Cultivating the "good city"
The theological engagement of the Institute
for Urban Ministry within the City of Tshwane

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Abstract

The vision of the "good city" is worth striving for. Enacting the pastoral circle can be theologically generative towards cultivating the "good city." The urban transition of 1993 in Pretoria/Tshwane, South Africa, held unknowns and possibilities. During this time, a small community with lived faith committed to journeying with the urban poor using the pastoral circle. Such contextual theological engagement birthed the Institute for Urban Ministry (IUM), and the pastoral circle remained at the heart of IUM. This article explores the possibilities of animating the "good city" in Tshwane and the Gauteng City-Region (GCR) as IUM applies the pastoral circle within the Tshwane Ecumenical Leaders Forum.

Keywords: "good city", pastoral circle, Tshwane, Gauteng City-Region, *oikoumene*, theological education

1. Introduction

The "good city" has captivated the intrigue and imagination of urban planning, scholarship and practitioners for nearly six decades. To set parameters on this article, the author interacts with elements of the "good city" as articulated by Ash Amin, John Friedmann and Elaine Graham, urban geographer, theorist and planner and theologian, respectively.

Ash Amin (2006:1021) identifies the "good city as an ethic of care incorporating the principles of social justice, equality and mutuality." John Friedmann (2000:469-471) imagines the good city whereby an empowered civil society supports and defends human flourishing so the most vulnerable have adequate social provision. Elaine Graham (2008:12,17) integrates urban life with faith and lifts up the role of faith-based organisations to harness "faithful capital," building social networks, partnerships and joint initiatives for flourishing urban society. Faith-based organisations generate "faithful capital" by long-term presence, contextual theological engagement and concrete actions in the city (Graham & Lowe, 2009).

This article places the aforementioned elements of the good city in conversation with the long-standing contextual theological engagement of the Institute for Urban Ministry (IUM) within the City of Tshwane, South Africa. Government reform changed Pretoria to

the City of Tshwane in 2000 to re-organise a number of separate local authorities into one interconnected metropolitan area (Mabin, 2015). IUM enacts the transformative, four-moment "pastoral circle" of Holland and Henriot (1983) to theologically engage Tshwane with its complexities and possibilities. Tshwane is a vital urban centre for South Africa because it is the administrative capital city and key municipality within the Gauteng City-Region (GCR), the urban provincial powerhouse of the economy in the country. The "African City of Tshwane" (Mashau, 2014) is influential for both the country and continent with regard to the government, economy, research, communications, mission innovation, and theological education and formation.

The pastoral circle or praxis cycle when practiced in community conscientises and activates creative agency for transformation (Holland & Henriot, 1983:xv), cultivating fertile conditions over time for good things to flourish in the city. This article begins with an introduction to a lived urban African Christian spirituality which emanates IUM's ongoing urban praxis of applying the pastoral circle within Tshwane. The article then moves through the moments of the pastoral circle following the traditional sequence (Holland & Henriot, 1983:8): insertion, social analysis, theological reflection and pastoral planning. When serving as the director of IUM, the author of this article applied the four-moment pastoral circle within the Tshwane Ecumenical Leaders Forum and traced aspects of the good city being cultivated by promoting an ethic of care, upholding human flourishing and leveraging "faithful capital" to facilitate greater theological co-operation in Tshwane.

2. Beginning with the lived faith that birthed the Institute for Urban Ministry

Before engaging the first moment of the pastoral circle let us acknowledge what Gustavo Gutierrez (2012: loc. 492) identified as the beginning of all theological work -- lived faith. The lived faith in community sits at the heart of IUM and the pastoral circle emanating each moment of contextual theological engagement in Tshwane. The lived faith of an urban

African Christian grass-roots movement that birthed IUM embodies three interrelated theological commitments: *oikoumene*, priority for the urban poor and communities of care. One can hear the undertones of the aforementioned elements of the good city within the urban African lived faith in community.

2.1 *Oikoumene* as God's urban household

The lived faith in community that created IUM understands *oikoumene* with unique particularity. A specialist in Christian higher education, Hope Antone (2005), offers an inclusive definition of *oikoumene* as God's household with boundless love of the whole creation. This definition by Antone (2005:29-30) invites theology and theo-

logical education to break free from isolation with resolve to dialogue and collabo-
ratively address systemic poverty, social injustices and disintegration of creation.
Oikoumene as the household of God being the whole inhabited world resonates
with the lived faith of the community eventually establishing IUM. The niche of
IUM's African urban lived faith however is seeing *oikoumene* as God's household
in the city (Meylahn, 2009).

