. It is a message of hope that God will restore his people's well-being and make them whole, the key change being that *shalom* 'is no longer assured through the state institutions but … a theologizing of the concept by its extended application to the saving acts of God.'[20p.37-38]

What are the characteristics of this meaning of *shalom*? Jer. 33v6-9 describes the restored *shalom* in two ways: First, it includes a return to Jerusalem and second, *shalom* under the new covenant is no longer simply the promise of a land but now extends to the healing of people's hearts and minds. This latter *shalom* reflects an 'eschatological vision of a state of plenitude and perfection where God rules and his people can have the maximum intensity of life.'[21p.326] It is a vision of *shalom* that offers God's future healing and the inclusion of the outcast. This eschatological dimension will be explored further later in this chapter.

In this overview, *shalom* is seen to have many variant meanings. 'It is the blessed joy of a successful life; the fullness of life in mutual love with God; the fullness of life in community; and it is impossible to distinguish between salvation and well being.'[22p.150] There is however a common thread, which is a sense of well-being and a quality of life lived under God. In this respect *shalom* offers a focus on God's purpose for his people and a way to define humanity's ultimate well-being rather than mere human flourishing.

b) Jeremiah's Outworking Of Shalom

The tools of etymology have offered a working definition of *shalom* as 'a common sense of well-being and a quality of life lived under God.' The next stage of the political hermeneutic is that of exegesis - to enquire further into how this vision of *shalom* is presented in Jeremiah's letter to the exiles.

An initial assessment is made of the historicity of the letter within the context of the book of Jeremiah. The focus then shifts specifically to Jeremiah's instructions to the Jews to seek *shalom* and how this is worked out in practice through the command to settle down, with instructions to build, plant, marry and multiply in Babylon. Finally, in a significant shift in Jewish thinking, Jeremiah tells them to seek and pray for the *shalom* of Babylon.

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[20] WESTERMANN, C. 1992 *Op. Cit.*
[21] JACOB, E . *A Theology Of The Old Testament.* London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1958.
[22] MOLTMANN, J. 1995. *Op. Cit.*

This exegesis develops further the multi-faceted nature of *shalom* discussed in the previous section as it resonates with the ideas of material well being, the covenant, security and a future hope. By exploring these echoes it is possible to begin to gain a deeper insight into the prophet's understanding of *shalom*.

The book of Jeremiah can be difficult to read as it mixes of poetic prophecy and narrative accounts of Jeremiah's interaction with the court of the kings. Although it is clearly set in the period leading up to the fall of Jerusalem and its aftermath, at times the chronology appears incoherent and its images and metaphors are hard to place in context. Historical criticism has suggested this is because there are actually three voices in the book: the poetry has been accepted as the authentic words of Jeremiah; the narrative or prose accounts are largely ascribed to Jeremiah's scribe Baruch; and finally the speeches appear to have a theology reminiscent of the Deuteronomists.

Nicholson[23] suggests that it is best to see the book as developing in two stages, an initial work by Baruch transcribing the words of Jeremiah in Jerusalem, later re-edited by the Deuteronomists as an instructive sermon for the exilic community. This has led to scholarly debate as to the extent of the authentic words of Jeremiah vis-à-vis the Deuteronomistic editing. Conservative theologians such as Holladay[24] and Skinner[25] argue that Jeremiah wrote the majority but this means they tend to focus on the Jerusalem context. On the other hand, redactionists such as Carroll[26] suggest the book has been so extensively re-edited in the exile that we cannot find the authentic words of the prophet.

The letter to the exiles recorded in Jer. 29 is therefore subject to similar scrutiny. At first it appears the whole chapter is one letter, the details of which are described in verses 1-3. However, it is clear that verses 24-32 are actually part of a correspondence in reply to the letter, while verses 15-23 appear to be largely a polemic against the people remaining in Jerusalem. Nicholson suggests therefore that the second half of the chapter shows clear evidence of a secondary addition probably by the Deuteronomists.[27p.46]

Hence this political hermeneutic will largely focus on verses 4-14. At the same time, it is worth noting that recent scholarship has moved away from source criticism. Theologians like Brueggemann argue the need to see the book as a whole 'consisting of a swirling of several interpretative voices, each exploring the meaning and significance of the crisis of Jerusalem and forming an appropriate response to that

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[23] NICHOLSON, E. *Preaching to the Exiles.* Oxford: Blackwell, 1970.
[24] HOLLADAY, W. *Hermeneia Commentary on Jeremiah.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989.
[25] SKINNER, J. *Prophecy And Religion.* London: Cambridge University Press, 1963.
[26] CARROLL, R. *The Old Testament Library Commentary: Jeremiah.* London: SCM Press, 1986.
[27] NICHOLSON, E. *Cambridge Bible Commentary Jeremiah 26-52.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975.

crisis.'[28p.1] In this respect the letter to the exiles offers but one snapshot of the prophet's response to the exile.

Herein lies the book's usefulness for this hermeneutic for it deals directly with the primary questions facing the Jewish community and how it should respond to a period of significant change and upheaval.

Hyatt[29] argues that the Jews had a degree of freedom and that they were not treated as prisoners of war. (The implications of this will be discussed further in chapter ten). However, it is worth noting Smith-Christopher's research that suggests from contemporary experience of migration that the Jewish exiles would have been traumatised by their uprooting from Jerusalem and being forced to live in exile.[30] The key question was therefore whether or not they should seek to put down roots in Babylon. Jeremiah's response in this letter is to tell them to settle down and seek *shalom*, with four clear imperatives – to build, to plant, to marry and to multiply. It is important to understand these imperatives, as they form the basis of Jeremiah's understanding of *shalom* in that they are 'all designed to produce a firmly established society with an open ended future.'[31p.556]

The first and second imperatives are to begin 'with the basics to build a family home and plant gardens, in other words to provide shelter and sustenance.'[32p.71] In other words, he is offering the exiles material and physical ways to work for their wholeness and well being – there are clear links to the secular or material meaning of *shalom* discussed above. However, Jeremiah's choice of words is interesting for Bach[33p.133] argues that the images of building and planting are well known in the Old Testament[34] especially in texts with a strong Deuteronomistic connection. As noted above, *shalom* is linked to the idea of God's gift of well being in a landed context.

However, there is an interesting paradox here. In Deuteronomy 6, the Israelites were about to gain a land with all the connotations of personal freedom and corporate power, yet it is a land with cities that they did not build and vineyards they did not plant. While In contrast, the command in Jer. 29 to build and plant is given to the Jews in exile where they have neither freedom nor power; yet the prophet commands the exiles to build and to plant. The message seems to be that Yahweh still wanted to

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[28] BRUEGGEMANN, W. *The Theology of the Book of Jeremiah.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
[29] HYATT, J. 'Jeremiah – Text Exegesis And Exposition' in ED. BUTTRICK, G. *The Interpreters' Bible Volume 5.* Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1956, pp. 277-285.
[30] SMITH-CHRISTOPHER, D. *A Biblical Theology Of The Exile.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002.
[31] CARROLL, R. 1986. *Op. Cit.*
[32] KEOWN, G SCALISE, P AND SMOTHERS, T. *Word Bible Commentary Jeremiah 26-52.* Dallas: Word Books, 1995.
[33] Cited by SMITH, D. *Religion Of The Landless.* Bloomington: Meyer, 1989.
[34] See for example: Deuteronomy 6v10-11, Isaiah 65v21, Ezekiel 36v36 and Amos 9v14.

bless the exiles with his *shalom* but now they needed to learn the cost of building *shalom* in a foreign land.

It is worth noting at this point McKane's caution about 'imposing too literal meanings on these proverbial forms of advice – to build and to plant, rather these are mere paradigms of integration, the prophet's advice is to take a long-term view of their residence in Babylon.'[35p.743] This is an important consideration in seeking to understand the meaning of *shalom* today. The idea of building and planting is not that the church should literally seek to build houses and plant gardens; rather it should look to the long term, seeking to play an integral part in its community and being committed to its material well being.

In Jer. 29v5-6a, the prophet adds a third command to the exiles, which is to marry. This is another allusion to Deuteronomistic teaching. In Deuteronomy 20v5-7 certain individuals are exempt from military service so they can dedicate their homes, vineyards and family to the Lord, while the curses for breaking the covenant in Deuteronomy 28v30 include an inability to lie with one's wife, to live in one's own home or enjoy the fruit of one's vineyard.

What then was the prophet's purpose in making these allusions? Berlin[36] argues they are a counsel to the exiles, that to maintain the covenant they must not engage in armed revolt against the Babylonian oppressor. This pent up anger against the oppressors who devastated their homeland and mocked their culture and traditions, is evident in Psalm 137. Here not only do the exiles yearn to return home but also with a temptation to return violence with violence. By echoing the words of Deuteronomy, Jeremiah is saying that working for *shalom* should be a work of peace not violence.

Applying this to today, *shalom* must be seen not as being concerned with 'revolution but a call for critical engagement, to be his presence'[37p.2] in an uncertain and bewildered world.

The fourth imperative in Jer. 29v6b is to bear children, to multiply and not decrease. This too is loaded with meanings that are linked to the idea of *shalom*. It is clearly 'associated with fertility, which to the Jews was a sign of blessing, prosperity and well being.'[38p.441] It also has resonances with God's command to creation in Genesis 1v28 to 'be fruitful and multiply' and the same directive is repeated to Noah after the flood in Genesis 9v1. It is interesting that these instructions were given by God before the nation of Israel was formed. In using these words Jeremiah reminds

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[35] MCKANE, W. *The International Critical Commentary – Jeremiah Vol.2.* Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996.
[36] BERLIN, A. 'Jeremiah 29v5-7 A Deuteronomic Allusion.' In: *Hebrew Annual Review* 8, 1984, p3-4.
[37] VILLAFANE, E. *Seek The Peace Of The City.* Grand Rapids: Erdmann, 1995.
[38] SISSON, K. 1986. *Op. Cit.*

the exiles that God's promise of fruitfulness was for all humanity and not restricted to the covenant community.

At the same time, there are 'echoes of the Egyptian sojourn where in a foreign land and under less than ideal conditions, Israel's numbers did in fact increase.'[39p.351] This would offer the Jews some hope, for in making the link with Egypt, Jeremiah could also be inferring that God's plans for a second exodus – this time for the exiles - were already under way.

If building and planting are concerned with material well being in the present, then marriage and child rearing are future orientated. *Shalom* is also concerned with future prosperity.

Following these four imperatives, there is what Brueggemann calls 'a stunning and remarkable turn in the letter as Jeremiah appears to urge the exiles to accommodate with their imperial overlord.'[40p.32] For in v7, he tells the exiles to seek the *shalom* of Babylon. In so doing, Jeremiah undermined the cultic understanding of *shalom* associated with the order and security of Jerusalem – and applied it to Babylon. *Shalom* was therefore no longer seen as dependent on political institutions but on the direct actions of Yahweh. *Shalom* is imputed with ideas of grace, healing and salvation. 'It is the putting together of a broken world … to reverse the effects of sin and the fall.'[41p.100-101]

Shalom has taken on a missionary dimension. Freed from the bounds of national religion, the Jews are called to be a blessing to those around them. To bless others is also a challenge to foster social change. As Murray argues 'to seek the *shalom* of the city will only happen if one identifies itself with the needs, concerns and aspirations of local people.'[42p.85] It is this radical *shalom* that speaks into the situations of people facing change as a result of urban development. It is not just about securing one's own sense of well being but looking out for the hurting and marginalised. Seeking *shalom* in this context means to work with others in an inclusive manner to create a civil society.

One way the Jews could seek *shalom* for Babylon was to and to pray for its *shalom* (Jeremiah 29v7b). This has echoes of Psalm 122v6-7 when the psalmist prays for the peace of Jerusalem saying 'may they prosper who love you, peace be within your walls, and security within your towers.' With this echo in their ears, what is the focus of the exiles' prayer for Babylon? It is exactly the same as Psalm 122, a prayer

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[39] LINDBOM, J. *The Anchor Bible, Jeremiah 21-36, A New Translation With Introduction And Commentary.* New York: Double Day, 2004.
[40] BRUEGGEMANN, W. *To Build And To Plant: International Theological Commentary On Jeremiah Vol.2.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmanns, 1991.
[41] GORNICK, M. *To Live In Peace.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.
[42] MURRAY, S. *City Vision.* London: Daybreak, 1990.

for the prosperity, peace and security, but this time it is a prayer for their Babylonian oppressors. Hence Jeremiah is emphasising that not only their material well being but also their hopes for a future *shalom* are inseparable from that of Babylon.

Similar sentiments are expressed in Jeremiah 29v11 where Jeremiah says that these plans are the Lord's plans and they are for *shalom* and not for harm. They are designed to give them - and Babylon - a future and a hope. As Brueggemann argues 'despite all the possible variants, the notion of *shalom* now has a radical nuance, it is an announcement that God has a vision of how the world is to be and is not yet.'[43p.39]

This links to the eschatological dimensions of *shalom,* which as noted above, is so crucial to the understanding of *shalom*.

This is the final challenge of the exiles' search for *shalom*. Now they were no longer part of a social hegemony, how were they to seek to shape the direction of the state and its powerful groups? It is through sharing the transformative effects of *shalom* and offering a hope for the future. These are themes explored further later in this chapter.

Jeremiah's instructions offer a vision of a life based on *shalom*. They include a commitment to becoming an integral part of one's community, holding in tension the need to retain one's own identity with critical engagement to promote well-being and create a civil society. This contextual definition of *shalom* recognises that the future is defined in part by one's socio-political context and is coupled with an encouragement to work alongside and pray for those in authority whilst continuing to speak up on behalf of the oppressed. This vision has a very contemporary feel and the next section explores how these ideas of *shalom* are being pursued in secular thought.

c) Shalom – A Means To Promote Human Flourishing?

Earlier in this chapter, a working definition of *shalom w*as posited as 'a common sense of wellbeing and a quality of life lived under God.' Having explored how this meaning of *shalom* is applied in Jer. 29, it is now noticeable that the command to 'seek *shalom*' holds in tension the material, relational and spiritual aspects of establishing the Jewish community in exile.

The next stage of the political hermeneutic is to make connections with the contemporary concept of promoting human flourishing identified in praxis. Earlier social analysis has highlighted three elements significant to human flourishing:

> Objective physical concerns such as a quality environment and housing; the subjective experiences of life and how it is interpreted to produce hope, confidence and relief from despair; and the notion of empowerment that gives individuals and communities the power to influence the physical concerns to create the subjective experience.[44p.12]

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[43] BRUEGGEMANN, W. 1982. *Op. Cit.*

[44] GRAYSON, L AND YOUNG, K. *Quality Of Life In Cities.* London: British Library Publications, 1994.

Connections are made between these three elements and the notion of *shalom* by initially exploring the ideas of wellbeing and quality of life before examining in more detail the ideas of liveability, sense of community and social capital.

The origins of the idea of wellbeing lie in philosophy describing both what is ultimately good for a person and the notion of how well a person's life is going at that time. This is similar to the use of *shalom,* which as noted above can be used as a greeting and a way of asking 'how do you do?' However, this individualised form of *shalom* precludes the idea of a communal sense of welfare. Philosophical discussion of welfare dates back to Aristotle who said, 'if you are my friend, my wellbeing is closely bound up with yours.'[45] This resonates with Jeremiah's use of *shalom,* working both for a corporate welfare and what is good for an individual.

In more contemporary literature the idea of wellbeing is linked to heath care provision. This is interesting, for as was noted in the social analysis stage of this thesis, ideas of health, social welfare and wellbeing were significant to the development of early town planning ideals. As urban development has become more professional and technical, this connection with wellbeing has become more tenuous. However, in writing about health and wellbeing, Griffin argues for a moral dimension to wellbeing.

> What makes life good or well is the presence not of a single super value such as pleasure or happiness, but a combination of substantive values such as accomplishment, deep personal relations, enjoyment of life, social dignity and understanding one's place in the world.[46p.34]

This more holistic characterisation is closer to the concept of *shalom*. On the other hand, although there is a moral aspect, there is no spiritual dimension to this idea of wellbeing. Rather, it is focused on meeting human psychological needs. This approach to wellbeing appears to reject religious concepts, even ones as positive and holistic as *shalom*. This reflects the Modernist approach which as noted above, saw the 'message of salvation turned into a secular presumption that it is possible for humanity to transform the world for the better.'[47p.2]

In contrast to the debates around the idea of wellbeing, the idea of quality of life 'has become a vague and ethereal entity, something that people talk about but no one knows very clearly what to do about.'[48p.583] Having said this, there is general agreement that it must include at least two sets of components: 'An internal

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[45] Cited by CRISP, R. *Well-Being* [Online]. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2008. Available at http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2008/entries/well-being/ [12th May 2009].
[46] GRIFFIN, J. *Wellbeing: Its Measurement And Moral Importance.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986.
[47] BOYD WHYTE, I. *Modernism And The Spirit Of The City*. London: Routledge, 2003.
[48] CAMPBELL, A ET AL. *Quality Of American Life: Perceptions, Evaluation and Satisfaction.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1976.

psychology that produces satisfaction, gratitude and gratification; and a set of external conditions that trigger these emotions.'[49p.x]

Since the genesis of town planning in the mid 20th Century, social analysts have collated indicators on these external conditions – including housing, townscape, physical environment, public service provision and crime. These indicators were used in the post war housing programmes to 'assess where we are going with respects to our values and goals and to evaluate specific programmes and determine their impact.'[50p.1] However, when the Modernist approach to town planning was questioned in the 1970s, there was a shift away from an indicators based approach that merely described a functional need to embrace the internal virtues. As Cutter states,

> An individual's happiness or satisfaction with life and their environment must include their needs, desires, aspirations and lifestyle preferences as these determine their personal sense of wellbeing … whereas an aggregating of the individuals' quality of life indicators only reflects a local consensus on a community's values and goals.[51p.146]

This problem of distinguishing between a neighbourhood and an individual's wellbeing has led to some dispute[52] as to the value of bundling statistics to measure the quality of life. Hence, consultation began in 2010 about developing a more holistic index of wellbeing that seeks to bring together 'wellbeing, quality of life, welfare, sustainability satisfaction, progress and happiness.'[53] This new approach is wider than the definition of quality of life and goes beyond the material and security ideas to begin to address the relational aspects that are so intrinsic to the idea of *shalom*.

Furthermore, neither the quality of life indicators nor the consultation on the wellbeing index sufficiently address issues of faith and spirituality[54] beyond seeing it as a fulfilment of a personal need or desire. Yet even Howard's Garden City Movement had a distinctive spiritual dimension in seeking to bring forth God's love and care. For Howard believed quality of life was a quality lived in relationship with others and with God. The quality of life indices approach does not reflect this spiritual implication of s*halom.*

Having explored the ideas of wellbeing and quality of life, the third contemporary idea possibly linked to *shalom* is liveability. This is a term that has grown in political currency since the late 1990s. Internationally, it has become

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[49] GRAYSON, L & YOUNG, K. *Quality Of Life In Cities.* London: British Library Pub, 1994.
[50] BAUER, R. *Social Indicators.* Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1966.
[51] Cited by MASSAM, B. 'Quality Of Life: Public Planning and Private Living.' In: *Progress In Planning* 58(3), 2002, pp.141-227.
[52] For an overview see SAWICKI, D AND FLYNN, P. 'Neighbourhood Indicators: A Review Of The Literature And An Assessment of Conceptual And Methodological Issues.' In: J*ournal Of The American Planning Association* 62(2), 1996, pp.165-183.
[53] HICKS, S. *Measuring National Wellbeing.* Consultation Event held in Birmingham, 7th March 2011.
[54] A point made with some conviction at the above consultation by Jim McDonald, the Birmingham Director of Public Health

intertwined with the concept of sustainable development[55] and the so-called three Es of Equity, Economy and Ecology. The best definition is that offered at the 2003 Cities+ Conference,

> Liveability refers to an urban system that contributes to the physical, social and mental wellbeing and personal development of all of its inhabitants. It is about creating delightful and desirable urban spaces that offer and reflect cultural and scared enrichment. The key principles that give substance to this theme are equity, dignity, accessibility, conviviality, participation and empowerment.[56p.2]

This definition of liveability does however have strong resonance with the concept of *shalom*. First, it explores the idea of community benefit per se rather than aggregating the specific benefits for an individual. It therefore reflects the relational aspects of *shalom* where, in the Jeremiah context, the Jews are implored to seek the *shalom* of the city which is self evidently a place or community. Secondly, it includes a spiritual element as it is concerned with creating desirable places that reflect the cultural and sacred enrichment which, was omitted from ideas of wellbeing and quality of life. However, the reference to the sacred is limited to physical spaces and does not recognise the role of faith in community formation which is an integral part of the definition of *shalom*.

Having applauded the concept, it is worth noting that in the USA, the definition of liveability has been narrowed to merely the social and economic sphere. This was because it was linked to the Clinton-Gore administration's initiative called *Liveable communities for the 21st Century*. This initiative placed value on the attributes of the physical environment but its stated aim was 'to build a future that sustains prosperity, expands economic opportunity, enhances quality of life and builds a stronger sense of community.'[57] This narrow definition combines the material aspects of *shalom*. However, as was noted in the social analysis chapter of this thesis, it is important to recognise the role of the physical environment in promoting social interaction within a safe public realm, a lively mix of building uses and appropriate recreational spaces.

Ironically, in the UK the term liveability has also been narrowed, but in the opposite direction - to focus on the environment and local actions to improve open spaces. This is reflected in the definition given by the then Liveable Communities Minister: 'Liveability is about building stronger local communities and enhancing quality of life through action to improve the quality of local environments and the places where people live.[58]

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[55] The principle that one should live one's life in a quality manner while not compromising the ability of others in this or a future generation to live their life in a similar quality manner.
[56] Cited by TIMMER, V AND SEYMOUR, N. *The Liveable City.* Vancouver: International Centre For Sustainable Cities, 2006.
[57] GORE, A. *Liveable communities for the 21st Century.* Speech at the Brookings Institute, 2nd September 1998, Online at www.smartgrowth.org/library/gore_speech9298.html [8th February 2006]
[58] MCNULTY, TONY MP. *Parliamentary Answer* 11th Apr 2003, Hansard Column 430W

Neither of these narrow definitions sufficiently reflects *shalom.* They are 'predominantly end of pipe term - in that they do not tackle the underlying causes and determinants but focuses on the end results.'[59p.2] There is an echo here of the etymological debate between those who saw shalom as an end state and those who argued it was a relational process.

The narrowing of the definition of liveability also reflects the debate between place prosperity and people prosperity and the need to balance the 'idea of improving the welfare for deserving people regardless of where they live and the idea of improving the welfare of groups of people defined by their spatial proximity.'[60p.187] This struggle for balance is seen in regeneration departments where one division focuses on infrastructure and economic investment hoping to raise quality of life, while another division facilitates services aimed at helping the disadvantaged through training, job brokerage and welfare distribution.

In this respect, both the US and UK governments' approach to liveability have failed to grasp the holistic nature of the original liveability concept, where 'The physical and social elements are closely tied and should not be separated into separate elements for they must collaborate together for the wellbeing and progress of the community and the individual members of that community.'[61p.19] As noted earlier, this holistic approach is much closer to Jeremiah's call for the Jews to seek the *shalom* of the city. For if *shalom* is concerned with the relationship between people and places and God's order over them all, then this must encompass the physical as well as social and economic attributes.

Given the problems in defining liveability, sociologists, psychologists and urban planners have turned to arguments about the presence of a sense of community within a neighbourhood that inhibits undesirable social behaviour while enhancing the health of residents through community development. This idea of a sense of community has its roots in community psychology and is defined by McMillan and Chavis: 'A sense of community is a feeling that members have of belonging and a feeling that members matter to one another and the group and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment.'[62p.9]

In the same article, the writers offered four components that create conditions for a sense of community: First, a clear membership, which is linked to a sense of belonging, emotional safety, identification and personal investment in that community.

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[59] LOW CHOY, D. *Ecotopia: Planning Salvation Or A Return To Planning Ideals In A Contemporary Package.* Paper at the ENHR Conference, Cambridge, July 2nd-4th 2004.
[60] BOLTON, R. 'Place Prosperity v People Prosperity Re-visited: An Old Issue With A New Angle.' In: *Urban Studies* 29(2), 1992, pp.185-203.
[61] SALZANO, E. 'Seven Aims For The Liveable City.' In: ED. LENNARD-CROWHURST; VON UNGERN-STERNBERG, S AND LENNARD, H. *Making Cities Liveable.* California: Gondolier Press, 1997, pp.18-20.
[62] MCMILLAN, D AND CHAVIS, D. 'Sense of Community: A Definition And Theory.' In: *American Journal Of Community Psychology* 14(1), 1986, pp.6-23.

Second, a degree of influence, which is linked to the idea of community empowerment. Third, a sense of integration that enables interdependence and enables one to gain all one's practical needs and emotional status from the group. Fourth, and finally, an emotional connection through a shared experience such as an historic event or a spiritual bond. It is argued that these four elements 'fit together in a circular, self reinforcing way in which all the conditions have both a cause and effect.'[63p.15]

There are strong resonances between ideas of a sense of community and relational *shalom* for they both describe the idea of a mutual relationship creating a communal sense of harmony and wellbeing. However, the term 'a sense of community' is not without its detractors and it is important to examine their views carefully before accepting the idea uncritically.

The first critique is that the term a sense of community 'expresses nostalgia for a time when community was seen as a cure for all urban ailments.'[64p.178] If this is the case, it is a point that can equally be directed towards *shalom*. For the Jews had to discover the meaning of *shalom* in Babylon and not rely on their cultic understanding of *shalom* in relation to the status of Jerusalem. In the same way, there is a need to find a way to express a sense of community that does not rely on historical precedent but is forward looking.

The second critique is that the concept of sense of community has failed to make the connection between social activity and the physical environment. This again opens the question as to whether humans shape the environment or, if in some deterministic manner, the environment shapes humanity. Talen argues, 'the link between environment and behaviour may not be direct but it may have a catalytic effect'[65p.1372] for as the social analysis chapter discussed, urban design may not directly lead to a sense of community but it may stimulate social interaction leading to the formation of groups which create sense of community. It would therefore be foolhardy to ignore the environmental factors altogether. As already noted above, the use of *shalom* in Jeremiah 29 is clearly linked to a place.

Finally, critics note that those promoting the idea of a sense of community do not explain how informal or formal social interaction can lead to a sense of community. This formational aspect of *shalom* which can enable human flourishing is neglected. This may be because its roots lie in community psychology, which is primarily concerned with measuring subjective feelings of allegiance. However, this can lead to a bias towards the formation of a homogenous group rather than societal wellbeing.

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[63] *Ibid*.
[64] NASAR, J AND JULIAN, D. 'The Psychological Sense Of Community In The Neighbourhood.' In: *Journal Of The American Planning Association* 61(2), 1995, pp177-184.
[65] TALEN, E. 'Sense Of Community And Neighbourhood Form - An Assessment Of The Social Doctrine Of New Urbanism.' In: *Urban Studies* (36), 1999, pp.1361-79.

To help understand how social interaction can lead to a wider sense of community and a liveable neighbourhood, McMillan argued that argued one must look at the process of community empowerment that comes from a build up of 'trust, as this is the salient ingredient in building a sense of community.'[66p.318] This idea of building a resource of trust is linked to the idea of acquiring social capital.

The term social capital became popular in the early 21st century for it has sought to explore the relationship between the quality of social networks and politically important outcomes such as economic growth, health, education and crime reduction programmes. However, as social capital has 'become a buzz word among politicians and academics … confusion has arisen as to what the term is referring to and how it should be measured.'[67p.1]

The most well known proponent of social capital is Putnam. He traces the history of the term back to Hanifan who stated in 1916 that,

> Social capital is those tangible substances that count for most in people's daily lives; namely goodwill, fellowship, sympathy and social intercourse. The accumulation of social capital may assist those in social need and … potentially is a substantial improvement to the community as a whole.[68p.19]

Putnam suggests 'the features of social organisation such as trust, norms and networks improve the efficiency of society by facilitating co-ordinated actions.'[69p.169] How does this happen? First, trust is developed through reciprocal actions – 'you do this for me and I will do this for you.' Then as the interactions increase, a more general reciprocity ensues that creates an atmosphere where trustworthiness and mutual confidence become the social norm in all one's relationships. However, the 'social capital is not the private property of any one of the persons who benefit from it.'[70p.315] Rather, the social capital only becomes evident when it is extended through the membership of a social network - you are able to trust a stranger if your friend tells you that you can trust them. The more people who extend trust towards another - the greater the resource of social capital within that social network, for 'trust lubricates cooperation and cooperation in turn breeds trust.'[71p.171]

The ideas of social capital are similar to that of *shalom* as they are both concerned with the links between individual wellbeing and the building up of a community. Both terms also recognise the value of social connectedness as a basis for building cooperation and mutual confidence which are key building blocks for empowerment in the community. However, such a build up of social capital is not always beneficial, for there is a dark side to social capital as these networks of trust can also be used to

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[66] MCMILLAN, D. 'Sense Of Community.' In: *Journal Of Community Psychology* 24(4), 1996, pp315-325.
[67] HALPERN, D. *Social Capital.* Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005.
[68] Cited by PUTNAM, R. *Bowling Alone.* New York: Touchstone, 2000.
[69] PUTNAM, R. *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions In Modern Italy.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.
[70] COLEMAN, J. *Foundations Of Social Theory.* Cambridge MA: Belknap Press, 1994.
[71] PUTNAM, R. 1993. *Op. Cit.*

promote extreme views or manage criminal activity. Both of these are a far cry from the peace that *shalom* promotes. Rather, there needs to be a level of trust to enable one to work alongside those who might be perceived as a threat to one's own wellbeing. The question remains as to whether one is also able to trust a stranger.

In addressing this question, Putnam[72p.22] identified two types of social capital. The first is bonding capital, which is created by the formation of an exclusive relationship between members of the group. This leads to an inward looking mentality which can tend towards homogeneity and reinforcement of the group's own views and identity. The second is bridging capital, which is created by a more inclusive approach that encourages new members into the network. The assumption is that the latter is much more open and so can be useful for diffusion of information and promoting a civil society. The difference is metaphorically summarised by Putnam as 'Bonding social capital is sociological superglue, while bridging social capital provides sociological WD40.'[73p.23]

There has been an exponential growth in literature in recent years that has assessed the impact of social capital on community wellbeing. For instance, links have been made with educational attainment, health and crime reduction. The problem with the growth of these studies is the concept has become 'totally chaotic, ambiguous and a generalised category that can be used as a notional umbrella for almost any other purpose.'[74p.155] Part of this difficulty is that social capital is incredibly difficult to quantify, being about trust and subjective values. For instance, analysts have measured trends in membership of voluntary or community associations. However, it is difficult to assess whether people involved in such networks have any impact on their local community.

Having highlighted these problems, it is worth noting most studies have decried the decline in social capital in recent years which is reflected in a decline in membership of voluntary associations. The blame has been placed on an increasingly privatised culture and poor physical planning that inhibits social encounters, both of which were pertinent to Jeremiah's call to seek the *shalom* of the city. There are also connections with post modern ideas of urban development and especially the New Urbanists' desire for walkablity – through the creation of safe neutral places to mix and to share in dialogue. However, as Talen argues, 'one also needs non-spatial factors to build relationships ... for private communication networks are simply no substitute for exploring how we can build a local community that overcomes the civic deficit and builds social capital.'[75p.1361,1367] These non-spatial factors include the significance of informal social networks such as those found in faith communities. There are therefore strong links between relational *shalom* and measures to encourage social capital.

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[72] PUTNAM, R. 2000. *Op. Cit.*
[73] *Ibid.*
[74] FINE, B. *Social Capital Theory vs. Social Theory.* London: Routledge, 2001.
[75] TALEN, E. 1999. *Op. Cit.*

Having reviewed the different concepts that could be related to the idea of *shalom*, a number of synergies are revealed. However, no single contemporary term has the holistic nature of *shalom*. They each over-emphasise either the material or relational experiences, leading to debate as to how one connects physical improvements with measures to enhance the sense of community.

Only the social capital terminology has grasped how individuals and communities can gain the resources to influence both the physical and psychological wellbeing of their area. However, none of these concepts has given full attention to all the drivers behind faith which are so integral to creating *shalom*. To understand this further, there is a need to explore the eschatological dimension to *shalom* and how this shapes people of faith.

d) The Eschatological Dimesnion Of Shalom

The danger with the hermeneutical exercise as it has been expressed thus far in this chapter is it can 'lead to a relativising – to such an extent that one ends up being unable to say anything until one is aware of all the different vantage points.'[76p.116] Instead Habermas argues for what he calls an 'anticipatory knowledge which hopes for a social vision yet to be given.'[77p.116] In other words, one needs the eschatological dimension, that is to search the scripture for places where God's hopes are expressed in his plans for an alternative reality.

This section begins with an exploration of Jewish eschatology, before seeking a definition of eschatological *shalom.* This then can be the basis for beginning to establish the practical contribution of the church working towards the transformation of society.

'Studying eschatology is a most tantalising subject. It is also a very frustrating assignment'.[78p.75] Not least because scholarship has not agreed an accepted definition of eschatology let alone the concepts that it is seeking to understand. Hoffman[79p.77] suggests three main conditions that may help assess the authenticity of any eschatological vision. First, is that it has a future perspective, second that it has universal application and third that there is a miraculous or supernatural element to the vision.

Traditional Biblical interpreters such as Bright note that though there is no explicit mention of eschatology in the law or histories yet 'in a broader sense, Israel's faith had

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[76] BRUEGGEMANN, W. *Old Testament Theology.* Minneapolis, Augsburg Fortress Press, 1992.
[77] Cited in *Ibid*
[78] HOFFMAN, Y. 'Eschatology In The Book Of Jeremiah.' In ED. REVENTLOW, H. *Eschatology In The Bible And In The Jewish And Christian Tradition.* Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997, pp75-97.
[79] *Ibid.*

from a very early period, a future orientation and it was this future hope that was its most characteristic and made it unique.'[80p.19] For throughout the Hebrew Bible there is expectation of better things to come. As Moltmann suggests, 'Old Testament *shalom* became the prophetic word of promise of future divine salvation.'[81p.150]

This hope of *shalom* was limited to key individuals in one particular place and one particular time. However, as Von Rad has argued, it was the prophets who gave this vision of *shalom* a 'cosmic significance as it involves not just the establishment of God's promise to Israel but a promise of a complete renewal of the life of the world.'[82p.251] This eschatological promise of *shalom* is linked to the idea of the Day of the Lord when God himself will come in judgement on this world and usher in a new 'state of plenitude and perfection.'[83p.326]

This longed-for Day of the Lord leads to another key theme in Jewish scripture, that of promise and partial fulfilment. God's promises express his purpose towards all people but these promises are never fully fulfilled, leading to a continued need for 'an element of deferment – not all hopes will materialise in this life.'[84p.253] However, this deferred hope does not lead to disillusionment with the present but rather it leads to recognition of one's need to trust in God who alone knows the future. As Zimmerli contends, it is 'a hope that is reaching out to a future in which a good ending is anticipated.'[85p.7]

This idea of a good ending is important in seeking to understand the Jewish view of history which is not cyclical but linear. Ancient Israel understood their life as being part of a great drama under the direction of God, which was moving towards a final consummation. This meant that prophets, even at a point of judgement and despair such as the exile, could return again and 'again to the promise and the need for hope and trust that there will be a day in which the dominant order of things as we have known it will be terminated.'[86p.75] Hence, Jeremiah's command to pray for Babylon is based on the promise that God had plans for the exiles' *shalom* and such plans could give them a future and a hope.

Jeremiah's promise that God had plans for the exiles' *shalom* returns to the theme of eschatological *shalom* highlighted earlier. It is noteworthy that though this vision of eschatological *shalom* is found through his people seeking after God with all their hearts, the promise of s*halom* is not a result of human endeavour or a spiritual experience but is rooted in God's purposes. For it is God himself who lets his people find him and who wants to restore their fortunes. This is a theme that will be developed further in chapter ten.

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[80] BRIGHT, J. *Covenant And Promise.* London: SCM Press, 1977.
[81] MOLTMANN, J. 1995. *Op. Cit.*
[82] ACKROYD, P *Exile And Restoration* London, SCM, 1968.
[83] JACOB, E. *Theology Of The Old Testament.* London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1958.
[84] ACKROYD, P. 1968. *Op. Cit.*
[85] ZIMMERLI, W. *Man And His Hope In The Old Testament.* London: SCM, 1971.
[86] BRUEGGEMANN, W. *Hope Within History.* Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1987.

Brueggemann writes extensively on this 'dream of God and the hope offered to Israel is for a new social order which will embody peace, justice, freedom, equality and wellbeing.'[87p.75] He notes that though set in the future, in a time of divine peace between humanity, the natural world and God,[88] the characteristics of this eschatological *shalom* are clearly anchored in this world – it is a specific 'social, historical vision of a new politics and economics ... a vision for a better world of justice and equity is coming, as promised by God.'[89p.80]

This is most evident in Is.65, where the prophet foretold *shalom* when:

> Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years ... They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat ... My chosen ones will long enjoy the works of their hands. They will not toil in vain.[90]

It is worth asking why the prophets proclaimed this promise of eschatological *shalom*. Andersen argues that it was not mere 'speculation on the form of a new age, rather the prophets' concern was for the future as it impinged on the present ... [this vision of *shalom*] offering the possibility of a transformation that God was at work.'[91pp.578-579]

While Brueggemann again grounds the promise in the present arguing that the promise of eschatological *shalom* shows 'that the present world order is still open and provisional. That the way things are is precarious.'[92p.80]

This is a radical proposition as it offers a direct challenge to the rich and the powerful as they tend to be the people who are most happy with the status quo. They are the ones who are happy with a world order that keeps them is positions of influence and keeps everyone else in their place. Likewise, it challenges the notion that the free market controls people's wellbeing and through a 'trickle down' effect everyone will benefit. Such a vision of God's *shalom* offers a fuller vision of human flourishing that embraces justice and equity for all.

