

Healthy Cities

Mike Love

Abstract

In this article I ask if and how a city can be a healthy city by providing the conditions for wellbeing. The linkages between poverty, power, and health are well established and increasingly recognised in national and local policy rhetoric, but wellbeing still tends to be thought of as personal and as an aspect of healthcare rather than the primary determinant. Because wellbeing is so linked to relative power and socio-economic status, improving wellbeing - and therefore health - is a profoundly political issue. Over 55% of the world's population now live in cities, power is being devolved from nation-states to cities globally, and cities are the major cause of ecological depredation, so it is to cities that we must look for solutions. Jewish and Christian scriptures offer a rich theopolitical imaginary for cities of wellbeing, given the all-embracing nature of *shalom* and all that Jerusalem (meaning 'founded on peace') signifies eschatologically. With North American feminist theologian Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, I argue that *ekklesia* should be given its political import as the radically democratic body politic of cities now seen through an eschatological hermeneutic of space and not just time. The spatial complexity of cities means that they are a pluriverse of potential *ekklēsiae* in which the poor discover their agentic personhood and are healed.

And did those feet in ancient time

Walk upon England's mountains green:

And was the holy Lamb of God,

On England's pleasant pastures seen!

And did the Countenance Divine,
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here,
Among these dark Satanic Mills?

Bring me my Bow of burning gold:
Bring me my arrows of desire:
Bring me my Spear: O clouds unfold!
Bring me my Chariot of fire!

I will not cease from Mental Fight,
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand:
Till we have built Jerusalem,
In England's green & pleasant Land.

Would to God that all the Lord's people were Prophets. Numbers 11.29

William Blake, 1808, from the preface to *Milton, a Poem*.

Introduction

In this essay I make links between health, wellbeing, power, and politics and suggest they are indivisible, with health and wellbeing determined positively or negatively by socio-economic status and therefore by relative power and powerlessness. Politics is the way that power asymmetries are redressed, but too often our political systems socially reproduce those

same power differentials. I employ Johan Galtung's definition of "positive peace" and "structural violence" to suggest that the damage to the minds and bodies of the poorest members of society is a form of violence perpetrated, albeit unintentionally, by the rest of society and by the system itself. This system is not 'normal' and can and should be challenged and changed. To do this takes power but not the kind of power that reproduces a system in which there are winners and losers, not the kind of power with which politics is concerned in nation-states founded on a mythos of sovereignty. Increasingly, power is being devolved to cities globally and, as more and more of the world's people live in cities, it is here that we will have to learn to how to live in such a way with each other, in all our human diversity, and with the planet, in a way that promotes the wellbeing of all. The kind of politics (how we make the *polis*) this entails is of a different order from the sovereigntist state because cities are *poleis* not founded on sovereignty. Indeed, the ideal of democracy - the power of the people - could only have arisen from a city. Cities are subject to sovereignties of all kinds - states, empires, flows of global capital - but that is not the whole picture. Henri Lefebvre's pioneering spatial analysis of cities brought to light those spaces that come into being where citizens encounter their others in truly humanising and liberating ways and so create new and political space-between. These are the spaces that the outsiders, the excluded and marginalised, and the artists make their own and where they exercise their "right to the city". Cities, unlike states, are complex political spaces and to bring about change calls for a politics of complexity and an understanding of how power operates in a quantum world.

Jewish and Christian scriptures are rich sources for a theo-political imaginary of the good city, a city which embodies shalom for all. Thinking of wellbeing as *shalom* brings an understanding of its holistic implications. Jerusalem means the city founded on shalom of which justice or equity is an integral element. Christian eschatology has been temporal rather than spatial so that the city of God instituted at Pentecost is deferred to the temporal eschaton as the New Jerusalem. Vitor Westhelle argues for a spatial eschaton in terms very similar to Lefebvre and which opens up the threshold of the city of God in our cities here and now. To consider what this means for a politics of cities and specifically for the political nature of Lefebvre's "third space," I turn to Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza who suggests the early church's self-designation as 'ekklesia' justifies a reading of a radically inclusive democratic polis in continuity with Pentecost and the eschatological horizon of the new Jerusalem of Revelation 21. This ekklesia is not 'the

church' or some other-worldly city of God, but it has come into the world decisively for the world as a principle and a horizon, a struggle, process, and calling and a hermeneutical space from which all our current forms of politics can be adjudged. I conclude with Walter Brueggemann who redefines health as the ability to fully share in the life of the community, and healing as the restoration of persons to "their full power and vitality in the life of the community". Wellbeing is not a lesser and fluffier partner to 'health' but is the essence and goal of cities. Cities are called by God to be healers for their citizens, and from the new Jerusalem the river kenotically flows for the healing of the world.

Health and wellbeing

A 1996 TV documentary, *The Great Leveller*,¹ made a lasting impression on me. It told the story of two teams of researchers who discovered significant correlation between their findings. The subjects of one team were Serengeti apes, and of the other, Whitehall civil servants.² The first half of the documentary recounted the findings of both teams, that the higher the status of the individual, the better their health, and vice versa. For example, lower status apes displayed anxiety and stress about food and mating, constantly looking to see where were the higher status apes in case they steal their food or mate. Stress and poorer nutrition were damaging their physical health. This was (and continues to be) mirrored in the relative status and health of civil servants. The profoundly depressing conclusion seemed to be that status, power, and health are linked, for better and for worse, and that we are hierarchical creatures by nature. The second half of the documentary told a very different story - that at those times we switch from hierarchical into collaborative behaviour and see ourselves as part of a collective, overall national health improves. The film gave as examples the improvement of the nation's health during World War II, and older men with strong social connections who suffered heart attacks went on to live significantly longer than those who were relatively socially isolated.