It was 1993 and South Africa was transitioning from apartheid into what was
themed as the new South Africa. Confronted by unprecedented changes, especially
within urban contexts, a cluster of churches, an informal network of friends and
some of the most vulnerable inhabitants of Pretoria Central (the main central busi-
ness district and downtown-area of Tshwane) became curious enough, perhaps
needy enough, to start doing African urban theology together (de Beer & de Beer,
2002). This small community in faith accepted the shared calling to see *oikoume-
ne* as God's urban household for healing, belonging and wholeness, refusing to
settle for a false duality between *polis* (city) and *oikoumene* (Russel, 1993; Palm
& Le Roux, 2018). God's household and presence are in the city.

Theology alone was insufficient for active participation in Tshwane. The cultural,
racial, political, historical, spatial, spiritual and psycho-social dynamics of urban
transitions necessitated ongoing discernment, critique and action. Wilna de Beer
and Stephan de Beer (2002:265) were compelled to deepen Christian presence
in Pretoria Central asserting that a "holistic and inclusive pastoral praxis should
be expressed both on the margins and on the public squares, as a sign of both
responsible discipleship and an affirmation of our covenantal interdependence in
the household of God." The ecumenical, diaconal, pastoral and theological engage-
ment of the city, God's urban household at that time within South Africa, ushered in
Pretoria Community Ministries (PCM)[1], and subsequently IUM.

2.2 The urban poor priority

Immersed in human suffering and tending to pregnant possibilities, there was
no African urban theological handbook for dealing with the evolving inner city.
However, guided by Stephan de Beer (2014), ecumenism in action prioritised the
urban poor as mutual partners of knowledge and sources of hope for community-
based solutions. According to the late Vuyani Vellem (2017:2), "The poor and the
marginalised, not Western civilisation, constitute our future for the development of
life-affirming alternatives of civilisation and knowledge." The knowledges and daily

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[1]   PCM started in 1993 with six inner city churches as partners of the ecumenical community organi-
sation. PCM became the Tshwane Leadership Foundation (TLF) in 2003 to sustain the faith-based
urban movement, pivot within Tshwane municipality and participate in a global network of Leadership
Foundations.

experiences of the poor in the African City of Tshwane matter as wisdom for today and tomorrow (de Beer, 2014).

The urban poor priority does not romanticise the people and places afflicted by poverty and oppression. Rather, by prioritising the poor, prophetic and critical accompaniment names death and rampant attempts to de-humanise. God is angered, even insulted, when people are not prioritised before profit, a morally bankrupt system leading to generations of enslavement, bondage and oppression of the poor and the human community (Vellem, 2017). Kritzinger (2014:4) highlights how "Jesus of Nazareth stood squarely in this prophetic tradition by living in solidarity with people side-lined and stigmatised" by the oppressive, economic, religious and purity system of the city of Jerusalem. Within God's urban household, the poor have a rightful place to be recognised, protected, seen, heard and valued.

As PCM journeyed with the urban poor interpreting the socio-political, economic, spiritual and spatial realities with theological reflection and prophetic action, IUM was birthed (de Beer 2012). The approach of contextual urban theological engagement strengthened the resolve for alternative visions within the emerging urban African faith-based movement. IUM subsequently formed to broaden and deepen contextual theological formation of community-and faith-based leadership and practical training in urban community transformation in Tshwane and beyond (de Beer, 2012). To fully participate in God's urban household the vantage point and presence of the poor was prioritised within the lived faith of the urban movement stewarded by the PCM ecumenical community and IUM as the specialised training partner.

2.3 Communities of care in the city

The third commitment within the lived faith that gave expression to IUM is nourishing communities of care. Enforced apartheid design scarred the city. Oppression, forced removals and systematic divestment left visible reminders of forgotten people and spaces throughout Tshwane (de Beer, 2014).

In "Change-making in a (post)apartheid city," de Beer and de Beer (2018:2) recall how essential it is to create communities of care empowered by God's presence for people and places to flourish and express wholeness in the inner city. The original community of care within the urban movement was The Potter's House, designed in Tshwane as the first-ever non-racial safe space and shelter for women-at-risk and their children (de Beer & de Beer, 2002). IUM was invited to walk humbly with the women in a journey of mutual edification as a community of care, discipleship and humanisation (de Beer & de Beer, 2018).