Furthermore, it is interesting to note that Jeremiah's letter to the exiles calls for the Jews to work for the *shalom* of Babylon. This offers what the Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks calls 'an intermediate goal not a utopian peace ... but a programme for the imperfect world of here and now'[93p.179] coloured by God's future hope. This vision of working is 'an act of critical hope, it is an eloquent statement of an alternative reality ... it offers the oppressed and hopeless the freedom of space and courage to act in a fresh way.'[94p.82-83]

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[87] *Ibid.*
[88] For example Isaiah 2v4 and 11v8, Joel 3v10 and Micah 4v3
[89] BRUEGGEMANN, W. 1987. *Op. Cit.*
[90] Isaiah 65v20-23 NIV translation
[91] ANDERSON, B. *The Living World Of the Old Testament.* Harlow: Longman, 1978.
[92] BRUEGGEMANN, W. 1987. *Op. Cit.*
[93] SACKS, J. *The Home We Build Together.* London: Continuum Press, 2007.
[94] BRUEGGEMANN, W. 1987. *Op. Cit.*

This political dimension is crucial to Moltmann's understanding of eschatological *shalom*. It combines a warning not to become too absorbed with the social structure but to be inspired by an eschatological vision of *shalom* that is both now and not yet. As Moltmann argues,

> The state must be seen as a 'process of the formation of political intention', which must be critically questioned in regard to its historical purpose within the horizon of the coming righteousness. It must therefore be shaped in creative love by Christians cooperating, working and suffering together.[95p.125]

The implications of Moltmann's conclusion cannot be underestimated. It means the church should 'never rest content with the status quo but must take up within itself all movements of change which aim for a better world.'[96p.283]

Moltmann's 'basic question is not then how the church adjusts society but how does the church become true to its purpose and intention.'[97p.141] In seeking to understand the church's purpose, it is important to consider how Christians have further developed Jewish eschatological thinking.

When asked what was the most important of the ancient Jewish commandments, Jesus replied 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and all your strength and all of your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.'[98] This core relationship between people of faith, God, and the community is foundational to eschatological *shalom*. It was also, as noted above, essential to the Old Testament covenant. This covenant theme is continued in the Christian's commitment to 'belong to the private sphere of worship and to work for integrating society, thereby providing a necessary ideology for public life.'[99p.108] This means (as discussed in chapter six) the division between a focus on worship and engagement in the world is a fallacy. Worship may bind Christians together, build an inner confidence and strength; but for what purpose? So they are challenged to collective action to transform the world.

In seeking to further an understanding of the Church's purpose in relation to fostering eschatological *shalom*, it is important to consider Christian eschatology. Bosch[100p.502f] outlines four models of Christian eschatology: absolute transcendence, which claims the future is controlled solely by God; individual conversion, where Christians are saved from this world and its corruptions; realised eschatology where the Kingdom of God has already begun and the Christians' role is to actualise God's kingdom in this world; a salvation history that sees the in-between times with the Christians' mission is to help bring the future kingdom into the present.

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[95] MOLTMANN, J. *Hope And Planning.* London: SCM Press, 1971.
[96] DOYLE, R. *Eschatology And The Shape Of Christian Belief.* Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1999.
[97] MOLTMANN, J. 1971. *Op. Cit.*
[98] Luke 10v27 NRSV Translation
[99] MILLBANK, J. *Theology And Social Theory.* Oxford: Blackwell, 1990.
[100] BOSCH, D. *Transforming Mission.* Maryknoll: Orbis, 1991.

The salvation history perspective perhaps best describes the idea of eschatological *shalom*. For this perspective argues that Christ has already inaugurated his Kingdom but it will not be fully realised until his second coming. However, as with the prophets' vision of *shalom,* this should not stop Christians praying God's future into the present. This means that a Christian approach to eschatological *shalom* is linked to societal responsibility and a call for the church's purpose to be 'the instrument of God's justice in the world ... charged with a mission to create peace.'[101p.6]

The final contribution of the Christian faith to eschatological *shalom* can be summarised in Jesus' command to 'love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.'[102] This can be directly correlated with Jeremiah's command to seek the *shalom* of Babylon, for the Jewish exiles are not to pine for Jerusalem but work for the welfare of one's enemy. Morisy,[103p.60] writing on social capital, argues that the church should not only be a source of bonding and bridging capital but offer a third dimension – brave social capital. This is the willingness to work alongside those perceived as one's enemy or a threat to one's own wellbeing. To step out in this manner takes a deeper faith in one's own convictions and a commitment to *shalom* which is beyond human ability. This commitment to building a community with those who are seen as a threat to your own wellbeing needs supernatural love which is only available through God's grace.

This section has explored the eschatological dimension to the Jewish faith with its vision of an alternative reality. Eschatological s*halom* subverts one's perspective of the present and makes people of faith allies with the powerless and oppressed. This Christian 'vision of God's ultimate reign of justice and peace can be a powerful magnet for those outside the church not just because the present is seen as empty but because God's future has already invaded it.'[104p.517] Such a vision proposes transformation, societal responsibility and a commitment to build a community of peace and justice.

e) Working Together For *Shalom*

The purpose of this chapter has been to begin the process of theological reflection on how the church engages with the urban development process by exploring the political hermeneutic of *shalom*.

First, through study of the etymology, a number of meanings of *shalom* were identified but a common thread was found, linked a mutual sense of wellbeing and a quality of life lived under God.

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[101] MOLTMANN, J. *Creating A Just Future.* London: SCM Press, 1989.
[102] Matthew 6v44 NRSV Translation
[103] MORISY, A. *Journeying Out.* London: Continuum Press, 2004.
[104] BOSCH, D. 1991. *Op. Cit.*

Second, through the exegesis of this meaning of *shalom* in Jer.29v4-14, insights were gained into the contextual understanding of *shalom*. This included a commitment to becoming an integral part of one's community; retaining one's identity while being involved in critical engagement to help create a civil society; and finally an encouragement to work alongside and pray for those in authority whilst continuing to speak up on behalf of the oppressed.

Third, further elucidation is gathered through an exposition of *shalom* and making connections with similar concepts in contemporary experience. These included the ideas of wellbeing, quality of life, liveability, sense of community and social capital. Although a number of synergies were made, no single contemporary term had the holistic nature of *shalom* primarily, as they neglected to give full attention to the notion of faith which is so integral to *shalom*.

Fourth, in seeking the eschatological meaning of *shalom,* an increasingly practical dimension to s*halom* has emerged that encompasses transformation, societal responsibility and a commitment to build a community of peace and justice.

Chapter Nine: '… of the city ...'

This chapter continues the process of exploring the political hermeneutic by looking at the idea of the city. In particular it identifies the tensions involved in building a city. Connections are therefore made with praxis to assess whether a theological understanding of the city can assist with mediating that tension.

This again involves reflecting on the four stages of the political hermeneutic.

First, through exploring the etymology, it is possible to trace the changing function of the city in the Bible. It must be stressed that this will not focus on the changes in physical infrastructure and land use in the ancient city. Rather, it explores the disputes about 'the idea of a city as a symbol of human activity, a container of a corporate identity.'[1p.xii]

Second, since the city referred to in Jer.29v4-14 is Babylon, it is important to trace the tensions between Babylon and Jerusalem that exist throughout the book of Jeremiah. This further illuminates the radical nuances in Jeremiah's command to 'seek the welfare of the city.'

Third, in making connections with the contemporary understanding of the city as a place of interaction and contestation, links are made with theologians and philosophers who have highlighted a similar tension between living in this world and a promise of the future. This thinking will be assessed to see how it has influenced the ideas behind engagement with the city.

Fourth, it is then important to consider the eschatological dimension that affects one's view of the long term destiny of the city and how this begins to subvert the ideas of utopia.

a) A Biblical Understanding Of The City

This section explores the word 'city' in the Hebrew Bible and whether a valid connection can be made between these early settlements and the changing nature of the city today. For Conn and Ortiz warn that 'jumping too quickly from the cities of the 20th Century to the vocabulary of the Old Testament can be hazardous to one's hermeneutical health.'[2p.83] In some respects they are right, as the Hebrew word for a city - *'ir* - refers to a fortified or walled settlement and this clearly does not reflect the complexity of the modern city. However, the core purpose of the city remains unchanged – cities are power centres either to protect against or exert influence over the area surrounding them.

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[1] HAWKINS, P. 'Civitas: Religious Ideas Of The City' In ED. HAWKINS, P. *Civitas Religious Interpretations Of The City.* Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986, pp. xi-xix.
[2] CONN, H AND ORTIZ, M. *Urban Ministry: The Kingdom, The City And The People Of God* Downers Grove: IVP, 2001.

According to the lexicon[3] the word *'ir* occurs 1,092 times in the Hebrew Bible. Three different uses of the word are identified relating to different stages of Hebrew city building: a walled enclosure designed for security; a fortified city with a local power base such as a citadel or sacred place; and a specific reference to Jerusalem - the capital city built as a powerbase for religious and administrative purposes. Two further stages of city building can also be added which lie outside the historical records of ancient Israel. First, the imperial cities focused on empire building; and second the eschatological city is based on a future vision of God's reign.

In investigating the role of the city in each of these contexts, this thesis follows Ellul who suggests 'it is of little importance whether these stories conform to factual reality for these stories are neither historical nor aetiological but theological.'[4p.1] Hence this thesis concentrates on answering four questions: What term 'city' mean in this context? What is the nature of the city at that time? What does the Bible say about these cities? And what theological purposes did the city further and are these purposes still relevant today?

The first translation in the lexicon[5p.701] for the word *'ir* is a hill, castle or city. However, its etymological roots are problematic, Frick[6p.27] suggests a root in the Ugaritic word *gyr* that means 'to protect' and therefore suggests the earliest meaning is 'the connotation of protection for its inhabitants and those of the immediate environs.'[7p.29]

This correlates with the archaeological evidence that suggests early ancient near east settlements were small, typically 3-5 acres, with several houses, cisterns and public ways protected by a wall. Mumford urges caution about identifying the nature of these walled cities simply from archaeological evidence. Rather he argues 'to identify the origin of the city one must identify the urban structure and functions.'[8p.13] If these early cities were protective enclosures, the city's functions would be to provide security, receptivity and nurture.

This idea of the city as a place of protection closely relates to the first Biblical reference to the city in Genesis 4v17. Cain built this city after he had murdered his brother Abel. Scholars such as Ellul[9p.5] suggest Cain's building of a city is a direct response to his desire for security, whilst naming the city after his son Enoch links the idea of the city to a place of nurture.

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[3] JENNI, E AND WESTERMANN, C AND BIDDLE, M. *Theological Lexicon Of The Old Testament.* Edinburgh: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004.
[4] ELLUL, J. *The Meaning Of The City.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmanns, 1970.
[5] KOCHLER, L AND BAUMGARTNER, W. *Lexicon In Veteris Testament Libros.* Leiden: Brill, 1953.
[6] FRICK, F. *The City In Ancient Israel.* Missoula: Scholars' Press, 1977.
[7] *Ibid.*
[8] MUMFORD, L. *The City In History.* London: Penguin, 1970.
[9] ELLUL, J. 1970. *Op. Cit.*

Murray[10p.24] identifies three theological implications of Cain's city. First, Cain was alienated from the ground and so to make a living he relied on trade. Second, Cain alienated himself from his natural family and needed protection behind walls. Finally, Cain alienated himself from God and sought protection in buildings. So the city becomes a 'surrogate for Cain's relationship with God, an alternate human form of protection and provision.'[11p.37]

The link between Cain and the first city has led to an anti-urban strand in early Israelite history where Eden is depicted as the place of security under God's protection and Cain's city as an act of defiance against God.[12] However, it is worth noting that in Deuteronomy 19, God redeems the idea of the city, as a place of refuge for people who unintentionally commit murder.

These themes of trade, walled protection and human ambition are key aspects of the 'fortified town' idea of *'ir* in the Old Testament. This stage of city building is when the city became a more permanent settlement. Weber[13pp.75-76] argues that this more fixed form of city was often focused around either a simple manorial house, or on a grander scale on a citadel or temple dominating the surrounding settlement. These focal buildings were the first signs of significant buildings 'deliberately meant to awe and overpower the beholder … expressing in concrete terms the magnification of sacred and secular power.'[14p.81&42]

It is important to note the socio-political changes that led to the creation of these fortified towns. Frankfurt suggests,

> It is well to recognise the extraordinary character of this urban form of political organisation. It represents in the highest degree ... intensified self consciousness and self-assertion … it is a man-made institution overriding primordial divisions of society based on family.[15p.77 (sic)]

How did these cities bring together a number of people under unified control? The answer for many ancient cities was religion - domestic shrines replaced the idea of gods in the heavens. The key building was therefore seen as a monument towering towards heaven.

The first example in the Bible of these types of city is the account of Nimrod[16] who is credited with building many of the greatest cities in the ancient world. The significance of these cities was the way in which they 'reflected a spirit of conquest … man conquers time, space and power. [sic]'[17p.13&14] Following Nimrod's city building, the

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[10] MURRAY, S. *City Vision.* London: Daybreak, 1990.
[11] JACOBSEN, E. *Sidewalks In The Kingdom.* Grand Rapids: Bazros Press, 2003.
[12] GOLDINGAY, J. '*The Bible In The City.'* Inaugural Lecture as Principal, 4th April 1988, St John's College, Nottingham.
[13] WEBER, M. *The City.* New York: The Free Press, 1966.
[14] MUMFORD, L. 1970. *Op. Cit.*
[15] FRANKFORT, H. *The Birth Of Civilisation In The Near East.* Garden City: Doubleday, 1956.
[16] Genesis 10:9-10
[17] ELLUL, J. 1970. *Op. Cit.*

Bible tells the story of the tower of Babel - a monument reaching for the heavens built by humans so they can make a name for themselves – ironically, a goal they never reach.

The theological message behind these cities again appears antagonistic. 'The city is depicted as an evil spiritual power, a place of entrenchment where each attempt at establishing a city is met by the failure of its own unconscious design.'[18p.19] On the other hand, Wilson[19p.7] challenges this anti-urban bias. He argues that the story of the tower of Babel does not end with God destroying the city but creating confusion amongst its builders. So Wilson asks, was God judging the city or the people?

The message of these early Genesis stories is that 'sin also takes on a corporate dimension when a city's citizens working together in common purpose.'[20p.41] It is not therefore the city per se that is being judged but the way city building creates confidence in the fallen human spirit, in defiance of God. A similar critique was made of the Modernists' approach to urban development when they too placed their faith in the power of human progress.

The next stage of city building takes place much later in Israel's history than in other ancient civilisations. This was because when Israel entered the Promised Land, the Canaanites had already built the cities. However, as Brueggemann argues 'the Old Testament sounds a voice on behalf of resentful peasants who regarded urban concentrations of power as a ruthless engine for economic exploitation.'[21p.12] He draws his argument from the book of Joshua where the Hebrews are depicted as being 'profoundly opposed to the city, for the city is the centre of Canaanite power, Canaanite religion and Canaanite ideology'[22p.13] that must be irrevocably destroyed. This worldview changes with the monarchy and David's capture of Jerusalem, establishing it as his capital. It is noticeable that the word *'ir* takes on a new meaning at this point, as 'a quarter within a major settlement containing the temple and major centre of administration.'[23p.39] This is seen in 2 Samuel 5v9 where the fortress area is called David's city.

What was the driving force for this new city? Mumford argues that the advent of urban institutions was to assist with orchestrating war for it enabled rulers 'to accumulate power, to hold onto power and to express power by deliberate acts of … destruction.'[24] This was evident in the physical form of the city: elaborate fortifications, towers and broad roadways terminating in a large courtyard where three institutions dominated;

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[18] *Ibid*.
[19] WILSON, R. 'The City In The Old Testament.' In: ED. HAWKINS, P. *Civitas*: *Religious Interpretation Of The City.* Atlanta: Scholars' Press, 1986. pp.3-14.
[20] LINTHICUM, R. *City Of God, City Of Satan.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991.
[21] BRUEGGEMANN, W. *Mandate To Difference.* Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007.
[22] *Ibid.*
[23] FRICK, F. 1977. *Op. Cit.*
[24] MUMFORD, L. 1970. *Op. Cit.*

the palace, temple and the barracks, representing the monarchy's domination of politics, religion and the military.

Brueggemann identifies a theological under-current in the Biblical account that 'juxtaposes the land of promise and city of David as a core tension in Israel's memory and faith.'[25p.17] This was evident in David's decision to move the Ark of the Covenant to the city, seeking to link the Mosaic traditions with the monarchy. However, under Solomon, royal authority eclipsed that of religion; for though Solomon's main building triumph is the temple, he built an even larger royal palace. 'There can hardly be any doubt that Solomon's building programme was primarily a symbol of royal power, wealth and grandeur; like all such urban accomplishments, its purpose is mythic and symbolic rather than functional.'[26 p.18]

Once again there is an apparent dichotomy in the theological view of the city. On the one hand, the Chronicler links to the Zion tradition where Jerusalem is seen as a sign of strength. Jerusalem is called the city of God and celebrated as the centre of worship - the place the psalmist calls 'where God has made his home'[27] and urges the people to 'pray for the peace of Jerusalem.'[28] On the other hand, an anti-urban strand continues in the prophetic and Deuteronomistic writings that focus on the darker side of urban development, when God's messengers speak out against 'the sins of the city's people including self indulgence, injustice and exploitation.'[29p.42]

The next type of city is the imperial city. These cities dominated national and international administrative, military and religious institutions. However, trade increasingly became the fourth power in the local hegemony. Goldingay suggests 'Babylon became a byword for trade, achievement, entertainment, civic pride, power, prosperity, craftsmanship and culture.'[30] Within this mix of imperial politics, religion was gradually replaced by military might and mercantile wealth as the means to retain order and security. The semblance to a modern city is becoming clearer.

The Bible describes two great imperial cities. The first is Nineveh, the capital of Assyria described in the book of Jonah as 'an exceedingly large city, a three days walk across.'[31] This is exceptionally large yet Jonah 4v11 suggests there were only 120,000 residents; the three day walk must have included the outlying secondary settlements. The second imperial city is Babylon, the largest city in antiquity covering some 2,500 acres.[32p.249]

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[25] BRUEGGEMANN, W. 2007. *Op. Cit.*
[26] *Ibid.*
[27] Psalm 132v13
[28] Psalm 122v6
[29] LINTHICUM, R, 1991. *Op. Cit.*
[30] GOLDINGAY, J. 1988. *Op. Cit.*
[31] Jonah 3v3
[32] LONG, J. 'Babylon, Babylonia.' In: *Encyclopaedia Of The Bible.* London: Marshall Morgan and Scott, 1988. pp.243-250

There is an interesting paradox in the theological function of these imperial cities in the Bible. On the one hand, the Bible sees these imperial cities as instruments of God's judgement on his people - as first Israel and then Judah is deported to these two empires in turn. On the other hand, they represent a metaphor or symbol of wickedness. As Watson highlights,

> As a symbol, Babylon embraces more than the empire, city, or culture of the Babylonians. It becomes equated with the sphere of idolatry, worldliness, the temporary control of Satan. Set up in opposition to the people and work of God … the antithesis of the Kingdom of God.[33p.566]

This metaphor of Babylon as a place of sin and rebellion is picked up by the prophets in passages such as Isaiah 14v5-21 and continues in the New Testament in Revelation 18. Once again there is tension in God's attitude towards the role of the city.

Babylon is not the final image of the city in the Bible; for alongside this image of Babylon is a vision of a New Jerusalem. However, it is clear from later prophetic descriptions that this is more than simply a return to ancient Jerusalem. It was noted above that the promise of *shalom* for Jerusalem is yet to be fulfilled. Furthermore, Ezekiel's vision is of a restored temple and city which is nowhere near the dimensions of the restoration temple built at the restoration. Rather, the vision of a New Jerusalem is 'the pinnacle of success, associated with order, civilisation, life and beauty. Its buildings spoke of prosperity and power and its walls of enduring peace and security.'[34p.86] It is a vision reiterated at the end of the Bible in Revelation 21 suggesting that God's final vision for restored humanity is to live in a city.

The following section explores how God's vision of a New Jerusalem gave the Jews renewed hope. At this point, it is worth noting how this vision is at odds with those who see an anti-urban trait in the Biblical text. It depicts the city not as a place to be finally destroyed but redeemed; for 'God has designed and intended the city to become what he has purposed.'[35p.39]

This overview of the Biblical meaning of the word *'ir* has noted how not only the form but the nature of the cities change as they becomes 'hubs of civilisation and centres of trade, places of imperial power and military strategy.'[36p.1] However, in reflecting on the theological role of the city, a number of tensions are revealed in the Biblical meaning of the city.

The cities of Cain, Babel and Babylon are associated with greed and arrogance and revolt against God. However, God also redeems the notion of city. He orders some

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[33] WATSON, D. 'Babylon In The New Testament.' In: *Anchor Bible Dictionary.* New York: Doubleday, 1992. pp.565-566.
[34] CONN, H AND ORTIZ, M. 2001. *Op. Cit.*
[35] LINTHICUM, R. 1991. *Op. Cit.*
[36] GRAHAM, E AND LOWE, S. *What Makes A Good City?* London: DLT, 2009.

cities be designated places of refuge, while he was willing to see his name associated with the building of Jerusalem. The Psalms describe Jerusalem as 'the city of the Lord Almighty.'[37] Finally the New Jerusalem provides 'a glimpse of what God has in store for us.'[38p.45]

Hence a paradox is at work. The city is 'both Babylon, the place of alienation, exile and estrangement and violence; and Jerusalem, the place of God's dwelling, God's sign and invitation to work for its peace.'[39p.140]

b) Jeremiah's Tale Of Two Cities

Jeremiah speaks of the city more times than any other prophet and is only narrowly eclipsed by Joshua as having the most frequent occurrence of the Hebrew word *'ir*.[40] Coupled with this is the fact that though Jeremiah spent the majority of his prophetic ministry in Jerusalem, he manifestly challenged the Jerusalem hegemony, for 'Jeremiah's theological argument … is saturated with Babylonian reality … and the cruciality of Babylon in any assessment of Judah's place in the world.'[41p.232]

It was noted in chapter eight that the prophecies in the book of Jeremiah are only loosely in chronological order, placed in a sequence to explain God's purposes. These purposes were not confined to the religious but in many cases had profound political implications. This is evident from Jeremiah's own call in the first chapter: 'See today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to pluck up and to pull down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant.[42]

Chapters 1-25 recount Jeremiah's prophecies of God's judgement on Jerusalem and the cultic state. He predicts an impending destruction of Jerusalem and pulling down of the Temple. His warnings fall on deaf ears and King Jehoiachin and his elite are 'plucked up' and taken into exile.

Chapters 27-29 form a series of prose from the time of the puppet King Zedekiah where Jeremiah addresses false hopes of a rapid return from exile but also sees God at work in the exile. However, this is only a temporary respite for Jerusalem before its destruction in 587BCE.

This is followed by what has become known as a book of consolation (chapters 30-33) when the prophet offers profound hope in Judah's darkest hour. Stories are told of how Jeremiah begins to build and to plant in Jerusalem even though the city is about to be overthrown.

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[37] Psalm 48:8 New International Version
[38] JACOBSEN, E. 2003. *Op. Cit.*
[39] GORRINGE, T. *A Theology Of The Built Environment.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
[40] 137 occurrences according to JENNI, E AND WESTERMANN, C AND BIDDLE, M. *Theological Lexicon Of The Old Testament.* Edinburgh: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004.
[41] BRUEGGEMANN, W. *A Commentary On Jeremiah: Exile And Homecoming.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmanns, 1998.
[42] Jeremiah 1v10 NRSV translation

Following a narrative on Jeremiah's life at the onset of exile, the book ends with the oracles against the nations (Chapters 46-51), where Jeremiah prophesies that God will ultimately pull down and destroy Babylon's power and offers a promise of God's unconditional deliverance for his people.

The letter to the exiles lies near the centre of the book of Jeremiah and is indeed a microcosm of his argument. So this exegesis section provides an overview of the role of the cities of Jerusalem and Babylon in each stage of Jeremiah's overall message rather than focusing specifically on the text of Jer.29.

In exploring the Jewish relationship with these two cities, connections can be made with the tensions in the contemporary city – thereby enabling the church to also benefit from the prophet's insight in its understanding of the city today.

The previous section highlighted the significance of Jerusalem and the temple to the Jews under the monarchy. This was increased significantly after the fall of the northern Kingdom when King Hezekiah and Josiah 'centralised national worship on the most comprehensive scale the world as ever known.'[43p.214]

Jeremiah lived in this period of centralisation of worship but unlike most of his contemporaries he does not see Jerusalem as a sacred city. Rather the 'book of Jeremiah gives voice to a small group of figures around the prophet who believed the royal policies in Jerusalem were quite wrong.'[44p.8] His words challenge the authorities in the city for their worship of idols, their failure to live up to God's standard and their abuse of power over the citizens. In sum he claims they have broken the holy covenant.[45]

Jeremiah rejects the assumption that Jerusalem would be secure as God was on their side. Instead he warns of judgment to come. It is interesting to note that in the first twenty chapters Jeremiah does not mention Babylon at all. Rather, there are warnings of an enemy coming from the north. However, there is no question that 'Jeremiah's message was one with strong political implications; his was no utopian vision of an unrealisable social order but a serious contention for the paths of peace.'[46p.159]

Is Jeremiah's message still relevant to the contemporary city? The social analysis stage of this thesis identified the predominant worldview behind urban development and planning as being largely based on furthering human progress rather than seeking the Lord's purposes. God's people, like Jeremiah, remain called to 'penetrate and expose the counter-interpretations of the establishment for what they are: misleading, misinformed notions that lead away from the power … of God's rule and purpose.'[47p.16]

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[43] SMITH, G. *Jerusalem: The Topography, Economics And History.* London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1908.
[44] BRUEGGEMANN, W. *Out Of Babylon.* Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2010.
[45] Jeremiah 11v1-17
[46] CLEMENTS, R. *Interpretation Commentary: Jeremiah.* Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1988.
[47] BRUEGGEMANN, W. 1998. *Op. Cit.*

This is not a comfortable place to be. Jeremiah was imprisoned and tortured for his faithfulness.

In 597BC the Jewish elite are taken into exile and there is an interesting interlude in Jewish affairs. The remnant in Judah were made a vassal state of Babylon but they had a King from the Davidic line and archaeological records show that they were treated relatively gently, for Jerusalem's 'commerce, agriculture and business at court appears to still run smoothly.'[48p.53]

A hope therefore began to emerge that Judah could break free from the Babylonian vassalage and see a rapid return for the exiles. However, Jeremiah's message[49] remained unchanged. He still urges submission to the King of Babylon and that resistance was counter to the will of Yahweh. As was noted in chapter eight, Jeremiah sees God at work in the exilic community for in his letter to the exiles 'he is more than simply accommodating Babylon but urging a coming to terms with Babylon as the unavoidable matrix of their well being.'[50p.8] For as the *Faith in the City* report noted, Jeremiah calls on 'the people of God to seek the welfare of the city even though that city is Babylon with all its connotations of evil.'[51p.4]

It is interesting to note that though Jeremiah's message has changed for the exiles in Babylon, his verdict on Jerusalem remains focused on plucking up and destroying. Life in Babylon has become a significant alternative for Jeremiah as he depicts that city as 'a viable venue for faithfulness.'[52p.9] He urges the Jews not be afraid of surrender to Nebuchadnezzar, as he is working God's purposes. This was a very different message to that the royal court who continued to see Babylon as a threat. Hence Jeremiah found himself questioning false prophets like Hananiah.[53] Jeremiah's struggle with his government reflects the tension in city building. His struggle to convey his message to those in power is resonant with praxis, where faith groups have struggled to understand how best to engage with the political powers behind city building; while everyday faithfulness is seen as a viable option for living in a contested city.

The destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 587BC symbolically represented the final end of the Jewish aspirations for their holy city. Their grief for the loss of the city expressed through the book of Lamentations reflects a feeling 'far greater than loss of national prestige, for their entire understanding of their special relationship with Yahweh was in question and it precipitated a total reappraisal and

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[48] NEWSOME, J. *By The Waters Of Babylon.* Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1979.
[49] Jeremiah 27v5-7
[50] BRUEGGEMANN, W. 2010 *Op. Cit.*
[51] ARCHBISHOP'S COMMISSION ON UPAS. *Faith In The City.* London: Church House Publishing, 1985.
[52] BRUEGGEMANN, W. 2010 *Op. Cit.*
[53] Jeremiah 28

rethinking of Israel's self understanding.'[54p.6] Jeremiah, on the other hand, saw it as a liberation from false hopes placed in Jerusalem and Zion. It was the will of Yahweh that Jerusalem was destroyed[55] and submission to Babylon was not a sign of defeat, but obedience to God. For it offered an opportunity for the Jews to learn that their religion was not limited to one city, a theme examined below in chapter ten.

The fall of Jerusalem has much contemporary relevance – it speaks to those who restrict God's work to particular places and buildings. The church needs to reflect on the way God engages with culture and be wary of limiting its vision of God and restricting his divine purposes.

In a similar manner, making the transition to life in Babylon offered an immense challenge to the Jewish elite who were used to their privileged position in Jerusalem. Commentators are uncertain whether all the exiles lived in the city. Parrot[56p.123] suggests that only a privileged group was based in Babylon around the former king Jehoiachin, while most of the exiles were put into manual service in the forced reclamation of agricultural land. This was later proved by Newsome who found evidence of Jewish names on burial sites around Nippor.[57p.70]

The contrast between Jerusalem and Babylon was stark, as noted above. Babylon was a major cultural centre with a plethora of temples and shrines, while 'the ziggurat was undoubtedly a landmark which could be seen from afar signalling the importance of the Babylonian religious community.'[58p.63] In addition, Babylonian mercantile records suggest a society based on individualism, wealth and consumption. This was also very different from the communal Jewish faith and chapter ten explores the way in which the Jews adapted their faith in exile.

This struggle to engage with the city is echoed in the debates outlined in chapter six concerning church engagement with urban development. For though city authorities promote different values from Christians, Jeremiah's argument is that it is possible to live and work with the powers in the city without compromising faith. The question is how far should one integrate and how does one maintain hope in God.

This hope, in the case of the Jewish exiles, was a promised return to Jerusalem in seventy years (Jer.29v11-14). This vision of hope is elaborated in chapters 30-33 where words of judgement on Jerusalem and pragmatism in Babylon give way to an effusion of poetry in a prophetic hope for restoration and healing. This poetry creates 'anticipation of a new historical possibility for Judah – an anticipation that pushes powerfully beyond imperial permits and transcends the seeming

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[54] CLEMENTS, R. 1988. *Op. Cit.*
[55] Jeremiah 25:9, 27:6 and 43:10
[56] PARROT, A. *Babylon And The Old Testament.* London: SCM Press, 1958.
[57] NEWSOME, J. 1979. *Op. Cit.*
[58] LEICK, G. *The Babylonians.* London: Routledge, 2003.

prohibitions of empire.'[59p.3] This so called Book of Consolation offered a comfort and a hope to the exiles that countered the sense of abandonment felt by the deportation, and subsequent destruction of Jerusalem. It was an assurance that their own city had not been forgotten even though they were now commanded to work for the *shalom* of another city.

What is the nature of this hope? There are promises of a new king in the Davidic line (33v17-26), the citadel and Zion restored (30v17-18) and the city rebuilt and extended (31v38). However, there are some noticeable differences between this vision of Jerusalem and the cultic ideas behind the Zionist ideology. This future city is not based on the politics of the Davidic kingship or sustained by the power of the temple but is empowered by the word and will of God.

These ideas of a New Jerusalem would have appeared fanciful in the days immediately following 587BC. Indeed Ackroyd[60p.60] argues for a later editing of these chapters arguing they share themes characteristic of Deutero-Isaiah. However, this is to deny the divine possibility that God could have given the same vision to two different prophets or that the later prophets read and reflected on the vision of Jeremiah. What is clear is that the promise of building and planting is not restricted to life in exile in the city of Babylon but it is still very clearly part of God's future purposes for Jerusalem (Jeremiah 31v27-28).

Just as the ultimate fate of Jerusalem will not be destruction but restoration, so the final chapters of Jeremiah (especially 50-51) foretell a very different future for Babylon. It is a prophetic call for God's people to leave Babylon which is about to be destroyed and her mighty walls thrown down. It is made abundantly clear throughout these so called 'Oracles against the Nations' that this is the Lord's plan and it will all be his doing.

Why does the book of Jeremiah do such an abrupt about-turn? It is to remind the Jews in exile that Yahweh is sovereign and he will ultimately not only return them to Jerusalem but repay the Babylonians for their oppression of the Jews. As Clements comments, 'had the book of Jeremiah contained only advocacy of submission and surrender to Babylon, it would have turned Jeremiah into a herald of doom and defeat.'[61p.266] However, the promise of Babylon's downfall offers a fuller picture of God's ultimate purposes. Evil will not be allowed to triumph, it will be defeated and God's people restored.

In the midst of this oracle is an interesting aside, 'we tried to heal Babylon but she could not be healed.'[62] In other words, though the Jews were called to seek the *shalom* of the city, Babylon would never ultimately achieve all the benefits of the

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[59] BRUEGGEMANN, W. 1998. *Op. Cit.*
[60] ACKROYD, P. *Exile And Return.* London: SCM, 1968.
[61] CLEMENTS, R. 1988. *Op. Cit.*
[62] Jeremiah 51v9 NRSV translation

Jewish *shalom* and 'in spite of all the efforts of goodwill, the brilliant city, the show city, is still condemned, her power annihilated.'[63p.57]

Does this mean that Christians are called to leave the city and there is no need to engage in prayer for the healing of the city? No, this prophecy reflects the end of times rather than the present when one is still called to seek the *shalom* of the city. However, it is an important message about the degree of involvement in Babylonian affairs. The previous section noted that Babylon has become a 'codeword or metaphor capable of representing any oppressive super power.'[64p.204] The contemporary meaning of Jeremiah is that the oppressive nature of the city will ultimately be destroyed and so part of a hope in the future should be to redeem as many people in the city as possible from their path to destruction.

Throughout Jeremiah's account and in particular in the letter to the exiles, a tension exists between the two cities of Jerusalem and Babylon. In the first half of the book, Jerusalem is judged for its false security and Babylon is heralded as the place to build and plant despite its apparent evil and myriad distractions. In the second half of the book, hopes focus on a restored Jerusalem and a promise that Babylon will ultimately be destroyed.

The exiles reading Jeremiah's letter are at the midpoint of this message, caught in this tension between submission to the King of Babylon and their eschatological hope for redemption and retribution. The message of Jeremiah offers a flexible realpolitik for the present city where an absolute faith in God gives faith in the present, an assurance that evil will not succeed and a promise that justice will triumph over oppression.

c) The Tensions Of Building A City

In exploring the Biblical concept of the city, this chapter has noted tension between a common anti-urban sentiment and depictions of the city as God's dwelling place. The study of Jerusalem and Babylon in Jeremiah, has argued that the prophet offers a realpolitik for holding that tension in the present.

This section moves on to consider the connections between the cities of the present and this Biblical perspective. For there is little doubt that the dichotomy between Babylon and Jerusalem has influenced theological thinking about cities. As Ricoeur[65] has explored, biblical metaphors often spill over into different contexts: 'Babylon has

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[63] ELLUL, J. 1970. *Op. Cit.*
[64] HOLT, E. 'The Meaning Of An Inclusio.' In: *Scandinavian Journal Of The Old Testament* 17, 2003. pp.183-205.
[65] RICOEUR, P. *The Rule Of Metaphor.* London: Routledge, 1978.

become a metaphor for ideology of great public power'[66p.20] and Jerusalem has 'transmogrified into an ideal form – a glimpse of the eternal order, a visible heaven on earth, a seat of life abundant – in other words a utopia.'[67p.281] This link between utopia and the contested city has resonance with the genesis of planning and urban sociological thinking today.

This section outlines this progression of thought from the Biblical metaphors of the city through western theology (Augustine, Luther and More who wrote about two cities or kingdoms) to contemporary urban concepts. In so doing this section explores the social context behind each philosophy, their expression of dialectical tension and how their thinking has shaped the Christian response to the city.

Much of Western thinking on the city comes from Augustine and in particular his theological reflections in his epic work, the *City Of God*. This book was produced in the context of a powerful but declining imperial Rome. However, the argument that this book was solely an attack on Rome cannot be sustained, 'on the contrary it sees Rome as a vehicle ordained by providence for the benefit of Christianity.'[68p.xxvi] The book has hence been called a Charter for Christendom, as it brings together a critique of Roman and Greek philosophy with the Hebrew Bible, to point to the supremacy of the one true God and his church. However, unlike Plato, Augustine does not see the church as governing the city and somehow superior to other people. Nor does he follow Aristotle and outline an idealised city of human perfection. Instead he draws on the Hebrew Scriptures which are 'future orientated, pointing to a future made possible by God's actions in the present.'[69p.95]

Augustine describes two cities: the City of Earth and the City of Heaven. He advocates that the earthly city was produced by human nature and traces its origins back to Cain and the tower of Babel. He then summarises the earthly city's characteristics as those of Babylon: the city of violence, impiety and false gods. In contrast, the City of God is the vision of the New Jerusalem that lies in the future, brought forth by the grace of God. It is the 'heavenly city which is perfectly ordered and perfectly harmonious … in the enjoyment of God and mutual fellowship in God.'[70p.870] However, Augustine is not merely dreaming of a New Jerusalem but seeking to convey the theology of a means to create true peace. There are definite correlations with the Jewish exile, as Augustine speaks of the mortal life as a 'life of captivity in this earthly city in a foreign land where one already has received the promise of redemption.'[71p.877]

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[66] BRUEGGEMANN, W. 'At The Mercy Of Babylon.' In: *Journal Of Biblical Literature* 110, 1991, pp.3-22.
[67] MUMFORD, L. 'Utopia, The City And The Machine.' In: *Daedalus* 94, 1965, pp271-292.
[68] O'MEARA, J. 'Introduction' In: AUGUSTINE (c.425) *City Of God Book XIX* Translated by O'MEARA, J. London: Penguin Books, 1984. pp.vii-xxxv.
[69] CLARK, M. *Augustine.* London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1994.
[70] AUGUSTINE (c.425) *Op. Cit.*
[71] *Ibid.*

In reflecting on the significance of Augustine's City of God to the development of Christian thinking about the city, it is important to note that Augustine did not condemn the building of the earthly city, for the city is built according to human standards in a desire to ensure peace. However, he does urge God's people to raise their sights and look for another city that is built by God.[72] The City Of God is not an ideal city to be built in the here and now. Rather, the distinction between the two cities is an eschatological one, for Augustine saw the City of God as 'an ark, hidden over and over again, its revelation only occurring at the end of history.'[73p.506] The City of God is therefore a spiritual phenomenon, something to be anticipated in the future, when all temporal values are redeemed. A dialectical tension is created in the present, where the values of the two cities are interwoven and mingled with one another. Where like Jeremiah, Augustine motivates Christians to work for a city of justice and peace (*shalom*).

Luther also developed a profound understanding of humanity's role in society. His ideas reflected Augustine and it could be said that the idea of 'the two cities is a direct ancestor of Luther's thought.'[74p.178] However, by the time of Luther, the two-cities philosophy had been misinterpreted as a conflict between spiritual and secular authority. For, in an increasingly urbanised society, a burgeoning middle class was eager to partake in the power of the city. However, the Catholic Church inferred that the Pope, as the ultimate spiritual head, had authority over secular authorities ruling the emerging city states.