In the 19th century there was bitter rivalry between Louis Pasteur and Antoine Béchamp. Pasteur argued that it was necessary to prevent and kill disease to create health. Béchamp

¹ "The Great Leveller" 1996 film on Channel 4. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WmEt2WuMZ7E>

² "Whitehall Study", Wikipedia, accessed November 11, 2021.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whitehall_Study

emphasised the effect of poor environments that render people more susceptible to poor health. Pasteur's curative approach prevailed and western medicine in its focus on curing disease has followed suit. Undoubtedly the advances and benefits of medical science are extraordinary but Béchamp's emphasis on wellbeing and the wider determinants of health has been largely eclipsed as a result, perhaps because it is so much harder to evidence prevention than cure. That we now routinely speak of 'health and wellbeing' and of 'social prescribing', shows that we are becoming more conscious of the importance of wellbeing as a determinant of health. The World Health Organisation goes further in defining health as: "a state of complete physical, psychological and social wellbeing [that] encompasses the conditions for an individual, community or society to achieve an acceptable state of health. Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."³

Wellbeing is now part of national policy rhetoric but yet there is scant national policy implementation. Back in 2010 at the beginning of his new coalition government, the UK Prime Minister, David Cameron, made a speech setting out his commitment to the goal of wellbeing and, recognising the shortcomings of measuring GDP alone,⁴ instituted a statistical measure of national wellbeing that has been reported every year since. While, according to the measure, there has been some overall increase, the Children's Society *Good Childhood Report 2021* says that children in the UK are amongst the most unhappy in Europe with 7% of 10-15 year olds unhappy with their lives (306,000, up from 173,000 ten years ago).⁵ Scotland's First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, said in January 2020, "the goal and objective of all economic policy should be collective wellbeing".⁶ International attention was drawn to New Zealand in 2017 when Prime Minister Jacinta Ardern, introduced a wellbeing budget to displace the centrality of GDP, adding measures of human health, safety and flourishing. Even New Zealand has discovered that it is harder to displace the GDP orthodoxy than it is to talk about it. Arthur Grimes, former chief economist at the Reserve Bank of New Zealand, and now a Professor of Wellbeing and Public Policy at Victoria University School of Government, says: "mention of "wellbeing" dropped

³ "The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition."
<https://www.who.int/about/governance/constitution>. Accessed online 6.10.21

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-speech-on-wellbeing>

⁵ <https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/information/professionals/resources/good-childhood-report-2021>

⁶ <https://neweconomics.org/2020/10/wellbeing-and-gdp-explained>

dramatically – from 174 headlines in 2019, down to 29 last year, and this year a mere seven [...] It has been striking how the government has pulled decisively back from using the term [...] Although there continues to be a lot of international interest – especially among political progressives, globally”.⁷

Cities too have wellbeing as a target for their cross-sectoral Health and Wellbeing Boards. The word order is significant - health is quantifiable and treatment is evidence based, and the cost of healthcare is a huge proportion of the economy of economically prosperous nations. In comparison it can be hard to evidence the positive *preventive* effects on health of wellbeing and so justify diverting public money from the ever-growing demands of healthcare. The global Wellbeing Economy Alliance calls this ‘failure demand’, by which “we are caught in a cycle of paying to fix what we continue to break”.⁸ Their September 2021 report, *Failure Demand: Counting the true costs of an unjust and unsustainable economic system*, details the cost of ‘failure demand’ in the areas of paid work, housing, and environment to the economies of Scotland and the Canadian province of Alberta. The report cites Katherine Trebeck and Jeremy Williams: “In the depressingly circular logic of failure demand, growth is required to pay for fixing the harm done in the creation of growth.”⁹ This cost is then counted as a positive contributor in an economy based on growth and measured by GDP. Further problems with wellbeing may be that it is difficult to measure something preventive and subjective, and the societal, economic, environmental, and political conditions for wellbeing are complex.

The influential 2008 report of the New Economics Foundation, *Five Ways to Wellbeing*, said that personal wellbeing stems from social connection, physical activity, mindfulness, learning, and giving.¹⁰ We¹¹ recently ran a small pilot programme with residents of an area of Leeds that

⁷ Tess McClure, *The Guardian*, 10 April, 2021, accessed on line: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/apr/10/new-zealands-wellbeing-budget-made-headlines-but-what-really-changed>

⁸ The Alliance aims to make wellbeing the purpose of the economy and goal of public spending instead of the pursuit of economic growth that causes harm to people and to the planet. <https://weall.org/failure-demand-counting-the-true-costs-of-an-unjust-and-unsustainable-economic-system>. Accessed 15.10.21.

⁹ Katherine Trebeck and Jeremy Williams, *The Economics of Arrival*, 9. https://weall.org/wp-content/uploads/FailureDemand_FinalReport_September2021.pdf.

¹⁰ New Economics Foundation, *Five Ways to Wellbeing*. <https://neweconomics.org/uploads/files/five-ways-to-wellbeing-1.pdf>.

¹¹ This was a project of Together for Peace in 2021, a Leeds-based charity I work with. The project applied the approach of the Leeds Poverty Truth Commission (which foregrounds the lived experience and *The Kenarchy Journal* (2022), 3, 46-71 Copyright © 2022

has some of the city's worst health outcomes. When asked what they understood by wellbeing, their responses aligned with NEF's findings. They spoke about the importance of social connection with family members and community groups, of volunteering and hobbies, and of the benefits of being in nature. These things, when possible and available to them, counterbalanced their poor health; the opposite was also true - the lack of these wellbeing factors exacerbated poor mental and physical health.¹² The growth of social prescribing is in recognition of the importance of these wellbeing factors. Similarly, the growing emphasis on 'patient voice' acknowledges that doing things *to or for* people, no matter how well intentioned, achieves less than doing *with* people and supporting people to do things for themselves.

Structural violence and health

Health and wellbeing have not always been easy bedfellows and we should not assume they are aspects of the same thing. I first heard of the Pasteur - Béchamp controversy at a lecture given by Johan Galtung, the eminent peace and conflict thinker and practitioner.¹³ He applied both sides of the argument to his own field of conflict transformation. His formula for what he calls "positive health" is:

$$\text{health} = \frac{\text{wellbeing}}{\text{disease}}$$

By increasing the value of wellbeing on the top line, disease diminishes proportionately and overall health improves. Galtung applies this to societal wellbeing, or what he calls "positive peace":

$$\text{positive peace} = \frac{\text{equity} \times \text{empathy}}{\text{conflict} \times \text{trauma}}$$

Simply resolving conflict and healing the resultant trauma ("curative measures") will not prevent future conflict arising from unhealed trauma - this is "negative peace". Positive peace comes

wisdom of people most affected by poverty) to health inequalities. <https://www.t4p.org.uk/>
<https://www.leedspovetrytruth.org.uk/>

¹² For example, a senior health professional told the Leeds Poverty Truth Commission the effect on physical health of social isolation is equivalent to smoking fifteen cigarettes a day.

¹³ Lecture given at the Richardson Institute for Peace Studies, Lancaster University, 22 June 2013.

when emphasis is placed on developing the mutual dependence of empathy and equity (social justice).