This historical and theological backdrop of the lived faith that birthed IUM in Tshwane gives shape to IUM's core. The theological underpinnings of *oikoumene*,

epistemological and hermeneutical priority of the urban poor and communities of care emanate each moment of the pastoral circle. The author of this article was invited to become the director of IUM in 2014 to nurture its unique charism. Upon entering the urban faith journey in community, the author discerned to enact the pastoral circle within the Tshwane Ecumenical Leaders Forum. To begin to see how IUM's theological engagement cultivates the good city, we now consider the first moment of the pastoral circle, insertion.

3. Insertion in the Tshwane Ecumenical Leaders Forum

The first movement of theological query as a social actor of faith is insertion (Holland & Henriot, 1983). South African missiologist and friend of IUM, Klippies Kritzinger, offers nuance to insertion. With Tshwane as his locus of mission praxis, Kritzinger (2008:773) understands insertion as the personal agency of urban mission, embracing 360-degree encounters where one sees and comes to see again who I am, who we are and how we are in relationship together. People encounter other people, places, powers and Jesus among us. With reflexivity, de Beer and de Beer (2018) posit that in our encounter of the city, the city also encounters us.\

3.1 Personal encounter with a model of accompaniment

With this in mind, the author now turns to reflect upon on my encounters in Tshwane as the director of IUM through insertion with the Tshwane Ecumenical Leaders Forum. An insight arises from the initial encounter with an ecumenical leader whom I met at the Tshwane Homeless Summit in 2015, our late Sister Marian of the Catholic Church Archdiocese of Pretoria.

Before Sister Marian passed on, she embodied what Pope Francis (2013:133-134) called the "'art of accompaniment' which teaches us to remove our sandals before the sacred ground of the other." As a pillar in the Tshwane Ecumenical Leaders Forum, Sister Marian participated in the Tshwane Homelessness Forum with steady accompaniment. She committed to solidarity by presence, love, listening and learning alongside homeless persons in Tshwane. Her proximity and authentic relationships opened a two-way path of liberation between homeless persons and the Tshwane Ecumenical Leaders Forum (Francis, 2013). Sister Marian's accompaniment towards life and making Tshwane a home for all modelled the Incarnation (Rocke & Van Dyke, 2017).

3.2 IUM's accompaniment with the Tshwane Ecumenical Leaders Forum

After the Tshwane Homeless Summit, IUM was invited to an ecumenical leaders' conversation to consider the *Pathways out of homelessness in the City of Tshwane Social Contract* (Renkin & de Beer, 2017). Not knowing it at the time,

the Tshwane Homeless Summit and subsequent initiative to gather ecumenical leadership for prayer, conversation and breakfast retrieved the energy and faithful capital of ecumenism in Tshwane. The priority of the struggling marginalised, such as homeless persons, remained the responsibility of ecumenical leadership in churches and faith-based organisations. By being invited to participate in the growing ecumenism in action, IUM's accompaniment in a small way contributes to cultivating the good city.

As IUM accompanied ecumenical leadership from different backgrounds, experiences and interpretations of history, I observed my theology and posture of urban mission becoming malleable. Black liberation struggle in historic and current South African urban contexts framed our conversations, discernment, reflections and actions. I encountered and was encountered by *ubuntu* as humanity practising humane relationships of mutuality (cf. Hankela 2015; Vellem 2017). The Tshwane Ecumenical Leaders Forum stood in the urban world from the position of what Gerald West (2006:319) identified as "multi-dimensional analysis of the relationship between oppressor and oppressed." The Forum's lens in the city critiques oppressors' attempts to make the oppressed non-human in every way -- economically, psychologically, culturally, racially, socially, sexually, physically, morally, spiritually and spatially (Vellem, 2017). This multi-dimensional, contextual Christian way of seeing and being in the city motivates dialogue, agency and responses.

3.3 Accompaniment unveils and avails learning

Through a number of different encounters during IUM's accompaniment with the Tshwane Ecumenical Leaders Forum, the author uncovered three lessons for urban mission. Firstly, I experienced liberative friendship where out of the abundance of mutuality and respect, each person could freely give and receive care, an indicator of true community (McKnight, 1995). The friendships within the Forum were also sturdy enough for people to say what they really thought, giving admonition with the understanding that we were committed to unity in diversity, ongoing collaboration and companionship in urban mission.