It is therefore surprising that Luther's reflection on the Christian's role in this increasingly urban society does not start with a radical critique of the existing social order. Not that he readily endorsed the Catholic Church as the supreme authority; rather he is more interested in the individual's relationship with God. The key to Luther's thinking was whether one belongs to the Kingdom of God or the kingdom of the lord of this world (that is the Devil). This is because like Augustine, he sees these two Kingdoms in an apocalyptic conflict and it was essential that one knew where one was placed in this eternal struggle.

Despite this emphasis on a distinction between two Kingdoms, Luther is wary of dividing this world into two separate but unrelated spheres. Rather, he is keen to stress that 'the Christian is a citizen of both kingdoms; for from the first, they were a citizen of the world and only then did they become a citizen of the kingdom of God.'[75p.320] To help explain this dual citizenship, Luther developed his theology further and identified the concept of two realms (or governments) – a temporal realm and a spiritual realm. The temporal realm is governed by the law with a God-given the power

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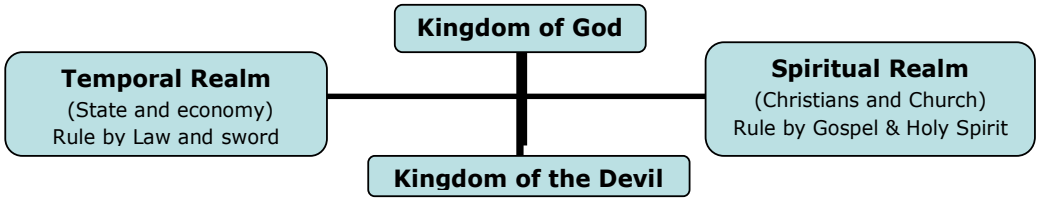
[72] Hebrews 11v16
[73] BLOCH, E. *The Principle Of Hope.* Oxford: Blackwell, 1986.
[74] EBELING, G. *Luther: An Introduction To His Thought.* London: Collins, 1970.
[75] LOHSE, B. *Martin Luther's Theology.* Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999.

to punish sin, to restrain the wicked and to save this world from the effects of sin. The spiritual realm is governed by the word of God and has power over the soul and inner person. (See Figure 9.1)

Figure 9.1 Luther's Two Kingdom Ideology



SOURCE: MOLTMANN, J *On Human Dignity.* London: SCM, 1984. p73

This is why Luther opposed revolutionary Christian sects such as the Anabaptists who challenged the authority of the temporal realm and sought to establish Christian governance. He warns them to 'take heed that you first fill the world with Christians before you rule it in an evangelical and Christian manner.'[76p.91] For as long as the Devil is the lord of this world, there will be both sinners and righteous people so there is a need for temporal power to bring peace and restrain the power of evil.

A dialectical tension is therefore created in which the church is called to engage with its contemporaries in a manner that reflects Jesus' maxim 'to be in this world but not of this world.'[77] This has an important message for the church today as it seeks to understand the Christian response to urban development. It needs to be aware that God has placed humanity in both the spiritual and temporal realm to work for his purposes. This means that the church must remain engaged with the temporal realm, sharing responsibility for the city and seek to shape its efforts to work for peace as a means to ultimately build the Kingdom of God.

Having assessed the thoughts of Augustine and Luther it is important also to consider More. His classic treatise on utopia was written in England in 1516 - about the same time as Luther was writing in Germany. More therefore lived in a closely related social context with a similar social desire to construct a new society. However, unlike Luther who began with individual faith, More's more social 'utopian thinking implies the capacity to criticise the status quo and imagine an alternative society … which overcomes the short comings of present society.'[78p.1] He presents his challenge by outlining a fresh vision of the city which is characterised by 'an economy of

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[76] LUTHER, M. 'Temporal Authority: To What Extent Should It Be Obeyed?' In: *Luther's Works Vol.45 The Christian In Society II* (1962 translation). Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, pp.75-129

[77] A monastic maxim based on John 17:14-15

[78] VERHEUL, J. *Dreams Of Paradise, Visions Of Apocalypse.* New York: V M University Press, 2004.

abundance and a fullness of leisure, where there are neither idle rich nor lusty beggars but equality for all.'[79]p.373

More's utopia has become established in the popular mind and the word utopia still has connotations of idealistic standards. However, it is important to remember that More's original vision was primordial; he looked forward to a New Jerusalem but also drew inspiration from Eden's harmony and perfection. The word itself reflects this dichotomy, being a pun on the Greek words '*eutopia*' meaning a good place and '*outopia*' meaning no place.

There is debate as to whether More's vision was meant as an idealised Christian city. There are links in his use of Christian vocabulary such as the New Jerusalem, paradise, redemption, hope and fulfilment; while his depiction of society contains echoes of Isaiah's vision[80] of eternal peace and tranquillity. However, Kumar suggests there is 'a fundamental antagonism between the forms and concerns of religion and the form and concerns of utopia.'[81p.7] He recalls that Jesus told Pilate 'my kingdom is not of this earth'[82] whereas utopia is concerned with a reconstruction of life on earth. However, this is to misunderstand More, as his archetypal city was 'not a telos, focused on the end it envisions but in the means it discloses'[83p.148] in order to help Christians understand their role in society.

More, Augustine and Luther all project the city as a place of dialectic tension between the ideal but unobtainable society and the problems of the city of the present. They therefore provide a model of how 'the stamp of divine order and human purpose can be combined in all its institutions.'[84p.283]

This idea that Christians are called to live in a dialectical tension and social interaction with the city has resonance with the social analysis part of this thesis. For instance, the early town planning visionaries – people like Morris, Geddes and Howard - witnessed the evils of the industrial city challenging 'its pollution, waste, poverty and lack of values. They saw a city of despair and equated it with Babylon.'[85p.14] In contrast to the city around them, they dreamed visions of Zion, and set about building their own forms of the New Jerusalem. However, these were 'secular versions of the Celestial City'[86p.2] modelled on freedom and human cooperation rather than the grace of God.

Underlying these visions was the mediation of the dialectical tensions inherent in city building, a notion that has shaped many ideas of urban development.

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[79] MUMFORD, L. 1961. *Op. Cit.*
[80] Isaiah 2 and 65-66
[81] KUMAR, K. *Religion And Utopia.* Canterbury: Centre For Study Of Religion And Society, 1985.
[82] John 18v36
[83] JOHNSON, R. *More's Utopia: Ideal And Allusion.* New Haven: Yale University, 1969.
[84] MUMFORD, L. 1965. *Op. Cit.*
[85] NEWMAN, P. *Theology And The City: Babylon and Zion.* Murdoch: Institute of Sustainability and Technology Policy, 2000.
[86] HALL, P. *Cities Of Tomorrow.* Oxford: Blackwells, 1996.

The first mediation of tension was between traditional rural forms of community and modern urban society. This was perhaps best encapsulated by Tönnies'[87] contrast between *Gemeinschaft* (community) and *Gesellschaft* (society). The key differences between these two forms were that the former was based on based traditional rural ties such as kinship, belonging and seeking the common good; whilst the latter was more urban - based on co-existence of people independent of each other, through voluntary associations and contractual obligations. This distinction reflects the Biblical tensions highlighted above. For instance Sorokin[88] links Tönnies to Augustine, with the City of God equated to the idealised fellowship of *Gemeinschaft* and the earthly city to the perfect unity of human will expressed in *Gesellschaft.* While Gorringe notes that in Tönnies' philosophy the 'church provides a glimmer of community where it is otherwise absent.'[89p.164]

A second mediation of tension is between the views of the past, present and future community. This tension was, for instance, inherent within the urban renaissance promoted by New Urbanist architects, who were caught between 'desires to shape development on a clean slate, while following consultation, they appeared to reinforce the existing urban form.'[90p.22] This can again be linked to the manner in which Jewish exiles related to Babylon, aware it was not their own city; the charge is for Christians to engage with the city knowing that their eternal destiny does not lie with the earthly city.

The third mediation of tension is between individual freedom and corporate need. The Social Analysis part of this thesis noted that post modern planning professionals see their role as 'mediating between interests as well as negotiating with them in a collaborative process searching for both-gain outcomes and at the same time empowering the powerless.'[91p.100] It was argued above that town planners cannot be the sole mediators of change – they needed other allies within the moral community.

This section has traced the idea of tension in city building. On the one hand, there is the earthly city ultimately under the control of the kingdom of this world but whose temporal government is permitted by God to ensure peace. This city is socially organised as a zenith of the human purpose and represents the triumph of secular ideology – the archetypal Babylon.

On the other hand, there is the vision of the New Jerusalem, a heavenly city created by God and governed by the power of the gospel and the Holy Spirit. This city is

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[87] TÖNNIES, F. *Community And Association.* English Translation of 8th Edition, (original work published in 1887), London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1955.
[88] SOROKIN, P. 'Forward' In: *Ibid.* p.v-vii
[89] GORRINGE, T. *A Theology Of The Built Environment.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
[90] FULTON, W. *The New Urbanism: Hope Or Hype For American Communities.* Cambridge (USA): Lincoln Institute Of Land Policy, 1996.
[91] FORESTER, J. *Planning In Face Of Power.* Berkley: University of California Press, 1989.

utopian in that it will never be built by human hands, yet it offers a model that subverts all worldly authority and power.

The city is therefore seen as 'the lightning rod of the profoundest human discontents, a paradox of opportunity and alienation, passion and repression, innovation and reaction.'[92p.229] It manifests this dialectic of sin and the offer of grace. It has been argued that it is part of a Christian's purpose in this world to work with others to help mediate this dialectical tension; by choosing to live within and interacting with the secular city, offering a vision of a new city, based on the promise of hope and *shalom.*

d) Transforming The City?

The previous section used the tools of exposition and political theology to recognise the tensions within both the Christian tradition and sociological thought in their considerations of the city. This section uses eschatological thinking to explore how the church echoes this tension, in the way it engages with the city in matters of politics, society and culture.

To assist in this task, two typologies are explored in order to ascertain what Stotts calls a 'hermeneutic of orientation, which enables us to see and understand the current dynamic'[93] between the church and the city. The first typology is that outlined by Niebuhr[94] who explored the church's double-wrestle in relating to Christ and to culture. Niebuhr indicates that eschatology is significant in his typology, but he does not develop this in detail. Since this is a key part of this stage of the political hermeneutic methodology, this section also outlines the different Christian views of eschatology especially in relation to millennial thinking. Wilson's typology[95] is then explored to reflect on how millennial thinking affects religious groups' response to the world. Interaction of the two typologies helps to clarify the Christian perspective on their interaction with urban development.

Niebuhr's work on *Christ and Culture* sought to relate the revelation of Christ to culture. His definition of culture did not mean the high culture of the arts but 'that total process of human activity … which comprises language, habits, ideas, beliefs, customs, social organisation … and values.'[96p.46] This holistic definition may be better equated with civilisation, thereby offering a useful examination of the relationship between the church and the city. Niebuhr's typology can be mapped in figurative terms (see Figure 9.2) to help see the links and differences between the five types.

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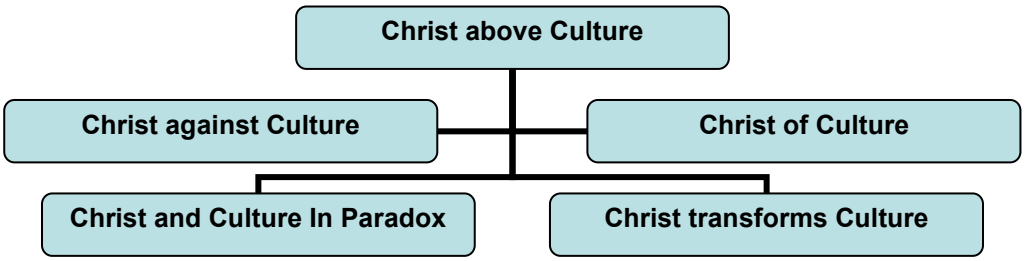
[92] HARVEY, D. *The Urban Experience.* Oxford: Blackwell, 1989.
[93] STOTTS, J. '*Christ And Culture Revisited.*' Address to the Covenant Conference, Austin Theological Seminary, 2nd November 2001.
[94] NIEBUHR, R. *Christ And Culture.* London: Faber and Faber, 1952.
[95] WILSON, B. *Magic And Millennium.* London: Heinemann, 1973.
[96] NIEBUHR, R. 1952. *Op. Cit.*

Figure 9.2 Niebuhr's Typology



Source: HASLER, J. *Cultures and Neighbourhoods.* Unpublished Research Paper,

The first type is what Niebuhr terms Christ against culture. This is where Christians are in opposition to the prevailing culture and seek to withdraw from society through separatist practice such as that adopted by certain monastic communities. This typology resists compromise or accommodation with the world suggesting 'Christians should have nothing to do with the world, to avoid its friendship, community life, culture and politics.'[97p.20] This approach leads to a division between sacred and secular ideas and by inference, can be antagonistic as to secular activity. However this gives a false impression of reality, for 'we are in the world, whether we like it or not, our only concern must surely be how to be live in the world.'[98p.43] Similarly Jeremiah called the Jews to 'seek the shalom of the city' even if that city is Babylon not the New Jerusalem.

The second type is the opposite of the previous type; it suggests that Christ is part of the culture. This view is expressed within Liberal theology, which affirms secular philosophies as part of the revelation of God's will. For instance, Kant sought to merge Biblical traditions with enlightenment philosophy. This approach embraces the world and encourages active participation in society. Yet there is a danger that the 'world actually tames the church'[99p.28] which contrasts with the experience of the Jewish exiles who kept their faith while engaging with culture.

The previous two types represent extreme positions, however, as Niebuhr himself noted, 'when Christians deal with the problem of Christ and culture, there are times, when some see that they are not dealing with either-or but a both-and relationship.'[100p.127] This is akin to the postmodern understanding of a contested city built on tension, where there is a need for negotiation between the multiple narratives of the future of the city. It has already been noted that Christians live in this dialectical tension. But how is this tension best expressed?

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[97] GLADWIN, J. *God's People In God's World.* Leicester: IVP, 1979.
[98] HAUERWAS, S AND WILLIMON, W. *Resident Aliens.* Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989.
[99] GATHJE, P. '*A Contested Classic, Critics ask: Whose Christ? Which Culture?*' IN: The Christian Century, Volume 119, June 19-26 2002, pp28-32.
[100] NIEBUHR, R. 1952. *Op. Cit.*

The first approach is to say that Christ is above culture. This is often linked to Catholic doctrines promoted by Aquinas that see Christ as king of the temporal and eternal realms reigning over the works of culture. This approach sees good things in society as signs of God at work and encourages the church to be engaged in these activities. This reflects the thinking of this thesis; however, there is a danger of a tendency towards what Gregory the Great called *condescensio* – God's compassionate stooping down to the level of the world. This portrays God in a patriarchal manner, which when imitated by the church led to an abuse of its social authority.

The next type challenges the idea that Christ is above culture, by suggesting that Christ and the culture are in paradox. This is a Lutheran view, outlined in the section above, which sees a paradox between the kingdom of this world and the kingdom of God only to be resolved eschatologically. God gives his grace to enable Christians to live in the in-between times, enabling them to 'honour what is divine and live out distinct values without compromise.'[101] However, once again there are potential problems. The primary one is a tendency to focus on the private faith of an individual with no expectation that an individual can have a significant impact on the world around them. This can lead to a moral vacuum and lack of 'expectation that the Kingdom of God would have a significant impact on the temporal and worldly kingdom.'[102p.175]

The final type that Niebuhr outlines is the one he personally favoured, which is that Christ transforms culture. Niebuhr identifies this as Augustine's view that 'bringing in of the kingdom of God transforms the structures and institutions in which we now live.'[103p.3] This approach acknowledges the tensions in culture but suggests that nothing in society is outside the purview of God and sees Christ actively at work (by means of his church) in the process of redeeming it. This type seems to offer a positive approach that echoes the idea of redeeming the city outlined in the etymology section above. As Kirkpatrick Sale wrote 'the only vision that offers any hope of salvation is one based on the understanding of a deep rootedness and a deep commitment to the re-sacralisation of place.'[104p.12]

Having reviewed Niebuhr's typology, there is a strong tendency towards preferring the final type – Christ transforms culture. However, it is worth noting that this is the only type that Niebuhr presents uncritically, so any reading of his work will logically see it as the most worthy. This is problematic as it can lead to inconsistent and inadequate analysis.

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[101] STACKHOUSE, J. *In The World, But …* [Online] Christianity Today, 2002. Available at http://www.christianitytoday.com [19th May 2006]
[102] DOYLE, R. *Eschatology And The Shape Of Human Belief.* Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1999.
[103] CREEGAN, N. 'Christ And Culture.' In: *Reality* 52, 2006.
[104] Cited by HARVEY, D. 'From Space To Place And Back Again.' in: Ed. BIRD, J ET AL. *Mapping Futures.* London: Routledge, 1993, pp3-29.

Critics such as Hauerwas and Willimon argue that 'a church is congratulated by Niebuhr for transformation, not noticing that the world has already so tamed the church that it has suppressed its ability to participate in culture.'[105p.43] A church called to transform the world must be attentive to the way the world changes them.

Another critic is Menuge[106] who argued that the danger of the transformation paradigm is its tendency to focus on what humanity can do on this earth. This means that, as noted above that it can underestimate the role of sin and so reduce the impact of the gospel to a social reclamation project. Such a question is crucial to this reflection, for as noted in chapter eight, the Jeremiah 29v7 injunction to seek 'the *shalom* of the city' must include personal and societal transformation. As Abrecht argues,

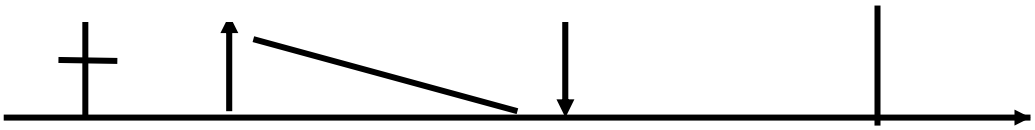
> Insofar as the Kingdom of God is in conflict with this world and is therefore still to come, the Christian finds himself under the necessity of discovering the best available means of checking human sinfulness ***and*** increasing the possibilities and opportunities of love within a sinful world.[107p.48]

Although the transformation thesis is highly applicable to this thesis in terms of engaging with the world, it is also important to consider the Lutheran paradigm of a paradox. For, as the exegesis of Jeremiah showed, there is a tension of being part of a sinful world and yet called to live in hope of an eternal home. It is crucial therefore to have a clear understanding of eschatology to help focus on 'the relationship between the end (that is the object of our hope) and the present reality.'[108p.10]

Chapter eight outlined a number of approaches to understanding Jewish eschatology. However, Christian eschatological hope has introduced a new notion that of the thousand year rule outlined in Rev. 20v1-7 which has became known as the millennium. So to fully understand the relationship between the future and the present, it is important to explore different views of millennialism.

Pre-millennialism (see Figure 9.3) is the view that the second coming of Christ will mark the start of the thousand-year rule. This view tends to see the world as doomed to destruction with a specific discontinuity at the end of the millennium. Its adherents are therefore reticent to be involved in the affairs of this world.

Figure 9.3 Pre-millennialism



First Advent Ascension <- This Age -> Second Advent <- Millennium -> New Heaven & Earth

Source: RYRIE, C. *The Final Countdown.* Wheaton. IL: Victor Books, 1982, p.53.

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[105] HAUERWAS, S AND WILLIMON, W. 1989. *Op. Cit.*
[106] MENUGE, A. *Niebuhr's Christ And Culture Re-examined.* [Online] 1991. Available at http://www.issuesetc.org [19th May 2006]
[107] Cited by CONN, H. 'The Kingdom Of God And The City Of Man.' In: ED. GREENWAY, R *Discipling The City.* Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1979, pp9-59. Sic. but with emphasis.
[108] DOYLE, R. 1999. *Op. Cit.*

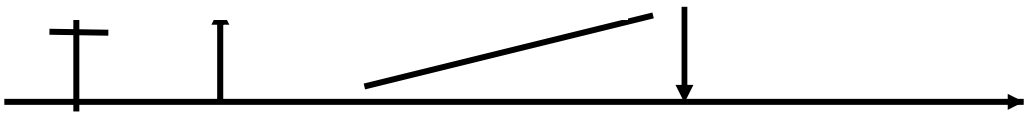
Figure 9.4 Post-millennialism

First Advent Ascension <- This Age / Millennium -> Second Advent New Heaven & Earth

Source: RYRIE, C. *The Final Countdown.* Wheaton. IL: Victor Books, 1982, p.53.

Post-millennialism (see Figure 9.4) is a view that the millennium predates the Second Advent and there is no discontinuity between this world and the next. The post-millennial view tends to be more optimistic about the 'future of the human community here on earth and ought to be involved in earthly political life'[109p.224] to bring the change in society that God has purposed. It is fundamental to Moltmann's teaching that all 'Christian social activity springs from not only our vision of the end but also from the way we are taken up in God's present revelatory eschatological activity.'[110p.284]

Figure 9.5 A-millennialism



First Advent Ascension <-This Age / Millennium -> Second Advent New Heaven & Earth

Source: RYRIE, C. *The Final Countdown.* Wheaton. IL: Victor Books, 1982, p.53.

Amillennialism is depicted in figure 9.5 and is the view that there is no literal thousand year rule, but that the millennium must be understood spiritually as glimpses of God's future kingdom already at work in the world today.

The major contribution of the debate about the millennium to Christian theology is the way in which a vision of a transformed society has influenced the way people respond to the world. Wilson[111p.22f] has devised a typology of eight approaches to the world based on one's view of the Millennium.

His first three models are largely pre-millennial in that they tend to focus on the negative nature of the current world and long for its redemption. He starts with what he calls a conversionist approach. This suggests that 'the world is corrupt because the men are corrupt' [*sic*][112p.22] and that the way God chooses to change the world is through individuals changing their hearts. This change enables one to live in the world while awaiting a promise of glory in heaven. The next type is the revolutionist. This goes further than the conversionist by arguing that only the supernatural destruction of the world will save the world and that humanity's response is to pray in the anticipated

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[109] *Ibid.*
[110] *Ibid.*
[111] WILSON, B. *Magic And Millennium.* London: Heinemann, 1973.
[112] *Ibid.*

revolution of God. The third model is known as introversion. This suggests that the world is irredeemable and salvation is achieved through renouncing the world and withdrawing into a separate community.

The next two models are post-millennial in that they do not see a discontinuity between the present and future condition. The first approach is the reformist. This suggests that divine and human philosophical insight is available for the changes necessary to amend the existing world, in order to bring ultimately in a perfect society. The second model is utopian. This advocates that God gives humanity a divinely inspired vision of a possible social organisation and calls on humanity to help realise this vision.

The final two types are a-millennial in that they offer a supernatural vision of what the new heaven and new earth could look like and this acts as a stimulus for people to change the way they behave in the here and now. The first approach is what Wilson calls manipulationist. This argues that the problems of the world are mainly societal and relational, and these relationships can be transformed by supernaturally inspired principles on how the church learns to work together. The final type is called thaumaturgical. This is similar to the manipulationist in that there is opportunity for supernatural healing but this is an individual healing to live out God's will.

Having outlined these different views of the millennium and reflected on Wilson's typology of how this affects Christian perceptions of relating to the world, it is informative to map these models against Niebuhr's typology of how one relates to culture. This is presented in table form in figure 9.6

Figure 9.6 Linking Wilson and Niebuhr

View of Millennium	Wilson's Typology	Niebuhr's Typology
Pre-Millennium	Introversionist Revolutionist	Christ Against Culture
	Conversionist	Christ and Culture in Paradox
Post-Millennial	Utopian	Christ Transforms Culture
	Reformist	Christ For Culture
A-Millennial	Manipulationist Thaumaturgical	Christ Above Culture

By viewing these typologies together, interesting relationships emerge. First, it is noticeable that pre-millennial models - which argue this world is doomed for destruction - tend to see Christ either in opposition to the culture of this age or see this world as a transitory place to be held at distance in some kind of paradox. On the other hand, the post-millennial models tend to be most engaged with current culture whilst recognising it is in need of some degree of transformation or reformation. Finally, the amillennial models tend to downplay culture as they focus on God's role as a spiritual force providing personal relief for the suffering of this age by the anticipation of what is to come.

In seeking a model that is paradigmatic of the ideas outlined in praxis, it is noted that the pre-millennial conversionist positions, seeing no lasting value in improving culture today, fail to express adequately the idea of mediating tension. On the other hand, Niebuhr's transformation and paradox typologies have merit; while the post-millennial utopian position calls the church to work for the radical transformation of society in order to establish order and peace. As Conn puts it,

> The task of Christians in cities through which they pilgrim is to reflect the lifestyle of the heavenly city in which they are already enrolled as citizens now in order to herald God's shalom, the restoration of justice and mercy.[113p.249]

The transformation-utopian approach therefore appears to have clearest links with Jeremiah's tension, living in Babylon but yearning for a New Jerusalem. It also has strong resonance with the planning profession, which as noted earlier has its roots in utopia and calls for radical social change.

This section has sought to explore how the church engages with the city in matters of politics, society and culture. The examination of Niebuhr's typology of relating to culture noted that neither a complete separation nor a complete immersion were appropriate models for working alongside those engaged in urban development. Instead, a continued focus on the dialectical tension in city building means one is 'realistic about the city's sins, refusing to be fully identified with it … but deeply committed to reach the city'[114p.57] in order to mediate Christ's transformation.

The eschatological dimension of this transformation suggests that God does not disdain to use this world. Rather, the message of the post-millennialism linked to utopianism is that God's love and justice is already at work in the world, restoring and transforming it to the wholeness of *shalom*.

e) Working With The City

The purpose of this chapter has been to reflect further on how the church engages with the urban development process, by exploring the political hermeneutic of the city.

First, through study of the Biblical images of the city, a dichotomy was observed between positive and negative images of the city; that at times the Bible appears hostile to the city relating it to the collective nature of human sin while at other times God redeems the 'city as a symbol of our final salvation.'[115p.66] The city is God's gift and part of his plans for the future.

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[113] CONN, H. 1979. *Op. Cit.*
[114] MURRAY, S. 1990. *Op. Cit.*
[115] COPELAND, E L. 'Urbanisation And Salvation.' IN: ED. GREENWAY, R. *Discipling the city: theological reflections on urban mission* Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1979, pp60-70.

Second, through an exploration of the bipolar tensions between the cities of Jerusalem and Babylon is presented in Jeremiah, further insight was gained into the dual expectations of the city and a realpolitik - living in Babylon but longing for a New Jerusalem. As Pope Paul VI stated ' To be sure the city is often depicted in the Bible as a place of sinfulness and arrogance … but there is also the Holy City: the place where God is encountered, the promise of a new city that will descend from heaven.'[116p.45]

Third, this dialectical tension was also noted within philosophy and theology, especially Augustine, Luther and More. These ideas have influenced urban development thinkers who saw the city as in need of reform – leading to a new tension between collective reminiscence of a rural past and individual utopian ideals for the future.

Fourth, in considering how 'Christians often struggle over our relationship to the culture around us'[117p.1] Niebuhr's typology is offered to understand the tensions in engaging with culture. By adding an understanding of the eschatological destiny, the church is called not just to mediate the tensions within the city but offer hope of potential transformation. So rather than merely 'place signposts and placards of the eternal city in the finite city'[118p.70] the church is called to engage with the collapsing social order; to seek to fundamentally 'transform community and the public sphere into a more free, just and participatory society.'[119p.20]

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[116] Cited by TONNA, B. *Gospel For The Cities.* Maryknoll: Orbis, 1982.
[117] CREEGAN, N. 2006. *Op. Cit.*
[118] COPELAND, E L 1979. *Op. Cit.*
[119] GORNICK, M. *To Live In Peace.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmanns, 2002.

Chapter Ten: '… where I placed you into exile.'

Exile can lead to significant change in the status of a people; Holdsworth suggest that the Jewish exile meant, 'all the nation's hopes and dreams were in tatters. The things they had been most certain about were called into question. The things that had given them a distinctive identity were destroyed.'[1p.4] Yet in the midst of this change the Jews found a new hope and purpose that gave birth to a new form of Judaism and a significant programme of social and religious reform.

This chapter continues the political hermeneutic by looking at the exile and, in particular, the proposition that because the Jews knew God had placed them in exile, this generated hope. This will again involve reflecting on the four stages of in the political hermeneutic:

First, the etymology section explores how the phrase 'where I have placed you into exile' is portrayed in the scriptures. It also addresses the critics who suggest that the exile did not happen or was merely a theological construct to enable the development of Judaism.

Second, since the letter in Jeremiah 29v4-14 is directed to the Jews in exile, it is important to assess the Jewish responses to the exile and how Jeremiah's words and those of the Deuteronomic editors led to a reflection on hope in exile.

Third, using the tool of sociology as part of a hermeneutic of suspicion, parallels are made between the Jewish exile and the contemporary experience of urban development and how people affected relate to changes in their society.

Finally, a comparison is made between utopian futurology and eschatological hope. It is postulated that this hope represents another means to interact with urban development alongside measures to bring *shalom* and mediate tension.

a) A Biblical Understanding Of The Exile

> Of all the eras in Israelite history, the exilic period represents one of the most significant caesura and most radical change … here the religion of Israel underwent its most severe crisis but here too it laid the foundation for its most sweeping renewal.[2p.1]

This view of the exile has been the traditional view of the exilic period and the one that has had the most impact on Old Testament scholarship. However, it is important to recognise that there have been some significant doubts about the nature of the exile – suggesting it was a literary construct developed by Jewish leaders and preachers to explain the foundations of the Judaic faith. Thus, at this stage it is important also to confirm the historicity of the exile and its place in the Jewish scriptures.

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[1] HOLDSWORTH, J. *Dwelling In A Strange Land.* Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2003.
[2] ALBERTZ, R. *Israel In Exile: The History and Literature of the Sixth Century BCE.* Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003.

To begin to understand the reality or otherwise of the exile, it is important to understand the etymology of the word. In English, exile can be a noun, as in someone who is a refugee, or it can be a verb meaning to be expelled from ones native land. Likewise in the Hebrew the root can take the sense of noun or verb. The noun is *golah* and the verb is *galah*.

According to Strong[3] the noun *golah* occurs 42 times in the Hebrew Bible and means 'one who is held captive or displaced.' It is noteworthy that the Bible does not on any occasion refer directly to the Babylonian exile as 'the exile' and when it does use the word *golah* it tends to be linked to the wider Jewish Diaspora rather than just the Babylonian exile. Critics therefore claim that "Jewish mythology quite deliberately confuses exile and Diaspora."[4p.129]

The verb *galah* on other hand occurs 188 times in the Hebrew Bible but interestingly, it is a verb which though it can be translated as deporting, it is more commonly linked to the idea of revealing, uncovering or stripping away. In secular terms[5p.479] this idea of a one being stripped naked and led away in shame can be directly linked to the idea of being carried off to exile.

Interestingly though there is also a deeper theological meaning, as the majority of the Biblical occurrences of the word *galah* are linked to the idea of the revelation of the works of God. It is particularly prevalent in the work of the prophets and the apocalyptic literature and occurrences 'where God is revealed as the one who defines the course of history.'[6p.487]

Although on seven occasions *galah* is translated as "God placed Israel into exile"[7] and three of these occurrences are in the letter to the exiles. This is the Hiphil form of the verb *galah* which usually expresses a causative action and in this case it highlights this idea that God reveals himself by placing the Israelites into exile. This has a profound theological impact and is a challenge from the very word itself to those who question the exile's veracity.

Before assessing this 'theological significance of the exile, it is important to gather information about the events themselves and their historical context as well as make comments on the scholarly views.'[8p.27] A good starting point is 609 BCE with the death of King Josiah. His son Jehoahaz only reigned for three months before he provoked Egypt and the Pharaoh attacked Israel, deporting Jehoahaz and placing his

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[3] STRONG, J. *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.* Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship (Electronic ed.), 1996.
[4] DAVIES, P. *'Exile? What Exile? Whose Exile?'* IN: ED. GRABBE, L. *Leading Israel Captive* Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998, pp128-138.
[5] ZOBEL, H-J. *Galah.* IN: *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament Volume II.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975, pp 476-488.
[6] *Ibid.*
[7] Jeremiah 29:4,7,14; Ezekiel 39:28; Amos 5:27; Lamentations 4:22; I Chronicles 6:15
[8] SMITH-CHRISTOPHER, D. *A Biblical Theology Of The Exile.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002

brother on the throne as his vassal king, renaming him Jehoiakim. This forced alliance with Egypt meant Israel would become a battleground between its two more powerful neighbours - Egypt and Babylonia. Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon invaded the land in 605 BCE but he did not reach Jerusalem as King Jehoiakim agreed to switch allegiance and become Nebuchadnezzar's vassal; but three years later he changed his mind and rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar. Jehoiakim died and was replaced by his son Jehoiachin. Seeing Jerusalem was weakened, Nebuchadnezzar himself came and laid siege to the city in 597 BCE. The city fell and the Babylonians made Judah a more acquiescent colony by deporting the leadership, including King Jehoiachin and his leading citizens. Noth suggests that this group were artisans and the military classes called up to defend the city.[9p.282] There is scholarly consensus this is group Jeremiah sent his letter to. A new vassal king was placed on the throne, King Zedekiah, but nine years later he too rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar so the Babylonians laid siege to Jerusalem a second time in 587 BCE. This time when the city fell, it was razed to the ground: the palace and temple were burned. The sons of Zedekiah were killed as he watched. Then they took him and the ruling classes as a second wave of exiles to Babylon. The Davidic Line was severed and public life in Israel came to an end.

Much of this historical information comes directly from the Bible and until 594-3 BCE can be corroborated by the Babylonian Chronicles, but the Chronicles for the later period cannot be traced. This is not to say that the Biblical account cannot be fully accepted. For even critical Biblical scholars like Grabbe recognise that the Bible at times can have considerably accurate information and within the bounds of recognising it is a text seeking to convey a message, 'we can have a good deal of confidence what happened in the two decades pre the fall of Jerusalem.'[10p.97]

Rather surprisingly though, the Bible does not describe the exile experience itself. This is unusual given the detailed account of the events immediately preceding the exile. But as to the events in exile, there is a huge gap in the Biblical literature. Albertz[11p.4] suggests reasons why. First it could be a lack of archive material, but this seems unlikely given the prevalence of other Biblical writings traced back to this period. Second, it could be that the social or psychological effect was so horrific they could not write about it. This also seems unlikely since traumatised people must have written the book of Lamentations. Albertz believes the answer is theological so to study this further one needs to look at the texts:

The first text in the Old Testament giving the history of the exile is 2 Kings 24-25. This account gives perhaps the most comprehensive version of the events leading up to

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[9] NOTH, M. *The History Of Israel.* London: A&C Black, 1958.
[10] GRABBE, L. '*The Exile Under The Theodolite.*' IN: ED. GRABBE, L. 1998. *Op. Cit.* pp80-100
[11] ALBERTZ, R. 2003. *Op. Cit.*

the exile with many details about the end of the land, city, temple and monarchy. It then stops abruptly. 'Clearly from this perspective the deportation … meant the termination of Israel's history … it spelled the end of everything.'[12p.9] Why? The Deuteronomistic writer of 2 Kings leaves little doubt. He sums up saying 'it was because of the Lord's anger that all this happened to Jerusalem and Judah, and in the end he thrust them from his presence.'[13] However, it is not quite the end as there is tantalising hope with the story that King Jehoiachin was released from his captivity and received honour at the Nebuchadnezzar's table, an apparent postscript that would appear odd if it were not verified by a piece of Babylonian cuneiform tablet outlining the food set aside for King Jehoiachin.

The second account of the exile is in 2 Chronicles 36. This offers fewer facts about the events leading to the exile and more reasons why the author believed they were taken into the exile:

> The Lord, the God of their fathers, sent word to them through his messengers again and again, because he had pity on his people and on his dwelling place. But they mocked God's messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the Lord was aroused against his people and there was no remedy.[14]

The message is the same that offered by the author of 2 Kings; 'Yahweh is the one who willed their deportation ... Babylon was merely the agent.'[15p.6] However, the Priestly Chronicler does not end with the exile or King Jehoiachin at the royal table but an intriguing suggestion the land had a period of Sabbath rests for the seventy years prophesied by Jeremiah. He then describes the return from exile, the implications being that the land was empty and 'the real history of Israel after the fall of Jerusalem must now be traced through the Babylonian exile.'[16p.295]

Another account of the exile is in Jeremiah 39-40. In this passage, Jeremiah affirms the belief that the exile was the just punishment of Yahweh: 'the Lord has brought it about; he has done just as he said he would. All this happened because you people sinned against the Lord and did not obey him.'[17] At the same time, Jeremiah is anxious to say that the faithful people are those who are willing to accept this punishment willingly and not the ones who remain in Jerusalem. Indeed as Carroll comments, paradoxically 'the exiles are now seen as Yahweh's special concern.'[18p.532]

There is therefore remarkable theological agreement between all three accounts that they all 'interpret divine activity in the calamity and defeat of exile.'[19p.188] It can therefore be argued that the meaning of the word *Galah* as 'the revealed will of God to

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[12] *Ibid.*
[13] 2 Kings 24:20 (NIV)
[14] 2 Chronicles 36:15-16 (NIV)
[15] BRUEGGEMANN, W. *Out Of Babylon.* Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2010.
[16] NOTH, M. 1958 *Op. Cit.*
[17] Jeremiah 40:3 (NIV)
[18] CARROLL, R. *Jeremiah: An Old Testament Library Commentary.* London: SCM Press, 1986.
[19] SANDERS, J. '*Exile.*' IN: *Interpreters' Dictionary of the Old Testament.* New York: Abingdon Press, 1962, pp185-188.

place his people in exile' has been corroborated. However, before looking at this theological meaning in more detail, it is important to address the critics who suggest the effect of the exile has been overstated.

In the last century, an increasingly sceptical view of the exile emerged that suggested it to be little more than an ideological construct. This critical view first emerged in 1910 when Torrey wrote,

> The Babylonian exile of the Judean Hebrews, which in reality was a relatively small and insignificant affair, has been made partly by mistake, and partly by compulsion of a theory, to play a very important role in the history of the Old Testament.[20p.285]

Exponents of this view have three main areas of concern: the scale of the exile; the impact on the land of Israel; and the extent of a restoration.