Galtung is best known for his analysis of violence as direct, structural, and cultural. His definition of positive peace evolved from the mere absence of war to a concept encompassing the absence of structural violence within a society. Structural violence is when damage to an individual or a group occurs because of an unequal distribution of, and access to, resources in any given society. Direct violence is *intended* to cause harm. Structural violence “is a social structure grinding out suffering, like capitalism and authoritarian regimes, and it hits people at their most vulnerable points [which are] called basic needs so you have misery at the bottom of society [...]. The structure is made in such a way that they are the helpless victims of it”. Examples he gives of structural violence are the persistent denial of real freedom to make choices (which is a good definition of poverty) and the deprivation of identity. “The structural violence is not intended but is caused by a very important concept, not the actual commission, but the act of omission. The condition for maintaining structural violence is that nobody does anything about it”. One reason for not doing anything is that it is considered to be the normal way of things; Galtung says, “They don’t intend to harm people but they don’t do very much about it either”. This state of affairs is held in place by cultural violence which justifies the other two forms of violence, for example social Darwinism, and the kind of Christianity that says suffering is the will of God.¹⁴

The poor health of the poor is not ‘just the way things are’ but is due to the structures of society which the richer and more powerful tilt in their favour whilst not, as Galtung says, *intending* harm. These structures remain that way until we tilt them the other way. Structural violence in England means that some women’s lives in my own city of Leeds are 20 years shorter than others’ who live in Camden, London, according to an October 2021 report of research carried out by Imperial College, London.¹⁵ Between 2002 to 2019 the Leeds women’s lives were shortened by 3 years while those in Camden lengthened by 9 years. The same report showed men in Blackpool die 27 years earlier than men in Kensington & Chelsea. Within Leeds itself, between rich and poor neighbourhoods, the life expectancy gap for men is 12 years. 52% of

¹⁴ Video of Johan Galtung: <https://www.futurelearn.com/info/courses/medical-peace-work/0/steps/27092>

¹⁵ <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/news/231119/life-expectancy-declining-many-english-communities/>

Leeds' new primary school children live in the 10% most deprived communities, meaning that they are condemned from the start to poorer health and shorter lives, and this is a worsening picture.¹⁶ Some years ago, I saw a graphic illustration of systemic 'tilt'. A map of Leeds highlighting the areas of poorest health was overlaid by a map indicating the areas with the highest incidence of healthcare interventions. They were the poorer and richer areas, respectively, and were diametrically opposite. The Covid-19 pandemic has further exposed health inequalities locally and nationally and the same pattern seems to be replicated in the take-up of Covid 19 vaccines.

The question of *how* we tilt the structures the other way is a power question, but this is secondary to the more important question of *why* we should. Ultimately, says Galtung, our omission to do anything about health inequalities is a failure of compassion. This, he says, is behind the slow unpicking of the social welfare fabric of Scandinavia which levelled out the socio-economic hierarchies, with provision of health care for all. Those who were beneficiaries and now have become middle-class have no compassion with those who are suffering today. If politics is how we decide what kind of society we want and having the power to bring it about, wellbeing, like health, cannot be dissociated from power and politics. The politicisation of the NHS in the UK indicates just how much politics, power and health are linked. Writing about NEF's *5 Ways to Wellbeing* eleven years on, Annie Quick, who led the Foundation's work on inequality and wellbeing until 2018, says: "They were only ever intended as a limited communications tool, but their popularity far outstripped our more systemic work on wellbeing for policy making because they were things that could be done without major structural change. [...] What all these approaches lack, however, is a serious analysis of power. They lack an understanding of whose interests are served by our current economy and what it will take to seriously rebuild it." She concludes: "If politics is the practice of power then wellbeing needs more of it, not less."¹⁷ So what kind of politics do we need more of?

¹⁶ 24% of under-16s in Leeds live in relative poverty, compared to 19% nationally.

¹⁷ <https://neweconomics.org/2019/03/does-new-economics-need-wellbeing>

Politics and the *polis*

If we are to recognise and act on the vital importance of wellbeing for the health of people, society and the planet, we will have to do so in our cities. More than 55% of the world's population now live in urban areas and this is expected to rise to 68% by 2050¹⁸. Power, as well as population, is increasingly concentrated in cities; the UN-Habitat World Cities Report 2016 identifies decentralisation of power to cities as one of eight key global trends: "As cities grow, and spread out over the land, they have been the recipients of a worldwide trend to devolve power from the national to the local level ... the fact that so many states have chosen to move along the path of decentralization constitutes a remarkable phenomenon."¹⁹

Even for those who are not city dwellers, urbanism will directly affect them and will increasingly be their enculturated way of life. Urban geographer Ash Amin says: "Sociologically, contemporary cities do not spring to mind as the sites of community, happiness and well-being, except perhaps for those in the fast lane, the secure and well-connected, and those excited by the buzz of frenetic urban life. For the vast majority, cities are polluted, unhealthy, tiring, overwhelming, confusing, alienating. They are the places of low-wage work, insecurity, poor living conditions and dejected isolation for the many at the bottom of the social ladder daily sucked into them. They hum with the fear and anxiety linked to crime, helplessness and the close juxtaposition of strangers. They symbolise the isolation of people trapped in ghettos, segregated areas and distant dormitories, and they express the frustration and ill-temper of those locked into long hours of work or travel [and yet] cities still abound with all manner of acts of mutuality, friendship, pleasure and sociality".²⁰

We are conditioned, despite the origins of politics in the *polis* (city), to think of politics as Politics - the essentially national politics that preoccupies broadcast, print and social media - and so we 'see like a state'.²¹ If we think of *city* politics at all we see it as 'municipal' and so an

¹⁸ <https://www.un.org/development/desa/en/news/population/2018-revision-of-world-urbanization-prospects.html> accessed online 3.06.2019

¹⁹ *Urbanization and Development: Emerging Futures* (United Nations Human Settlements Programme, World Cities Report 2016, 10). Accessed online 9.12.2017. <http://wcr.unhabitat.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/WCR-2016-Full-Report.pdf>

²⁰ Ash Amin, *The Good City* (Urban Studies, 43 (5/6), Sage Publications, 2006), 1011.

²¹ James Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (Newhaven: Yale University Press, 1998).

inferior sub-set of national politics. The state's monopoly of Politics blinds us to the political nature and potentiality of the myriad ordinary daily interactions that maintain and create the fabric of society and are beyond the reach of the state. 'Seeing like a state' means that we assume the nation state to be the norm, along with a politics ontologically grounded in state sovereignty.