Secondly and painfully, I had my biases, prejudices and privilege broken open. My white, middle-class sensibility for certainty, comfortability, order and control attempted to dampen creative agency in discernment dialogue and theological reflection. I had to heed the call and invitation to experience conversions (Kritzinger, 1991; Vellem, 2017). Even though I was the director of IUM, my middle-class values undermine IUM's core theological commitments and display a fraudulent message of Jesus and impede human flourishing. Steve Biko and Aelred Stubbs (2016:106) posited, "Black culture above all implies freedom on our part to innovate without recourse to white values." My middle-class, white values for control

tried to stifle the Forum's creative agency to make culture and prophetically address predominate culture which does not respect the urban other.

And thirdly, through accompaniment IUM shares the charism of building relational networks. *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* recently dedicated an entire issue to network weaving and collaboration in mission. In that issue Porter and Pubols (2020:5) call for healthy network leadership to draw in Spirit-empowered individuals and communities for focused engagement within their geography. For over 20 years in Tshwane, IUM has been advocating for the African urban agenda to be held with greater intentionality in theological discourse, mission, church life and faith-based organisations in the city. After generative urban praxis in community with priority to excluded places and people, shortly after its birth, IUM became the convener of the Biennial Consultation on Urban Ministry in 1996 (Swart & de Beer, 2014). Hosted in Tshwane by IUM and partners, seldom heard voices and African urbanisms and urban ministry models are featured. This unique space for African urban theological reflection has become relational and spiritual sustenance for urban practitioners, scholars and activists from over 30 cities in South Africa, Africa and around the world.

Whilst networking is happening broadly, it remains a challenge in Tshwane and the GCR to deepen relational networks around a shared vision. IUM's accompaniment with the Tshwane Ecumenical Leaders Forum built friendships, tends to the capacities of the urban church and faith-based organisations and discerns what could emerge out of our prophetic and priesting responsibilities in Tshwane. We are accountable to each other, the most vulnerable in the city and the primary good of the city (Renkin & de Beer 2017). To get a better idea of what might be a collaborative step in making a good city, the author now turns to the social analysis moment in the pastoral circle.

4. Social analysis of the City of Tshwane within the Gauteng City-Region

The second moment of the pastoral circle, social analysis, according to Henriot and Holland (1983:13) "is an indispensable step toward effective action on behalf of justice." Holding the observations from the first moment with preparation to enter the third and fourth moments, social analysis of Tshwane provides solid footing for theological reflection and pastoral action towards the good city.

4.1 Historical background

Tshwane is the administrative capital of South Africa and one of nine municipalities in the GCR. Long before becoming a built-up urban region, grasslands, freshwater, minerals and mountainous protection sustained "one of the cradles of humankind" (Mabin, 2013:6; van Schalkwyk, 2014:3). Human settlements and society over centu-

ries developed trade networks and the economy, influencing push-pull migration patterns (Krüger, 2003; Mabin, 2013) of the population in this southern area of Africa.

An urban turning point occurred with the establishment of Pretoria in 1855 and Witwatersrand gold rush in the 1880s (Mabin, 2013). According to reputable town planners, Fair and Mallows (1959:130), the broad polynuclear pattern of an east-west mining axis and north-south communications axis was already in place by 1896 for the urbanising core of the country. Tshwane sits north in the polynuclear structure of the GCR today, geographically covers 35% and contributes 27.8% of Gauteng Province's gross domestic product (City of Tshwane, 2013:22). This historical sketch depicts Tshwane as an integral municipal centre of the GCR (SACN, 2004).

4.2 Population

Ongoing research by the Gauteng City-Region Observatory [GCRO] (2019a) estimates the population of the GCR at 15.2 million people. Landau and Gindrey (2008) forecast the population to be 19.7 million by 2030 and by 2050, 25.2 million. To get a better handle on these estimates, the GCR grows daily by 868 people. Tshwane makes up about ¼ of the population in the GCR. A modest projection of urban growth for Tshwane reaches 4.9 million people by 2030 and by 2055, 7.2 million (City of Tshwane, 2015).

4.3 Racial inequities

For the purposes of this article, the author highlights the persistence of "apartheid legacy" in the GCR and Tshwane (COGTA, 2016:22). The apartheid legacy perpetuates racial categories of people, systemic inequities and unearned advantages. The author underscores that population categories in South Africa often are not non-racial.