It cannot seriously be denied that an exile never took place. As already noted there is evidence from the Babylonian Chronicle that describes the deporting of the King and his court. However, the extent of the exile is less clear. 2 Chronicles 36 implies that all the land was emptied and laid desolate as everyone was taken to Babylon. Whereas, 2 Kings describes two exiles, the first in Chapter 24 numbering either 8,000 (v16) or 10,000 (v14) and a second exile in Chapter 25 where no number is offered except to say some remained in the city (v11) and the poorest of the land remained to work the fields (v12). In contrast, Jeremiah in chapter 52 gives a far more conservative number totalling 4,600 over three exiles. If Jeremiah's numbers are accepted then the scale of the deportation was small and would not have made a large impact on the city of Jerusalem.

So why is there a discrepancy? Critics such as Noth suggest that the Babylonian group of exiles "represented a tiny part of the tribal state numerically, but they represented the political and intellectual leaders."[21p.289] Since these leaders had lost their political independence it was in their interests to promote this relatively minor event as epoch making. More conservative scholars suggest a simpler solution, that Jeremiah only counted the heads of family and so would naturally have under-estimated the number.[22p.481]

This debate over numbers has led to a wider question as to what happened to the land of Judah during the exile and the rather 'poetic idea that the land had a Sabbath rest.'[23p.285] One of the most outspoken critics of this view is Barstad who argued from archaeological evidence that 'the majority of the population remained intact and in all probability life in Judah carried on in much the same way that had been done before

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[20] TORREY, C. *Ezra Studies.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1910.
[21] NOTH, M. 1958 *Op. Cit.*
[22] MAXWELL-MILLER, J AND HAYES, J. *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah.* London: SCM Press, 2006.
[23] TORREY, C. 1910. *Op. Cit.*

the catastrophe.'[24p.42] This he contends was because although Nebuchadnezzar deported the leadership, the social structure remained intact as Israel was largely a backward agricultural society.

Schniedewind challenges this view, arguing 'in the last days of the Judean monarchy, Israel was a relatively densely populated economically prosperous urban state. This radically changed in the Babylonian period'[25p.42] when 80% of these towns were abandoned or destroyed. This is corroborated by Williamson who has archaeological 'evidence of widespread destruction of major towns in Judah to the south of Jerusalem.'[26p.279]

It appears to be little doubt therefore that a significant exile occurred and it had a major impact on the land of Judah. However, there is a further challenge to the Biblical view that the Jews retained their identity in exile and returned after the pre-ordained period of 70 years returned to rebuild Jerusalem. This argument is based on the fact that there is little archaeological evidence of a mass return. This, the critics[27] assert, was because only a token number returned, only some of whom were Jews, meaning that the term exile is a misnomer as the Jews were not forced to stay away from their homeland.

This argument moves beyond the remit of this study. However, it is worth noting that there is no Hebrew word to describe the restoration[28p.46] and many Jews still claim to live in exile or be part of the Diaspora today.

Having addressed the critics who have challenged the extent of the exile and the scope of the deportation, it is important to return to the fact that the 'Biblical text leaves the reader in no doubt about the horror of this event and ... the Bible seeks to grapple with its implications.'[29p.278] These theological implications include: First, the judgment on the monarchy and the challenge to God's promise of an eternal Davidic dynasty that had led to the doctrine of Zionist infallibility; second, there are questions as to the extent of the covenant relationship, with the removal of control over the Promised Land; finally, the status of cultic worship was questioned as God had appeared to allow his temple to be violated and ultimately destroyed. These three themes are such key symbols in Old Testament theology - 'the Biblical text should not be ignored ... or rejected just because it is part of a theological document.'[30p.96-97]

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[24] BARSTAD, H. *The Myth Of The Empty Land.* Symbolae Osloenses 28 Oslo, Scandinavian University Press. 1996.
[25] Quoted by SMITH-CHRISTOPHER, D. 2002. *Op. Cit.*
[26] Quoted by PROVAN, I; PHILIPS LONG, V, AND LONGMAN III T. *A Biblical History Of Israel.* London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003.
[27] Such as the contributors to ED. GRABBE, L. 1998. *Op. Cit.*
[28] BECKING, B. *'Ezra's Re-Enactment of the Exile.'* IN ED. GRABBE, L *1998, Op. Cit.* pp40-61
[29] PROVAN, I; PHILIPS LONG, V AND LONGMAN III, T. 2003. *Op. Cit.*
[30] GRABBE, L. 1998. *Op. Cit.*

This section has reviewed the etymology and the Biblical understanding of the exile. It has suggested that the exile is a sign of divine retribution which the nation had to accept because God had placed them into exile, owing to their failure to follow God's law. 'The state centred theology of monarchy faded and instead the prophetic message, which in the pre-exile period, had been ignored came to the fore.'[31p.133] This prophetic message was that God had a purpose in placing them into exile (the Hiphil form of the verb *galah*). The exile is therefore best seen as a watershed, moving Jewish theology out of the jurisdiction of nationalism and into the hands of a prophetic faith community. It is important therefore to reflect again on Jeremiah's call to the exiles to begin engaging in community building.

b) Faith In Exile

The marvel of the exile is that 'Israel's history did not end altogether; rather Israel survived and formed a new community out of the wreckage of the old.'[32p.343] The extent of these changes to the Judaic faith has given rise to much scholarly opinions. This is because, as noted above, there is no biblical account of the Jewish experience of exile. Instead one has to deduce a response by reading between the lines of those texts believed to be written during the exile. Jeremiah's letter to the exiles is therefore the only definitive glimpse of the life of the first wave of exiles; which reinforces the view expressed earlier in this chapter that the Jews were urged not to 'view the exile as a terrible catastrophe but a God given chance for a new beginning.'[33p.7]
This section uses the tools of exegesis to examine Jeremiah's message, especially in the letter to the exiles, in order to identify how the Jews responded to the exile. It then focuses on the way the Jews re-shaped their faith around the ideas of judgment, deliverance and a new covenant.

It appears from Jeremiah's letter that the Jewish exiles were free to build homes and plant gardens to earn a living and 'they were not dispersed as slaves as might have been expected … rather they remained in tight closely knit communities and were able to maintain regular communication with Jerusalem by mail.'[34p.171]
Even though the Jewish exiles had some freedom, one cannot underestimate the significant socio-economic and psychological effects of the exile. For if, as was suggested above, the exiles were the leaders - the military, artisans and priests - they would not be used to menial labour. Moreover, they needed to come to terms with the fact they no longer had any power. Their captors had broken the walls of Jerusalem, and taken the treasures from the temple for use in their pagan temples.

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[31] ALBERTZ, R. 2003. *Op. Cit.*
[32] BRIGHT, J. *A History of Israel.* London: SCM Press, 1981.
[33] ALBERTZ, R. 2003. *Op. Cit.*
[34] CLEMENTS, R. *Interpretation Commentary: Jeremiah.* Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1988.

Faced with such failed hopes, it is not surprising that anger and helplessness set in. Looking into a bleak future, the Jewish exiles faced some major choices: Did they become so inward looking and preoccupied with their survival that they ignored the wider community around them?[35p.116] Or did they assimilate into Babylonian society, taking advantage of their relatively liberal treatment by adopting Babylonian practices and becoming ensnared by the culture of prosperity?[36p.126] Or did they see the destruction of the temple as the triumph of Marduk over Yahweh and capitulate to Babylonian theology allowing its ideas to change their own theology?[37pp.40-41] Although there is no written record of the exile, many scholars date the writing of much of the Old Testament to the exile period, which suggests a sizable community remained loyal to Yahweh. However, these writings also show how the Jews recognised their past failures with a need to give their faith a new direction.

The Jews' previous religious practice had been hammered out under King Hezekiah, when the court and priests had centralised the Jewish faith at Jerusalem and on the temple. A right response in face of continued idol worship; but the elimination of all forms of religious practice, other than sanctioned worship at the Temple had made their faith narrow, defined by pilgrimages to make their sacrifices. Exile led to a profound fracture in this theology. Their temple had been destroyed and 'the very transcendence of God was placed in deep jeopardy … as Israel was forced to break with the theology that reduced God to a fixed predictable system.'[38p.128]

The first written response to exile was hence a deep grief, which is articulated in the book of Lamentations and in the anger of Ps.137. The second response was led by the Deuteronomists who, rather than getting stuck in their grief, directly faced their pain and sought to rediscover their roots. They stripped away the Zionist theology and returned to the Sinai traditions of the covenant and the need to keep the law. Bright argues that the 'exile must have swept many from their religious moorings and plunged others into the depths of despair, but sincere Israelites were driven to the searching in their own hearts and to penitence.'[39p.178] They rewrote their history showing how God is a God of justice and exposed the people's guilt in breaking the covenant, it was God's judgement that had placed them into exile.

In exposing their guilt, the Deuteronomists showed the Jews had lost their innocence. The non-academic but spiritual writer Richard Rohr[40] notes that the word innocence means 'not wounded' and he argues that to lose innocence is to recognise the power

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[35] BRUEGGEMANN, W. *Cadences of Home: Preaching Among The Exiles.* Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997.
[36] PARROT, A. *Babylon and the Old Testament.* London: SCM Press, 1958.
[37] ACKROYD, P. *Exile and Restoration.* London: SCM Press, 1968.
[38] BRUEGGEMANN, W. *Like Fire In His Bones.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006.
[39] BRIGHT, J. 1981. *Op. Cit.*
[40] ROHR, R. *Faith In Exile.* Cincinnati: St Anthony's Messenger Press, Audio Cassette, 2002.

of pain to drive one back to the grace of God. It is this subversive wisdom[41] that is evident in the books of Ecclesiastes and Job, written some believe in exile, as they showed how 'God is implicated in a morally incoherent world.'[42p.9] This subversive wisdom, that both God's judgement and grace lay at the centre of their pain, led to 'much heart searching, whereupon a profound readjustment could take place.'[43] They refused to believe their present judgment represented God's last word to them; rather they began to hope for deliverance and this 'perception subverted and destabilised the present tense reality.'[44p.268] It represented a shift from the view that God is in culture, beyond the view that God was against the culture, to recognition that God actively seeks to transform the culture.

This shift marked a significant change in thinking but as the Jews not only reviewed their law and history, they also returned to the words of the prophets and to Jeremiah who had foretold the judgement to come. There they discovered at the very brink of the catastrophe, that Jeremiah had offered a prophetic hope of a new covenant based on redemption with the hope of liberation from exile. 'A powerful mythical typology emerges based on the doctrine of the fall, possibility of repentance, leading to forgiveness and liberation.'[45p.32] This is expressed by prophets like Ezekiel and Second Isaiah who relayed visions of a new covenant between a transcendent God and his liberated people.

These great changes in the Jewish faith: the acceptance of the Lord's judgement, a hope of deliverance and the promise of a new covenant, are all outlined in the Book of Jeremiah.

It has already been noted that Jeremiah saw exile as a form of judgement for breaking the covenant. Jeremiah's message was 'it was Yahweh who had caused them to be carried away into captivity, he had brought them where they were, and he must mean something by the deed.'[46p.177] The Jews needed to accept the Lord's judgment, return to the Lord and repent of their sin.

If judgement is a principal theme in the first part of the book (chapters 1-25), then the second half (chapters 26-45) is dominated by a theme of deliverance and a promise of restoration. What causes this change in message? There is little doubt it is the onset of the exile. This is clear in chapter 24 where Jeremiah sees a vision of two baskets of figs, one is fresh and the other has gone rotten. For the temple cult, the meaning of this vision was obvious - those left in Jerusalem were the chosen fresh figs and those who had gone into exile were being judged. Yet Jeremiah counters this suggesting it is

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[41] *Ibid.*
[42] BRUEGGEMANN, W. 1997. *Op. Cit.*
[43] BRIGHT, J. 1981. *Op. Cit.* p21
[44] BRUEGGEMANN, W. *A Commentary on Jeremiah: Exile and Homecoming.* Cambridge: Erdmanns, 1998.
[45] DAVIES, P. 1998. *Op. Cit.*
[46] WELCH, A. *Jeremiah: His Time and His Work.* Oxford: Blackwell, 1951.

the exiles who are 'the good figs promised a restoration and blessing'[47p.55] while the remnant were rotten figs doomed for destruction. So at the very point when the exiles were looking into the depths of the abyss, Jeremiah offers a vision beyond the imminent disaster and sounds a note of hope and rebirth. He foresaw that in exile, a new community was going to be born and it was through their faith that God would restore Israel. 'A radical break with the past was a pre-requisite for fresh networks of hope.'[48p.255]

This message of hope was not just that deliverance was possible but in the book of consolation, it also took the form of a promise of a new covenant (chapters 30-32). Scholars such as Raitt[49p.8] have noted a different speech form in these promises, which are is written as if God himself is speaking directly to his people. This is not the only difference. God now speaks 'profoundly about the condition of man and offers a deliverance which is no longer conditional and temporary but a full on-going plan for the future.' [sic] [50p.179] It is a promise of a new covenant no longer based on a prerequisite obedience of the torah but on God's grace and forgiveness. God himself will take the initiative to deliver them from exile and he will write his law on their hearts so they might know him. This is not a Deuteronomistic teaching, it is something new and prophetic. It is a new-covenant community based on an individual's hope of grace and the law being written in their hearts.[51] The relationship with God formerly mediated by the priest who represented the whole nation before God at the temple, now found expression in 'a new community based upon individual decision.'[52p.338]

These three themes - the acceptance of the Lord's judgement, a hope of deliverance and the promise of a new covenant are seen in microcosm in the letter to the exiles.

The letter opens with a clear statement that their predicament is an act of God not of Nebuchadnezzar: 'Thus says the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles that I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon.'[53] In other words, the exiles were encouraged to embrace the exile as judgment and an act of the will of Yahweh. 'They were not at the mercy of circumstances. They were in the hands of God who had brought them to Babylon.'[54p.170]

How were the Jews to find God's deliverance in exile? Jeremiah's message is clear; they had to reject any hope of a swift return. Instead they needed to face their grief and begin to rebuild their community in Babylon, working in practical ways for the

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[47] ACKROYD, P. 1968. *Op. Cit.*
[48] STULMAN, L. *Abingdon Commentary: Jeremiah.* Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005.
[49] RAITT, T. *A Theology of Exile.* Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977.
[50] *Ibid*
[51] Jeremiah 31:33
[52] BRIGHT, J. 1981. *Op. Cit.*
[53] Jeremiah 29:4 RSV translation
[54] WELCH, A. *Jeremiah, His People, His Time.* Oxford: Blackwell, 1951.

shalom of Babylon through 'behaving as peaceable subjects, identifying their material interests with the prosperity of the empire.'[55p.288] However, Jeremiah's community-building project then takes a significant turn. 'The Jewish community is invited to pray into the larger public process of the empire … and been given a new responsibility for the larger community of Babylon.'[56p.32] This is remarkable for the 'notion of prayer for a heathen land is unique in the Hebrew Bible even if self interest is the grounds for such an activity.'[57p.557] Freed from the bounds of national religion, the Jewish exiles are given a missionary mandate to be a blessing to those around them. For 'Jeremiah knew no separate *shalom* for the exiles, no private deals, no permitted withdrawal. The only *shalom* wrought is that for Babylon and moreover the exiled community can impact Babylon by their active concern.[58p.13]

The promise of deliverance therefore appears to be squarely focused on embracing this new civil religion. Yet in v10, Jeremiah prophesied an oracle of salvation 'when seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you and I will fulfil my promise to you to bring you back to this place.'[59] This prophecy has provoked a range of scholarly responses. Carroll[60p.557] argues that it is a Deuteronomistic insertion after the exile designed to justify the restoration. Westermann[61p.236] goes even further and suggests it is 'a date, Jeremiah had no power to give.' Rawlinson-Jones on the other hand suggests that this is prophetic and consistent with the principle that God is building a new community. For 'it firmly repudiates any hope of a return in their lifetime, while adding a measured gleam of hope that in God's time salvation lay on the yonder side of judgement.'[62p.360]

This gleam of hope is the promise of a renewed relationship with God and a promise of a future and a hope in v11.[63] The key question is whether this signals an act of grace of God or if salvation is conditional on whether the people repent. This depends on the understanding of v12-14. The wording has a definite ring of the Deuteronomists and resembles the promises of Deut.4:29 concerning a restoration for those who search for Yahweh with all their heart. On the other hand, this passage is grounded 'in the character and resolve of God'[64p.68] and uses language more akin to the new covenant in Jer.31. This is even clearer in the Septuagint translation of the opening words of v14 which says 'I will reveal myself to you' rather than the modern translation

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[55] SKINNER, J. *Prophecy And Religion.* London: Cambridge University Press, 1963.
[56] BRUEGGEMANN, W. *To Build And To Plant: International Theological Commentary On Jeremiah Vol.2.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmanns, 1991.
[57] CARROLL, R. 1986. *Op. Cit.*
[58] BRUEGGEMANN, W. 1997. *Op. Cit.*
[59] Jeremiah 29:10 RSV translation
[60] CARROLL, R. 1986. *Op. Cit.*
[61] WESTERMANN, C. *Prophetic Oracles of Salvation in the Old Testament.* Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991.
[62] RAWLINSON-JONES, D. *New Century Bible Commentary: Jeremiah.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmanns, 1992.
[63] Interestingly, if one looks at the original Hebrew, v11 speaks of a 'hoped for future' making a clear link back to the promised return after seventy years prophesied in v10.
[64] BRUEGGEMANN, W. *Hope Within History.* Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1987.

'I will be found by you.' This offers a clever wordplay on the word *galah* which, as noted earlier, means both a revealing of God and to take into exile. The ultimate message appears clear: 'live in exile in the hope of a promise of deliverance.'[65p.113]

Evidence of the impact of these changes in belief on the religious practices of the exiles is sketchy. A typical response to dislocation is a desire to assert one's own identity through emphasis on kinship ties and ritual.[66pp.106-109] This is seen in seeking 'tokens of unity with the past … to the traditions to which Israel looked back but also contained reference to their future.'[67p.297] These included an increase in circumcision and the practice of a Sabbath day of rest for worship. However, without the temple as a focus, 'new modes of worship were necessary, which may or may not have been antecedents of synagogue worship.'[68p.363] For without temple sacrifice, worship would have to begin to change as indeed it did towards the synagogue pattern of reading the law and singing the psalms.

It has been noted above that the Deuteronomists looked back and realised they had been judged and found guilty. The remarkable thing is that they wrote this into their scriptures, implying not only a recognition of their dependence on God but also a hope that 'someone would read it and learn from it.'[69p.86] Likewise, the priests encouraged holiness. Ackroyd[70p.254] argues that the Leviticus holy code was the new liturgy of the priesthood as they sought deliverance through piety.

These major shifts in religious practice would inevitably affect the Jewish view of their Babylonian captors. For though the Jews initially sought practices that made them separate in their identity, Jeremiah's command for a new civil religion 'independent of the privileges of Jewish citizenship and even consistent with loyalty to a foreign power'[71p.287] meant that their faith developed a universal appeal, while the 'separation of the official religion from its political powerbase and political responsibility opened the way for vast utopian designs for the future with all the dangers of loss of contact with reality.'[72p.134] This is seen in the way the elders took on a greater role and heralded 'a just and compassionate counter-culture; a new social alternative'[73p.256] in which the Second Isaiah saw God as a God of the poor and interested in the widow, the orphan and the alien.

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[65] RAITT, T. 1977. *Op. Cit.*
[66] ALBERTZ, R. 2003. *Op. Cit.*
[67] NOTH, M. 1958. *Op. Cit.*
[68] RAWLINSON-JONES, D. 1992. *Op. Cit.*
[69] NEWSOME, J. *By The Rivers Of Babylon.* Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1979.
[70] ACKROYD, P. 1968. *Op. Cit.*
[71] SKINNER, J. 1963. *Op. Cit.*
[72] ALBERTZ, R. 2003 *Op. Cit.*
[73] STULMAN, L. 2005. *Op. Cit.*

This section has shown how the exile profoundly affected the Jewish faith. Reflections on the exilic catastrophe led Jews to believe God had placed them in exile (*galah*). This 'permitted and authorised a daring theological energy'[74p.117] to see not only that they had been judged for their past sins, but deliverance was possible and through God's grace could be transformative. Jeremiah's letter offered that first gleam of hope, a new covenant to be written on their hearts. A new community emerged, no longer committed to the national temple cult but to a radical mission to transform their context based on representing divine hope. This revelation was 'the crucible of the Jewish faith'[75p.188] as new forms of religious practice emerged based on identity, the revealed word of God, a desire for holiness and greater community engagement.

c) Learning from the Exiles

The early part of this chapter argued that the message of Jeremiah is that God's purpose is evident in the midst of the crisis of the exile. It has been suggested that when the Jewish exiles understood the true meaning of *galah* – that God had placed them into exile, it enabled them 'to summon faith in a fresh way and create hope for a community in crisis.'[76p.3]

This exposition section explores parallels between the Jewish exile and people seeking to find meaning in urban change today. Two theological frameworks are examined that borrow language from anthropology and sociology. These frameworks are mapped against the exilic experience to offer 'a theological approach to exclusion and marginality.'[77p.166] By reflecting on this approach, resources of transformative grace are identified that enable the church to represent God's revelation of hope. Such grace enables one not only to cope with the dislocation created by urban development but also to respond positively and create hope in one's community. For it is 'a striking paradox that in exile: the boldest, the most creative and most defiant dreams of a new future are born.'[78p.1]

The exile affected the Jews at a number of different levels: individuals experienced upheaval and insecurity; nationally it destroyed social institutions and the values they promoted; religiously there was a loss of confidence in the relationship between Yahweh and those in power. Comparisons can be made with the urban development experience in the same three ways.

At a personal level, Mursell suggests, 'exile is any situation in which you are not at home or in control of what is happening to you.'[79p.1] This definition certainly reflects the

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[74] BRUEGGEMANN, W. 2006. *Op. Cit.*
[75] SANDERS, J. 1962. *Op. Cit.*
[76] BRUEGGEMANN, W. *Hopeful Imagination.* Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986.
[77] LEECH, K. *Through Our Long Exile* London, Darton, Longman and Todd, 2001.
[78] MURSELL, G. *Praying In Exile* London, Darton, Longman and Todd, 2005.
[79] *Ibid.*

sense of turmoil and lack of control when significant change takes place in one's neighbourhood or if one has moved into a new place. In both these cases, the disruption leads to a feeling that one does not 'fit in' with the community or the place one finds oneself. Brueggemann describes this as 'a loss of structure in a reliable world that gave meaning and coherence … such exile is not primarily geographical but social, moral and cultural.'[80p.2]

It was noted in the Social Analysis part of this thesis that urban development often causes social dislocation as a result of an increasing heterogeneity in an area. As Smith-Christopher observes, 'people are now chronically mobile, routinely displaced, nationality is no longer based in territorial claims but the memory of a place no longer inhabited.'[81p.16] In such cases, the dominance of western values and national identity is perceived to be under threat. Instead the world has sought identity in what Huntington calls civilisations: 'Blood and belief, faith and family. People rally around those with similar ancestry, religion, language, values and institutions and ... distance themselves from those who are different.'[82p.100] It appears that the hegemony of Western powers, like that of ancient Israel, is going into an exile; while community cohesion becomes an issue with clashes of different civilisations' worldviews.

Churches can never escape the influence of the changing city, for as chapter nine noted, urban development has often been linked to rising secularisation, while the review of urban development policy highlighted that places of worship are rarely considered in new housing areas. However, a greater resonance can be made between the Jewish cultic state and the rule of Christendom, when 'the church allied itself with the dominant forms of social, cultural, economic and intellectual life. This allowed the church to provide a theological certainty and a means of social control in society at large.'[83p.39] This power has gradually been undermined since the Enlightenment, for the church no longer leads culture but responds to it. Furthermore, cities are increasingly secular and multi-cultural with a growing influence of other faith-groups.

Like the Jews in exile, the church needs firstly, to recognise it is outside the flows of power for though it retains an influence in some areas, 'it is very difficult to make serious reference to God in the public arena.'[84p.23] Secondly, as the notion of the relevance of faith in God has waned, less people go to church. Hence, missional writers such as Frost[85] use the exile motif to urge the church to find new ways to engage with society, as missionaries to Western culture.

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[80] BRUEGGEMANN, W. 1997. *Op. Cit.*
[81] SMITH-CHRISTOPHER, D. 2002. *Op. Cit.*
[82] Quoted by STOTT, J. *Issues Facing Christians Today.* 4th Edition, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Press, 2006.
[83] BRUEGGEMANN, W. 1997. *Op. Cit.*
[84] HAUERWAS, S. *After Christendom.* Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991.
[85] FROST, M. *Exiles: Living Missionally In A Post Christian Culture.* Peabody: Hendrickson Press, 2006.

When faced with crisis, be it personal, societal or ecclesial, like the Jews in exile, one is faced with a choice. First, one can retreat into fundamentalism to assert some kind of moral authority to convince oneself that one is not in danger - an approach mirroring that of the leading Jews in Jerusalem. It could be argued that the American Right has adopted this approach, however this is 'not a Christianity characterised by compassion but theology by megaphone.'[86p.192] Alternatively, one can immerse oneself in the world like those who chose to assimilate the Babylonian faiths. However, Hauerwas and Willimon argue for withdrawal from the world because 'Christians have lost the theological resources to resist.'[87p.27] The final choice is revealed in the hope of *galah*, to allow the exile to break links with one's past and offer a period of reflection to transform how one understands oneself, God and the world.

Theoretical frameworks have been drawn up in both anthropology and sociology to assist in the exploration of this need for a period of reflection in times of transition, two of which are explored here.

The first is the work of Turner,[88] an anthropologist who explored how tribal rites of passage help a group of people make a transition in times of crisis. Drawing on the earlier work of Van Gennep, Turner identifies three clear phases, the separation from the past and the familiar, a period in the margins, followed by re-assimilation into society. The key area that can be identified with the exile experience is the period in the margins. Turner uses the term liminality to describe this experience of being 'neither here nor there; betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremony.'[89p.95] This sense of being separated from conventional norms is akin to the breakdown in personal or societal order described above. For in the liminal state, people 'are stripped of anything that might differentiate them from their fellow human beings - they are in between the social structure, temporarily fallen through the cracks, … and it is in these cracks … that they are most aware of themselves.'[90]

Paradoxically, those living in the liminal period can also discover a new bond between themselves that Turner calls a '*communitas*, community, or even communion of equal individuals which is formed as they submit together to the general authority of the ritual elders.'[91p.96] Turner cites the beat generation and hippies as examples of *communitas* in modern Western society. He also recognises that the term communion has religious overtones and suggests that monastic communities can also be examples of *communitas*. Connections can be made with Foucault's idea of

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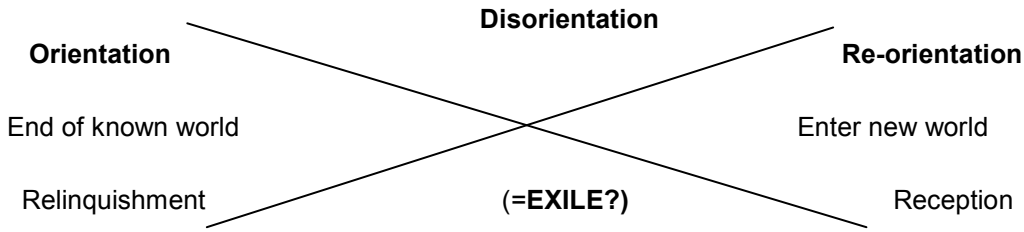
[86] SMITH-CHRISTOPHER, D. 2002. *Op. Cit.*
[87] HAUERWAS, S AND WILLIMON, W. *Resident Aliens* Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1989.
[88] TURNER, V. *The Ritual Process.* New York: Aldine de Grayter, 1969.
[89] *Ibid.*
[90] LA SHURE, C. *What is Liminality?* 2005 [Online] Available at www.liminality.org/about/whatisliminality [4th December 2008]
[91] TURNER, V. 1969. *Op. Cit.*

heterotopia, identified in the Social Analysis part of this thesis, which also identified sacred space as significant places that celebrated and enabled transition.

There are some problems with Turner's thesis. First, there is a difference between marginality and liminality. Marginality is a place or a social context in which one finds no way out whereas Turner's idea of liminality is a midpoint in a rite of passage. Furthermore, Turner's period of liminality focuses on those who opt out of the normal social order. This does not adequately reflect the sense of exclusion and powerlessness facing those experiencing urban change.

The second framework is that presented by the sociologist turned theologian Brueggemann, who as this thesis has already shown, has written extensively on making connections between biblical narratives and contemporary social issues. Brueggemann sees the exilic crisis of 587BCE as 'a metaphor for the end of the known world and a dismantling of systems of meaning and power.'[92p.4] Figure 10.1 shows how Brueggemann equates exile with a period of sociological disorientation when one relinquishes old power structures before one re-orientates oneself for the reception of the new world that is to come.

Figure 10.1 Relinquishment to Reception



Source: BRUEGGEMANN, W. *Hopeful Imagination.* Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986 p4

Brueggemann suggests that the church fails to recognise the value of disorientation:

> The danger is, like ancient Jerusalem, we imagine the present is decided by the politics of the empires around us and not the will of God. We imagine our exile situation is occupied solely by despair and alienation and … so we miss the summons home.[93p.18]

Brueggemann's 'summons home' is the revelation of *Galah* - that it is God who created the exile – the disorientation experience. 'Reflection on the moral and theological significance of exile leads to a radically revamped and rehabilitated view of world'[94p183] enabling one to move from one era to another.

There is always a danger in relating scripture too quickly into the contemporary church. Brueggemann has written extensively on many social situations and so may

[92] BRUEGGEMANN, W. 1986. *Op. Cit.*
[93] BRUEGGEMANN, W. 1998. *Op. Cit.*
[94] BRUEGGEMANN, W. *Old Testament Theology.* Minneapolic: Augsburg Press, 1992.

be guilty of making too many correlations. In this case, the Jewish exile was clearly portrayed by Jeremiah as judgement, but there is no clear view that God has judged the church for compromising itself to the world and its values. On the other hand, like Turner, Brueggemann sees the exilic experience as a good tool for 'reflecting on the abyss so we do not fall into despair but ponder the possibility of a new future.'[95p.188] Such a period of reflection is invaluable to listen to the changes, not denying the abyss but seeing it as a time for God to give a new script for engagement with the reality.

This chapter has identified that 'exile is no more the last word, rather that there is a new social possibility wrought not by political strategy but by God's free capacity to work beyond visible constraints to give a future and a hope.'[96p.68] This source of hope helps reflection in exile. Mursell[97p.13] has identified four such resources: the power of memory and story; the need for lament; the call to remain faithful and distinctive; and recognition of one's own powerlessness.

The first of these resources is the need to retain collective memory. Before one can move on from a time of crisis, it is important to understand where one has come from. As noted above, the Jewish exiles looked back at their history and wrote accounts of God at work in the life of the nation in the past. It gave them the boldness to understand their grief. The telling of story is also fundamental to the post-modern worldview where understanding is found through conversation and dialogue. The telling of story is not however, just a product of post-modernity, 'Judaeo-Christianity ... is explicitly rooted in narrative and their adherents stress the importance of remembering and re-telling these narratives.'[98p.178] For instance, the Passover and the Eucharist are both forms of storytelling forged in the 'dialectic of memory and anticipation.'[99p.297] Likewise, in areas of urban change, it is important to retain heritage and collective memory. For instance, Trinity church on the Lansbury Estate in East London has witnessed many waves of immigration, constantly changing the socio-economic profile of the area. So the church gathered the voices of different racial groups to help create a community tapestry, telling the area's story as a whole.[100]

Having come to terms with the past, it is important not to dwell in the past, but to come to terms with the present. This means pastorally to 'put a voice to our indignation and bewilderment.'[101p.17] Mursell[102p.47f] points to the power of the Biblical lament:

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[95] BRUEGGEMANN, W. *The Theology of the Book of Jeremiah.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
[96] BRUEGGEMANN, W. 1987. *Op. Cit.*
[97] MURSELL, G. 2005. *Op. Cit.*
[98] JANTZEN, G. 'On Philosophers (Not) Reading History.' IN: ED. VANHOOZER, K AND WARNER, M. *Transcending Boundaries in Philosophy and Theology.* Aldershot: Ashgate Press, 2007, pp.177-179.
[99] BRUEGGEMANN, W. 1992. *Op. Cit.*
[100] More information available at www.lansburyvoices.org.uk [10th November 2007]
[101] BRUEGGEMANN, W. 1997. *Op. Cit.*
[102] MURSELL, G. 2005. *Op. Cit.*

Theologically, it represents trust in a God who is big enough to handle human bitterness and uttermost depths of despair. Psychologically, laments remind readers they are loved unconditionally and so set free to fail and yet hope for redemption. Politically, they enable one to call for justice.

The third resource in the exile experience: Mursell identifies is to reinforce one's sense of identity vis-à-vis the surrounding culture. There is a strong pressure to define what makes one different, to look for symbols of meaning that represent identity. For instance, as noted above, the Jewish exiles re-introduced circumcision and saw significance in meeting together on the Sabbath. To focus on the essentials of the faith and recognise God's saving power at work is counter intuitive and can lead to the formation of what Hauerwas and Willimon calls 'a colony of heaven … an island of culture in the midst of another.'[103p.1] This use of the term colony does not imply imperial supremacy or a desire to hide behind a stockade and not mingle with the natives. Instead, the idea of a colony of heaven is drawn from a Celtic spirituality that calls for an expression of faith that engages with the culture but retains one's identity. This confidence in the *galah* hope of God better reflects the 'Christ transforms the world' principle explored in Chapter Nine, for it calls on 'Christians informed on the exile to transform the world.'[104p.8]

The final resource of hope is recognition of powerlessness. This enables people to draw no longer on their own resources and strategies but seek a revelation of God's will in the midst of exile. For instance, it was noted above that the Jewish exiles were mainly the members of the Jewish establishment – those in positions of power and influence. Exile forced them to the bottom of the social order where they discovered a God who has empathy with the poor. Consequently the Jewish faith became more egalitarian.

The Social Analysis part of this thesis has already noted that whenever people of influence face an exilic experience they have greater empathy with those on the margins and this can lead to a creative hope that subverts those in power. Brueggemann describes this as a 'covenantal neighbourly world empowered by the neighbourliness of God.'[105p.21] Examples already noted include the 19th Century Settlement Movement in the East End slums and the Socialist ideas developed after the destruction by the blitz. This subversive hope can be equated with Turner's idea of *Communitas,* that liminal period which represents the 'unlimited possibilities from which new social structure emerges.'[106] A similar shift took place within the planning profession. Historically dominated by a white, middle class, male outlook which believed that public interest could be reached through detached reason. The profession's time of reflection was caused by the social failures of 1950's and 1960's

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[103] HAUERWAS, S AND WILLIMON, W. 1989. *Op. Cit.*
[104] HOLDSWORTH, J. 2003. *Op. Cit.*
[105] BRUEGGEMANN, W. 1997. *Op. Cit.*
[106] LA SHURE, C. 2005. *Op. Cit.*

planned estates, which led to a shift away from an approach based solely on the insight of professionals to acknowledging the value of local opinions.

This exposition has explored the links between the idea of exile and the lives of individuals, institutions and the church. Reflecting on the thinking of Turner and Brueggemann, connections are made with liminality and a period of disorientation where God reveals himself by placing people into exile (*galah*). This meant that although exile represents a time of crisis, God is revealed in the dislocation, the margins or the liminality, subverting the exile from within.

God is revealed as compelling his people 'not to focus nostalgically on the past but to move on to concentrate on the future – not to be overwhelmed by despair but to set out a new vision of hope.'[107p.72] Such a subversive view of the exile empowers participation in the life of the culture and calls for a 'move forward with a new sense of identity, new landmarks of meaning, an awareness of grace and forgiveness, with a vision of hope.'[108p.60] Such a vision can no longer be restricted to an individual, an institution or the church. It must break out and even 'produce great public policy ideals for the sake of all the community.'[109p.64]

d) Building A People Of Hope

The previous section argued that the Jewish exile experience can be paradigmatic to the experience of the church and society today. In particular the understanding of *Galah* as the revealed will of God behind them being placed in exile, enabled 'the people of God in exile to have been most imaginative and have great courage to be extraordinarily hopeful.'[110p.100]

This section examines eschatology to see how hope inspires vision and builds a community 'where the present is not seen as final, but it becomes possible to search for alternate possibilities that can be projected into the future and give birth to hope.'[111p.13] To understand the power of this hope, two contrasts are examined. The first is between futurology and the eschatological hope of the Bible. The second is between ideas of utopia and an understanding of prophecy. It is argued that it is only the power of *galah* that 'endows one with a new ability to seek to re-shape his known universe'[112p.116 (sic.)] through acts of faith.

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[107] MURSELL, G. 2005. *Op. Cit.*
[108] HOLDSWORTH, J. 2003. *Op. Cit.*
[109] BRUEGGEMANN, W. *Deep Memory, Exuberant Hope.* Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2000.
[110] LOWRY, J. 'The Bible As Scripted Hope.' IN: ED. BRUEGGEMANN, W. *Hope For The World.* Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001, pp95-105.
[111] ALVES, R. *A Theology Of Human Hope.* St Meinrad: Abbey Press, 1969.
[112] ALVES, R. *Tomorrow's Child.* London: SCM Press, 1972.

Both futurology and eschatology are concerned with understanding the future, particularly the end of human history. Futurology is a vision based on human aspirations expressed through philosophy. It offers a 'systematic construction of a likely future world … built upon existing reality.'[113p.106] Eschatology, on the other hand, is rooted in the Christian understanding of a completely new future as revealed in the scripture.

Perhaps the most popular understanding of the end of human history is "we go to heaven when we die." However, this perspective has more to do with Plato than Yahweh; for it was Plato who spoke about the immortality of the soul and downgraded the human condition. This Platonic view[114] is seen in his allegory of the cave where the humans are bound in chains and forced to watch what they perceive is reality but is actually mere illusion or shadow. It is only when the soul is released from its shackles that it fully sees the nature of reality.

This view of reality was similar to that adopted by the Gnostics, who argued that there was a secret salvation enabling release from the decay of this world. Wright argues that this heretical view of the goal of human life has 'infected whole swathes of Christian thinking on the immortality of the soul and devalued the view of this present world.'[115p.103] Such a perspective is linked to pre-millennialism (see chapter nine) and is reflected in medieval art and literature but it remains strong in popular understanding today. In particular it has led to what Moltmann[116p.271f] calls a conservative syndrome, which downplays the human potential to make a positive impact on the world. This negative view of human possibility has validated the need for a strong power to repress evil through patriarchal dominance and imperialist dictatorships.