Cities offer hope for a very different kind of politics, both for the city and for a world that is, in reality, more a cosmopolis than a collection of nation states.²² Political theorist Warren Magnusson, and geographers Ash Amin and Nigel Thrift, speak of "seeing like a city" to critique the political hegemony of the state and its myth of sovereignty, and to describe a world that functions much more like a city in all its complexity, self-organisation, and absence of sovereignty. Magnusson says: "it is impossible to understand the world in which we live if we imagine it as a three- or four-dimensional space. Much more helpful are recent ideas from physics about hyperspace: an n-dimensional space in which each domain is related to all the others, even though the other domains may be imperceptible from the vantage point of any particular one [...]. The boundaries between different domains, like the social and the political, are always at issue, and the issue is always political. [And so], we are best advised to think of the urban as a hyperspace of many dimensions, each of which is produced by political action and related to the others politically".²³ To see like a city is to perceive a complex and dynamic order of both collaboration and conflict, and so "learning to deal with this order is our main political challenge".²⁴ This, he says, is best understood in terms of the kind of urban social movement described by Manuel Castells that engages with the complexities and complexion of urbanism as a way of life, with the city as a "space of flows". To see like a city is to recognise the complexity of political space; it also demands a politics suited to the city as a complex system. Amin and Thrift who say that the very infrastructure of cities determines socially just or unjust outcomes, suggest some of the ways in which such a politics of complexity works:

²² Benjamin Barber, political theorist and founder of the Global Parliament of Mayors, says: "It is a most remarkable political conundrum that the unique power held by sovereign states actually disempowers them from cross-border cooperation, while the corresponding powerlessness of cities facilitates such cooperation" Benjamin Barber, *If Mayors Ruled the World* (Newhaven: Yale University Press, 2013), 139.

²³ Warren Magnusson, *Local Self-Government and the Right to the City*, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2015), 21-22.

²⁴ *ibid.*, 26.

“We are talking here about a politics of leverage, a politics of small interventions with large effects, a politics of locating pinch points, and a politics of urban life as a trickster assemblage of like and unlike [...] a politics true to the machine that the city is, which is able to convert often small interventions into very large gains for the many, without necessarily touching on what some have come to regard as the only available levers of change, whether planning or political party or revolution.”²⁵

The right to the city

The city is not merely the space in and over which politics takes place but, as Henri Lefebvre says in his seminal *The Production of Space*, city-space itself is already political because it has been ‘produced’ by distributions of power flowing through the city. Despite cities being sites of globalising neo-liberal capitalism, Lefebvre says there are spaces in cities that will always exceed and elude all forms of sovereignty and hegemony. There is not space here to explain Lefebvre’s rich and complex analysis of city-space, but my focus is on these spaces which he calls “spaces of representation” (I will use Ed Soja’s name for them, “third space”).²⁶ These are the new spaces-between produced as people encounter one another across their various differences and in so doing discover a new common humanity. The production of new space ensues from the reorientation of the conscientised self in relation to other bodies, a new space-between which does not reproduce abstract space (in which the self and its social relations are constituted by capitalism) nor the social relations that hold it in place.²⁷ Essentially, this new space is a re-humanising space of encounter in which a new humanity be-comes, comes into being. The generation of newness across difference is of the essence of what it means to be a city, or as Aristotle said, “A city is a place where strangers meet”²⁸. This is the truly political space - the space in which a *polis* comes into being - much as Hannah Arendt says “natality” is the essence of politics²⁹. These spaces where structural violence is recognised, resisted, and not socially

²⁵ Ash Amin & Nigel Thrift, *Seeing Like a City* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2017), 6.

²⁶ Ed Soja, *Third Space: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real and Imagined Places* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1996).

²⁷ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, tr. D. Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 417.

²⁸ Harvey Cox, *The Secular City*. (Princeton: University Press, 2013), XXXVII.

²⁹ Hannah Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, eds. Joanna Scott and Judith Stark. (Chicago: University Press, 1996), 146-148.

reproduced, have a yeast-like ability to change, renew, and humanise the whole city, and so they are political in relation to the whole. Lefebvre insists on the newness of such space for human flourishing because, otherwise, our social relations are inevitably determined and distorted by existent space.

If cities make people, Lefebvre says people must have a “right to the city”, a right to shape the city that produces people, as David Harvey explains:

“The question of what kind of city we want cannot be divorced from that of what kind of social ties, relationship to nature, lifestyles, technologies and aesthetic values we desire. The right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city. It is, moreover, a common rather than an individual right since this transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanization. The freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is, I want to argue, one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights.”³⁰

The right to the city has been proposed as a new form of political citizenship that challenges the monopoly of the state to grant citizenship. It belongs to all simply by virtue of inhabiting the city, and so, for example, has been deployed to defend the interests of asylum seekers in Australia.³¹ A proposal for the right to the city to be endorsed by Habitat III, the 2016 United Nations’ *Future of Cities* summit, was blocked by China and the United States, but “inclusive” still made it thirty six times into the final *New Urban Agenda* document.³² Following the summit, Ada Colau, Mayor of Barcelona, wrote in the Guardian newspaper: “I believe you can’t talk about a just, sustainable, equitable or inclusive city if you don’t speak about the right to the city [a model of urban development that includes all citizens.]”³³ Writing of Lefebvre’s right to the city, Leo Hollis, in his book *Cities Are Good For You*, says something similar: “While the city was the place where inequality, injustice, and exploitation were most apparent, it was also the site of its transformation. The city causes the crisis - the home of neo-liberalism, the banking

³⁰ David Harvey, *The Right to the City* (in *New Left Review* 53: Sept Oct 2008), 23-40.

³¹ Chris Butler, *Critical Legal Studies and the Politics of Space* (*Social & Legal Studies* 18(3), 2009), 313–332.

³² <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/oct/18/world-quito-ecuador-future-cities-local-voices-habitat-3>, accessed 29.3.2019.

³³ <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/oct/20/habitat-3-right-city-concrete-policies-ada-colau>, accessed 29.3.2019.

community, hideous inequality - but also offers the best possible location for its salvation. Only the city could cure the city of its own ills, but this future could only come from the bottom up”.³⁴

The good city and the city of God

Jewish and Christian scriptures offer a rich theopolitical imaginary for wellbeing in an urbanising world. Of Jerusalem, Isaiah 54.13 says, “the well-being of your children will be great”. The word translated wellbeing is *shalom*, and the name Jerusalem itself has a meaning of “foundation of peace”. *Shalom*, variously translated in the English bible as welfare, favour, prosperity, safety, and ease, has much the same meaning as Galtung’s ‘positive peace’, and justice as a condition of *shalom* is explicit in the next verse, “in righteousness you will be established”. *Shalom* recognises no boundaries between the societal, political, environmental, spiritual, and personal; Isaiah 66.12 likens this peace to a river, a flow. *Shalom* has come when things are well, and so it is well-being. The context of the Isaiah 54 passage is God’s restoring love for the city. The good city is identical with the good of God’s people. Jerusalem is a metonym for well-being and the prophets warn of God’s judgement when it violates *shalom*. Likewise Christian eschatological hope is fulfilled in a city, the global cosmopolis of the new Jerusalem (Revelation 21 & 22). In the meantime, as Ash Amin and Leo Hollis remind us, we live in cities that seem to be of another order of being altogether.