The racial composition of the GCR is 75.2% Black African people, 18.4% White people, 3.7% Coloured [Mixed race] people, 2.7% Indian/Asian people (OECD, 2011:15). This indicates that Black people are the clear majority in the GCR, yet the systemic socio-spatial and economic injustices remain a pervasive reality when we consider overall quality of life (GCRO, 2019b). Black people are the only population group with an average Quality of Life Index below the provincial average, which is 6.30/10. Black people have an average of 6.08. Coloured [Mixed race] people have an average of 6.49; Indian/Asian people, 6.96; and White people, 7.30. The yawning gap of historical inequalities continue as "race remains a key determiner of overall quality of life in Gauteng" (GCRO, 2019b:14).

4.4 Christian affiliations

Gauteng Province experiences a gradual 3.5% increase of people who self-identify with Christian churches (StatsSA, 2004; StatsSA, 2014). Of those who self-identify as

Christian in South Africa, 84% are Protestant; 11%, Catholic; and 5%, other (Pew Research Center, 2010:22). Recent research (de Beer, Smith & Manyaka, 2017; Ribbens & de Beer, 2017) in two distinct yet interconnected areas of Tshwane indicates clusters and dense presence of 57 churches in 2km2 of Pretoria Central and 40 churches in1-km radius within Mamelodi East. Among Protestant Christian population in South Africa, those who identify as Pentecostal are 10% and African Independent Churches, 35% (Pew Research Center, 2010:23). Due to the make-up of the Tshwane Ecumenical Leaders Forum is so-called mainline churches, denominational affiliation in South Africa is noteworthy data, 11% are Methodists; 11%, Catholic; 6%, Anglican; 4%, Lutheran; and 12%, Other Protestant (Pew Research Center, 2010:22-23).

The South African Christian Directory (SACD, 2018) indicates the number of schools, organisations and institutions located in Tshwane self-identifying their core speciality as Teaching and Training at the tertiary, adult and/or community-level. There are 69 entities claiming their core sector to be Teaching and Training (SACD, 2018). Of the 69 entities, only two (SACD, 2018), of which one is IUM, also identify activities in urban development. This highlights the niche of IUM to integrate theological teaching and practical training at the adult, tertiary, and/or community-level with urban voices and local urban dynamics.

4.5 Housing challenges

The prevalence of so-called informal settlements is an indicator that the supply of decent and affordable housing is not meeting the demand for housing. The urban growth in the GCR of South Africa is indicative of urban growth happening throughout sub-Saharan Africa, rapid expansion of so-called informal dwellings where more and more of the majority of the urban population currently and will continue to live (UN-Habitat, 2003; UNFPA, 2007). The researcher acknowledges the achievement in Gauteng to deliver 797,000 Reconstruction and Development Programme houses over 15 years (OECD, 2011:21). Yet, there is an ever-intensifying housing backlog of over 50 000 units per year (OECD, 2011:21). Rather than working to structurally undo the apartheid spatial legacy and socio-economic segregation, public housing tends to trap residents in suboptimal and peripheral locations with about half of Gauteng inhabitants not living within walking distances to the train or bus (OECD, 2011:21-22). Compounding the housing challenge are increasing numbers, aging populations and suburbanising shifts of homeless persons where low estimates indicate 6 244 street homeless people in Tshwane (de Beer & Vally, 2015).

4.6 Summary

The social analysis demonstrates an obvious reality: the GCR, including its integral Tshwane municipality, is one of the most socio-economic and "spatially unequal city-

regions in the world" (OECD, 2011:25). To work towards the alternative, a good city, and faith communities need to rise to the urban occasion to engage contextual issues and astutely participate in the city-making discourse, policies and plans (de Beer, 2016). With shrewd theological engagement and leveraging faithful capital of churches and faith- and community-based organisations, there is a need to develop and implement integrated urban management working across municipalities to densify, mix commercial and residential-use, co-ordinate and incentivise public transport, remember the most vulnerable in caring communities and accessible neighbourhoods (OECD, 2011; City of Tshwane, 2013; de Beer & Vally, 2015; Renkin & de Beer, 2017).

5. Theological reflection in the City of Tshwane

The third moment in the pastoral circle bridges analysis from life to life. Henriot and Holland (1983:93) contend that theological reflection creates two integral connections: one linking faith and justice and another linking our theologies with daily experiences of the oppressed and urban poor. This moment of theological reflection begins with the Tshwane Ecumenical Leaders Forum and then the good city, leading us into pastoral planning.

