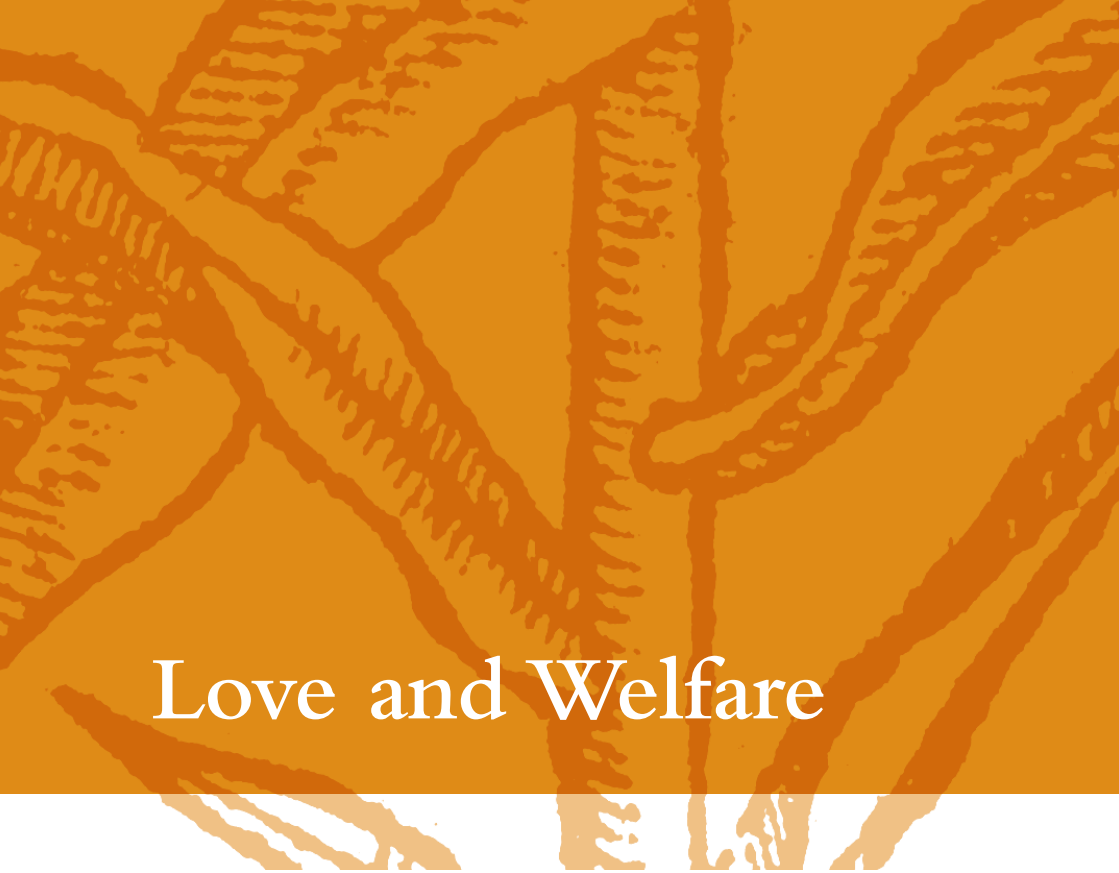

Love and Welfare

Simon Duffy

Editors: John O'Brien and Simon Duffy

THE NEED FOR ROOTS

THE CENTRE FOR WELFARE REFORM

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Simon is a philosopher and social innovator. He founded the Centre for Welfare Reform in 2009 as a network for a sharing radical alternatives to neoliberal conceptions of welfare reform. He is best know for having invented personal budgets, for which work he received the RSA's Prince Albert Medal and the Social Policy Association's award for outstanding contribution to social policy. His publications include *Keys to Citizenship*, *Unlocking the Imagination*, *The Unmaking of Man* and *Women at the Centre*.