A classic text for how the believer relates to the unbelieving city where they find themselves aliens and strangers is Jeremiah 29.7 (NASB): “Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile ...”. We read it as a call to be good citizens and to generally try and do good in the city we are passing through as pilgrims *en route* to the city to come. Again, the Hebrew word translated welfare is, of course, *shalom*. The city Jeremiah speaks of is Babylon, the symbolic antithesis of Jerusalem, and yet it is where believers should seek out, and expect to find, *shalom*. Here they are to create the conditions for wellbeing: build homes, create fruitful gardens, enjoy family life, seek out and contribute to the *shalom* the city offers, and make the city the concern of their prayer life. Jerusalem - ‘the city founded in peace’ - can be found in

³⁴ Leo Hollis, *Cities are Good for You* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 180.
The Kenarchy Journal (2022), 3, 46-71 Copyright © 2022

Babylon, just (as the prophets say) Babylon can be found in Jerusalem. This is not about believers doing good to the city, or for the city - as city dwellers they are caught up with everyone else in relationships of reciprocity, for good or ill, and so their well-being derives from the city being well. When they find how even this city (and therefore any city) can yield wellbeing, they and everyone else will be well, and their exile will be over.

The eschatological and messianic hope embodied in Jerusalem is not eclipsed by the present shalom to be discovered in Babylon, but only when they have learnt shalom in Babylon, can the exiles return to the Jerusalem they forfeited by abandoning the conditions that make for shalom. For much of global Judaism, this messianic hope is bound up with a this-worldly ethic of *tikkun olam*, which means to repair/mend/heal the world so that it becomes the eu-topian Jerusalem. For much of the history of Christian eschatology it has been other-worldly. The 19th century Scottish evangelical, Henry Drummond, restores a this-worldly significance to the new Jerusalem: "The significance of that name [the new Jerusalem] has been altered for most of us by religious poetry; we spell it with a capital and speak of the New Jerusalem as a synonym for Heaven. Yet why not take it simply as it stands, as a new Jerusalem? Try to restore the natural force of the expression - suppose John to have lived today and to have said London? "I saw a new London?" Jerusalem was John's London. All the grave and sad suggestion that the word London brings up today to the modern reformer, the word Jerusalem recalled to him. What in his deepest hours he longed and prayed for was a new Jerusalem, a reformed Jerusalem. And just as it is given to the man in modern England who is a prophet, to the man who believes God in the moral order of the world, to discern a new London shaping itself through all the sin and chaos of the city, so it was given to John to see a new Jerusalem rise from the ruins of the old."³⁵ Drummond was typical of the visionary 19th century evangelical reformers who, seeing another city coming from heaven, were largely responsible for alleviating the evils visited on the urban poor of inhumane working conditions, bad housing, poverty, and lack of education, and for provoking wider society to do the same.

It was Augustine of Hippo, the fifth century north African Bishop and theologian, who laid a conceptual foundation within which much of Christian theology since has grappled with the

³⁵ Henry Drummond, *The City Without a Church*, (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1988), 13-14.
The Kenarchy Journal (2022), 3, 46-71 Copyright © 2022

problem of the two cities symbolised by Jerusalem and Babylon.³⁶ In *City of God*, he writes of two citizenships of two cities intermingled in the *saeculum* - the time between the incarnation and the *parousia* - but predestined to have very different ends. Citizenship of the city of God is constituted by love and worship of God and with no need of any other law; citizenship of the earthly human city is constituted by love of self and dominion over others. Only the city of God therefore can truly be called a *res publica* or republic.

Augustine was writing *City of God* at a time of crisis in the secular city that provoked his reflection on the relationship between the church and the secular powers, and his political theology has come to the aid of theologians at times of similar crises throughout the Christian era. In the various 'post-' times we are living through - post-Christendom, post-modern, post-liberal, post-secular, post-colonial - there is a resurgence of interest in what he has to say. Some of that interest is in how he complexifies political space with his two cities. There is not one city in which the secular and the sacred jostle for space and power and find their various accommodations, but two distinct cities intermingled in a necessary and limited mutuality in the era of the *saeculum*. Recent neo-Augustinian and post-liberal political theologians share this idea of complex political space with Lefebvre, but not that this is to be found in the city. They have a radical critique of the secular liberal state but still do not consider the theo-political possibilities offered by the city as alternative political space. As a result, the church is often posited as the alternative and truly political and public space.

From Augustine onwards time has been the dominant dimension in eschatology, the spatial realisation of the city of God deferred to the *eschaton* (the last), and even then as Drummond says, often to a space other than this earth. This longitudinal perspective, Vitor Westhelle says, has its source in Augustine's attempt to "dissociate faith from social and political reality" in the context of the crisis facing the Roman Empire following the sacking of Rome by Alaric in 410 CE. As result, Westhelle argues, "the spatial denotations of eschaton have been glaringly absent from Western eschatological discourse. As much as the longitudinal perspective has insisted on an end within history and not beyond it, it is necessary to realise that eschaton also implies an

³⁶ Robert Markus says: "much of Western theology as well as of political thought has in fact been, at least in part, [...] a long drawn out conversation on the implications of Augustine's thought and about the issues he was concerned with". *Christianity and the Secular* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 41.

end within space and not beyond it”.³⁷ We should think of eschaton as an “experience of ultimacy” “the crossing of a threshold [that] entails exposure”³⁸. This exposure is to “the ends in the spectrum of the eschatological discourse [...] What redemption and damnation mean cannot be presupposed or foreknown; it comes with the crossing”. The exposure comes in the crossing into the space of an other which, he says, is also the exposure to the Other.³⁹ Eschatological space is also the space of the *eschatos*, those who in the present order are last but who are first over the threshold into the economy of God (Matthew 20.16). Westhelle’s spatial eschatology offers an intriguing hermeneutic for reading Lefebvre’s third space, imbuing it with transcendent and pneumatological potentiality.⁴⁰ Spatial eschaton opens onto new space, with the potential for what Lefebvre calls “the construction of a new [city] on new foundations, on another scale and in other conditions, in another society”.⁴¹ These spaces in which the right to the city can be exercised can properly be called democratic, and therefore can properly be called ekklesial spaces.