5.1 Tshwane Ecumenical Leaders Forum

The impetus for coming together as the Tshwane Ecumenical Leaders Forum was the wake-up call for ecumenism in action at the Tshwane Homeless Summit. Motivated by the purpose of *oikoumene* to more fully participate in God's urban household, the Tshwane Ecumenical Leaders Forum stood in solidarity with the urban poor. Ecumenical leadership committed to a pastoral approach journeying with the Tshwane Homelessness Forum, supporting various advocacy initiatives, defending human flourishing, demonstrating good news and ensuring responsible and accountable governance of Tshwane.

Ecumenical leadership also desired to embody Jesus' prayer in John 17 through unity and complementarity in Christ. John McKnight (1995:178) put forward Jesus' prophetic mandate that "beyond the revolution of Christian service is the final revolution, the possibility of being friends." The Tshwane Ecumenical Leaders Forum is a fraternal of leadership from different churches and faith-based organisations and formations in Tshwane. Friendship transcends barriers and leverages faithful capital through the fraternal consisting of The Archbishop of the Catholic Church Archdiocese of Pretoria and the Bishops of Anglican Church of Southern Africa Pretoria Diocese, the Methodist Church of Southern Africa Limpopo Synod, Ethiopian Episcopal Church and other Christian leaders. Being friends rooted in Christ sustains our intentionality for an ethic of care by loving justice, struggling with the most vulnerable in our city and making alternative visions through mutual action (McKnight, 1995).

During one of our breakfast meetings we were discerning how to practically demonstrate Church unity. The idea surfaced in our conversation to consider nurturing a theology cluster and co-operation between theological institutions in Tshwane.

One participant of the Tshwane Ecumenical Leaders Forum, Klippies Kritzinger, some years ago captured the essence of our breakfast conversation on Church unity. Kritzinger (2014) urged for concrete spirituality to reclaim synergistic ecumenical witness in Tshwane through socio-spatial justice-seeking practices around shared priorities. Concrete African spirituality can be inculcated throughout the formative years of theological education whilst being located in Tshwane. Of the 69 entities in Tshwane with a central focus on training and teaching, the Tshwane Ecumenical Leaders Forum identified the departments and faculties of three tertiary institutions, the University of Pretoria, University of South Africa (Unisa) and St. John Vianney, as theological pillars and conversation partners for greater co-operation and envisaging a theology cluster to overcome fragmentation and synergise African urban theological engagement.

The Tshwane Ecumenical Leaders Forum delegated a team to tend to the possibility of greater co-operation between theological institutions in Tshwane. The author was invited as the IUM director to work with the team. The fourth moment will give detail to what is emerging from this idea that we discerned in community when reflecting theologically on Church unity in the City of Tshwane.

5.2 Can we imagine the City of Tshwane as a good city?

IUM's role of accompaniment over time with the Tshwane Ecumenical Leaders Forum deepened our companionship in urban mission. Enacting the pastoral circle within the Tshwane Ecumenical Leaders Forum availed IUM's charism of contextual theological engagement for mediating the good city.

A decade ago IUM convened a summer school with the theme: Can we imagine a good city? Stephan de Beer (2010) articulated characteristics of a good city in Tshwane: servant leadership, interdependent communities and active, participatory citizenship. De Beer (2010) contended that by keeping ourselves accountable to each other and the urban poor, Tshwane would start to become a caring, inclusive and just city. The Spirit of God had been calling forth the good city within Tshwane for many years, and IUM and the Tshwane Ecumenical Leaders Forum each uniquely participate and contribute to facets of the good city.

Two missiology professors at Unisa, Geneviève James and Lukwikilu (Credo) Mangayi, who might describe themselves as family members of IUM, provide vital theological reflection on Tshwane becoming a good city.

To participate in the endeavour of cultivating the good city, Geneviève James (2015) provides two guiding insights from Isaiah 65. Firstly, in the context of Tshwane, James (2015:62) establishes that "our obligatory interlocutor" is the poor, marginalised and

most vulnerable among us, who remain forgotten, abandoned and oppressed because of residual urban fractures in our post-apartheid cities.

The second theological insight from James (2015:58) is that precisely because of Creator God's goodness "the reorder and redemption of the city" is on God's volition and initiative. In other words, God does not leave us alone in this activist and theological endeavour to cultivate the good city. As Letty Russel (1993:129) puts it, "the household of God" is the New Creation, the incoming New Jerusalem. The urban experience of God's empowering presence stimulates hope and joy (James, 2015:58).