This view of the end of human history was challenged and undermined by modernist metanarrative and the Whig view of historical progress. It had its roots in the Renaissance but came to its full expression in the Enlightenment, seeing 'human history moving forward along an upward sloping path to an ever improving future.'[117p.241] Moltmann[118p.273f] calls this a progressive syndrome that hailed the role of human beings to improve the world with the power of science. Buoyed by the industrial revolution, technology was seen as the instrument by which humanity overcame the environment, bringing economic prosperity. This confidence in the power of humanity, who were by definition good rather than evil, led to faith in education rather than any need for grace. Such growth in the power of the individual was expressed in ideas of democracy, freedom and liberty. The idea of a creator God

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[113] KUMAR, K. *Utopianism.* Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1991.
[114] PLATO. The Republic *Book VII: On Shadows and Realities in Education.* Cambridge: Loeb Classical Library, translated 1914-30.
[115] WRIGHT, N T. *Surprised By Hope.* London: SPCK, 2007.
[116] MOLTMANN, J. '*The Liberation Of The Future.'* IN ED. BAUCKHAM, R. *God Will Be All In All.* Edinburgh, T&T Clark, 1999, pp265-289.
[117] BAUCKHAM, R. *'The Year 2000 And The End Of Secular Eschatology.'* IN ED. COLWELL, J. *Called To One Hope.* Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2000, pp.240-251.
[118] MOLTMANN, J. 1999. *Op. Cit.*

seeking relationship was derided as religious superstition and repression of the individual, while liberal theologians like Weiss and Schweitzer 'virtually eliminated the apocalyptic elements of the Christian hope.'[119p.95]

The Modernist narratives that saw humanity as central to existence came to their zenith in the optimism at the end of the 19th Century. This is reflected in the futurist movement in the art and literature of the early years of the 20th Century – a worldview which, as noted in the Social Analysis section of this thesis, clearly influenced early Town Planners and architects such as Le Corbusier.

This optimism floundered on the fields of Flanders. 'The collapse … of European culture brought a new sensitivity to the frontier of death'[120p.536] while those who had trumpeted technology as a means to bring global peace were confounded by the scale of death and destruction that technology could bring. This set the tone for the 20th Century, which was to witness more wars than any other and bring humanity face to face with the horrors of the holocaust. Such experience showed the depravity of any faith in human progress, thus Bonhoeffer wrote from a Nazi jail, 'we are at the turning point of history, where the new is being formed and is not discernible in the alternatives of the present.'[121p.196]

The post-war period saw a melting pot of ideologies as the metanarratives of modernism were revitalised and then rejected. Postmodern thinkers like Lyotard suggested that 'humans are objects of human history not subjects; there is nothing intentional about the future.'[122p.247] This offered an explanation for the suffering of life but no sense of hope. Indeed it 'abandoned the idea of hopeful direction and an ever better future and a priority was given to the present.'[123p.244] The only confidence expressed is in the power of sharing one's story – but there was a failure to move on through lament to a revelation of hope.

This is perhaps the biggest weakness in 'future thinking. It is in principle the extrapolation of present ways'[124p.25] – it simply describes the future within the limits of the current reality and offers no sense of hope. This is the key difference from eschatology, which is rooted in God's future and not in human progress.

This power of eschatology in providing a hope was identified in chapter eight as offering the 'promise of God that stands in contradiction to the reality of the world.'[125p.538] This may be why reflection on eschatology grew in popularity in the aftermath of World War One. This began with Barth who characterised the promised

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[119] MACQUARRIE, J. *Christian Hope.* Oxford: Mowbrays, 1978.
[120] PANNENBERG, W. *Systematic Theology Vol. 3.* Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993.
[121] Cited by ALVES, R. 1972. *Op. Cit.*
[122] Cited by BAUCKHAM, R. *'The Year 2000 And The End Of Secular Eschatology.'* IN: ED. COLWELL, J. *Called To One Hope.* Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2000, pp.240-251.
[123] *Ibid.*
[124] GOODMAN cited by ALVES, R. 1972. Op. Cit.
[125] PANNENBERG, W. 1993. Op. Cit.

hope of God as being based on the existence of a wholly different reality announced by the revelation of God's word in Jesus Christ.[126p.45] Later, Moltmann writing in the shadow of the horrors of Auschwitz sought an eschatology that was so all-embracing it covered not just the future of the individual but the transformation of the whole cosmos. For Moltmann, 'the expected future did not develop within the framework of possibilities inherent in the present but arises out of what is possible to the God of promise.'[127p.57]

Given this all-encompassing promise, Moltmann calls for eschatological ethics for all Christians suggesting that every Christian 'is an eschatologically determined being and that our history is controlled by the eschatological transcendence.'[128p.107] In other words, God's promise of future *shalom* discussed in chapter eight can lead to courage to live following God's purposes now.

Moltmann calls this hope, 'God's future that reaches back into the present and effectively re-fashions it.'[129p.64] Such a theology transcends the ideas of post-millennialism and pre-millennialism which were explored in chapter nine. Instead it offers a transformative hope that enables an imaginative vision; reconciling the body and soul, individuals to community, and humanity with the created order.

There are many such movements which display a concern for the world and its current trajectory and the church is certainly not 'the sole midwife of the future.'[130p.66] This language of hope and also dissatisfaction with the present has been prevalent in much study of the future and not just in eschatology; indeed it is the driving force behind the idea of utopia. It is important therefore to highlight the difference between utopia and Christian prophecy.

On the surface they appear very similar. For it was noted in chapter nine that utopians use religious language such as salvation, redemption, hope and fulfilment. Furthermore, though the first recorded use of utopia was by More, he was not alone; Campanella, Andreas and Bacon all wrote Christian utopias and there is little doubt that they influenced millennial thinking.

On the other hand, utopian literature 'is a parody of the Christian vision – a vision of history moving towards a goal that will emerge from within and not come from above.'[131p.94] It is more akin to the modernist dream, a product of human achievement wrought by the powers of technology. The Christian elements are 'a very thin veneer

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[126] Cited by ALVES, R. 1969. *Op. Cit.*
[127] *Ibid.*
[128] MOLTMANN, J. *Hope And Planning.* London: SCM Press, 1971.
[129] Cited by: HART, T. '*Imagination For The Kingdom Of God.*' IN: ED. BAUCKHAM, R. 1999, *Op. Cit.* pp49-76
[130] ALVES, R. 1969. *Op. Cit.*
[131] WRIGHT, N T. 2007. *Op. Cit.*

over hard-edged rationalistic, scientific utopias … a project more influenced by classical republicanism and Hellenistic rationalism.'[132pp.10-11]

There are three ways utopian ideology differs from Christian thinking. First, a utopian world is a future where the world is tamed and humans have mastery, rather than any idea of a new creation being an act of God. Second, utopia is achieved through hard work and education, a humanistic hope rather than a God given hope based on God's grace. Finally, utopian thinkers fail to accept the idea of evil, sin and humanity's fallen nature. As Chesterton said, 'the weakness of all utopias is this, that they take away the greatest difficulty of men and assume that this can be overcome and then give an elaborate account of how they will overcome the smaller problems.'[133p.12 *sic.*]

Such problems with utopian ideas are not constrained to the early planning visionaries. The neo-liberal utopias shared the failings of utopian literature, with their trust in human ambition, lack of reliance on grace and greater focus on 'conspicuous consumption, individuals are freed from ethical constraint and communal bonds, yet such affluence is limited to the few and is undermined by the exploitation of the many.'[134p.13]

Utopia is hence concerned with speculation about human betterment but it lacks 'the ingredient of hope without which speculation becomes idle fancy.'[135p.19] Christian eschatology offers an alternative expression of the future based on a hope in 'the power of God's future to transform the present … by capturing the imagination and open up a new vision of God's promise.'[136p.75] This builds a bridge between the human yearning for a better city and the supernatural revelation, by injecting the spirit of divine hope into the dreams of utopian transformation. It is this *galah,* the revelation of God in the midst of crisis, that offers hope. This is the offer of an authentic community of faith; it professes to have 'tasted an aperitif of the future, a vision of something as yet absent.'[137p.173] A hope grounded in the promise of God's reign breaking in the present yet continually unfolding into the future is a hope that subverts the powerful who promote a human form of utopia.

This is the power of prophecy, from Old Testament prophets like Jeremiah to modern prophets like Martin Luther King who dared to say "I have a dream". The prophetic hope speaks to the world and is rooted in the experience of this world, but a prophet also challenges its evils and injustices. However, rather than remain in the place of judgement, the prophet rises above the present condition and anticipates

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[132] KUMAR, K. *Religion And Utopia.* Canterbury: University of Kent at Canterbury Centre For Study Of Religion And Society, 1985.
[133] Cited in *Ibid.*
[134] BEAUREGARD, R. *Voices Of Decline: The Post War Fate Of US Cities.* Oxford: Blackwell, 1993.
[135] KUMAR, K. 1991. *Op. Cit.*
[136] HART, T. 1999. *Op. Cit.*
[137] ALVES, R. 1972 *Op. Cit.*

God's future, in expectation that faith will enable good to be achieved. Prophetic hope is not an emotional belief that there is always good in the world, nor is it mere escapism. Rather, it is rooted in faith that enables one to make what Rugg calls a prophetic leap of the imagination to challenge 'long held pre-suppositions and begin again with a new orientation.'[138p.67]

The source of one's imagination is crucial here. For if one sees human imagination as the sole source of creativity then this leads to utopian ideas. On the other hand, if one acknowledges that God created the imagination, 'the power of the future to transform the present lies chiefly in the capacity of God's Spirit to capture our imagination and open up a new vision of God's purpose … so stimulating alternative ways of being in the world in the present.'[139p.75] This is not a human inspired false hope, for the instigator of the prophetic hope is God and this results in a *shalom* of true peace and joy. As Paul wrote in Romans, 'May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit'[140]

It is this overflowing with hope that characterises the prophetic as it becomes the impetus for the Christian community. It generates a 'creativity of imagination … empowered by the desire for newness, inspired by the counter-narrative of God's hope and guided by the values of flourishing.'[141p.190] For if God is already active in creating all things new, Christians simply need to join in his action.

This section has examined the implication of the revealed will of God (*galah)* and concluded it means one has a Godly hope to bear on reality. In seeking to understand this hope, a contrast is made with futurology. Three views were explored. First, Plato's frustration with the human condition that led him to believe humanity was doomed to destruction. Second, the Enlightenment led Whig philosophers who were optimistic about the power of human ambition. Third, postmodern thought that suggests there is no meaning in the chaos. Eschatology offers an alternative to all these perspectives. 'God reveals himself in the form of a promise.'[142p.42] He is at work in the future and invites his church to participate in his future.

This Biblical understanding exposes the difference between a prophetic hope and utopia. For despite the religious language of utopia, it remains largely a dream which is not yet manifest and derived from human ambition; while prophetic hope springs from the yearning of God. Bonhoeffer had a vision of this hope in the midst of the

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[138] Cited in *Ibid.*
[139] HART, T. 1999. *Op. Cit.*
[140] Romans 15v13 NIV translation
[141] JANTZEN, G. 2007. *Op. Cit.*
[142] MOLTMANN, J. *Theology Of Hope: On The Grounds And The Implications Of A Christian Eschatology.* London: SCM Press, 1967.

uncertainty of Nazi Germany, a prophetic hope that 'sends a man back to his life in a totally new way.[sic]'[143p.107]

e) Working In Hope

This chapter has sought to reflect further on the potential role of the church in urban development areas. Having considered questions concerning the scale and duration of the exile, a return to etymology explores the idea that God reveals himself in times of crisis. For just as the Jews took strength from the knowledge that God had a purpose in placing them into exile (*galah*), so God offers hope amidst the dislocation of urban change.

Exegesis of Jeremiah has shown that the prophet offers a model of how reflection on a community's painful experience reconnected them to a promise of 'hope which lies beyond, ultimately rooted in the enduring nature of divine promise and God's bond with his people which God is still willing to maintain.'[144p.61]

Connections are then made with anthropological ideas of liminality and sociological disorientation, to suggest that an exile experience represents an opportunity for individuals, institutions or the church to reflect on their despair and then begin to dream ideals for the sake of all the community.

It is this eschatological hope that refuses to allow the present to have the last word which 'subverts and destabilises the present tense reality.'[145p.268] To represent this hope is the task of the church as Alves puts it so poetically,

> You may choose to continue to dance the tune played by our present reality or you may choose to move your body to a different rhythm from a world we do not see ... Our hope is based on hearing the melody of the future and having the faith to dance to it.[146p.195]

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[143] Cited by NULIS, D. '*A Common Hope Is Always Context Specific.*' IN: ED. BRUEGGEMANN, W. 2001. *Op. Cit.*
[144] ACKROYD, P. 1968. *Op. Cit.*
[145] BRUEGGEMANN, W. 1998. *Op. Cit.*
[146] ALVES, R. 1972. *Op. Cit.*

PART FOUR: Developing A Transformative Strategy

Chapter Eleven: Significance Of Transformational Learning

The first three parts of the thesis have begun to develop a critical awareness of the issues associated with urban development. Parts one and two identified the praxis and offered some social analysis 'to determine by what processes the frames of reference through which we view and interpret our experience are formed.'[1p.xiii] Three themes were identified, based on promoting human flourishing, mediating tension and representing hope.

Part three used a process of hermeneutical reflection on the Jewish experience of exile in the 6th century BCE to develop these themes through what Mezirow calls transformational learning. This is when, through constructive dialogue, one 'can change, elaborate, create, negate, confirm, problematize and transform meaning.'[2p.117] This hermeneutical reflection has helped begin to shape the theological and missiological rationale for the church's engagement in urban development (see figure 11.1 at the end of this chapter).

Chapter eight argued that God gives a command to seek *shalom,* which has been translated as a common sense of well-being and a quality of life lived under God. Connections have been made with secular concepts linked to human flourishing - well being, quality of life, liveability, sense of community and social capital. However, these terms did not prove holistic, nor gave attention to the faith which is so integral to *shalom*. Rather, the *shalom* vision calls for the church to work for societal responsibility and be committed to working with God to create wholeness, healing, justice, peace and well being.

Chapter nine noted that philosophical thinkers have tended towards a negative view of the city as a place in need of reform. However, it is argued that this leads to either a distracting nostalgic reminiscence of rural past or utopian ideals for the future. Instead, the prophet Jeremiah calls one to work with the city, holding the dialectical tension between the present reality and God's future ideal. The church's role is not just to help mediate the tensions within the city but to offer the hope of God's promised transformation in the present - to seek to transform Babylon into Jerusalem.

Finally, in chapter ten, the exile experience is linked to the personal, social and ecclesial dislocation created by urban change. Rather than be disturbed by such change, it is argued, exile offers a time for reflection, leading to a new resolve for the church to 'maintain its identity not so one curses the darkness but to become the light in its midst … to turn our problems into a theological opportunity.'[3p.151-2] This period of

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[1] MEZIROW, J. *Transformational Dimensions Of Adult Learning.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1991.
[2] *Ibid*
[3] KLEIN, R. *Israel In Exile.* Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979.

reflection reveals God's presence in exile (g*alah*) and leads to a call for active participation in the life of the city. It is a missional opportunity to represent God's hope in the midst of the dislocation as opposed to the human ambitions of utopia.
These three themes are integrated, for it is prophetic hope that offers *shalom* and pastoral healing; and it is in recognising God's presence that the church can mediate hope between competing alternatives to offer possibility of transformation. Together they point to signs of God's love in action.

This fourth part of the thesis is the next stage in the transformational learning process that goes beyond critical reflection to the essential 'dynamic of fitting and refitting our theories into action and being responsive to feedback.'[4p.117] This moves the church's role beyond offering a place for critical reflection, to seeking ways that the church can begin to develop a transformative strategy for engagement with urban development.
This requires a willingness for the church not only to learn from its past and 'question its dominant ideas but to go onto envisage alternative ideas which are the key to social transformation of the dominant hegemonic ideology.'[5p.23] In so doing, the process of transformational learning must always lead to 'a new way of seeing things, that has to lead to some kind of social action.'[6p.335]

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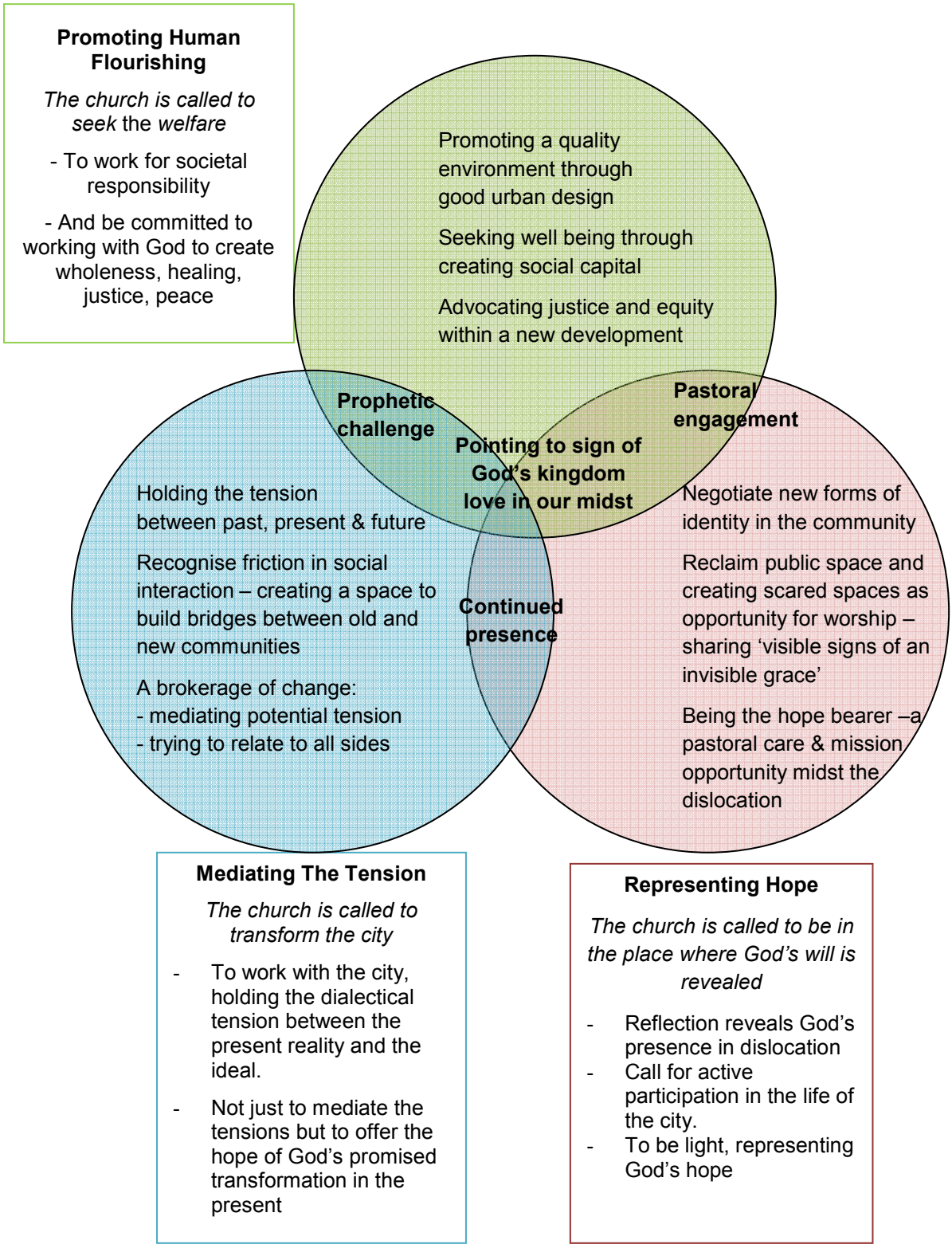
[4] *Ibid*
[5] MAYO, M. *Imagining Tomorrow.* Leicester: NIACE, 1997.
[6] MEZIROW, J. 2000. *Op. Cit.*

FIGURE 11.1 Linking Hermeneutical Reflection To The Transformative Strategy



Chapter Twelve: Transforming Church Engagement

This chapter returns to the themes of church engagement with urban development explored in the social analysis (chapter six) in the light of the themes explored in the hermeneutical reflection. In so doing, it seeks to develop a transformative strategy based on Jeremiah's call 'for a relationship with the city, culture and society; and against the false prophet's call for assimilation, revolution or escapism. Instead Jeremiah calls for critical engagement with and an ongoing presence in the city.'[1p.2]

This thesis has already proposed that this engagement be characterised by promoting shalom, mediating tension and representing a lasting hope. This chapter weaves these themes into a form of church engagement based on: a potential partnership with planners, developers and regeneration agencies; fostering civil society and the idea of faithful capital; and making the idea of building a good city part of the missional purposes of the church. When brought together, it is argued that these three aims offer a framework for the church to show God's kingdom at work.

a) The Church's Role In Partnership – Opportunity Or Threat?

In seeking to promote the idea of *shalom*, the church is called to work with God to create wholeness, healing, justice, peace and well being. At the same time, as this thesis has already identified, both the government and other community organisations are also committed to creating well being. This means that a way must be found to work with others in a mutual interest of societal responsibility.

In contrast to the state led development agenda of much of the mid twentieth century, with its focus on modernist utopian ideology, the post modern approach to planning is increasingly based on partnership working. In an English context, this shift in political emphasis was led by Tony Blair's New Labour philosophy. This was drawn from Labour's Christian Socialist roots based on an understanding that 'wherever you find a group that has managed to break free from poverty and deprivation, there you will invariably find strong families, associations and communities of faith.'[2p.20] As a consequence, New Labour actively encouraged collaboration and partnership with what they called the Third Sector. This includes voluntary and community organisations, faith groups, social

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[1] VILLAFANE, E. *Seek The Peace Of The City.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.
[2] BLAIR, T. 'Values And The Power Of Community.' Speech to the Global Ethics Foundation. Cited by CHAPMAN, M. *Blair's Britain.* London: DLT, 2005.

enterprises, co-operatives and mutual societies. Using deliberate religious overtones, Furbey has suggested that 'social entrepreneurs have been seen as urban prophets.'[3p.432] Since the church remains the largest voluntary sector organisation in the country, it is seen as having 'an important role in society, partly because of the ethics that it teaches and partly because of their contribution in terms of serving the community.'[4] Thus the church has been encouraged to become a partner in delivering the government's agenda, in welfare or education, engagement in local regeneration projects, or promoting community cohesion.

There are clear links with Jeremiah's call to work with the people of Babylon to seek the *shalom* of the city, and so partnership working needs to be seen as an element of the transformative strategy for the church. This approach is reflected in the way church-based charities such as Faithworks, Liveability and the Church Urban Fund have begun to talk about promoting human flourishing and creating wellbeing,[5] both of which have links to the idea of *shalom*; while the faith groups were recognised in the government's third sector review in 2007 as they act 'as a catalyst for the formation of networks, as welfare service providers, participants in partnership structures and the basis for bringing the community together.'[6p.50]

On the other hand, it can be argued that the church working with those in power does not feel like a church in exile but rather a vestige of Christendom where church was in a place of influence. However, the rhetoric of community engagement often masks a top down policy agenda which is obsessed by meeting centrally set targets. This means that 'the church's place at the table, on regeneration boards and management groups is at best ambiguous.'[7p.41] The church is clearly not in charge, in fact it is akin to being in exile working together for the welfare of Babylon.

This means that if the transformative strategy is to encompass working with others to create *shalom,* church participation in regeneration programmes must not be naive or uncritical. For if the church is to work with the government and other third sector partners, it must recognise that its partners may not always share the same values, on for example the acceptance of the power of the market which means there will always be losers in society. The church must be careful not to be co-opted as either an agency of community

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[3] FURBEY, R. 'Urban Regeneration: Reflections On A Metaphor.' In: *Critical Social Policy* 19:4, 1999. pp419-445 .
[4] HEAP, S. 2005 *An Evaluation Of New Labour* Unpublished PhD Thesis
[5] HACKWOOD, P. *A Discussion Paper.* Presented to the Funding And Development Group, 15th March 2011.
[6] Cited by JARVIS, D ET AL. *Building Better Neighbourhoods.* Coventry: Coventry University Paper, 2010.
[7] DAVEY, A. 'Better Places: Performing The Urbanisms Of Hope.' IN: *International Journal Of Public Theology vol. 2,* 2008. pp27-46

formation or simply as the champion of the community if its main role is simply to 'mop up the ill effects of the market.'[8p.194] This means that the church must be wary that it does not 'simply accept the government's proscription and prescription'[9p.117] or to become 'appropriated to become an agency of community formation to ensure a happy and acquiescent population.'[10p.74]

This was the position taken by the Church of England in a report to General Synod responding to the ideas of the Urban Renaissance.[11p.2,5] This report contains an annex outlining six theological principles for the church's involvement in partnerships. These are outlined in box 12.1 and offer a useful starting point in formulating this thesis' transformative strategy in relation to regeneration partnerships.

Underlying these principles is a theological approach not that dissimilar to that posited in this thesis' hermeneutic. It is argued that when there are similar values between those working in urban development and the faith of the church then a common purpose emerges based on a desire to transform a place, to create a sense of community and to provide a meaningful supply of social capital.

Box 12.1 Underlying Principles For Church Engagement in Urban Renaissance

[1] *The parish system gives the Church of England its distinctive interface*
The church's presence in a locality is a prophetic sign of a commitment by people of faith not to their own betterment but to mutual struggle.

[2] *Our faith is concerned with welfare of people*
It is life giving and life-enhancing.

[3] *Our faith is active in engaging and sustaining a hope*
Based on a belief that transformation is possible and offers a different future where things can be different.

[4] *Our faith sees no distinction between love of God and love of neighbour*
Rather it offers the possibility that one encounters God in acts of compassion and solidarity with the poor.

[5] *We believe that partnership is a vital sign of a common humanity*
In acting in partnership we expect a respectful relationship, investment of time and commitment to empower and not to exploit.

[6] T*he outcome of regeneration must be holistic*
The economic and design aspects of regeneration must be matched with spiritual regeneration.

Source: URBAN BISHOPS' PANEL. *The Urban Renaissance and the Church Of England.* London: General Synod Of Church Of England, 2002 pp.25-30.

[8] LEVITAS, R. 'Community Utopia And New Labour.' IN: *Local Economy* 15:3, 2000. pp188-197
[9] CHAPMAN, M. *Doing God: Public Policy Under Brown.* London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2008.
[10] CHAPMAN, M. 2005. *Op. Cit.*
[11] URBAN BISHOPS' PANEL. *The Urban Renaissance and the Church Of England.* London: General Synod Of Church Of England, 2002.

Accepting these values means that the church is naturally placed to work alongside those with a vision for urban development and promotion of human flourishing. This has echoes of the ecumenical missionary strategy proposed by Fung.[12] This strategy is based on the vision of Isaiah 65 - reducing infant immortality, supporting for the elderly, reducing homelessness and promoting fair labour. Since this vision is characterised by human flourishing, it enables the church to share purpose with others involved in urban policy. Fung's strategy is based on a partnership between the church and 'individuals or groups who may be concerned and motivated by personal ideals and driven by varying interests'[13p.25] but come together to share the similar concerns expressed in the Isaiah vision.

Fung's strategy is appealing but regrettably his focus was on the alleviation of need, rather than offering a positive vision that prevents the problems in the first place. As was noted in the social analysis part of this thesis, a similar struggle occurs in regeneration departments where some promote the benefits of infrastructural and economic improvement to an area in the hope of raising the quality of life; while others work to alleviate need through welfare distribution. Fung's *Isaiah Vision* has appealed to the latter and church groups have been active in this area. However, the church has had a limited impact on the former.

There is therefore a case for a different rallying cry for those seeking to promote investment in the planning of infrastructure of an area in the hope of raising the quality of life. In formulating this thesis' transformative strategy it is posited that s*halom* be this common vision for the church to work alongside secular bodies working in planning and urban development. Placing the idea of *shalom* into Fung's strategy is not difficult since he was not primarily writing about the church's role in partnerships but seeking a missionary approach not that different from the principles of eschatological *shalom,* with its vision of transformation, societal responsibility and a commitment to build a community of peace and justice.

Morisy has explored Fung's approach in the context of community ministry whereby she argues for an oblique approach to mission where 'Christians and non-Christians work alongside each other and through dialogue and experiences that are shared … it can trigger an awakening of faith within those who have not given the Christian faith a second thought.[14p.11] In so doing it offers an opportunity for Christians and non-Christians together

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[12] FUNG, R. *The Isaiah Vision.* Geneva: WCC, 1992.
[13] ANDERSON, R. *The Shape of Practical Theology*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2001.
[14] MORISY, A. *Beyond the Good Samaritan.* London: Mowbray, 1997.

'to reflect on their involvement in ways in which the Christian faith maybe relevant to their mutual experience.'[15p.100]

This approach has been criticised by Shannahan, arguing that 'community ministry must not be a stealthy evangelistic tool but emerge from listening to the context, the text, the situation and the place.'[16p.178] However, this misunderstands Morisy, who clarified her position in 2004 to focus on patient listening. Stating that if the church 'honours the gospel it has to journey out, embrace the stranger, work for social peace and justice and then help others partake of God's gracious gift of salvation.'[17]

b) The Role Of Faith In Fostering A Civil Society

The first element of the transformative strategy has therefore been outlined as promoting partnership with those working for *shalom.* The second element is to work to mediate tension to generate social justice, which is linked to the idea of fostering civil society. This is not a new idea; it was identified in the social analysis part of this thesis as a key driver for the early planning visionaries, while post modern planners have been encouraged to find ways to create civil society by ensuring greater participation in shaping and forming urban development. So what does the term civil society mean in this context? Michael Walzer defined it as: 'the space of un-coerced human association and the set of relational networks formed for the sake of family, faith, interest or ideology that fills this space.'[18]

Questions as to how far religion can foster civil society have long been debated in both psychology and sociology.

In psychology the focus has been on 'the practical implications of religion in enhancing or retarding personal and societal well being.'[19p.5] As was noted in chapter eight, the focus here has been on the role of religion in preventative health care through such measures as reducing stress, promoting inner healing and empowering individuals.

However, it is interesting to note the role of relationship building in this context. For psychologists argue that the 'role of religion differs depending on whether the activity is directed within the congregation or is spread through outreach to the wider

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[15] *Ibid.*
[16] SHANNAHAN, C. *Voices From The Borderlands.* London: Equinox, 2010.
[17] MORISY, A. *Journeying Out.* London: Continuum Press, 2004.
[18] Cited by LOWNDES, V. *Civil Society and Governance Of Urban Areas.* Paper Presented to Urban Policy Day, 13th November 2003, St Philip's Centre, Leicester.
[19] PALANTZIAN, R AND KIRKPATRICK, L. 'The Scope Of Religious Influence On Personal And Societal Well Being.' IN: *Journal Of Social Issues* 51(2), 1995. pp.1-11

community.'[20p.178] This link between the church and the wider community underpins the idea of a mediated tension and as such begins to develop another element of this thesis' transformative strategy.

Sociological thinking has also explored this dynamic between the private and public spheres of religion. Durkheim and Weber both sought to understand how an individual's ideology affects society and promotes economic growth.

Durkheim[21p.172] identifies three levels needed to build a consensus in society: shared norms - that is, the acceptable way of doing things; shared values through common agreement on the proper way of behaving; and finally a shared belief on the way the world works. He argued that this consensus cannot be reached unless an outside authority provides a sanction for those who step outside the agreed parameters. This sanction can be legal or social but the most effective authority is transcendent religion. This Durkheim argued was because 'religion provides us with a system of ideas which give a complete representation of the world.'[22p.36] It represents a supra-social authority that can sustain a commitment without the need for expensive punitive sanctions, at least in this life.

The problem with Durkheim's view is that he defines the role of religion in social terms,[23p.175f] seeing faith's contribution to civil society as merely to enforce norms and values. This does not reflect the hermeneutic, as it offers no opportunity for faith to mediate change in the direction and values of a society. It does not therefore help further the transformative strategy.

On the other hand, Weber took Durkheim's ideas further by identifying a positive link between religious values and socioeconomic development. He[24] argued that the protestant work ethic with its focus on thrift, frugality and saving provided the finances for the development of industrial capitalism. Although this view has been hotly contested, it is worth noting that Weber's views have retained some academic standing. This may be because his argument was not as socially deterministic as Durkheim but rather he offered a new focus on the institutional power of the major religions in imparting an order to society.

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[20] MATON, K AND WELLS, E. 'Religion As A Community Resource For Well Being.' IN: *Journal Of Social Issues* 51(2), 1995. pp.177-193

[21] Cited In GLOCK, C AND STARK, R. *Religion And Society In Tension.* Chicago: Rand-McNally, 1965.

[22] Cited In BUDD S. *Sociologists And Religion.* London: Collier-Macmillan, 1973.

[23] CONN, H AND ORTIZ, M. *Urban Ministry: The Kingdom, The City And The People Of God.* Downers Grove: IVP, 2001.

[24] WEBER, M. *The Protestant Ethic And The Spirit Of Capitalism.* London: George Unwin and Allen, 1930.

Building on Weber's view, Barro and McCleary[25p.772] have proposed a chain whereby church attendance affects beliefs, which in turn affect character traits, and this will inevitably affect our behaviour and economic activity. This view has been challenged by secularists such as Dawkins[26p.113] who see religion as primarily a private matter; and by Christian thinkers such as Morisy who see 'a danger in the sequential model as it inadequately expresses the holistic nature of the Christian mission.'[27p.25] Earlier in this thesis Morisy's holistic approach was linked to the idea of *shalom* in the way it balances the spiritual, societal, personal and material facets of life. However, the way these benefits are mediated in a relational manner to ensure that all society gains is crucial to this second element of the transformative strategy.

The above discussion on the role of religion in public life needs to be placed in a contemporary political context of 'a population that comprises a majority of people who are largely indifferent but not hostile to organised religion, alongside a small but well mobilised heterogeneity of religious groups.'[28p.15] In this context, the question being asked is, what is the added value of religious groups in public life?

Chapter eight answered this question by suggesting faith groups are a good source of social capital. The earlier discussion identified two forms of social capital. Bonding social capital involves developing a strong sense of allegiance between people but can lead to exclusivity and an inward looking approach which is not conducive to building up society. Bridging social capital involves stepping beyond one's own network to meet with a stranger in a move that can lead to neighbourliness. Churches tend to create a strong sense of fellowship which can lead to bonding social capital. However, it is only as the church members get involved in volunteering to reach out to others in their area through community programmes that bridging social capital can be created.

Morisy argues that the church's tradition of community ministry and mission means that 'no other agency has the depth of history or representation and legitimate role in society ... This means the church can help contribute to government programmes for liveability and re-neighbouring.'[29pp.58-59] However, Morisy also challenges the church to take one step further and to engage in what Rahner calls 'venturesome love' or what Morisy has coined 'brave social capital.' This is when one is 'willing to be a risk taker and work with those

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[25] BARRO, R AND MCCLEARY, R. 'Religion And Economic Growth.' IN: *American Sociological Review* 68, 2003. pp.760-781
[26] Cited by CHAPMAN, M. 2008. *Op. Cit.*
[27] MORISY, A. 2004. *Op. Cit.*
[28] GRAHAM, E. 'Doing God? Public Theology Under Blair.' in Ed. MANLEY SCOTT, P ET AL *Re-moralising Britain.* London: Continuum, 2009. pp1-18
[29] MORISY, A. 2004. *Op. Cit.*

one perceives to be a threat and to work for the well being of the menaces of society.'[30p.61] In chapter eight, a connection was made between Morisy's 'brave social capital' and the command to create *shalom* in Babylon. For Jeremiah's command was beyond human ability – he called the Jews to pray and work to build community with those whom the Jews perceived as a threat to their well being. The transformative strategy must therefore include 'brave social capital' to ensure *shalom* is mediated within the tensions of today's society.

In 2004, Morisy was asked to be secretary to the church's new Commission for Urban Life and Faith (CULF) the successor to the Archbishop' Commission on UPAs some twenty years earlier. It is worth noting at this stage the changes in the political, economic and religious context in the two decades between the reports. *Faith in the City* emerged as a response to the riots in some northern cities in the early 1980s and concern about the ill effects of unemployment. On the other hand, CULF's work sought to evaluate the church's commitment to urban ministry in the intervening decades.

Given Morisy's approach to community mission and ministry outlined above, it is not surprising that the CULF report, unlike Faith in the City, chose not to focus on specific socioeconomic issues but to examine the processes that foster urban faith and life. This, it was argued, would enable the CULF to 'join up ideas about good urban participation planning and ideas of promoting well being ... to explore the extent to which faith organisations could contribute to fostering civil society.'[31]

CULF's main report entitled *Faithful Cities* was produced in 2006. The report outlined a vision of 'renewed citizenship and a society in which all flourish and that justice is the bedrock of well being.'[32p.iv] It is noticeable that CULF went one step further than the Archbishop's Commission on UPAs. The latter had non-Anglican Commissioners but CULF was both ecumenical and inter-faith. This meant that when the report sought to offer practical guidance on how one can bring a faith perspective to working with those in regeneration, it had first to identify the practical outcomes of such engagement in a manner that did not assume that the church had a natural raison d'être for doing so. Box 13.2 shows the core outcomes, and argued that faith communities should be welcomed 'as a force for good and often the source of vibrant new partnerships and initiatives.'[33p.245] This focus on partnership in regeneration was very different to the mood of opposition to government and the 'bias to the poor' expressed in the *Faith in the City* report

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[30] *Ibid*.
[31] CULF. Newsletters April,2004
[32] RICHARDSON, K. 'Foreword' IN: CULF. *Faithful Cities: A Call For Celebration, Vision And Justice*. London: Church House Publishing, 2006. p.iv
[33] GRAHAM, E. *Words Made Flesh.* London: SCM Press, 2009

Box 12.2 Faithful convictions

- That God is the source of all life, from whom all creation draws its purpose and character.
- That to be human means that we are all made in the image and likeness of God and that therefore each of us has an innate and irreducible dignity
- That our traditions call us into relationship with God because human purpose is fulfilled in lives of mutuality, love and justice.

Source: CULF. *Faithful Cities: A Call For Celebration, Vision And Justice.* London: Church House Publishing, 2006.