Ekklesia

Of the elemental forms of the ancient Greek *polis* the democratic *ekklesia* was the core. The *ekklesia* was the gathering of the people exercising their collective power to make and shape their city. It is unsurprising that the democratic ideal originates in the city because cities are essentially *poleis* without sovereignty. Where the modern nation state makes its claim to sovereign power over its territory, cities do not. An *ekklesia* is therefore a political form appropriate to the *polis* that the city is (just as sovereigntist political forms are appropriate to states). The democratic ideal may be fading now, along with belief in the liberal nation-state to which it became attached, but it was only ever an unrealised ideal. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza says the classical Greek definition of democracy which promised equal participation to all in the

³⁷ Vítor Westhelle, *Eschatology and Space: The Lost Dimension in Theology Past and Present* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 79.

³⁸ *ibid.*, XIV.

³⁹ *ibid.*, XV.

⁴⁰ Lefebvre himself, though not a believer, retained a mystical sensibility and understanding that what he was talking about was the third age of the Spirit (joy) in Joachim’s progressive eschatology, the first two being the ages of the Father (law) and the Son (faith). Rob Shields *Lefebvre, Love and Struggle* (London: Routledge, 1998), 31.

⁴¹ Lefebvre, 1996, 148.

ekklesia of the polis “in practice, granted such rights only to imperial, elite, propertied, educated male heads of household by restricting full citizenship to them”.⁴² The ekklesia has never been fully realised and so democracy remains a promise while ever it denies equality and inclusion. The early church comes into being in the space of Empire but also in the political space founded on the ideal of the Greek polis, and so the early Christians’ choice to self-designate themselves as ekklesia should be read in that light, as an alternative body politic, an ekklesia foreshadowing and signifying the fullness of God’s intention for the polis. The translation of ekklesia by ‘church’ has obscured and even reversed its radical political freight of meaning, indeed ‘church’ derives from *kyriakon*, with its meaning of “belonging to the lord/master/father”.⁴³ The early Christian use of ekklesia signifies a radical democratic ethic working towards a cosmopolis, “foreshadowed” at Pentecost as all “Jews, Greeks, Barbarians, wo/men and men, slave wo/men and free, those with high social status and those with nothing in the eyes of the world [...]share in the multi-faceted gifts of Divine Wisdom-Spirit”.⁴⁴ Schüssler Fiorenza recovers this originary sense of ekklesia for a feminist political theology encapsulated in the “ekklesia of wo/men”.⁴⁵ The ekklesia of wo/men is both a principle and an horizon, a struggle, process, and calling. It is “constituted not by super- and sub- ordination but by egalitarian relationships”. She says: “Ekklesia, as the decision making assembly of full citizens, insists on the ancient Roman and medieval democratic maxim: “that which affects all should be determined by everyone”.⁴⁶ Because equality, freedom, and democracy are inherent in what it means to be image bearers of G*d⁴⁷, they can never be suppressed and so the ekklesia of wo/men does not require for its realisation some guarantor of rights such as the state and the law, nor is it the “property of the superior races of western European civilisation”.⁴⁸ Church and world share the same utopian horizon and so the ekklesia of wo/men is a critical “hermeneutical space” from which church and state can be adjudicated as to how far they fall short of such an ekklesia.

⁴² Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Power of the Word: Scripture and the Rhetoric of Empire* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 71.

⁴³ *ibid.*, 78.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, 77, 79.

⁴⁵ “In order to take into account not only the changing definitions of woman as a social-political category but also subaltern women’s and men’s experiences of domination by elite women and men, I write wo/men in a broken fashion, to destabilise this category woman”. *ibid.*, 13.

⁴⁶ This is similar to the motto of the Poverty Truth Commissions that have been happening in various paces in Scotland and England over the past twelve years: “Nothing about us, without us, is for us”.

⁴⁷ Her neologisms queer words that have carried gendered meanings.

⁴⁸ *ibid.*, 80.

The ekklesia of wo/men is a space that is “already” and “not yet” and so is not merely a reversal of kyriarchal domination and subordination but is the alternative to empire.⁴⁹ In and through struggles for liberation, the vision of the ekklesia, of G*d’s life-giving and transforming power for community, becomes experiential reality in the midst of structural sin, which is constituted by death-dealing kyriarchal powers⁵⁰ of exploitation and dehumanisation⁵¹. This is “a radical democratic hermeneutical space” from where to judge existent political forms, but there are many other such radical democratic assemblies (ekklesiae) in the cosmopolis of G*d’s very different peoples”.⁵² The ekklesia of wo/men has gender recognition and equality as its lodestar but qualitatively equivalent ekklesiae might as theirs have race, disability, economic justice, and so on. Schüssler Fiorenza, like others⁵³, uses the term “radical democracy” to distinguish her ekklesia from democracy as we know it, and cites Sheldon Wolin: “Democracy was and is the political ideal that condemns its own denial of equality and inclusion”.⁵⁴ The radical democracy at the heart of each ekklesia - and between each - prevents closure and is the beginning of politics. In other words, and using Westhelle’s definition of eschatological space, only if the ekklesia *begins* with the *eschatos*, the last and the least, can it be called democratic, because ‘a city that is not good for all is not good at all’.

Against this eschatological backdrop, a city can be judged by the extent to which it furthers or harms wellbeing for those who are excluded and marginalised. Using Schüssler Fiorenza’s definition of ekklesia as hermeneutical space, we can apply to the city what has been limited to ecclesiology. An example might be the passage in 1 Corinthians 12, where Paul speaks about what constitutes the health of the social body: “But God has put the body together, giving greater honour to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, 70.

⁵⁰ “I have developed a complex analysis of interstructured and multiplicative dominations and have coined the neologisms kyriarchy/kyriocentrism (from Gk. Kyrios= domination by the emperor, lord, master, father, husband, elite propertied male), as descriptive of the workings of empire. These neologisms seek to express the intersecting structures of dominations and to replace the commonly used term, patriarchy, which is often understood in terms of binary gender dualism.” *ibid.*, 14

⁵¹ *ibid.*, 77.

⁵² *ibid.*, 69, 82.

⁵³ For example, Romand Coles and Sheldon Wolin.

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, 76.

with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it”.⁵⁵ A city (a body politic) with vastly different experiences of health and wellbeing is an unhealthy city and unaddressed power asymmetries have direct consequences for the health of citizens. If the Lord’s Supper is the elemental essence of the ekklesia and the spatial economy in which we encounter our others and especially the poor⁵⁶ (*eschatoi* = the last/least ones), it is also, as Westhelle suggests, the threshold at which we are exposed to “the ends of the spectrum of eschatological judgement”. I have always read 1 Corinthians 11.29-30 as divine judgement on the bodies of the selfishly richer members of the ekklesia: “For whoever eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgement to themselves, if they do not judge the body rightly. For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep”. But it may (also) be that the poor health, and even death, of the poorer members of the social body is a judgement on the whole body that has failed to discern and enact the divine shalom by which it is constituted. The ekklesia of the poor, like the ekklesia of wo/men is a critical hermeneutical space from which to read the city.