We also consider the biblical, contextual and missiological insights from Credo Mangayi. The missionary encounters of Mangayi (2017) for the last 25 years have been within different areas of the GCR and Tshwane. In diverse urban contexts alongside different communities, Mangayi (2017) has taken to the posture and practice of mediator who facilitates Contextual Bible Study with some of the poorest in the city.

The knowledges and hermeneutics of the urban poor surface in Mangayi's participatory research (Mangayi, 2014; Mangayi & Ngcobo, 2015; Mangayi, 2017). The theological reflection from lived experience and Biblical study in community uncover several characteristics of the good city. To cultivate the good city where there is collective well-being and human flourishing, three key actions have been suggested by homeless persons in Tshwane (Mangayi, 2014:232): "(1) partnerships and collaboration to end poverty and marginalisation; (2) empowerment for social change and justice; and (3) fostering mutual respect."

Robust interpretations of the Bible and critical theological reflection of urban contexts within community-based praxis create fertile conditions for elements of the good city to emerge. As we enter the moment of pastoral planning, one can see aspects of the ethic of care and leveraging faithful capital by co-operation so that there is humanisation and flourishing in Tshwane through the collaborative, theological engagement of IUM and the Tshwane Ecumenical Leaders Forum.

6. Pastoral planning leads to real collaboration in Tshwane and new learning

We now turn to the fourth moment of the pastoral circle. It is during this moment that discernment reaches consensus and collective implementation. Henriot and Holland (1983:9) see this moment as decisive action towards influence, creating new experiences and opening the possibility for transformation.

6.1 Conversations with theological institutions become tangible collaboration

IUM and the Tshwane Ecumenical Leaders Forum co-constructed a process for ongoing conversations and discernment with different theological institutions in Tshwane. The intention was to invite growing participation from theological faculty and students

of the Full Gospel Church of God College, Lutheran Theological Seminary in Tshwane, Mukhanyo Theological College, Northern Theological Seminary, University of Pretoria, Unisa, St. John Vianney and others who are willing in Tshwane.

During one conversation, the idea emerged to take a practical step of collaboration and learn from our shared action. IUM was asked to team up with members of the Tshwane Ecumenical Leaders Forum and a theological faculty member to co-design a two-day Tshwane Ecumenical Summer School of Theology. The theme was *Encountering Christ in Our City*, and the contextual theological process followed the four-moment pastoral circle to engage Tshwane and the GCR. Part of the engagement included visits to the Tshwane Leadership Foundation (formerly PCM) and churches from three different ecclesial traditions: St Alban's Cathedral, Cathedral of the Sacred Heart and St Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Throughout the Tshwane Ecumenical Summer School of Theology 39 participants (mostly theological students) responded to questions and inputs in a reflective and participative way. In focus group conversations of 3-5 people, participants contributed in written form on tables covered by 866mm x 610mm paper jotting notes, thoughts, questions and observations. Another way to register ideas and enquiries to deepen reflection was on 51mm x 51mm notes.

As the leadership of IUM and the Tshwane Ecumenical Leaders Forum co-facilitated the moments of the pastoral circle, generative conversations and reflections led to new learning. The Tshwane Ecumenical Summer School of Theology in an introductory way engaged the pastoral circle within Tshwane and two important outcomes emerged as new learning and possibilities of the good city were being cultivated. The author will now briefly share the outcomes as two invitations to revive contextual theological engagement and step into transdisciplinary engagement in Tshwane and the GCR.

6.2 An invitation to revive contextual theological engagement

The theological students at various moments in the pastoral circle expressed the need to learn and apply different theological methods to more fully engage real world contexts. It was not clear what different theological methods are currently being used in their respective institutions. However, their queries documented on the table indicate that to a certain extent their theological education and formation does not robustly critique and engage current urban realities in South Africa or Africa: "Do we give enough attention to assimilate a contextual theological method, not only information about theology? How do we become relevant in responding to current challenges, yet remain authentic to our call?" Furthermore, the students noted that there is an "ever-growing clericalism, elitism of the church theological outlook."

A contextual theological method is the pastoral circle as applied by IUM in community and presented in this article. To strengthen the theological rigour, Kritzinger (2008) expands the four-moment pastoral circle to seven dimensions: personal agency, context analysis, ecclesial analysis, theological reflection, spirituality, practical projects and reflexivity. This multi-dimensional, contextual way of doing theology is robust not only for more vivid interpretations of God and our city but also to sustain ongoing dialogue, critique and gospel witness in an ever-changing and urbanising continent and world.