In seeking to link the outcome of these faith convictions and ideas of fostering civil society, CULF introduced a new term – faithful capital. This idea is central to the report as it adds a moral dimension to social capital by offering prospects of 'personal and collective transformation, love for neighbour, care for the stranger, and to human dignity and social justice.'[34p.3]

The idea of faithful capital therefore goes further than promoting social capital and echoes the ideas of venturesome love and brave social capital explored above. In this respect, Green[35p.7] believes the report offers the church a language to express its contribution in mediating the tensions within the contested spaces of urban policy. This approach enables this thesis' transformative strategy to link elements of promoting *shalom* and mediating tension with the fostering of civil society

On the other hand, critics of the *Faithful Cities* report such as Chapman argue the report is too pro-government as it fails to 'address the democratic deficit and sees the church as simply a provider of services ... undermining its opportunity to critique what is actually going on.'[36p.117] Likewise, Shannahan initially supports *Faithful Cities* as a 'more creative and accessible report, which engaged far more with social theory than the *Faith in the City* report.'[37p.163] However, he then goes on to criticise the report for failing to adequately articulate hope for the poor.[38pp.164] Such criticism is perhaps too harsh for as noted earlier the 2005 urban context was much more mixed than 1985. As Graham notes,

> Times had changed in the intervening decades; we were dealing with a radically different political, economic and religious context. The physical and economic landscape of most English cities had changed beyond recognition prompted by the urban regeneration policies of the 1990s with the conversion of city centre

[34] CULF. 2006. *Op. Cit.*
[35] GREEN, L. 'I Can't Go There.' IN: ED. DAVEY, A. *Crossover City.* London: Mowbray, 2010. pp2-8.
[36] CHAPMAN, M. 2008. *Op. Cit.*
[37] SHANNAHAN, C. 2010. *Op. Cit.*
[38] *Ibid.*

> factories and warehouses into luxury housing designed to attract a new generation or residents, mainly young professionals.[39p.244]

While CULF itself noted that 'a multi-million pound regeneration industry has become an umbrella term for cultural, retail, leisure and housing development across urban Britain.'[40p.46] So the church does need to find a more inclusive language of hope to engage with all the players involved in urban change.

On the other hand, Shannahan does make a clinching argument in relation to the differences between each faith's understanding of faithful capital.[41pp.165] Indeed the use of the term capital for this contribution has disturbed many commentators. It is noticeable that even in the Archbishop's introduction he admits 'the slightly doubtful aura that hangs around the word capital.'[42p.v] This theme is taken up by Davey when he argues that though the term capital 'allows the practice of faith to become a quantifiable product or a commodity that can attract resources ... (it can also) be neutralised or appropriated.'[43p16-17]

Instead, Davey calls for Christians to practise what he calls an everyday faithfulness. This concept has already been noted in this thesis with its clear links to Jeremiah's identification of Babylon as a viable venue for faithfulness. Such an approach must then shape the transformative strategy as it calls upon Christians to work alongside others, to promote *shalom* and mediate tensions. By adopting small tactics and strategies 'to engage in the public realm; not merely to show useful interest in the latest regeneration programmes but to be committed to making a difference, for they can change the world as it is changing them.'[44p.44]

Everyday faithfulness expressed in deliberate actions to mediate tension and foster social justice is invaluable to fostering civil society. It therefore represents a significant element of this thesis' transformative strategy.

c) How Building A Good City Links To The Mission Of The Church

Two key elements of the transformative strategy have therefore been identified as engaging in partnership with those who promote *shalom* and seeking to mediate tension as a means to foster civil society. Questions now arise as to the church's purpose for engaging in public life and 'how to use our footholds in education, community

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[39] GRAHAM, E. 2009. *Op. Cit.*
[40] CULF. 2006. *Op. Cit.*
[41] SHANNAHAN, C. 2010. *Op. Cit.*
[42] WILLIAMS, R. 'Foreword.' IN: Ibid, p.v.
[43] DAVEY, A. 'Faithful Cities: Locating Everyday Faithfulness.' IN: *Contact* 152, 2007. pp8-20
[44] DAVEY, A. 2008. *Op. Cit.*

development and the civic imagination beyond the desire to gain influence and accumulate social capital.'[45]

These questions were also addressed by CULF and one of their main recommendations was for the Church of England bishops to host debates in their dioceses on 'what makes a good city?' Interestingly, the theological perspective behind these debates was highly eschatological for CULF highlighted the city as 'the space between what is and what is to come ... a place of waiting but also the space in which humanity is called to work for God's purposes.'[46p.54]

They then outlined three similar themes to those of this thesis' hermeneutic: drawing on Jeremiah's command to make common cause and see something of good in an alien place; the vision of the Biblical city as a place of suffering but also of ultimate promise; and the idea that 'the human city is riven with contradictions but undeniably the place of divine deliverance and covenant.' [47p.54f]

These 'Good city' debates therefore focused on the role of the city as space for forming human meaning and social relationships. These debates were held from 2006 to 2008 and led to interesting reflections on what made the church distinctive in the changing socioeconomic context (for fears of impending economic recession had begun to grow.) The conclusions to this process of reflection were offered at the Urban Futures conference held in 2009 to review the developments in urban thinking three years after the *Faithful Cities* report.

At this conference, Bishop Stephen Lowe sought to answer the question 'what makes the Christian story distinctive' in three ways: 'it has a visionary dimension, a clear moral and value base and is built on the significance of relationships.'[48] In response to these three factors, Bishop Laurie Green called for an 'urban sacramentalism, seeing the story of God as performative, meditative and transformative.'[49] These three ideas link with this thesis' hermeneutic and so can contribute to the shaping of the transformative strategy. First, the church is called to create and perform acts that lead to *shalom*; second, Christians can mediate morals in a contested environment; and finally the church is called to proclaim transformative hope of a relationship with God.

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[45] DAVEY, A. 'On Not Taking The City For Granted.' Talk at *How Should We Live In Cities Now*? Conference held on January 17th 2011, Leeds.
[46] CULF. 2006. *Op. Cit.*
[47] CULF. 2006. *Op. Cit.*
[48] LOWE, S. 'What Makes A Good City? Some Feedback' Talk given at the *Urban Futures* Conference, 30th-31st March 2009, London
[49] GREEN, L. 'A Response To Bishop Stephen' Talk given at the *Urban Futures* Conference, 30th-31st March 2009, London

Reflecting on these principles it becomes clear that the church is again caught in the dilemma explored by Niebuhr (outlined in chapter nine) – as to what extent the church shapes the city and how far the city shapes the church. Seeking answers to this question, Graham and Lowe note that 'the Church of England has tended to lean toward a more public convergence of the church and the world, but in an increasingly secular and multicultural world, is there a need for a more distinctive or counter cultural prophetic ethic?'[50p.3] Their own answer is for church members to hold the tension between their public role as citizens - in which there is the opportunity to collaborate with others of faith and no faith, and that of personal discipleship in which the church is called to be counter-cultural.[51p.2] This reflects Niebuhr's concept of 'Christ and culture' in paradox. However, it does not offer opportunity for transformation. The question Mandy Ford asked Stephen Lowe at the Urban Futures conference was whether it was possible to link individual transformation and collective transformation.[52]

Mandy Ford asked her question in the context of *Mission Shaped Church*. This was a significant report published by the Church of England in 2004[53] that was ostensibly about church planting but offered a much more radical agenda to reshape the way the Church of England was organised to be focused on mission and outreach. This report led to several other reports such as '*Mission Shaped and Rural'* and the '*Mission Shaped Parish'*. The *Faithful Cities* report could have taken the opportunity to join this direction. However, it has been criticised by Kuhrt[54] and others for failing to engage with the missional perspectives of evangelical and charismatic churches, which at their heart, speak of transformation. For the *Faithful Cities* report did not refer to new ecumenical prayer initiatives such as Transform Newham and city wide social action projects such as Soul in the City and Redeeming our Communities. Kuhrt expresses his frustration somewhat flippantly, 'God save us from a church that is fluent in sociological and economic analysis but cannot speak confidently of how the Holy Spirit can transform lives.'[55p.18]

Kuhrt challenges the church to move beyond building social networks to seeking personal and societal transformation by bringing together evangelism and socio-political

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[50] GRAHAM, E AND LOWE, S. *What Makes A Good City?* London: DLT, 2009
[51] *Ibid.*
[52] FORD, M. 'A Response To Bishop Stephen' Talk given at the *Urban Futures* Conference, 30th-31st March 2009, London.
[53] CHURCH OF ENGLAND MISSION AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS COUNCIL. *Mission Shaped Church* London: Church House Publishing, 2004.
[54] KUHRT, J. 'Going Deeper Together.' IN: ED. DAVEY, A. 2010 *Op. Cit.* pp14-23
[55] *Ibid*.

involvement in its interactions with the local community. This is another important element of this thesis' transformative strategy, for the hermeneutic has sought to integrate fostering human flourishing and mediating change in the city with the opportunity for personal transformation and an eschatological hope.

In seeking this integrative approach, it was noted earlier in this chapter that community ministry should not be seen as a type of evangelism by stealth. It was also recognised that the building of trust was key to creating social capital; but this was only beneficial if the local church sought to step out and engage with its local area. Robinson argues that

It would be misguided to see the intentional development of trust as pre-evangelism for this implies a chronology with evangelism following on. Rather gaining trust is not a one off event but a process that takes place alongside and amidst the proclamation of the gospel.[56p.41]

This ongoing process of building trust resonates with this thesis' argument that the church's role is to mediate tensions based on its offer of hospitality and the fact that 'the most creative social strategy we have to offer is the church – the place where God forms a family out of strangers.'[57p.83]

This is why the debate between individual faith and societal transformation is misguided, as it leads to a split between evangelism and social action. Kuhrt argues that this is due to a misunderstanding of the nature of sin and salvation,

> For too often in history the gospel has been individualised to suit the rich and powerful and deny the radical biblical critique of social and structural sin. This needs to be exposed but not in favour of a lop-sided focus that disregards the personal aspects of sin and salvation. This is equally ineffectual and dangerous.[58p.75]

Having identified the danger of splitting the definition of sin, Kuhrt then identifies the four meanings of salvation in the Bible: healing and wholeness based on a network of relationships; liberation from oppression; forgiveness that leads to reconciliation between God and one another; and an affirmation through God's acceptance and love. Figure 12.1 shows how these ideas of wholeness, liberation, forgiveness and affirmation enable the church to adopt a more inclusive approach to mission in the urban context. In a similar manner the emerging elements of this thesis' transformative strategy can be linked: the wholeness of *shalom* and a commitment to reconciliation brought together by God's message of hope. It is this third element of imputing God's hope into the heart of a community that forms the final element of the transformative strategy - as Bishop Tom Wright has contended:

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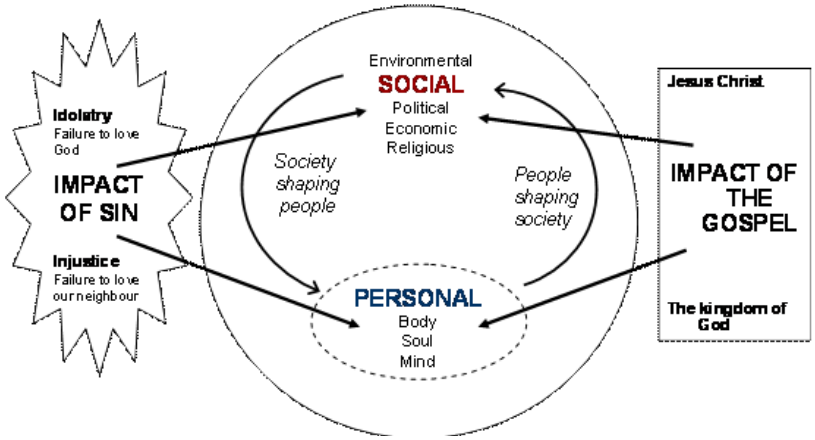
[56] ROBINSON, P. 'Developing A Wider View Of Evangelism' IN: ED. DAVEY, A. 2010 *Op. Cit.* pp37-51

[57] HAUERWAS, S AND WILLIMON, W. *Resident Aliens.* Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989.

[58] KUHRT, J. 2010. *Op. Cit.*

Figure 12.1 An Integrated Approach To Mission



Source: KUHRT, J. 'What Does Salvation Mean In An Urban Context.' p76
IN: ED. DAVEY, A. *Crossover City.* London: Mowbray, 2010. pp.73-81

'if we want a mission shaped church, it must be hope shaped.'[59p.206] He then identifies three ways in which the church can bring missional hope. First, like the Liberation Theologians, he perceives God as seeking social justice and release from oppression, so

> When a sense of injustice hangs over a community … something has gone wrong. The church must take up this call for justice and … turn those cries to prayer, but the task must also continue with the church's work with the whole community to seek better housing, schools and community facilities and cajoling local councils to foster hope at any and every level.[60p.242-3]

Second, Wright celebrates beauty based on the eschatological hope (described in this thesis' chapter ten) which offers a vision of God creating a new heaven and a new earth. This, he argues, leads to dissatisfaction with the damage evil created in this world and he calls the church to engage in generous acts of re-creation fostering a sense of beauty and quality in the environment.

Finally, Wright identifies a need for personal transformation, through what Daley calls 'an awareness of the promise of the future unhampered by the anxious need to secure a future on his own.[sic]'[61p.83] This is a hope of salvation based on the promise of *shalom*.

It is interesting to see how this hope-based expression of mission differs from both the abstract ideas of faithful capital and the more evangelical narrative of personal salvation. Instead, it represents a collective vision based on dialogue and practical solutions. It 'does

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[59] WRIGHT, N T. *Surprised By Hope.* London: SPCK, 2007.
[60] *Ibid.*
[61] Cited by DOYLE, R. *Eschatology And The Shape Of Christian Belief.* Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1999.

not present the picture of a perfect society … but a powerful dialectical conception that social change is only possible when we change ourselves.'[62p.186]

If this hope-based approach to mission is the final element of the transformative strategy, the question remains as to how this approach can affect the role and purpose of the church. Brewin, reflecting on the *mission shaped church* agenda, sees the established church as going into a period of exile. In an argument not that dissimilar to the one described in chapter ten of this thesis, Brewin calls on the church 'to stop the programmes, stop the meetings, stop the denial, to weep until we see the barrenness, only then can we truly make way for the new.'[63p.35] For as this thesis' hermeneutic has stated, it is in this period of reflection that God can reveal his *galah* purposes; just as when Jeremiah encouraged the exiles to reflect on how God had met them in the past whilst seeking to come to terms with the new city around them.

If the church is to be sustained in this new context, it must also find new ways to create what Baker calls religious or spiritual capital to 're-invest in the city the possibility of the sacred. This will involve greater participation in the communal and public struggles to establish community and negotiate new forms of spiritual meaning and identity in the community.'[64p.107] Through joint-working with new and existing residents together it is possible to 'find ways of appropriating spaces and creating places to fulfil their desires as well as their needs – to tend to their spirit as well as take care of the rent.'[65p.41]

This so called emerging church has sought new ways of connecting with people in their context. Such churches are characterised by being 'open and adaptable to time and context; based on learning networks of relationships and ... a servant leadership.'[66p.75-78]

They have also explored innovative ways of creating scared spaces in shared public spaces. They may therefore offer a means to create hope in places of urban change and 'to figure out a way to bring Christian voices into the conversation … and incorporate the church in a more central way.'[67p.64]

The three elements of the transformative strategy are therefore in place. For if the church is called to 'live in the counsel of Jeremiah, it is called to embrace and accept the city with its diversity and contradictions as the new centre for God's ordering kingdom on

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[62] UNGER cited by HARVEY, D. *Spaces of Hope.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.
[63] BREWIN, K. *The Complex Christ.* London: SPCK, 2004.
[64] DAVEY, A. 'The Spirituality Of Everyday Life.' IN ED. WALKER, A. *Spirituality In The City* London: SPCK. 2005. pp105-112.
[65] DAVEY, A. 2008. *Op. Cit.*
[66] BREWIN, K. 2004. *Op. Cit.*
[67] JACOBSEN, E. 'Receiving Community: The Church And The Future Of The New Urbanist Movement.' IN: *Journal of Markets and Morality* 6(3), 2003. pp.59-79

earth as it is in heaven.'[68p.35] Within this ever-changing city, the church is called to work in partnership with others to promote *shalom*, to help foster civil society by mediating tension and creating social justice, and to represent God's hope for their future. These three elements are brought together in Jeremiah's command to enter into what Davey calls: 'An alliance or partnership with city shapers ... to subvert the imperial city by seeing the only way that city can thrive is if there is a commitment to its wholeness and well being ... and an openness to new possibilities that can be imagined and negotiated.[69p.35]

[68] DAVEY, A. 'Being Urban Matters: What Is Urban About Urban Mission?' IN ED. DAVEY, A. 2010. *Op. Cit.* pp.24-36
[69] *Ibid.*

Chapter Thirteen The Church's Agents Of Transformation

The church is well placed to engage in dialogue with urban development. The Church of England alone 'has over 10,000 full time employees, footfall of over a million people a week and a history of involvement in community life from provision of welfare to education and youth work.'[1p.xii] However, the difficulty with the existing parochial church structure is that it was created for an established population living in small static village communities. With major redevelopment programmes taking place largely within urban areas, there is a need to avoid retrenchment into old models of church and instead to seek fresh expressions of church reflecting the new forms of mission and ministry discussed above.

Chapter six in the social analysis identified the roles of the church in this context as encompassing prophetic challenge, continued presence, and pastoral engagement. The agents of the church who carry out these roles include urban industrial missioners, church based community development workers and church leaders (or in the case of the Church of England parish priests.) The next stage in the formation of the transformative strategy is therefore to assess the extent to which these agents of the church can become those agents of transformation this thesis presents.

a) The Role Of Workplace Chaplains

The connection between urbanisation and industrialisation has always been a close one. This was because of the assumption that mass industrial employment was prerequisite for an urban context. This is why the church's early urban mission was focused on outreach to people involved in industry and it became known as industrial mission.

This approach to urban mission only became mainstream after 1945. In part, this was because of the experience of World War Two when the army padre became a valued source of care and support for working men in the armed forces. Hence, 'in the early days ... it was assumed that the bulk of the mission's work would be orientated towards encounters with manual workers on the shop floor.'[2p.552] For it was perceived that there was a need for 'trained manpower who possessed such distinctive deifical and sociological insight. [sic]'[3p.267]

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[1] GRAHAM, E AND LOWE, S. *What Makes A Good City?* London: DLT, 2009.
[2] HOPKINS, G. 'The Parish Church And The Industrial Worker.' IN: *Theology* 69, 1966, pp549-553.
[3] WICKMAN, E. 'The Encounter Of The Christian Faith And Modern Technological Society' reproduced IN: ED. NORTHCOTT, M. *Urban Theology: A Reader.* London: Cassell, 1998, pp264-268.

With the decline in manufacturing industry, the role of industrial mission began to change as it began to focus on the wider urban context. Hence it subsequently became known as the urban industrial mission and it is therefore worth noting what the defining characteristics of the mission's involvement were at that time. Moody offers three such metaphors:

First, is that of 'a participant observer, you are invited to enter into the wilderness of people's daily experience and such proximity makes you consciously aware of the overwhelming nature of people's daily experience.'[4p.16] Since the missioners were also outsiders, they could empathise with the disorientated people especially those struggling to understand what was happening to them. Moody makes the link between this mediated change and the idea of liminality discussed in chapter ten, having a clear resonance with the Jewish exile experience. As both missioner and worker work in an 'amphibious nature, they are acting outside the usual constraints of their institution but not conforming totally to the constraints of the other they are placed in.'[5p.19]

Moody's second metaphor is that of a watchman who looks out over the night. So when the missioner sees critical points in people's lives, they minister God's care and compassion to those in need. Such pastoral care is offered to all people regardless of whether they have a faith or not, for it stems from the relationships forged in the institutional context. This call to offer all individuals meaning in the midst of change is akin to the command to the Jews to foster a shared sense of well being and pray for the wider *shalom* of those in Babylon.

The third metaphor is that of a prophet who challenges the illegitimate or heavy burdens being placed on people in their workplace. This role was highlighted at the IMA conference discussed in praxis, where one delegate noted 'we need to make a nuisance of ourselves, always asking the question why? And how does this impact people?'[6] Connections can be made with prophets like Jeremiah, who seemed insignificant and were not welcomed by the Jerusalem establishment but were called to act as God's spokesperson speaking forth God's word into the situation.

In the late 1970s and 1980s, significant structural shifts took place in the UK economy. As is discussed in the social analysis section of this thesis, the manufacturing industry began to close and inner urban areas and outer council estates began to be characterised not by working class employment but multiple layers of deprivation.

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[4] MOODY, C. 'Spirituality And Sector Ministry.' IN ED. LEGOOD, G. *Chaplaincy: The Church's Sector Ministries.* London: Cassells, 1999, pp15-24.
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] Conversation with Angela Overton Benge (Swindon Industrial Chaplain), 13th July 2004.

The concept of industrial mission widened to the extent that its very name became something of a misnomer as the focus was clearly no longer on supporting solely those in industry. At the same time, there was a discussion about the appropriateness of the term mission in an increasingly multi-faith society. Was there really an explicit role for an evangelist here? Instead the word chaplaincy began to be used as it better described the pastoral (sharing the love of God) and prophetic (inspiring change in an institution) roles which had begun to emerge. So the idea of workplace chaplaincy emerged.

The problem with accepting this shift in focus was the growing wedge between parish-based clergy and those involved in workplace chaplaincy.[7passim] There was a feeling amongst those in chaplaincy that parish-based ministry was an outdated institution tied up with maintenance of buildings and entrenched congregations rather than being engaged in the secular world. While those in parish based ministry saw chaplaincy as either an easy option with its narrow focus on pastoral listening or as a compromised institution too closely allied to the secular world in a manner which Niebuhr's analysis in chapter nine would call 'Christ in Culture.'

Given these questions about the purpose of workplace chaplaincy, it is worth reflecting on the roles that chaplains are increasingly being asked to undertake. Box 13.1 gives a description of the tasks of workplace chaplaincy.

Box 13.1 Tasks of Workplace Chaplaincy

- As a minister of the Christian Church a workplace chaplain is **interested in the well being and prosperity** of individuals, the company, the organisation and wider community.
- A chaplain takes **seriously the needs of all** and is here to serve those whose busy working lives are spent serving others.
- A Chaplain is committed to being among you on a **regular and sustained basis**. They are able to set aside **time to listen** to people at all levels of the workplace small and large.
- A chaplain is **independent, confidential and impartial**, keen to encourage and **help find solutions.**
- A chaplain is here for **people of all faiths and none** just as the Christian church is for all people.
- A chaplain is concerned about the wider world and the **global connections with the local economy.**
- A chaplain may **raise concerns and issues** and ask challenging questions if necessary.
- A chaplain is an **ecumenical representative** of the church in all its denominations not only a single local congregation.

Source: IMA. *Faith Economy Work.* Unpublished Study Pack, 2007.

[7] LEGOOD, G. *Chaplaincy: The Church's Sector Ministries* London: Cassells, 1999.

It is noticeable that the list of tasks remains largely focused on offering pastoral care and seeking well being and prosperity with its clear links to *shalom*. However, there are some other interesting additional roles:

First, since chaplains are involved in two institutions (the church and the workplace) they 'are familiar with each language, ways of life and particular orientation in a particular environment.'[8p.x] This means they can interpret that environment for the other institution. Hence, as was noted in praxis, 'urban industrial chaplains find themselves as the Christian representative in local, regional or even national projects and regeneration organisations.'[9p.202] This representative role gives them a potential influence over local urban development policy. At the same time they can help raise the level of debate within the church about development in its area and changes in the local economy. They are also able to act prophetically and challenge the direction of an organisation. This role is beyond that of offering *shalom* care to those at work and is closer to the role of mediating change in a local area.

On the other hand, there are those who argue that too much involvement in the boardroom has detached the chaplain from their primary task, that of pastoral care of those in the workplace. While this can be considered missional it has little to do with proclaiming salvation or a call to repentance.[10p.5] For as is noted in box 13.1 chaplains take pride in offering care to people of all faiths and none. Indeed chaplains, unlike the early industrial missioners, would no longer see themselves as evangelists. As one chaplain said explicitly 'I am not trying to persuade people to come to church.'[11p.25] Rather they seek to help Christians network and so establish their own sense of belonging at work. As Bishop David Sheppard stated 'Industrial mission will never cover the ground of every place of work but it can hold together a network of Christians who acknowledge they need help to think Christianly about the daily lives.'[12p.4] The problem with this definition is that it confines the chaplains' role to supporting Christians in their workplace and surely this is the role of every minister in their parish church. Workplace chaplains therefore see their role as wider than ministering to Christians - building on the heritage of the Industrial Mission as the 'agency of the church sent out into the secular world.

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[8] *Ibid.*
[9] BALLARD, P. 'Prophetic Action: The Church's Involvement.' Reproduced IN: ED. NORTHCOTT, M. 1998. *Op. Cit.* pp202-203.
[10] AVIS, P. 'Towards A Theology Of Sector Ministry.' IN: ED. LEGOOD, G. 1999. *Op. Cit.* pp3-14.
[11] MCCOULOUGH, D. '*Me And My Job.'* IN: '*Ideas For Life*' The Boots factory in house magazine, December 2003, pp.24-25.
[12] SHEPPARD, D. '*God's Concern For The World Of Work'* In: '*God At Work Part II*' Nottingham: Grove Books, 1995, pp.3-12.

So what role is there for the workplace chaplain in delivering this thesis' transformative strategy? Their missionary nature puts it on the boundary of the church – the frontier of where the world and church meet.'[13p.268] Chaplains are wary of seeing themselves as God's agents in the world. Rather they draw on Bosch's idea of *missio dei*[14] in which as noted earlier he argued that the church's mission belongs within God's mission. Torry describes this form of mission as 'building bridges and crossing them, and industrial mission has been the classic example of this kind of mission.'[15]

This is linked to the hermeneutical reflection that sees God not confined as Israel to or the temple but as a God who could be met in the dislocation of exile. The challenge for the Jews in exile, like that of the chaplains, was to build bridges across the boundaries between the religious and the secular; to find new ways of seeing God at work in a foreign land. So it is that as one meets the stranger with the offer of the peace and healing of *shalom*, God is found at work in the encounter. Likewise 'the church's responsibility is to provide signposts for the individual to follow to enable the kingdom of God to be lived now, and in this context it must provide signposts to the kingdom in the economy as a whole.'[16p.140]

The workplace chaplain can therefore be seen as one of the agents of transformation essential to the outworking of the transformative strategy. Traditionally seen as agents of pastoral care and relationship-building in an institutional context, chaplains have promoted *shalom* for individuals in the midst of change. However, it has also been noted that chaplains can have a prophetic role for they are often one of the first representatives of the church in an urban regeneration context and can have a role in mediating change.

b) The Role Of The Church Based Community Development Worker

Historically the church has played a significant part in English community life. For centuries, the parish church was the centre for education, public health, welfare and social justice. It is therefore not surprising that, as noted earlier, sociologists such as Durkheim and Weber identified the church as having a key role in developing and shaping communities. As the population grew and moved to the larger industrial cities, the church remained important but its activities moved into the voluntary sector through philanthropic projects such as the Settlement Movement explored in chapter six.

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[13] BAGSHAW, P. 'The Church Beyond The Church' in Reproduced IN: ED. NORTHCOTT, M. 1998. *Op. Cit.* pp268-273.
[14] BOSCH, D. *Transforming Mission* Maryknoll: Orbis, 1991.
[15] TORRY, M. *Bridgebuilders.* Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2010.
[16] TORRY, M. 'Serving The Economy.' IN ED. TORRY, M. *Diverse Gifts.* Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2005, pp130-142.

In the post war period the state began to lead community development. This was linked to the housing reconstruction programme and continued with the New Town programme and inner city renewal. It is to the credit of these urban development programmes that community facilities such as youth and sport centres, schools and even churches were created as part of the development. While from the 1960s, the state funded community development professionals to facilitate community capacity building and encourage the formation of community. Chapter six notes that the church also paid community development workers to work alongside these local professionals. The church was recognised as having a strong role locally because: 'it was ubiquitous, working across the nation; it was neutral, providing a meeting point; and it was a bridge-builder, helping people to meet each other.'[17p.38]

In the 1980s the neo-liberal political agenda led to the shift in focus towards the individual and the family rather than the wider society. Many local authority funded community development programmes were scaled back and their funding cut. The *Faith in the City* report was therefore a timely rallying cry to both church and state that 'local churches were often the sole survivors producing any viable community development.'[18p.4] This was because the neo-liberal approach to regeneration, as outlined in chapter five, was focused on private sector property-led regeneration programmes. As was noted in the praxis part of this thesis, these projects 'failed to deliver the goods for indigenous communities and ... simply left local people deprived and divided.'[19p.72] There was therefore a call for funds for engagement in local communities to enable local people to audit changes, prepare plans and take ownership of the redevelopment of their neighbourhoods. This was why the Church Urban Fund funded many church based community development workers.

As noted above, the Third Way developed by the New Labour government also heeded the call for greater community engagement. They encouraged the church to collaborate with the government and private sector in shaping local regeneration. As Stephen Timms the Labour Party Vice Chair stated in 2000, 'We need the church and church based projects to work with us ... churches have people, energy, commitment, local knowledge and buildings that are key assets in community development.'[20] Church based community development workers therefore found themselves once again being co-opted into government programmes.

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[17] VERNEY, S. *People And Cities.* London: Fontana, 1969.
[18] MORISY, A. *Journeying Out.* London: Continuum Press, 2004.
[19] HACKWOOD, P AND SHINER, P. 'A New Role For The Church In Urban Policy?' Reproduced IN: ED. NORTHCOTT, M. 1998. *Op. Cit.* pp71-75.
[20] TIMMS, S. Tawney Lecture in London, 25th March 2000.

What then is the role of a community development worker in this context? 'Put simply, community work seeks to facilitate ... a level of awareness and cooperation so that people as a group can act together in such a way to improve their common life.'[21p.6] This aim is linked with this thesis' transformative strategy as both are concerned with fostering civil society by mediating tension and creating social justice.

This is particularly significant in an urban development context where postmodernist planners are encouraged to make use of every 'practical opportunity to make a new community and improve the existing.'[22p.3] Plant has argued that there are two possible functions of the community development worker in this process and these are inextricably linked: 'In the first instance, to develop the quality of community, in order to enhance the lives of the individual and second, to assist the self development of the individual, so that each may better contribute to the work of the community.'[23p.17] The desired result of the second function is that the community development worker is no longer needed, as the community has established networks of trust and so is able to flourish and sustain itself. There are clear links with the idea of promoting *shalom* as developed in the transformative strategy. For as noted earlier, *shalom* is concerned with 'forming a network of relationships that bind together a community in justice and mutuality, embracing one another in trust and affection, sharing the joys and responsibilities of common life.'[24p.24]

As community development workers promote the *shalom* of the community, it becomes obvious that ensuring the flourishing of all members of the community also means enabling a diversity of opinions. This inevitably leads to conflict as well as opportunities for collaboration. This creates another role for the community development worker which is to hold the tension between the individual and collective freedoms of the people they are working with. Therefore 'a crucial role of the community development worker is creating space for critical dialogue.'[25p.145] For it is this debate and search for common ground that engenders mutual respect and openness to the other. Such a role is vital in an urban development context for through the diversity of projects offered by the community development worker, it is possible 'to make a context for questioning and to make a critical connection between people's lives and the structures of society.'[26]

So for example, a community development worker can convene neighbourhood meetings about development proposals in their area and create space 'for argument and deliberation, in which citizens can express their different viewpoints and negotiate a sense

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[21] BALLARD, P AND HUSSELBEE, L. *Community And Ministry.* London: SPCK, 2007.
[22] LOVELL, G. *The Church And Community Development.* London: Avec, 1981.
[23] Cited by BALLARD, P AND HUSSELBEE, L. 2007 *Op. Cit.*
[24] *Ibid.*
[25] PACKHAM, C. *Active Citizenship And Community Learning.* Exeter: Learning Matters, 2008
[26] LEDWITH, M. *Community Development.* Bristol: Policy Press, 2005.

of common interest.'[27p.31] However, such conversations are not always easy, for when faced with significant changes in one's locality, 'local people will speak about them with excitement, hope, fear, anxiety or anger.'[28p.8] There is often a need for mediation, and community development workers with their grassroots based approach to community engagement are often asked to facilitate these discussions. There is therefore a clear role for the community development worker in delivering the transformative strategy with its focus on the role of God's people to assist in mediating the tensions arising from working for well being in a contested arena. For such mediation 'cannot be brought, legislated for, or grow naturally it must be enabled.'[29p.174]

The result of a struggle to establish community and broker the views of different parts of that community can often be very positive. It not only creates a greater sense of local ownership, it can also lead to people coming together to volunteer to help with projects in order to overcome issues identified in the deliberations. Community development workers have therefore found themselves facilitators. 'A stunning array of opportunities has emerged for personal and communal exploration which can only operate in a space that is always that of the other.'[30p.107] For example, innovative projects have emerged such as credit unions or local trading schemes, which rely on the interface between the less well off and wealthier members of the community. The *Faithful Cities* report notes that these programmes should not be seen as a new philanthropy for they are not solely about meeting the needs of the poor rather, they should be seen as opportunities to create mutuality and self respect which can lead to a 'rediscovery of the soul of the city with values such as empowerment and celebrating diversity.'[31p.56] This vision of a human society is amazingly hopeful and has resonance with the themes in the transformative strategy that sees hope arise out of the crisis of dislocation. For an important role of the community development worker is to be positive and optimistic, articulating a vision of what might be possible if the community worked together. There is a clear relationship with the eschatological *galah* which represents 'the consummation of a hope that is eagerly awaited.'[32p.147]

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[27] JOCHUM, V ET AL. *Civil Renewal And Active Citizenship.* London: NCVO, 2005, pp.7-8.
[28] HOPE, A AND TIMMEL, S. *Training For Transformation: A Handbook For Community Workers.* Gweru: Mambo Press, 1984.
[29] HAUSER, R. 'The Invisible Community' IN: ED. VERNEY, S. 1969, pp172-189.
[30] DAVEY, A. 'The Spirituality Of Everyday Life.' IN: ED. WALKER, A. *Spirituality In The City.* London: SPCK, 2005, pp105-112.
[31] CULF. *Faithful Cities: A Call For Celebration, Vision And Justice.* London: Church House Publishing, 2006.
[32] GARNER, R. *Facing The City.* Peterborough: Epworth, 2004.

Having explored the roles of the community development worker, it is important to clarify how a church based approach differs to that promoted by the state or another voluntary sector organisation. For though the above discussion has shown clear resonances with the transformative strategy, Christians believe in a further 'aspect of caring for the spiritual welfare of the people involved.'[33p.23] This is reflected in three ways: being present in the community, a prophetic voice to those in power and pointing to signs of God's kingdom at work.

The parochial nature of the Church of England means that it is particularly place- focused, so any Anglican church based community development worker will be strongly aligned to a particular locality. One Birmingham based community development worker describes her work as creating 'a church without walls'[34] in that she saw her role as working in a specific area using an approach that Verney describes, as offering the 'reality of God's forgiveness and his grace which is only made known through holding together different parts of the community, even if that means being torn to pieces in order to show God's love and acceptance.'[35p.129] The reconciling presence of church based community development work in an area can therefore be a launch pad; not only for the building of community trust but also for the imputing of a spiritual significance to a place which can lead to a resacralisation and a growth in personal meaning.[36] This significance is not created by grand projects but is seen in the everyday faithfulness of the church based community development worker, in enabling the local community to ensure their part of the city 'is constantly appropriated and reshaped by its inhabitants.[37p.109]

The hermeneutical reflection noted that Jeremiah was not the only prophet to challenge the Jewish leaders of their day, to work for peace and cooperation, social justice and love for the outcast. This prophetic message is now voiced by church based community workers as they seek to hold together the tensions of individual and collective freedoms. For 'out of the transforming power of the gospel comes the desire to witness to the quality of life for the individual and the call to be involved in the community through acts of compassion.'[38p.31] Thus if a community worker needs to challenge those in positions of power in a locality. Only the church based, rather than state-funded community development worker, can only truly offer an impartial view on these matters. For it only

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[33] WILLIAMS, R. 'Urbanisation: The Christian Church And The Human Project.' IN: ED. WALKER, A. 2005. *Op. Cit.* pp.15-26.
[34] COOPER, S Ward End Church Based Community Development Worker in conversation with the author, 12th July 2006.
[35] VERNEY, S. 1969. *Op. Cit.*
[36] EADE, J. 'Secularisation, Sacralisation and the Resurgence of Religion in the Public Realm ' Talk given at the *Urban Futures* Conference, 30th-31st March 2009, London.
[37] DAVEY, A. 2005. *Op. Cit.*
[38] BALLARD, P AND HUSSELBEE, L. 2007. *Op. Cit.*

when everyone has neutral access to information and knowledge that true community empowerment can take place.

It is therefore clear that the church based community development worker has a role as the second agent of transformation delivering the transformative strategy. For in seeking to be a reconciling presence and prophetically challenging those in power, the church based community development worker can be a key mediator of tensions that emerge from urban development. However, as the above discussion has shown, this mediator role is also fundamental to creating God's vision of *shalom* for all society and part of the expression of hope in seeking God's kingdom in an area. As Bosch's seminal work legitimising social engagement as an expression of mission states, 'the church should display to humanity a glimmer of God's immanent reign – a kingdom of reconciliation, peace and new life.'[39p.5]

c) The Role Of The Parish Priest

The parish priest is charged with leading the community in worship, in word and sacrament; to care for the world and create a sense of interdependency; and to be a witness to God's mercy and grace. They therefore have a potential role as the final agency of transformation.

However, the choice of the words 'parish priest' to describe this role is not itself without controversy; not least because the word priest is never used in the New Testament to describe the role of the clergy. The word priesthood in the New Testament is reserved for the 'unique and unrepeatable actions of Christ's priesthood but Christians are called to reflect this ministry through the priesthood of all believers.'[40p.107] The title given to the leader of the early churches was rather one of an elder or presbyter.

The term priest only returned to the nomenclature in the second and third century when worship began to focus around the Eucharist. At this stage, the idea of priests offering sacrifices at the altar was reclaimed from the Old Testament. As clergy took on the title of priest it led to a separation of the ordained priest from the priesthood of all believers. It was the sixteenth century Reformers who returned to the idea of the corporate model of priesthood and made the ministerial office inseparable from the congregation. The task of

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[39] Cited by MORISY, A. 2004 O*p. Cit.*
[40] RAMSEY, M. *The Christian Priest Today.* London: SPCK, 1985.

the priestly ministry was seen as 'leading, shaping, guiding and forming God's priestly people,'[41p.viii] a definition still preferred by the free church tradition.