Healing in the city

Walter Brueggemann, a Christian scholar of the Tanach or Hebrew scriptures, ends his collection of essays exploring the multi-faceted dimensions of shalom with an essay, *Health Care as Healing and Caring*. He employs Paul Tournier’s distinction between ‘technical medicine’ and ‘personal medicine’, both of which are valuable. Technical medicine is the “the enormously complicated network of machinery and institutional sophistication that understands disease and cure in precise and scientific ways”. Personal medicine is the “mystery of healing interaction that happens when persons take one another seriously, that resists institutionalisation and predictability, but which seems to be essential to whole humanness”.⁵⁷ Technical medicine is an elite knowledge which has its own remote language and is costly. Brueggemann says “perhaps it is strange to include a statement about God on the subject of health care.[...] In the biblical tradition God is precisely the free, undomesticated power of wholeness who is not owned by

⁵⁵ 1 Corinthians 12.24-26. NASB

⁵⁶ I use “the poor” in the same sense as Jon Sobrino, to signify all who are deprived of full and flourishing existence by the current system. Sobrino, in *No Salvation Outside the Poor*, says “The poor are those who die before their time” (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2008), 79.

⁵⁷ Walter Brueggemann, *Peace* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2001), 193.

those who own everything and who is not understood by those who know everything useful”.⁵⁸ The exodus narrative, the “primal event of God’s coming in the Bible concludes with ‘I will not bring upon you any of the diseases I brought upon the Egyptians, for I am the Lord who heals you’.⁵⁹ The exodus is presented as not only the primal event of liberation but also the supreme act of healing - healing as empowerment, liberation, and restoration. The Bible has this strange notion of the interconnectedness of freedom and healing, of slavery and sickness”.⁶⁰

Brueggemann says the sacral requirements of the second temple as depicted in the Christian testament disqualified the poor, the ritually impure, and the disinherited from accessing the place where institutional healing happened. Jesus’s free offer of health care infuriated and frightened the qualified elite because “Kings view health as a tool for governmental policy to enhance the throne and its friends. Prophets insist it must be a public trust for all folks because all are bound to one another”.⁶¹ He says: “Jesus asks [...]: Can a viable community be ordered any other way, if we rightly understand persons as belongers, community as covenant, God as intruding healing and health as a network of care. Jesus’ notion of healing, and therefore of health care, is not an oddity in his teaching. It is consistent with everything else he did and said”.⁶² Personhood, community, freedom and healing are indivisible: personhood is given in community and community is a network of persons in covenant with one another (Brueggemann does not limit this to the church). Personhood grows with agency and therefore freedom, and community is enhanced when all are committed to the wellbeing of all. This leads him to redefine health as the ability to fully share in the life of the community, and healing as the restoration of persons to “their full power and vitality in the life of the community”. Similarly, “God as transcendent, healing intervener is discerned as that force, person, or agent who comes unexpectedly and powerfully into situations of sickness and death and transforms them. The transformations are from diminishment to enhancement of both persons and community”.⁶³ So redefined, health and healing are literally endemic (*en-dêmos* = in the people) to the new democratic (*dêmos* = common/free people, *krátos* = power) ekklesia that is born at Pentecost. Transforming society’s perception of health begins,

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, 194.

⁵⁹ Exodus 15: 26.

⁶⁰ *ibid.*, 195.

⁶¹ *ibid.*, 196.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 198.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 198-199.

Brueggemann suggests, with “seeing that the political and troublesome phrase “health care” consists of healing and caring. And everyone has been promised that in the gospel!” The ministry of Christians, then, is to enable the world to become the kind of community where “if one member suffers, all suffer with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it”⁶⁴.⁶⁵

Conclusion

Wellbeing has become synonymous with personal wellbeing and particularly with mental health. As such it is considered a secondary aspect of healthcare and so, in terms of the resources it receives from the state, it is very much the poor relation of curative and technical health. I have argued here that wellbeing is more than one of the wider determinants of health and that the biblical principle of shalom helps us grasp the full depth and breadth of its importance for the human and beyond-human world. Shalom signifies a healthy and health-giving ecology and economy and encompasses the Hebrew ethic of *tikkun olam* - repairing/healing the world - and the being-well of health. It *is* personal, but it binds together (in the truest sense of religion - re [again] + ligare [bind or connect]) what has been split apart and so is also a social and societal ethic. The *process* by which we live out this ethic, and shape our society accordingly, is political, in its truest meaning of creating the human *polis*.

The poor health of the poor is because the *polis* is not good for them which means that its politics is failing them. This is not ‘just how things are and have always been’ but is a result of the structural or systemic violence that inflicts damage on the bodies and minds of the poorest citizens. The structures embody and maintain asymmetrical power relations in their tilt in favour of those with more power and material resources. The remedy for the tilt is not to ‘level up’ (bringing the poor up to the level of the rich) but to find the pivot points that remedy the tilt (redistributing the wealth and power of the rich). As Galtung points out, the structural and systemic nature of violence against the poor is held in place culturally, but ultimately by a failure of compassion. A statist politics founded on a myth of sovereignty is hard-wired to reproduce power inequalities in socio-economic relations.

⁶⁴ 1 Corinthians 12: 26.

⁶⁵ *ibid.*, 200.

This structural violence is spatially embedded in the city and its economy. An egregious example from Leeds' history is how the houses of the workers in the mills, factories, and foundries were built for them by industrialists to the east of the city where the prevailing westerly winds blew the toxic smoke from their workplaces. In recent years the city's waste incinerator has been built - in east Leeds - adjacent to some of the city's oldest and poorest housing. The east of the city still has some of the worst health statistics in the city. The radial roads that bring commuters from the affluent suburbs to the centre of the city pass through and pollute the 'rim' around the city centre containing some of the oldest and poorest housing stock and newer social housing estates. Gentrification and 'regeneration' of the city centre reduces the physical spaces in the city where people from the poorest areas traditionally shopped. One community member of the Poverty Truth Commission, commenting on the gentrification of the city's markets following the opening of the city's most exclusive shopping centre right next door, asked "where am I going to shop now?" The schools in the poorest areas struggle to attract and retain teachers and the same is true for primary health care. Public transport serves the most profitable routes and not necessarily the areas that most rely on it. These infrastructures that maintain 'the tilt' are the subject of Ash Amin's and Nigel Thrift's book *Seeing Like a City*, along with the kind of politics needed to change it, "a politics of small interventions with large effects".⁶⁶ Leeds Gypsy and Traveller Exchange have been exploring with organisations that also work amongst marginalised groups how solidarity between them might affect system change on behalf of these groups. They have suggested that commissioning of healthcare could be done "from the margins" on the basis that if it works for Gypsy and Traveller communities, which suffer the worst health and shortest life expectancy, it will work for all.