One must keep in mind that the experiences and African contexts in which we are theologising are urban. Swart and de Beer (2014:5) point out that waking up to the urban occasion of being located and embedded in the spatial, psycho-social, racial and economic realities of urban contexts can serve as correctives in prophetic discernment. Yet, the physical address or locale of being embedded is insufficient. Swart and de Beer (2014) contend that for contextual theology to be authentically urban, transformative and liberative, the theologising will subvert Empire projects by doing theology from below shoulder to shoulder with people who are excluded, abused and exploited by dominant systems.

Imagine if theological education and formation in Tshwane would be able to move through seven dimensions in a critical and creative process of doing contextual theology, responding from what we've seen and heard at this time and prophetically, pastorally and missionally acting in community to uproot death-dealing conditions and make fertile conditions for the good city (Renkin & de Beer, 2017). The intentionality to urban places and particular communities uncovers assets, key distinctions, unique theologies and life-giving mission.

6.3 An invitation to step into transdisciplinary engagement

The second outcome from engaging Tshwane through the pastoral circle as designed by IUM and the Tshwane Ecumenical Leaders Forum was to retrieve, celebrate and share assets and knowledges from transdisciplinary collaboration. With emphasis on sustaining holistic understanding of *oikoumene* and Tshwane, the participants in the summer school were able to glean from a wide range of voices, perspectives and experiences.

Words often used to describe transdisciplinary research, collaboration and engagement, according to van Breda (2005 italics original), are *between* and *beyond* disciplines. Renkin and de Beer (2017:494) add particularity in terms of an authentic contextual theological approach, namely, *beneath* or "from below," "asserting the centrality of the homeless/God as a socio-political priority for building a good city."

One theological student in the final moment of the pastoral cycle wrote: "nothing about us without us." Renkin and de Beer (2017:493) posit that contextual,

trans-disciplinary approaches from below invite and create space for different types and sources of knowledge so that there is mutuality and shared learning and "responsibility in seeking the common good." Listening to and learning from seldom heard voices call forth new commitments and actions. Nothing about us without us captures the essence of the ethic of care, seen in the embodied principles of human dignity, respect, mutuality, justice and equity.

The GCRO's rigorous contextual analysis of the GCR and Tshwane helped bring new understandings at a vital moment in the pastoral circle during the summer school. The GCRO's strategic research revealed challenges and opportunities within the socio-spatial, economic, racial and political realities. Dr Ngaka Mosiane, Senior Researcher of GCRO later shared in an email, "The link [being made] between theological education and the wider city-region space could be very fruitful as we think about the plight of ordinary people." The niche of IUM and the work of the Tshwane Ecumenical Leaders Forum along with other collaborators in Tshwane are standing in the gap and strengthening a link that at one time was weak or missing in urban discourse.

De Beer (2012) moved forward the proposition of the liberating potential for both theological education and the city only if theological education intentionally took the urban turn. This line of query could be a diagnostic on the theologies and practices of the theological students, lecturers and institutions as well as people in churches and faith-based organisations who are in Tshwane and the GCR. As we consider long-standing physical presence in the city, what are the levels and forms of accompaniment with the urban poor, the most vulnerable and excluded in the city? What are the markers in memory of systemic injustices, gender and racial inequities and alienation from God and each other (Kritzinger, 2008)? To what extent is theological education in the city enhancing prophetic imagination, witness, proclamation, critique and resistance (Brueggemann, 2012; de Beer 2016)?

7. Conclusion

This article traced the contextual theological engagement of IUM in mediating the good city within Tshwane, an integral centre of the GCR. By remaining true to what and who is at the heart of IUM, the pastoral circle when enacted in the Tshwane Ecumenical Leaders Forum was catalytic. Elements of the good city, such as caring for the city as God's urban household, seeking justice for all who dwell in it and maximising faithful capital, were animated by Spirit-empowered community and collaboration. IUM's conscious engagement in community is facilitating relational bridges sturdy enough to hold co-operation between different theological institutions. What is also becoming more evident is that scholarship and practitioners from other disciplines who are deliberately taking part in city-making have space

for theology and theological education to rise to the urban occasion. It is time for messengers of good news to cultivate good cities in real ways that mirror God's goodness.

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