In the twentieth century the church became more ecumenical, particularly following the publication of the *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* paper and the 1982 World Council of Churches in Lima. As a result, there is growing agreement that 'every Christian enters ministry at their baptism rather than at ordination'[42p.329] and that the role of the priest in whatever church tradition is to 'to reflect the priesthood of Christ as one of the means of grace whereby God enables the church to be church.'[43p.111]

Having said this, a specific focus of the Anglican and Roman Catholic Church is the link between the priest and the 'cure of souls' of the whole parish. This is why priests in the Church of England are ordained to serve their title in a parish. This connection with a specific geographical area means the parish priest is called to work for what Moberly calls 'an intense for-other-ness.'[44p.8] However, this ministry is also expected to be conducted with the congregation by those who 'are chosen and called to this work, by men who have public authority given unto them *in (note not by)* the congregation. [sic]'[45p.323]

It is this charge for the care of souls that lies at the heart of Anglican priesthood; which is why this thesis opts to retain the term 'parish priest' as it reflects a desire to work with a congregation towards 'containing or rendering manageable the anxieties of the profane world, so that individuals and institutions are better able to carry out the tasks on which the survival and well being of their social group depends.'[46p.148]

This has resonance with the charge to the Jewish exiles to seek the *shalom* of the city around them and not just focus on their own sense of well being. The parish priest is thus adopted as an agent of transformation if his/her prime concern is 'to free the community as a whole to cope'[47p.215] with the struggles and trials facing their locality.

One of the prime means given by God to enable people to cope with this world is worship, which is why it 'lies at the heart of the life of the church, it expresses its faith, hope and love and through worship, God shapes and renews us.'[48p.165] In a similar manner to the Jewish exilic community, the church has been through a period of reflection and discovered new ways to worship in the midst of change and dislocation. Particular

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[41] COCKSWORTH, C AND BROWN, R. *Being A Priest Today.* Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2002
[42] WEBSTER, J. 'Ministry And Priesthood.' IN: ED. SYKES, S ET AL. *The Study Of Anglicanism* London: SPCK, 1998, pp321-333.
[43] RAMSEY, M. 1985. *Op. Cit.*
[44] Cited by COCKSWORTH, C AND BROWN, R. 2002 *Op. Cit.*
[45] From the 39 Articles, cited by WEBSTER, J. 1998. Author's emphasis.
[46] REED, B. *The Dynamics Of Religion.* London: DLT, 1978.
[47] *Ibid.*
[48] BALLARD, P AND HUSSELBEE, L. 2007. *Op. Cit.*

influences on the current renewal of worship include the liturgical movement, charismatic movement and liberation theology.

The liturgical movement has led to the rediscovery of the centrality of the Eucharist as expressing the common life of the church. This is because people who live increasingly individualistic lives, caught in the maelstrom of global change, can come to church and encounter the transcendent. At the table they find themselves kneeling beside another person and together they are 'lifted beyond their immediate context into the life of the whole church and in the life of God.'[49p.73] How does this transformation take place? It is the *galah* revelation of God's presence, the heart of the gospel that God has not left us alone but comes to meet us in his Son. 'The bread and the wine become both the vehicle and symbol of glory, transfigured to be God's story of redemption.'[50p.172] This is why the Eucharist is a sacrament. As Catholics are taught in the catechism 'a sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible grace.' Sykes prefers the word sign from John's gospel meaning, 'a narrative which is at the same time both factually true and symbolic of a deeper truth.'[51p.128] To preside at the Eucharist is therefore a key role for the parish priest and perhaps is the most obvious example of the priest representing hope for the people of God.

The second influence on worship in recent years has been the charismatic movement which has emphasised 'the freedom of the Spirit in one's personal experience and in shared participation.'[52p.168] Like the rediscovery of the Eucharist, this is based on a *galah* revelation of the presence of the transcendent Holy Spirit in the midst of this life and its pain and struggle. For when a large group of people come together in exuberant praise and thanks to God, it is possible 'to get lost in wonder, love and praise.'[53] God is revealed in one's own experience and it is possible to have hope, based on a personal encounter with God. The parish priest may therefore also offer people ministry in the Spirit amidst 'celebration, affirmation and praise which can be truly redemptive for those who experience criticism, exclusion and blame; for the praise of God creates self belief and shared trust.'[54p.222]

The final influence on contemporary worship has been Liberation Theology, which as described in chapter two, focuses on the social and economic nature of the gospel and is earthed in God's option for the poor. This has led to searching questions such as – is it possible to express the commitment to the poor in one's community in worship? Can such

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[49] COCKSWORTH, C AND BROWN, R. 2002 *Op. Cit.*
[50] BALLARD, P AND HUSSELBEE, L. 2007. *Op. Cit.*
[51] SYKES, S. *Unashamed Anglicanism.* London: DLT, 1995.
[52] BALLARD, P AND HUSSELBEE, L. 2007. *Op. Cit.*
[53] The words are takes from Charles Wesley's hymn 'Love Divine, All Loves Excelling.'
[54] NORTHCOTT, M. 'Worship In The City.' IN ED. NORTHCOTT, M. 1998, pp221-226.

worship build people up and help people find meaning? Liturgies prepared by groups like the Iona Community and Christian Aid have been specifically designed to resonate with people's life experience. Morisy sees the value in these liturgies is that though they 'may move people, they also engage with their minds as well as their emotions ... to help people reconcile God's love with a suffering world by offering space and opportunity for reflection.'[55pp.241-2] Such a period of reflection is akin to the exile experience. So like the exiles' leaders, the parish priest can help enable a 'fusion of worship and imagination to take place and allow the future to be praised upon.'[56pp.124-125]

All these expressions of worship reflect the transformative strategy which suggests that even in times of dislocation it is possible to lead worship that reveals the *galah* presence of God. Within, the Anglican tradition, Parish priests are charged with this task, so can they be seen as agents of transformation.

If the parish priest's prime role in leading worship is all about seeking to reveal God's presence in the midst of change, then the complementary aspect of this ministry is the pastoral duty which includes a 'special concern for the afflicted, oppressed and the needy.'[57p.32] This pastoral responsibility is what makes faith groups unique compared with other voluntary sector groups, for in the words of William Temple 'the church is the only society in the world that exists for the benefit of those who are not its members.'[58p.xii]

Such pastoral responsibility constantly seeks to offer signs of God's love and care to those it meets. This is reflected in practical acts of Christian love and service. Such practical action goes beyond the parish priest's pastoral visit with the elderly and housebound and is seen in a wider holistic care for a whole area. Examples include the Eden Project in Manchester that intentionally moves people into an area as an expression of their 'long term commitment to an area and to show respect and concern for the whole person.'[59p.135] This emphasis on serving others is characterised by the generosity of God and a desire to promote flourishing.

Again there are clear resonances with the themes of this thesis' transformative strategy with its focus on creating *shalom*. A key role for parish priests is therefore to work with their congregations to represent hope for communities. As Cocksworth and Brown put it,

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[55] MORISY, A. 'Beyond the Good Samaritan' Reproduced IN: ED. NORTHCOTT, M. 1998, pp.238-244
[56] GARNER, R. 2004. *Op. Cit.*
[57] KUHRT, G. *An Introduction To Christian Ministry*. London: Church House Publishing, 2000.
[58] Cited by GRAHAM, E AND LOWE, S. 2009. *Op. Cit.*
[59] GIBBS, E AND BOLGER, R. *Emerging Churches.* London: SPCK, 2006.

this role is to 'knead hope through compassionate service and care and kneading that hope in as we lead people along a path they've not yet seen.'[60p.90]

There is perhaps no greater need for kneading hope than in a setting of urban development, where people's neighbourhoods are radically changed by the closure of industry, major construction programmes and large numbers of new people moving into an area. New powerful institutions can move into a neighbourhood and seek to shape the very form of the community. The shifting focus of the pastoral activity of a parish priest in this setting led the Urban Bishops' Panel to suggest this 'poses one of the greatest challenges: to assess the extent of their involvement in community initiatives, to be an honest broker between the community and other bodies and represent the church on development boards.'[61p.12] It was suggested above that the pastoral commitments of the workplace chaplain could be diverted by activities in the boardroom. Likewise, it is arguable that the parish priest's work can be diverted by meetings with town planners and discussions on the strategic planning of an area. As one parish priest notes with some exasperation, 'people expect you to be out in the parish caring for people.'[62p.185]

On the other hand, this balancing of the pastoral and prophetic role is a key part of this thesis' transformative strategy. For Jeremiah offers a biblical and 'moral imperative to identify with and struggle alongside one's parishioners in their search for their true humanity.'[63p.146] Having said this, the parish priest must continue to seek God's presence so that the 'networking, endless meetings and visits to promote confidence, greater understanding and prospects for the common good, is underpinned by a commitment to prayer, study of scripture and reflection.'[64p.105]

It is at this interface of the pastoral duty and the seeking of God's presence that the parish priest can witness to God's mercy and grace as signs of hope in God's kingdom. This is particularly the case in times of transition and change. At a personal level, this is most apparent at birth, marriage and death. It is not surprising therefore that the church's occasional offices provide 'opportunities to express Christ's pastoral sensitivity, offering hope in the reality of their daily lives.'[65p.168] While at a wider community (or even national) level, it is noticeable that in times of disaster the church is regarded as a natural gathering place for people to meet and reflect their common grief.

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[60] COCKSWORTH, C AND BROWN, R. 2002. *Op. Cit.*
[61] URBAN BISHOPS' PANEL. *The Urban Renaissance and the Church Of England.* London: General Synod Of Church Of England, 2002.
[62] TORRY, M. 'While We're Here We Belong.' IN: ED. TORRY, M. 2005. *Op. Cit.* pp185-203.
[63] WHEALE, G. 'The Parish And Politics' IN: ED. NORTHCOTT, M. 1998. *Op. Cit.* pp145-151.
[64] GARNER, R. 2004. *Op. Cit.*
[65] BALLARD, P AND HUSSELBEE, L. 2007. *Op. Cit.*

In this context, it is not just the pastoral responsibility of a priest to take a baptism, wedding, funeral or memorial service. Rather 'in troubled times, pastoral care and mission have become allies harnessing all the skills and sensitivity (of the parish priest) to help foster resilience in the community.'[66p.101]

This alliance of pastoral care and mission is a means of offering hope and seeking to point to signs of God's kingdom. It represents a more holistic expression of mission posited in this thesis' transformative strategy rather than the traditional model of evangelism, for it offers the wider understanding of sin and salvation discussed above. It is a call for 'an actualising of the kingdom of God – it is a gospel of the kingdom not a gospel of salvation.'[67p.91]

This is perhaps better expressed in the emerging church model, where the church is not seen as a meeting place but as 'a space for the kingdom to enter in their midst and is manifest in the people, the community and way of life.'[68p.135] In this space there is no room for easy answers, but there is opportunity for struggle towards understanding, in a safe and hospitable place where God is invited to be present.

This shift also affects the shape of ordained ministry, for it is no longer centred around solely leading worship and tending to the pastoral concerns of those who come through their doors. Rather, the parish priest is seen to be actively involved in the life and formation of community, representing the *galah* hope of God's kingdom presence with them on that journey.

This idea of a parish priest representing hope has been much debated.

In the more catholic understanding of priesthood, the priest represents Christ himself 'as the appointed means through which Christ makes his priesthood present and effective for his people.'[69p.55] While in the more reformed tradition, the priest is seen as representing 'the priestly calling of the whole church to stand before God with the world offering praise and prayer as well as in the world as witness to God's mercy and grace.'[70p.167] Taking the theme of this thesis' transformative strategy it can be argued that the role of the parish priest is to represent hope: to represent God's hope to the world and to represent the people's hopes to God in prayer and then to those in authority.

Croft[71p.20] sees danger in a representative model of priesthood which leads to an over-focus on the Eucharist as a sign of unity. Instead he draws on the idea of *episcope* – the

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[66] MORISY, A. *Bothered And Bewildered.* London: Continuum, 2009.
[67] GIBBS, E AND BOLGER, R. *Op. Cit*.
[68] *Ibid*.
[69] KUHRT, G. *An Introduction To Christian Ministry*. London: Church House Publishing, 2000.
[70] BALLARD, P AND HUSSELBEE, L. *Community And Ministry.* London: SPCK, 2007.
[71] CROFT, S. *Ministry in Three Dimensions.* London: DLT, 1999.

oversight role - where the bishop or priest is the focus of unity for the church. This means that the parish priest is 'the focus for unity – publically and continually responsible for the healthy life and development of God's people.'[72p.49] This reflects this thesis' transformative strategy with its call to promote *shalom*. However, a parish priest often gets 'caught between the demands of attending to the needs of the people and the call to attend to God in prayer.'[73p.53] This can mean they become so busy preparing for acts of worship or in pastoral duties, that they neglect to pray, thereby failing to provide that holistic approach akin to *shalom* which sustains the whole community of God.

To ensure the mediation of this tension, Croft argues for what he terms a three dimensional approach to ministry that includes diaconal servant leadership, priestly representation and an *episcope* ministry 'focused on enabling and sustaining the ministry of the word and sacrament that is aimed at supporting and sustaining others in their ministry.'[74p.167] This move to a more facilitative role of the priesthood is common in new expressions of church that tend to be more led by laity. The bringing together of the clergy and laity to mediate the tensions in past patterns of ministry can generate greater involvement by the whole church to be salt and light in society. So in the words of Cranmer, 'the whole that is done should ... pertain to the people as well as the priest.'[75p.42]

The parish priest is therefore still seen, at least in the Anglican tradition, as the church's representative in enabling the leading of worship and revealing God's *galah* presence through administering the word and sacrament. This role is complemented by providing pastoral care which can be both practical and missional as the priest gets involved in the formation of a community. Taken together they can help point to signs of God's kingdom in times of dislocation and change.

This ministry can hence be seen as the third agent of transformation in creating *shalom*, mediating tension and representing hope. However, it is perhaps most anchored in the way in which the parish priest animates the people of God to be 'a people of hope, who are moved by hope and see it as a way of life.'[76p.198] This enables people, in the words of the late Bishop David Sheppard, 'to see life through God's eyes, and soar above the real world and indulge in a little holy fantasy.'[77p.330]

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[72] KUHRT, G. 2000. *Op. Cit.*
[73] PETERSEN, E. Cited by COCKSWORTH, C AND BROWN, R. 2002. *Op. Cit.*
[74] CROFT, S. 1999. *Op. Cit.*
[75] Cited by SYKES, S. 1995. *Op. Cit.*
[76] COCKSWORTH, C AND BROWN, R. 2002. *Op. Cit.*
[77] SHEPPARD, D. *Built As A City.* London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1974.

d) Summarising The Transformative Strategy

The transformative strategy has therefore begun to take further shape (see figure 13.2). Key to implementing this process of transformation are the church's agents of transformation; the workplace chaplain, the church based community development worker and parish priest.

The workplace chaplain offers pastoral support and a vision of well being and flourishing for all of society. At the same time they can prophetically challenge the church to a 'process of disentanglement from the values that dominate the age'[78p.54] and encourage both the new and existing community to discover that God is present in their midst. They point to a God who cares for the community and seeks to share with them as they seek to flourish and develop their 'vision of what is humanity can and should be.'[79p.4]

The church based community development worker is based in a specific geographic area and seeks to reflect the church's presence in that context. This means that they are often aligned with those who live in an area and are experiencing change at first hand. Consequently there is always the potential for the church to assist in the empowerment of those living in an area of significant development and change. This may well involve prophetic engagement in local social structures – meeting those in the political hegemony to help mediate the tensions associated with socio-economic change.

'In a world of politics and economics, the church is (still) relatively small time and an amateur but in leading worship and helping people to cope with the transitions in life, the church possesses the highest level of competence and skill.'[80p.215] The parish priest has for centuries been the representation of hope and they must continue to provide this role to ensure 'that the rumour of God should not altogether die out.'[81p.336]

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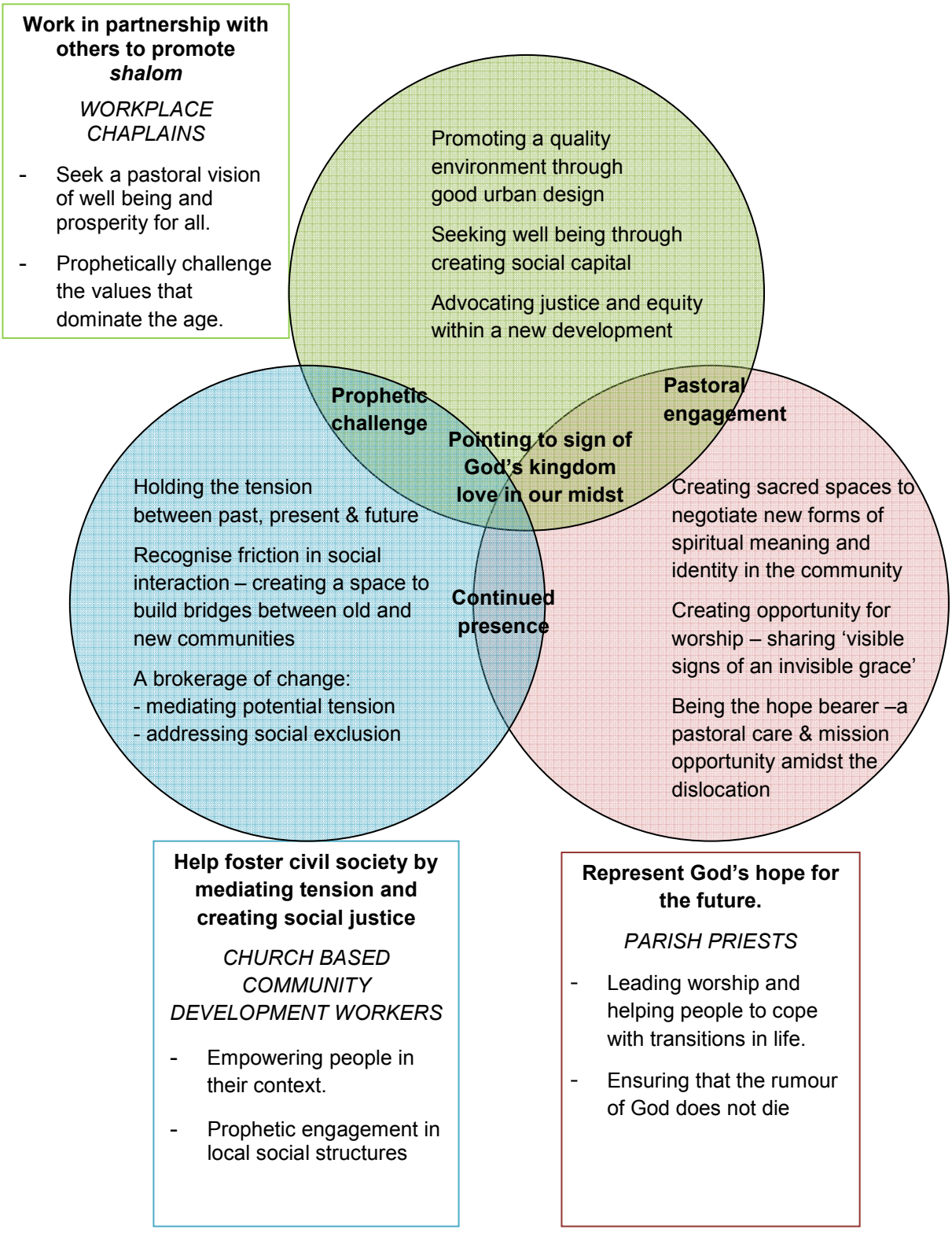
[78] WALLIS, J. *Agenda For Biblical People.* London: Triangle Architectural Pub, 1986.
[79] GREEN, L. 'Postcards From Utopia.' IN: GREEN, L AND BAKER, C. *Building Utopia?* London: SPCK, 2008, pp1-21.
[80] REED, B. 1978. *Op. Cit.*
[81] SHEPPARD, D. 1974. *Op. Cit.*

FIGURE 13.2 The Transformative Strategy



PART FIVE: A Return To Praxis

Chapter Fourteen: A Commitment To Re-Evaluation

This thesis has used the Pastoral Cycle methodology to explore the urban development process and reflect on the church's response to urban change. It has proved a helpful process of theological reflection that has enabled the church's actions 'to be celebrated, evaluated, and further reflected upon in a continuous cycle, which includes a commitment to re-evaluation.'[1p.104]

This final part of the thesis marks this commitment to re-evaluation by 'returning to praxis in the light of the new hermeneutical perspective that has been hammered out'[2p.11] through the formation of the potential transformative strategy. For as was noted in chapter two, the Liberation Theology approach to theological reflection which underpins this thesis' method is that 'it starts with action and leads to action. It is a theology that leads to practical results.'[3p.10]

In order for this re-evaluation to be fully formulated, it is important for the urban theologian to move out of the academic community and seek to meet local practitioners who are actively seeking to explore the role of the church in their particular urban development context.

For the purposes of this research, the practitioners are the agents of transformation identified at the end of the previous chapter – workplace chaplains, church based community development workers and parish priests. For these individuals alongside other church leaders are the representatives of the church who have worked most closely with their local congregations and wider community in a process of informal education whereby they have enabled the group 'to reflect on their experience and allowed space for critical dialogue which can bring about a self directed change'[4p.1] in their particular locality.

What is the role of the urban theologian in this context? Chapter two suggested the researcher's role be equated with what Gramsci calls an organic intellectual. They do not stand aloof but rather are active in the communal learning process, agitating with passion, posing critical questions and articulating new values.[5p.124]

Such people play an active part in the process of learning but see their primary role as facilitating others to share their own learning, thereby helping the group as a whole to benefit from their mutual reflection. This Freiren approach to learning enables the group as a whole to develop a sense of critical awareness.

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[1] MORISY, A. *Bothered And Bewildered.* London: Continuum, 2009.
[2] SHANNAHAN, C. *Voices From The Borderland.* London: Equinox, 2010.
[3] BOFF, L AND BOFF, C. 1987 cited in *Ibid.*
[4] PACKHAM, C. *Active Citizenship And Community Learning.* Exeter: Learning Matters, 2008.
[5] LEDWITH, M. *Community Development.* Bristol: Policy Press, 2005.

This critical awareness can lead to hostility and a desire to expose the hegemonic powers that shape the way one sees the world. This was the challenge that faced the pioneers of Liberation Theology but they discovered that an understanding of the eschatological 'vision of better things to come, meant that even when confronted by injustice and alienation, such a vision may be re-directed towards hope.'[6p.260] This has resonance with the themes of this thesis' transformative strategy based on promoting *shalom*, mediating tension and representing hope.

Having made this commitment to re-evaluation, the next chapter follows the journey of a particular group of practitioners as the author facilitated their learning through each stage of the Pastoral Cycle as they reflected together on the significant changes in their locality and developed an approach based on a hope of transformation.

[6] WARD, G. *Cities Of God.* London: Routledge, 2000.

Chapter Fifteen: The Longbridge Development Experience

a) Identifying The Praxis

The case study for this return to praxis is based on the learning experience of an ecumenical working group of practitioners who came together initially on an ad hoc basis, in response to the proposed redevelopment of the MG Rover plant at Longbridge in South West Birmingham. By the end of the period of theological reflection, the group had begun a process of establishing a formal mechanism to offer a corporate response to the scale of urban development in their locality.

In identifying the praxis of this case study area, this section initially outlines the changes in the Longbridge area. It then notes the players in the working group and their different reasons for engaging with the Longbridge development. For interestingly the group represented the three agents of transformation already identified in this thesis - workplace chaplains, church based community development workers and parish priests.

The 350 acre Longbridge site dates back to 1903 with the opening of the Austin car plant in 1905. Lord Austin was one of the pioneers behind the rapid expansion in economic growth in Birmingham during the early twentieth century, based on the development of mechanical engineering and in particular the motor industry. So that 'by 1951 nearly three quarters of Birmingham's manufacturing labour force was employed in motor vehicle engineering and metal work.'[1p.13]

Globalisation and the changes in the structure of the UK economy have meant that Birmingham's economy too has had to change. As the motor industry contracted, Rover was sold to BMW, who having failed to grow the market sold MG Rover (and the Longbridge site) in 2000 to the Phoenix Consortium. This consortium began the process of redevelopment of the site and sought a development partner. The West Midlands based firm - St Modwen - was selected as the preferred developer. In 2005, the MG Rover Company itself finally collapsed with loss of 6,000 jobs. St Modwen became the landowner of the whole site. Nanjing Motors took over a small portion of the site to continue making cars but the remainder was released for re-development.

It is worth noting at this point St Modwen's development proposals. These include: a new 'heart for Longbridge' with town centre functions focused around a technology park, a relocated Further Education (FE) College, a youth centre, railway station and food store. The river Rea will be opened up to create a linear park through the site. Almost 2,000 homes are planned making this the largest housing site in the midlands and in the top ten in UK. Two further employment areas are planned, which together

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[1] COMMISSION OF THE BISHOP'S COUNCIL OF DIOCESE OF BIRMINGHAM. Faith In The City Of Birmingham. Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1988.

with the new technology park, FE College and food store mean that St Modwen believe there will be up to 10,000 new jobs created on the site, a far greater number than those employed by Rover.

The Longbridge site was one of the first sites required to produce an Area Action Plan as part of the reform of the regional planning process. The problem for Longbridge was not only the scale of the site, but its geographical position – it straddles the border between Birmingham City Council and Worcestershire County Council (Bromsgrove District Council). This meant that the area action planning process was slowed down by bureaucratic delay. The final Area Action Plan was produced in April 2009, by which time the UK was in economic recession and the likelihood of large scale regeneration and any public sector funding support was minimal.

At this point, it is worth noting that though the council and St Modwen set up a Regeneration Consultative Group this was largely self selected. It included the MP, local councillors, representatives from the regional development agency and some the more articulate local residents. However, it was clear that as is all 'too often the case, the planners are solely concerned with infrastructure design, assuming that the community will follow and they did not engage with the wider community to enable the history to be shared and re-imagined.'[2p.52] In a scenario not dissimilar to those described in the social analysis section of this thesis –

'Planners, architects and social engineers used the latest knowledge and skills to create what they consider to be ideal environments for modern living. They are able to produce the conditions in which community spirit can develop but they cannot create the spirit.'[3p.2]

By late 2010, there was growing frustration that the planning process had taken so long and that the recession, combined with an upcoming general election, meant no-one beyond the developer appeared to be championing the project.

This was when the Longbridge working group was convened by the Churches' Industrial Group Birmingham (CIGB) to reflect on how the church could offer that community a voice. It is interesting to note that just as in the case of Thames Gateway (outlined in the first case study in chapter three) the first faith body to appreciate the significance of the Longbridge development project was the ecumenical industrial mission. In part, this was because one local parish priest (Colin Corke) was also the former workplace chaplain to the MG Rover car plant. So he was able to better appreciate the macro-economic changes in an area, while, it is certainly the case that his pastoral experience working with both employees and residents during the long term decline of the motor industry, meant he was well placed to represent the hopes and fears of local people. In a lovely turn of phrase he says 'if that's the new heart for

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[2] DAVEY, A. Urban Christianity And Global Order. London: SPCK, 2001.
[3] LOVELL, G. The Church And Community Development. London: Avec 1980.

Longbridge up there, what happens to the blood pressure down here.'[4] This informed concern meant that he made early contact with the Managing Director of St Modwen and had joined the Regeneration Consultative Group as a faith representative.

Colin Corke called on the support of the CIGB team leader (Barbara Hayes) who had been reflecting over time on how 'the shift in emphasis of workplace chaplaincy towards the individual and pastoral ... had meant that the chaplain's role as a community builder needed to be revisited and reclaimed.'[5] She was keen to help the group understand that the role of workplace chaplain was not just about promoting flourishing and offering pastoral care. Rather she had begun to reflect on the idea of neighbourhood chaplains acting as brokers between local employers and the local church to help the existing and developing communities to articulate their aspirations.

In 2009, Barbara Hayes was approached by Stephen Plant, a layman who had spent his working life training electrical contractors. He had sought to retrain as a non-stipendiary minister but was especially interested in developing lay chaplaincy to the construction sector. His interest was in the pastoral care and well being of 'hard hat' employees. This opened up a new vein of thinking for CIGB that it could enable chaplaincy to be established in a neighbourhood before it was even built. The opportunity therefore emerged for Stephen Plant to work alongside Colin Corke to seek access to the Longbridge development.

In addition to the CIGB, another key player invited to the working group was Fred Ratley, who represented the Community Regeneration Department at Birmingham Diocese. This department had been working with Birmingham City Council on a vision to create Flourishing Neighbourhoods since 2006. This vision:

> ... envisaged distinctive neighbourhoods where people live in harmony with each other and identify with a neighbourhood that is safe, where there is economic prosperity, voluntary and community activity, and where services are well managed, timely, inter connected and responsive.[6]

This idea of well being and flourishing is akin to the ideas of *shalom* particularly as the project had a more popular strap-line that 'flourishing neighbourhoods should be clean, safe and generous.'[7] This idea of generosity was introduced by Bishop John Austen, the then Bishop of Aston. It was not just about sharing the benefits of economic prosperity but seeking to develop neighbourhoods where mutual support was valued alongside economic transactions. This links to the idea of mediating tension and creating faithful capital outlined in chapter twelve which argued 'relations

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[4] CORKE, C. Comment made on working group tour of Longbridge site, 15th March 2010
[5] HAYES, B. Chaplaincy And Community. Briefing note for Kings Norton Deanery, Birmingham Diocese, 23rd October 2010.
[6] RATLEY, F. Faithful Cities: Some Issues For Our Churches In Birmingham Paper Presented To Birmingham Diocesan Synod, January 2007.
[7] *Ibid*

that spread beyond the personal can create good community life and relationships.'[8] Fred Ratley believed the idea of developing a Flourishing Neighbourhood was the key to success in Longbridge. His main interest was therefore in the interaction between the existing population and the new emerging community.

Here he saw a crucial role for church based community workers in helping mediate any potential tension between the different communities. For alongside the Flourishing Neighbourhoods Programme the Community Regeneration department had been working with Anthony Collins Solicitors and St John's College, Nottingham on a training programme for church based community development workers called the Nehemiah Foundation. This innovative scheme 'seeks to help communities build partnerships and sustainable programmes for change by offering a range of training and support to equip people and organisations to transform their communities.'[9] In particular, they offer training to church based community development workers to conduct community audits, develop local action plans and help deliver local projects. One such worker who had recently completed the Nehemiah Foundation's programme was Janice Paine, who already worked in the neighbouring parish to Longbridge, and Fred Ratley saw the opportunity to join up the church's work when it appeared the statuary bodies had every excuse not to.

A concern of the working group members was that as well as bringing together key thinkers from CIGB and the Community Regeneration department the project also needed to be anchored in the local community. So a Baptist pastor (Stephen Harris), Methodist minister (Nick Jones) and two local parish priests (Melusi Sibanda and the aforementioned Colin Corke) were also members of the working group. Nick Jones, the Methodist minister, was keen to work with young people to help develop a cohesive community. Stephen Harris was being placed under some pressure by his Baptist colleagues to explore the potential for a church plant in the new development, while both parish churches had existing projects working to support the needs of the working class estates around Longbridge which had experienced high levels of unemployment as a result of the factory closure. It is interesting to reflect how these three responses mirrored the church's response to urban development in the mid 20th Century (noted in chapter six) which included: a desire to address the causes of urban poverty, a perceived need to build new churches in the new urban development areas and a desire to live among the poor and offer signs of hope.

In the case of the Church of England clergy, the reflections in the working group emerged at exactly the same time as the Diocese of Birmingham launched a new mission initiative entitled *Transforming Church*. This new framework for church

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[8] *Ibid*
[9] NEHEMIAH FOUNDATION. *Introducing the Foundation.* Publicity leaflet, 2006

based mission was based on the theology of *missio dei* (discussed in chapter twelve) that mission is not primarily an activity of the church but of God, and the *Transforming Church* programme sought to encourage each church community to seek where God is at work building his kingdom in their area. This has resonance with this thesis' transformative strategy which is also about seeking to point to where God's kingdom is at work.

To assist in this process of discernment the diocese identified seven areas of transformation[10] for prayerful discussion in each parish. Specially trained local 'consultants were then invited by the Bishop to journey with each parish, offering a fresh perspective and helping to crystallise the vision along the way.'[11] This meant that the working group's reflections could also feed into the parish's reflections on its mission to the Longbridge area.

However, there were some concerns that because the *Transforming Church* programme so 'unashamedly begins with the local church'[12] that it would miss the scale of the Longbridge development and the need for wider partnership and collaboration beyond the individual parish boundary. It therefore seemed useful or the Longbridge working group to invite an independent facilitator to act as its own form of *Transforming Church* consultant, offering a fresh perspective and helping the group crystallise their vision. This was the role of the author of this thesis, and the group agreed to the writing up of their learning experience as this thesis' case study. Once the working group began to develop its own projects and move towards working with the wider congregations to develop a corporate response to the development in their locality, it seemed appropriate for the author to withdraw to ensure local ownership of the project.

b) Social Analysis

The approach to facilitated learning adopted was akin to that of this thesis in that it followed the Pastoral Cycle. So the second stage after identifying the praxis was social analysis. This took the form of two study visits to development contexts similar to Longbridge and was designed to help the working group explore the impact of the urban development process and reflect on the church's previous experience of engaging with urban development.

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[10] Transforming worship, transforming relationships, transforming discipleship, transforming leadership, transforming presence, transforming outreach and transforming Partnerships.

[11] DIOCESE OF BIRMINGHAM *Transforming Church – The Consultants* www.birmingham.anglican.org/information/transfroming_church [Online] [Accessed on 18 August 2011]

[12] DIOCESE OF BIRMINGHAM *Transforming Church – Theological Resources* www.birmingham.anglican.org/information/tc_theology [Online] [Accessed on 18 August 2011]

Given the scale of the development planned at Longbridge, it could have been problematic to identify similar development contexts. However given the author's experience in Thames Gateway, it was possible to revisit the development areas explored in the first case study in chapter three. Furthermore, in the intervening seven years since that case study had been explored, the church's response had become more formal and nuanced. It was therefore a good opportunity for the group to identify some learning for their own response to the Longbridge site.

Three members of the group joined the author on the study visit – Stephen Plant, Fred Ratley and Colin Corke – interestingly they again represented the three agents of transformation identified in this thesis - workplace chaplains, church based community development workers and parish priests. They were joined by Angela Overton Benge who had met the author at the IMA conference in the first case study and now worked as a neighbourhood chaplain in Swindon.

It is helpful to note the key learning formed at this stage.

The first visit was to the Olympic site in Stratford, East London. Here the group met Kelvin Woolmer who is a part-time workplace 'hard hat' chaplain to the development site and part-time local parish priest of St Paul's.

Kelvin Woolmer being an ex Police Chaplain was used to a chaplaincy model of ministry and he has recruited three voluntary assistant chaplains. These lay people and a priest from other ecumenical partners met through the local mission network (Transform Newham). His model of chaplaincy focused on the well being (*shalom*) of the employees and involved pastoral conversations in the canteen as well as being a critical friend to the management as Kelvin Woolmer was invited to attend the developer's board meeting.

The current parish is very deprived with its attendant social issues, especially gangs of young people. Post 2012, when the Athletes' Village returns to general housing, some 16,000 souls will be added to St Paul's parish. The problem is exacerbated as 50% of the housing will be Housing Association with allocations of people from all over London. Kelvin Woolmer foresees social tensions between the existing and incoming communities. So he has secured funding from Transform Newham to fund a church based community development worker to be appointed to mediate tensions and build a sense of community in the area. This is a laudable objective; however, it is unfortunate that as the community development worker is due to start, Kelvin Woolmer will be retiring.

It was noted that in the past people from the estate walked past St Paul's church on their way to work at the railway works. When these works closed, the church was left on the edge of the community, but when the new housing is occupied the church will once again be at the centre of the community – at the meeting point of the old and

new communities. As a parish priest, Kelvin Woolmer hopes the church can represent a place of reconciliation and hope in the future.

Kelvin Woolmer shared his dream for a major mural painted on the church wall charting the history of the area over the last 150 years from the 1860 railway works to present day and the Olympics. The community had begun to engage on this project and the local school was keen to be involved. The working group made two further suggestions that might assist integration of the workplace chaplaincy, church based community development and parish ministry: Why not involve the construction workers in painting the mural? And why not use the project as a launch pad for the new church based community development worker to meet the existing community before both Kelvin Woolmer retires and the new residents move in.

The second visit was to the Greenwich Peninsula and the O_2 Arena (the former Millennium Dome). Here the group met with Malcolm Torry who is the parish priest of East Greenwich and coordinating chaplain of the Greenwich Peninsula Inter Faith Chaplaincy Team. Malcolm Torry sees his role as a cross between chaplaincy and pioneer ministry.

This is because the Peninsula has been historically isolated and separated from the rest of East Greenwich (local people would have to cross a major urban motorway and railway to get into the development). Given very few people lived on the Peninsula prior to its development there was not much engagement with local residents. So there has been less need to mediate tensions between the new and old residents.

In terms of parish ministry, Malcolm Torry has been released from regular parish duties to pioneer a ministry on the Peninsula. A church plant has begun in the school. However, as the new population has been moving into private rented flats this has led to a transient population which has been difficult to minister to on a long term basis, beyond representing a place of worship on a Sunday.

Instead Malcolm Torry has been developing a neighbourhood chaplaincy model. This began in 2003 with an approach to the developers at the master planning stage. In 2005, when the construction began, workplace chaplains began to visit the O_2 construction site and offer pastoral support to workers on a regular basis in the canteen. Interestingly these chaplains began to represent a wide range of world faiths. Once construction was completed in 2007 and businesses began to move onto the site, 'a new form of chaplaincy began to evolve based on a geographical territory and seeking to be chaplain to everything in it, rather than one off initiatives.'[13p.137] The team grew in number (to approximately seventeen people) drawn from clergy and laity and still representing all the world faiths. As a result the team 'will be one of the most

[13] TORRY, M. *Serving The Economy*. In ED. TORRY, M. *Diverse Gifts*. Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2005. pp.130-142

diverse expressions of chaplaincy seen so far.'[14p.136] The chaplaincy is now established as a registered charity with its own board of trustees. This means it has been able to raise funding in its own right to help promote the well being (*shalom*) of the employers, employees and residents of the Peninsula. Malcolm Torry felt that the chaplaincy had begun to act as a mediating institution for a range of activities including workplace reconciliation and education programmes which lay beyond workplace chaplaincy and more akin to community development.

It is notable that there is no dedicated religious building on the entire Peninsula. Agreement was reached with the developer at the master planning stage for a permanent shared place of worship somewhere in the redevelopment. In the meantime, they promised a temporary building. Seven years later, a temporary building may be appearing. Since the different faith chaplains have never arranged their own worship, the working group asked Malcolm Torry whether he felt a shared place of worship with other faiths could fully convey the full meaning of church and its integrated mission. The group were also concerned to see how this new building relating to the new church plant.

Both the above study visits highlighted how the church was adopting a new way of working in development areas based on a mix of parochial ministry community development and a neighbourhood based workplace chaplaincy.

The experience in Stratford was still emerging. It was still largely focused on the ministry of one parish priest with some volunteers to help with the workplace chaplaincy, though there were plans for a community development worker. However, there was an anxiety about the future cohesion of the new and old community and the future role of the church when Kelvin Woolmer retires.