The growing importance and power of cities are an opportunity to rethink politics by relocating it in its originary *polis*. Derrida argues the fatal flaw of democracy is the state sovereignty which is the condition of its possibility.⁶⁷ Recent theorisations of cities agree that cities are of a different order or political ontology from states, most importantly in that they are not sovereign *poleis*. They are, of course, subjected to sovereignties of many kinds but the spatial - and therefore political - complexity of cities is inassimilable by sovereign power and

⁶⁶ Ash Amin & Nigel Thrift, *Seeing Like a City* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2017), 6.

⁶⁷ Daniel Matthews, *The Democracy To Come: Notes on the Thought of Jacques Derrida*. <https://criticallegalthinking.com/2013/04/16/the-democracy-to-come-notes-on-the-thought-of-jacques-derrida/> accessed July 6, 2021.

control. I have suggested that Lefebvre's "third space" epitomises what Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza means by *ekklesia* as a fully humanising space of radical democracy. The originary Pentecostal *ekklesia* finds *spatial* expression in the city when eschatological thresholds of otherness and difference are encountered and traversed, and the *eschatoi* (the last and the least) are the first in the new spaces (*ekklisiae*) that come into being. These are the healing spaces in which Walter Brueggemann says people are restored to "their full power and vitality in the life of the community". The new Jerusalem or, in my case, the new Leeds, comes into spatial being in innumerable *ekklisiae* which are fractals of the eschatological cosmopolis, the new Jerusalem. The power of these spaces to grant political agency is of a different logic from that of states; Brueggemann says we can discern the intervention of God in the "force, person, or agent" that restores full personhood, and Schüssler Fiorenza attributes equality, freedom, and democracy to what it means be image bearers of G*d.

In closing, I want to say something about how *ekklesial* space comes into being, but I do not believe it is possible to be definitive. Lefebvre speaks of the importance of artists for holding up a mirror to how things are and enabling us to see in different ways. It is of the eventual nature of these spaces as **new** that they exceed any representation we might make and escape any conditions for their existence we may want to impose. I therefore suggest they are pneumatological, and therefore free, and are more likely to come about where encounters across difference occur. Azusa Street, Los Angeles, where, in 1906, black and white Americans together experienced the Spirit, was the originary space for the global pentecostal and charismatic movements, but it was also a profoundly *political* space in the context of segregation in the United States at the time. The sign of many languages on the day of Pentecost anticipates the cosmopolitan new Jerusalem *and* the super-diversity of contemporary global cities. But these spaces need not be, *prima facie*, religious; they can be sought out, or just stumbled across. Harvey Cox in *the Secular City* says "theology [...] is concerned first of all with finding out where the action is, the discernment of the opening. Only then can it begin the work of shaping a church which can get to the action."⁶⁸ Experience tells me we can be intentional and do what Rosemary Carbine calls "*ekklesial* work".⁶⁹ One of the most helpful things we heard

⁶⁸ Harvey Cox, *The Secular City* (Princeton: University Press, 2013), 149.

⁶⁹ Rosemary Carbine, "Ekklesial Work: Toward a Feminist Public Theology" (*Harvard Theological Review*, 99 (04), 2006), 433-455.

in the early days of work with Together for Peace, was “all you can do is create a space where something might happen”.⁷⁰ The careful opening and holding of spaces of humanising encounter have political potential in the terms I have outlined. One example, that has been referred to several times in other articles in this journal, is the Poverty Truth Commission approach that holds the space between people with lived experience of poverty and the people who (appear) to hold the levers of power. The space-between becomes political when the former group discover their power and begin to realise (as one of the Leeds participants said) that their poverty is not their fault, and if not, the fault must lie somewhere, and when the latter allow the perspectives of the former to disrupt their representations of how things are.

Bibliography

Amin, A., *The Good City*. *Urban Studies*, **43** (5/6), Sage Publications, 2006.

Amin, A., & Thrift, N., *Seeing Like a City*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2017.

Arendt, H., *Love and Saint Augustine*, edited by Joanna Scott and Judith Stark. Chicago: University Press, 1996.

Barber, B.R. *If Mayors Ruled the World*. Newhaven: Yale University Press, 2013.

Butler, C. 2009 Critical Legal Studies and the Politics of Space. *Social & Legal Studies* **18**(3), 2009.

Brueggemann, W. *Peace*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, Princeton, 2001.

Carbine, R.P. “Ekklesial Work: Toward a Feminist Public Theology.” *Harvard Theological Review*. **99**(04), 2006.

Channel 4. “The Great Leveller.” 1996. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WmEt2WuMZ7E>

Cox, H. *The Secular City*. Princeton: University Press, 2013.

Drummond, H. *The City Without a Church*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1988.

Galtung, J. <https://www.futurelearn.com/info/courses/medical-peace-work/0/steps/27092>

⁷⁰ This was from Michael Fryer, now Professor of Practice at the Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies, University of San Diego.

Galtung, J. Lecture given at the Richardson Institute for Peace Studies, Lancaster University, June 22, 2013

Harvey, D. "The Right to the City" in *New Left Review* 53: Sept Oct, 2008.

Hollis, L. *Cities Are Good for You: The Genius of the Metropolis*. London: Bloomsbury, 2013.

Lefebvre, H. *The Production of Space*. tr. Nicholson-Smith, D. Oxford: Blackwell, 1991.

Magnusson, W. *Politics of Urbanism: Seeing Like a City*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2011.

Magnusson, W. *Local Self-Government and the Right to the City*. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2015.

Markus, R.A. *Christianity and the Secular*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006.

Matthews, D. "The Democracy To Come: Notes on the Thought of Jacques Derrida". Accessed July 6 2021. <https://criticallegalthinking.com/2013/04/16/the-democracy-to-come-notes-on-the-thought-of-jacques-derrida/>.

Scott, J. *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. Newhaven: Yale University Press, 1998.

Schüssler Fiorenza, E. *The Power of the Word: Scripture and the Rhetoric of Empire*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007.

Shields, R. *Lefebvre, Love and Struggle*. London: Routledge, 1999.

Sobrinho, J. *No Salvation Outside the Poor*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2009.

Soja, E. *Third Space: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real and Imagined Places*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1996.

Westhelle, V. *Eschatology and Space: The Lost Dimension in Theology Past and Present*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

Wikipedia. "Whitehall Study." Last modified January 5, 2022. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whitehall_Study