The development of the Greenwich Peninsula was at a more advanced stage and it reflected a more integrated model linking chaplaincy to community development. However, there were fewer links with the existing population of East Greenwich and Malcolm Torry's role had become more missional than priestly.

c) Theological Reflection

The working group needed some time to reflect on these models of church engagement with urban development and to seek to understand their underlying theology and ecclesiology. So the author presented a summary of this thesis' hermeneutical reflection as an opportunity for beginning the conversation and enabling a 'prayerful mulling of things over and allowing the process of discernment to be forged.'[15p.33]

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[14] *Ibid*
[15] MORISY, A. Bothered And Bewildered. London: Continuum Press, 2009.

Discussion was hence focused on Jeremiah's command to 'seek the shalom of the city where I place you into exile' and this thesis' transformative strategy -based on working in partnership with others to promote *shalom*, to help foster civil society by mediating tension and creating social justice, and to represent God's hope for the future. This thinking was developed further by the working group as they discussed the need for greater collaboration based on a reflection of how Jeremiah's threefold command reflected the nature of the Trinity.

The working group's reflections on the call to seek *shalom* were focused on their desire to offer pastoral care and support to those in the existing and future community as well as those engaged in its construction. This thesis' transformative strategy has argued that the chief agent of transformation for promoting *shalom* has tended to be the workplace chaplain. The working group agreed that a workplace chaplain would be concerned about well being but were reluctant to see that role being restricted to mere pastoral care, and they saw their roles as equally concerned with social inclusion and local governance.

It was a sign of the working group's commitment to mutual care and attention to all members of the community that they saw workplace chaplains' role not only as affirming people in their struggle but also as an element of prophetic challenge. This would take the form of influencing public policy and the developer's agenda to reflect the community's needs and aspirations.

The group also recognised that eschatological *shalom* meant going beyond offering a listening ear and suggesting ideas for well being, to exploring where God was at work in the situation. For as discussed in chapter eight, God is not static, he is actively drawing his creation into the relationship with one another and with him. A mechanism was needed to link the workplace chaplain's pastoral ministry with parish based ministry and offer opportunities for worship.

The call to mediate tensions between the new and existing community was a pertinent one for the Longbridge group as the planned housing developments would be literally across the road from existing housing. There was uncertainty as to who would occupy these new houses but it was noted that the existing community had historically been predominantly white working class and the newcomers could potentially reflect the many cultures and creeds of twenty-first century Birmingham. The group recognised that a potential tension akin to that in the Stratford case study could occur. They also noted that this thesis' transformative strategy had identified the primary role of church based community development workers in developing projects that would enable the 'stitching' of the new development into the existing neighbourhood.

This was a clear case of city building and though the group preferred the term 'urban area' to that of 'city', they understood the connection with Jeremiah's call to engage with the city and not to narrow their focus. The group particularly identified the importance of Jeremiah's call for a long term commitment to an area. They noted that the church is rooted in a local community and members of the congregation live in the area and so they would face the struggle to engage with the new development on a daily basis.

This was not however a negative observation but rather seen as an opportunity for the church to offer its buildings and its expertise in church based community development. Such work can offer places of negotiation for all the community to explore how the new Longbridge neighbourhood could operate as one, rather than parallel communities.

The capacity for the church to represent hope in an apparently hopeless situation is perhaps one of its greatest opportunities. The Longbridge area has faced a number of challenges over the last ten years as the Rover factory declined and parts of the site were sold. The sense of collective bewilderment was less due to unemployment - many of the employees had used their steady income to better themselves and had moved out of the immediate area; rather it was after the closure of the factory that a programme of demolition began which left the area looking desolate, boarded up and deserted. People had begun to feel a sense of bereavement and loss combined with an uncertainty as to what was happening to their area. The connection with the idea of exile and people living in a place of liminal change (as discussed in chapter nine) was very appropriate.

The working group was therefore keen to explore the idea that the church and especially its worship 'represented a sign or an instrument and foretaste of God's kingdom and as such it existed not for themselves but for the whole community.'[16p.114]

For it is a revelation of God's hope expressed in the work of his kingdom that transforms the church's relationship with one another, with God and the wider community. It is a revelation of this 'hope that shines most brightly in midst of trouble.'[17p.116]

It is the contention of this thesis' transformative strategy that the primary agent charged with representing this hope is the parish priest as they combine the functions of offering pastoral hope, proclaiming the gospel of peace and leading people in public worship. The working group agreed with this but were keen to stress that this task is not for the priest alone, rather that the priest acts in collaboration with others to enable the body of Christ to enact its primary call to be a priesthood of all believers.

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[16] COMMISSION OF THE BISHOP'S COUNCIL OF DIOCESE OF BIRMINGHAM 1988 *Op. Cit.*
[17] *Ibid*

Having discussed this thesis' transformative strategy the working group questioned the manner in which the author has separated Jeremiah's command into three different components and allocated a role to each of the working group. They argued that it was actually one command with three parts or a threefold command with one main objective.

This has echoes of the doctrine of the Trinity and so the working group began their own theological refection, leading to a further re-evaluation of this thesis' transformative strategy. They saw in the relational pattern of the Trinity, three clear roles that were akin to the three roles identified in this thesis. First, the love of God the Father is always reaching out to bless and seek the welfare of his creation. Second, God the Son through his incarnation understands the nature of dislocation while living in the tensions of the now and not yet Kingdom of God. Third, that God the Holy Spirit is the 'go-between God'[18] who reveals God's will and purpose to minister hope to the city.

There is great profundity in this reflection. However, the group members were also aware of 'the trap of assuming to read off from the doctrine of the Trinity in a simple and direct manner an understanding of the ministry'[19p.46] of the workplace chaplain, church based community development worker and parish priest. For no-one can humanly carry out the divine task. Rather they argued that their Trinitarian analogy was more focused on the dynamic and relational nature of the Godhead. For Augustine has argued on the Trinity, 'when God relates to the world it is as one unified action.'[20p.29]

As Greenwood has argued 'an ecclesiology for a church which is a foretaste of God's final ordering of all things … must be informed and nurtured by a social trinitarianism.'[21p.86] This social interaction which is at the heart of God's being offers us a sign of the quality of relationship that is central to carrying out God's desire to seek welfare, mediate tensions and represent hope. This task cannot therefore be carried out by any one of the workplace chaplain, church based community development worker or parish priest acting as individuals but only when they work together as a collaborative unit.

If the church is to adopt the pattern of a triune God who calls his people to work together, then 'its ministerial arrangements need to echo the Trinitarian relationship of loving communion.'[22p.87] Though there has been great progress in the latter part of the twentieth century towards greater collaboration between the clergy and the laity, there has been relatively little collaboration between workplace chaplaincy, church based

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[18] A term used by TAYLOR, J V. The Go Between God. London: SCM Press, 1972.
[19] PICKARD, S. Theological Foundations For Collaborative Ministry. Fareham: Ashgate, 2009.
[20] Cited by LORENZEN, L. The College Student's Introduction To The Trinity. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1999.
[21] GREENWOOD, R. Transforming Priesthood. London: SPCK, 1994.
[22] *Ibid*.

community work and parish ministry. For instance, a national conference held in response to the Sustainable Communities Plan (as discussed in chapter six) laudably brought the different groups together but it promptly split into workshops based on different ministries and the agenda has been carried forward in a limited and fragmented manner. This is because in many Church structures (including Birmingham Diocese in this case study) each ministry tends to be treated as a separate entity with separate training programmes and support networks all designed to reinforce their separateness rather than their togetherness. Whereas what was 'urgently needed was collaborative and mutually enriching ministries.'[23p.116]

c) A Transformative Strategy For Longbridge?

Having identified a need for a collaborative approach to the church's engagement in the redevelopment of Longbridge, the working group began to develop their thinking further. This was expressed in three ways.

First, after nearly a year of discussion, the opening finally emerged in September 2010 for Stephen Plant to begin workplace chaplaincy to the Longbridge construction site. But rather than seeing his support and line management solely through the Churches' Industrial Group Birmingham (CIGB), Stephen was keen that his work be accountable to the working group and connected into the mission of the local church. So the group sought a way that would demonstrate how the workplace chaplaincy could be joined up with community development to show the church was active in the area. This led to some discussion about the need to establish more formal mechanisms for the mission of the church in the area and it was decided to begin to engage more widely with members of the congregation to draw up a more representative working group. An initial meeting was held in February 2011 that informed local people of the work to date.

A second opportunity to begin to express the church's collaborative mission arose from Stephen Plant's connection with St Modwen, the developer and Shepherd Construction. The latter felt 'that as outsiders to the community they wished to add something of value to the community of Longbridge and asked Stephen to identify community based projects they could get involved in.' Because of contacts with the local churches, the two projects chosen were repainting one church's hall and installing new toilets in another church based community project. The construction company went into partnership with the local college to provide training opportunities for local people and each building was refurbished free of charge. 'These projects are an example of partnerships when church and community engage in a real and positive

[23] PICKARD, S. 2009 *Op.Cit.*

relationship with the developer.'[24p.16] Furthermore, as the painting was completed days before the second meeting of the church representation meeting, it meant 'the chaplaincy gained credibility on all sides as a means of communication between the world of work and the community.'[25p.16]

The third exploration concerned plans for a community centre in the heart of Longbridge. The developer had planned to build a centre but they had not established who would run the community centre and what form it would take. Discussions at the second meeting of the wider church congregations in Longbridge had focused on seeking God's heart for Longbridge. It was interesting to note that owing to their reflections over the last year the working group had decided not to adopt the traditional church responses to urban development - addressing the needs of the existing population, planting a new church in the area or being present to offer signs of God's presence (discussed in chapter six). Rather, they began to explore a much more collaborative approach whereby the churches could offer to the developer to manage the new community space. Indeed this space would not be a new church in a conventional sense but as a base for the chaplaincy team, church based community workers and parish priests to come together with the existing and new communities; The shared purpose being to create a meeting place to encourage social interaction that promotes *shalom*, mediates any tensions and represents hope in the heart of Longbridge – pointing to signs of God's kingdom in their midst.

It is the conclusion of the Longbridge working group's reflections that the church needed to be engaged in the change in their development area and that this needed to be a holistic expression of mission. It did not depend on the work of an individual workplace chaplain, church based community worker or parish priest but rather on a partnership approach in which the lines can be rubbed out in this thesis' three circles diagram. (See Figure 15.1)

This collaborative approach was expressed in a desire to reflect God's relational being and offer a united approach. First, there was interest in the whole human condition and concern for well being of the construction workers, existing and new residents. Second, there was recognition of the need to relate to all the community and willingness for the church to provide a space for mediating the tensions that result from urban change. Finally there was a desire to inspire hope that engaged local residents, the developer and the public institutions that there could indeed be a new heart for Longbridge - if they could together find God's heart for Longbridge.

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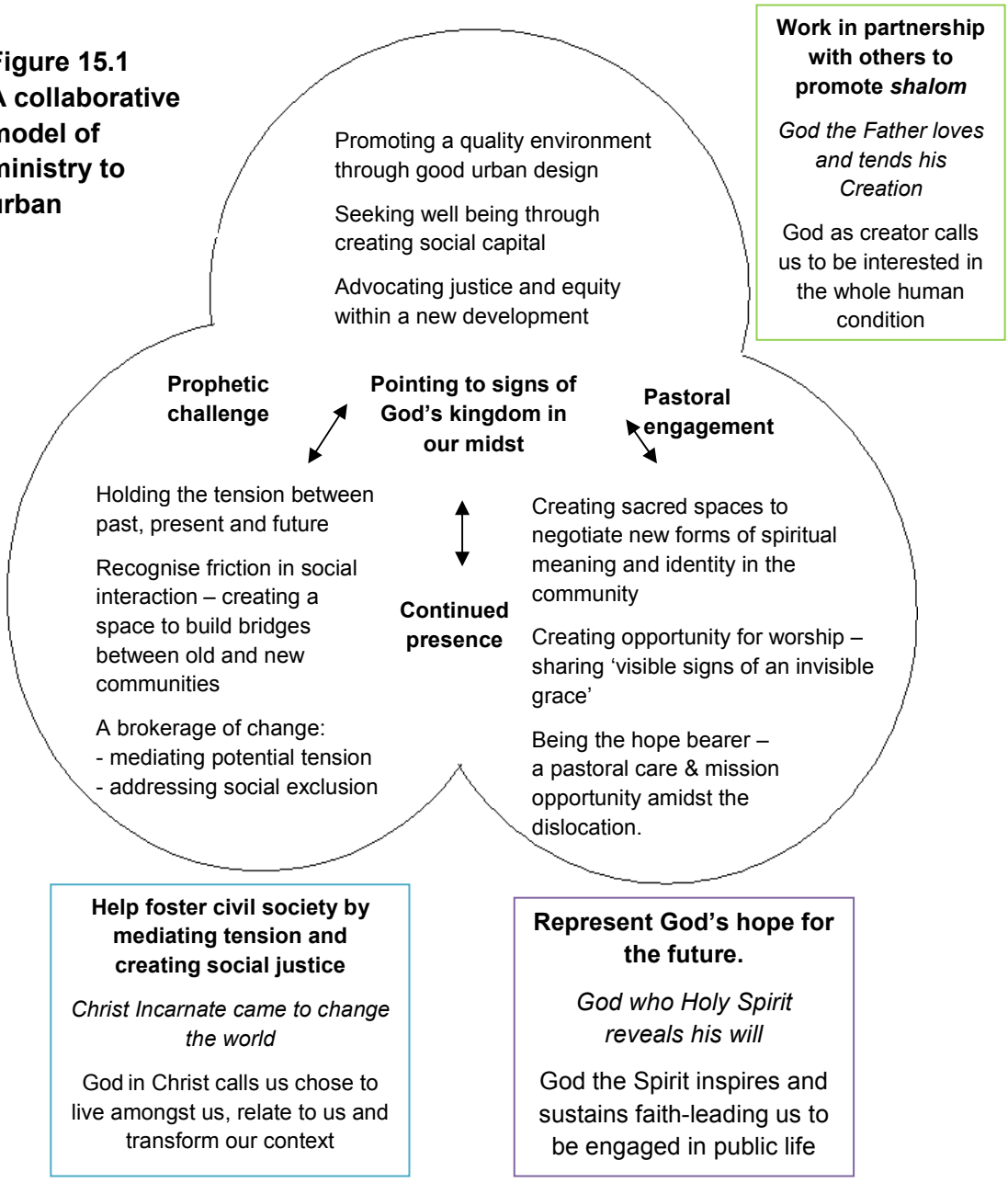
[24] PLANT, S. Hard Hat Partners: The Longbridge Development Experience. Transform (The Magazine of Diocese of Birmingham) Issue 4, 2011.
[25] *Ibid*

Figure 15.1
A collaborative model of ministry to urban



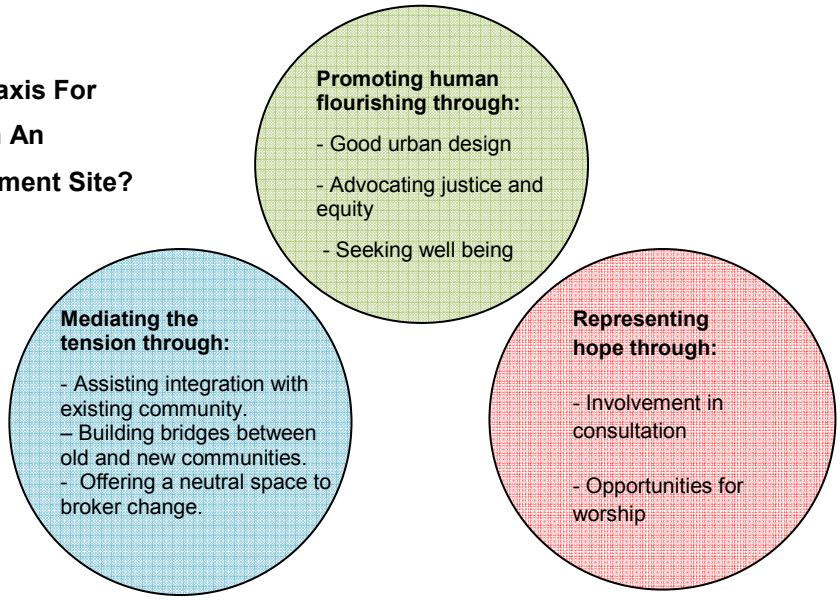
Chapter Sixteen: Conclusions And A Way Forward

At the outset of this thesis, three questions were posed: What are the ideologies and policy solutions posited by those engaged in urban development? What is the church's response? And where is God in this context? Using the Pastoral Cycle methodology, this thesis has engaged with and reflected on these questions through social analysis and Biblical reflection, in order to discern the church's role in urban development areas and to work towards understanding God's purposes for his church in this context.

Having initially explored the development experiences of the Thames Gateway, an early indication of the learning praxis for the church's engagement with urban development emerged. Three key areas were identified (see Figure 16.1). The first is an interest in promoting human flourishing as it was recognised that good design alone does not create community but there needs to be a sense of justice and equity marked by a deep concern for the well being of one's neighbour. The second area was an interest in mediating the tension between new and old communities, offering a neutral space for community development. Third, there is an interest in representing hope. This is primarily seen in offering opportunity for worship at a time of transition. It is also a combination of the pastoral, missional and prophetic roles of the church serving an area affected by dislocation caused by urban development.

FIGURE 16.1

What Is The Praxis For The Church On An Urban Development Site?



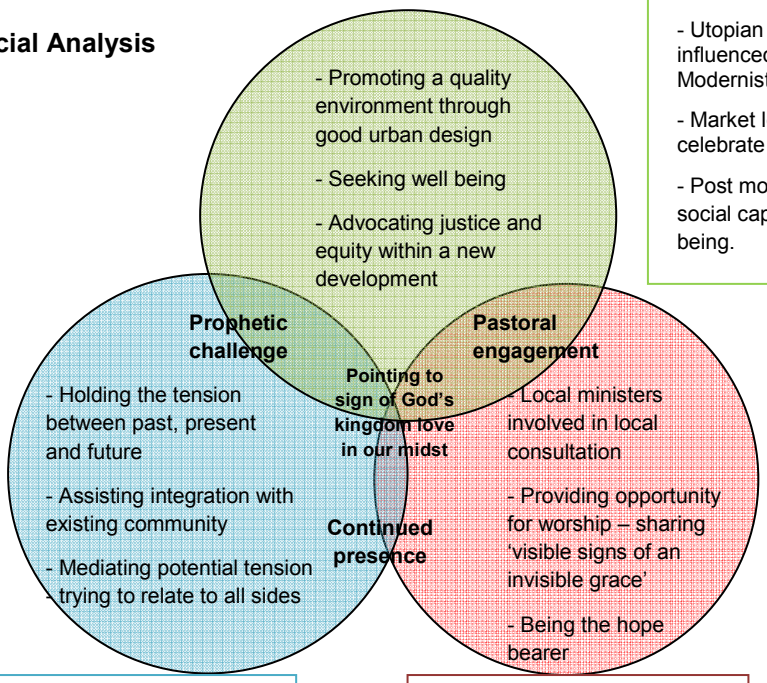
The next stage in the pastoral cycle is the social analysis. An overview of the origins and ideologies of urban development and town planning identified that 'modernist planning attempted to create homogenous urban space that while reflecting the common good, suppressed plurality and diversity.'[1p.16]

In contrast, postmodern theories of urban development are far less utopian and more accepting of difference and diversity. The contemporary town planner is therefore seen as a negotiator of change offering every person a voice. Links can therefore be made with the themes of promoting flourishing, mediating tension and representing hope (see Figure 16.2).

The church's involvement in urban development has a long history based on three main approaches: seeking to address the causes of urban poverty; building new churches in new development areas; and promoting initiatives to live among the poor and offer signs of hope. This means that the church's role can also be mapped against the themes identified in praxis (see Figure 16.2). However, at this stage it is becoming clear that the key themes need to overlap for the church is also present at their interface based on: offering prophetic challenge, continued presence, and pastoral engagement. Taken together, the church is charged with pointing to signs of God's kingdom love in our midst.

FIGURE 16.2

Linking Social Analysis To Praxis

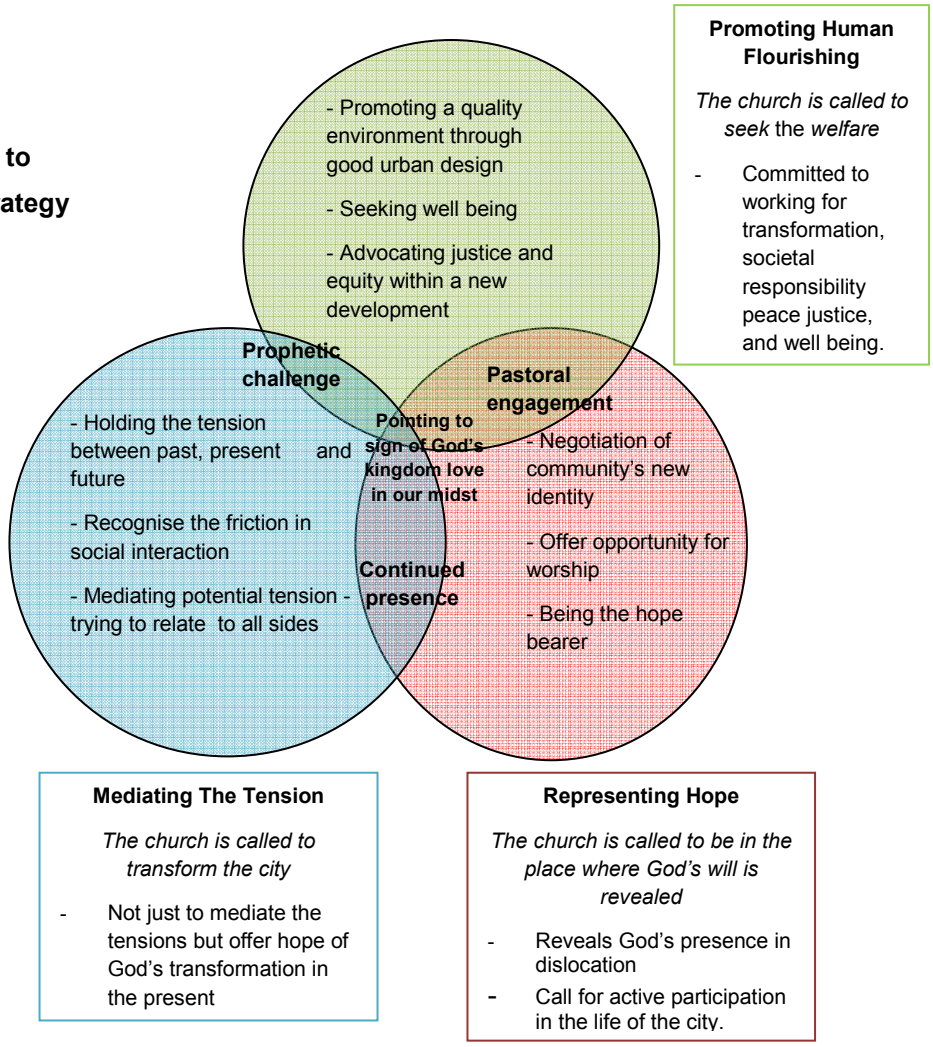


[1] BAKER, C. *The Hybrid Church In The City*. London: SCM Press, 2009.

The third stage of the pastoral cycle is a hermeneutical reflection of the Biblical text with a pedagogical interest based on Brueggemann's assumption that 'if the Bible is the scripture of the church, it is non-negotiably contemporary in every time, place and circumstance, so … we purport to be listening for a contemporary word from God to us.'[2p.109 sic.] Through reflection on the Jewish exile experience, and in particular the command to 'seek the *shalom* of the city where I place you into exile' three main purposes are identified for the church in areas of dislocation created by urban change (see figure 16.3).

FIGURE 16.3

From Hermeneutic to Transformative Strategy



The first reflection is on *shalom* – a theme linked to human flourishing and its connections with well being, quality of life, liveability, sense of community and social capital. However, none of these terms are as holistic nor give sufficient attention to the spiritual dimension of *shalom* that includes transformation, societal responsibility and commitment to peace and justice.

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[2] BRUEGGEMANN, W. *Out Of Babylon*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2010.

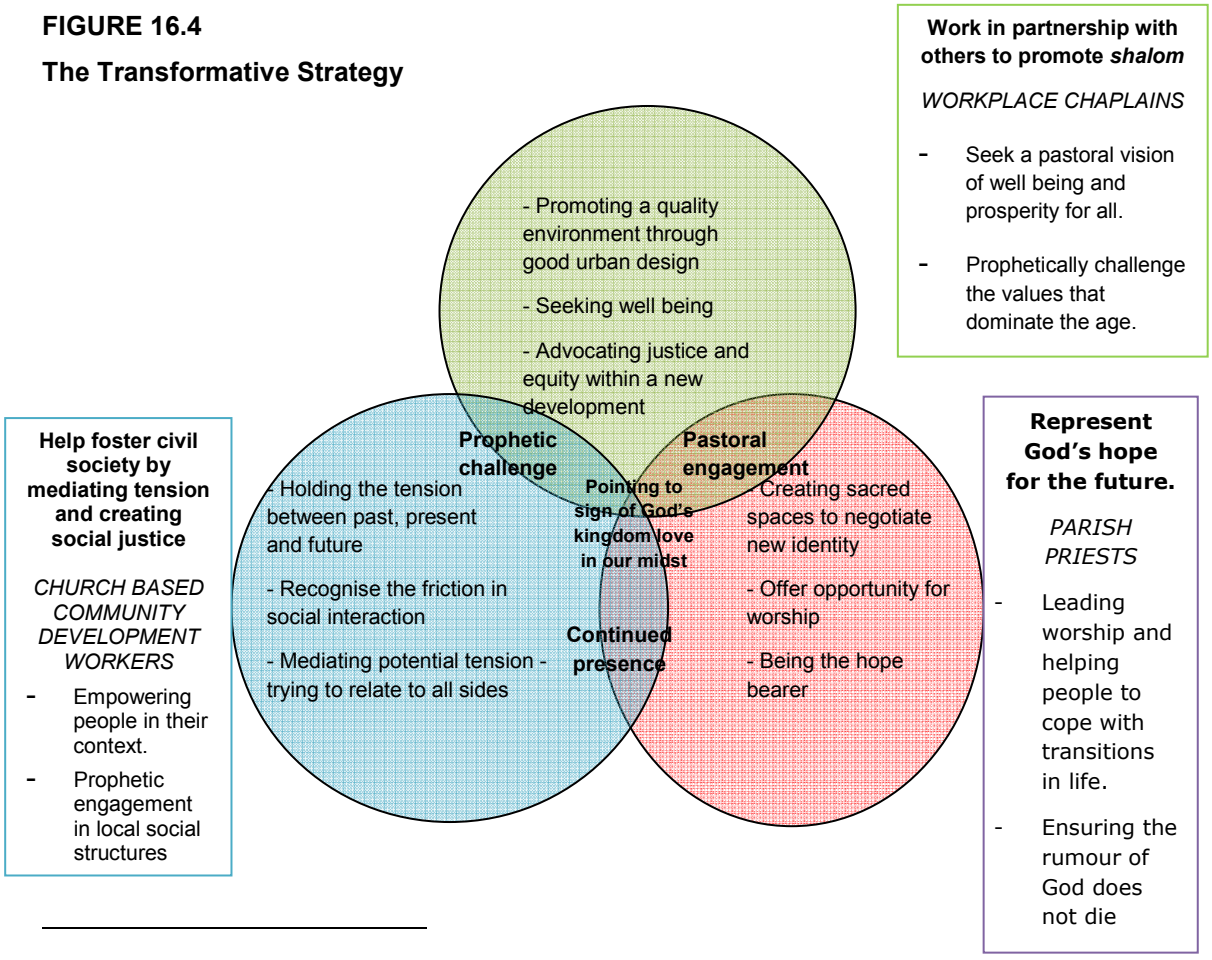
The second reflection is not just to recognise the tensions within the city but to offer hope of transformation from Babylon to Jerusalem. For it is in entering the public sphere that 'we are forced to meet with and journey with each other … for the very thing that binds a city together is the shared experience of the difficulties and suffering'[3p.114] associated with urban change.

The third reflection is that the Jews in exile were able to look beyond their overwhelming sense of chaos, based on the revelation that God had a purpose in placing them into exile. This knowledge offered hope amidst the dislocation of urban change. Representing God's hope therefore offers an opportunity for individuals, institutions or the church to reflect on the urban change in their context and dream ideals for the sake of all the community.

The fourth stage in the Pastoral Cycle is what has been termed the transformational learning process, whereby the strategy that has emerged through critical reflection is tested against social action. This means that it was important to revisit the themes of the earlier social analysis – the development of urban policy and the church's response – in the light of the new ideas that had emerged from the hermeneutical reflection (see figure 16.4).

FIGURE 16.4

The Transformative Strategy



[3] BREWIN, K. *The Complex Christ*. London: SPCK, 2004.

In seeking to understand the engagement of the Christian community, links were made with the ideas of fostering civil society, faithful capital and building a good city. However, key to implementing these ideas are the church's agents of transformation - the workplace chaplain, the church based community development worker and parish priest. The workplace chaplain offers pastoral support and a vision of well being and flourishing for all of society. The church based community development worker is involved in local social structures –helping to mediate the tensions associated with socio-economic change. While the parish priest has tended to be the representation of hope ministering in times of change. Together they can provide signposts to God's kingdom love at work in the world.

The final stage of the pastoral cycle is a commitment to re-evaluation of the transformative strategy by returning to the experience of praxis. In the case of this thesis, this meant meeting with the agents of transformation identified above – the workplace chaplains, church based community development workers and parish priests.

With support of the author such a group was convened in response to the redevelopment of Longbridge in Birmingham. This working group revisited the development experiences of Thames Gateway in the light of the themes identified in this thesis. Their conclusion was that running workplace chaplaincy or community development or ministry programmes in isolation may benefit the recipients and the individuals engaged in the project. However, if a model of chaplaincy and community development was integrated within the ministry of the local church in a partnership approach, then the lines can be rubbed out in this thesis' three circles diagram (see Figure 16.5). Such a collaborative approach mirrors the threefold command in Jeremiah 29 and has 'potential to bring greater benefits and connection to an urban development area.'[4] The Longbridge experience showed it is possible for Christians to collaborate in their engagement with urban development so the Christian faith can form a kingdom community to help shape society, economy and institutions'[5p.184-5] in urban development areas.

The Longbridge Working Group noted how this collaborative approach also mirrors the relational nature of the Trinity and the separate actions of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. There is scope, therefore, for continued theological reflection to explore how this Trinitarian model can further develop our understanding of collaborative ministry in urban development areas. For Pickard has argued that 'whilst the trends in Trinitarian thinking in relation to ecclesiology and ministry are evident, the

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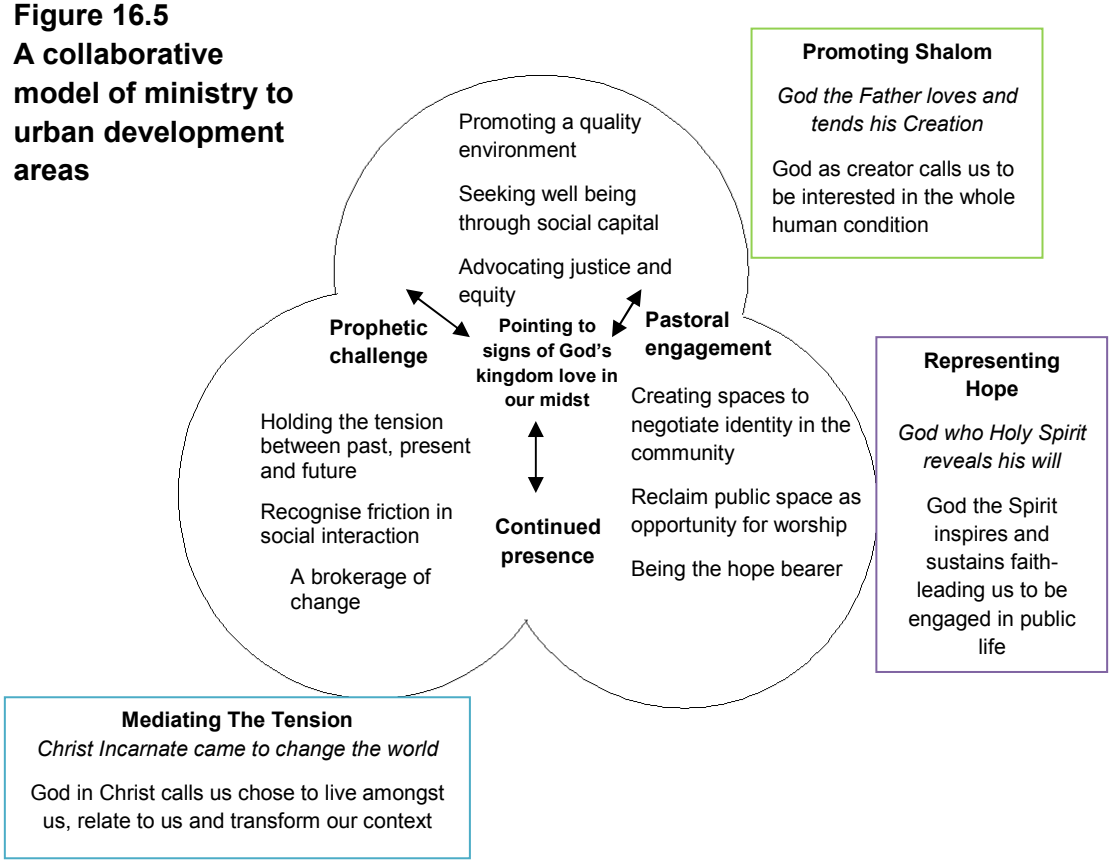
[4] HAYES, B. Chaplaincy And Community. Briefing note for Kings Norton Deanery, Birmingham Diocese, 23rd October 2010.
[5] TORRY, M. *Bridgebuilders.* Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2010.

Figure 16.5
A collaborative model of ministry to urban development areas



work of transposition and interweaving of Trinitarian and relational categories remains significantly under-developed.'[6p.40] Further research is possible to explore a pattern of ministry that reflects the Trinity which could be a sign that the church truly reflects the mission of God (missio dei) – with one message, expressed and delivered in three different ways. Some signposts have already been identified that could point to future research linking the central themes of this thesis to the persons of the Trinity:

God the Father is the creator - the one who brings all things into being. The Modernist utopian vision of the city failed because it dismissed God and saw humanity's purpose was to tame the world. Yet if one acknowledges God the Father's will and purpose, then more and more of God's fingertips are evident in his relationship with the world. He is the God who seeks *shalom*, the one who offers humanity free will and ability to interact. Further exploration of the mission of God as promoting *shalom* could be developed around 'a theology of creation that is based upon stewardship since humanity is called to create environments of grace where the human spirit is nurtured.'[7p.150]

Jesus Christ is the reconciler or mediator. He is the one who took flesh in order that humanity may know God's peace. 'Like Jeremiah, we have been given a vision of making our home in Babylon, not the home we would have wished for, but created to

[6] PICKARD, S. Theological Foundations For Collaborative Ministry. Fareham: Ashgate, 2009.
[7] BAKER, C. 2009. *Op. Cit.*

serve God's divine purposes, it is our calling to work for the good of the city even it is a place of our exile.'[8p213] Further research could be pursued linking an incarnational approach to mission with the risks intervening in the tensions of city life, negotiating the encounters in the public square in a way that recognises that Christ came not to take us to heaven but to help us transform the world which he came to save.

God the Holy Spirit is the sustainer. He is the 'author of all hopeful visions.'[9p.48] This thesis identifies part of the purpose of the church is to be the hope-bearer – offering fresh vision that inspires and sustains people amidst the dislocation of urban change. Listening to the Spirit will lead to new forms of church not necessarily based in church buildings but focused around people. There are opportunities for further participatory action research with workplace chaplains, church based community development workers and parish priests to explore new opportunities to create spaces of hope, renewal and encounter with God.

This thesis has therefore posited three core themes that together begin to form a transformative strategy for the church's engagement with urban development: to promote *shalom*, help foster civil society by mediating tension and creating social justice, and to represent God's hope for the future. What practical ways are there for the agents of transformation within the local church to work closer together, and in partnership with others, to deliver this vision?

First, in the words of Torry, 'the Church must have the courage to join in: participating with the local community as it seeks answers to an area's problems, joining in planning consultations ... joining partnerships of voluntary-sector groups and meeting professionals'[10] involved in urban development. This thesis has offered local church leaders and interested lay people the history and language to enable them to engage meaningfully in this dialogue.

Second, it is important to ask questions about the shape of the proposed urban development. This thesis has reflected on the pitfalls of previous urban development schemes and their impact on the existing community especially the poor and disadvantaged, and the impact on local amenities such as schools, shops and health service. It has also offered some learning from previous church engagement that may be of value in evaluating one's response.

Third, just as was the case in Thames Gateway and in Longbridge, it is important to remember the values, visions and theological identity that we bring to those engaged in urban development. So one needs to prayerfully 'discern the caring hand of Father

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[8] WORKING PARTY OF THE METHODIST CHURCH. *The Cities: A Methodist Report.* London: NCH Action For Children, 1997.

[9] GORRINGE, T. *A Theology Of The Built Environment.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

[10] TORRY, M. Conclusion: Building God's City. IN: ED. TORRY, M. *Regeneration And Renewal.* Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2007, pp.168-172.

God guiding us and instructing us on the way we respond to the changes we see.'[11] How does one seek God in this context, it must be through listening to God in prayer, to his word in scripture, to others in the community, to the developer and one's own hopes and dreams. A model of hermeneutical reflection based on etymology, exegesis, exposition and eschatology is central to the method of this thesis. Likewise, it is recommended urban theologians assist local churches leaders and interested laity form groups akin to the base ecclesial communities of Latin America, to explore the scriptures and develop their own local theologies in their context.

Finally, it is important to bring the different agents of change - workplace chaplains, church based community workers and church leaders to together 'generate a new way of working that would empower the community and church to work together for the flourishing of the whole community'[12] enabling the church to become a key player in urban development areas.

Like the Jewish people when they were placed into exile, those living in urban development areas know the pain of dislocation. The way to transformation echoes through the centuries in God's call that we are to 'seek the welfare of the city where I place you into exile.'

[11] HARRIS, S (Pastor of Longbridge Baptist Church) speaking at *Ecumenical Meeting Of Members Of Churches From Across The Longbridge Vicinity,* 1st February 2011.
[12] ROBINSON, P. *Developing A Wider View Of Evangelism.* In: ED. DAVEY, A *Crossover City.* London: Mowbray, 2010 , pp37-51

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