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Foreword

Justice is love
correcting that which
revolts against
love.

Martin Luther King
Address to the Montgomery Improvement Association, 1959

In this essay Simon Duffy continues his effort to root the welfare state deeply enough to resist the attacks that currently threaten it while revitalising it so that the welfare state can become a social reality that people can love. [see *Citizenship and the Welfare State*.] The very possibility of a people loving their welfare state because it does justice is the first of many challenging ideas presented here.

Simon holds that justice is love in social form and that building up a welfare state worthy of love entails constitutional changes sufficient to make a fertile space for citizens to pursue the common good by containing the now dominant forces of self-interested material accumulation. He is not shy to identify practical implications of his argument, noting, for example, the potential of measures like Basic Income as an adaptation to an economy in which paid work is no longer a sufficient path to financial security.

This essay calls for a Copernican shift in our collective approach to welfare. Understanding this shift challenges the reader. The shift in perspective and practice necessary to appreciate and act on what is written here turns common understanding of welfare reform on its head and disorients familiar debates and reform efforts. Simon reaches for this shift in three somewhat risky ways.

First, he retrieves the thinking of key figures in the development of European welfare states whose ideas have faded from debate: William Temple in the UK and Simon Weil for France. Both drew their understanding of welfare from the intersection of their Christian faith with the realities of the Great Depression and World War II. People of secular convictions might dismiss these religious antecedents of the welfare state as irrelevant.

Second, Simon looks for the ground of hope for the future of the welfare state in the living resistance of disabled people to the forces of social exclusion and oppression. Here he draws particularly on the thinking Jean Vanier which arises from Vanier's religiously inspired practice of sharing life with people with intellectual disabilities. These efforts may seem too small to constitute an adequate response to the crisis. Third, he constructs an analytic tool by driving liberalism and socialism to their conceptual extremes in order to reveal the assumptions common to both of them. These assumptions produce an unlovable and unjust welfare state and lack the moral force to reform it. Some readers might lose the thread of the argument by refusing to consider what this account of politics points to.

From the beginning a gap opened between the structures that embody the welfare state and the vision of Temple and Weil. Simon locates the source of this gap in the assumptions that the two dominant political beliefs share as they pass responsibility for welfare back and forth.

Both treat the welfare state as a form of state administered charity. Practice shifts the mechanisms of control and the boundaries between market and state provision. Neither acknowledges that social justice demands robust rights and entitlements that allow all citizens to recognise their rights and corresponding duties. This has shaped a paternalistic welfare system.

Both assume that the function of the welfare state is to meet needs, conceived as a lack that must be filled or a deficiency to be remedied. This divides society, creating a distinct and devalued status for the needy. Practice increases or shrinks the conditions of eligibility and the generosity of provision. Neither acknowledges the interdependencies that make welfare a benefit to society as a whole or recognises that a capable welfare state mobilises every citizen's gifts and contributions. This has shaped a negative welfare system.

Both assume that welfare is purely material. Neither attends in a practical way to the relationships and social conditions that encourage human flourishing. This has shaped a materialistic welfare system.

Both distrust citizens' powers of decision making and undervalue their resourcefulness. Both have favoured centralised authority and elaborate, top-down systems of command and control. Neither has put meaningful control of adequate money in the hands of citizens themselves and responsibility for local conditions in the hands of local governments. This has resulted in a meritocratic welfare system in which the experts know best.

Both act on the assumption that the isolated individual is the locus of need and the focus of response. Neither defines its policies and practices as if family, friends, neighbourhood and community were the necessary contexts for care and development. This has created an individualistic welfare system.

Read on to discover the ways that love acting to correct that in the welfare state that makes it unlovable can generate a way of living together that embodies justice, humanity, spirit, equality and community.

John O'Brien

Preface

In this essay I have tried to do two contradictory things. First I've tried to wake people up to the severity of the crisis in the modern welfare state, to its current unlovability and hence to its extreme vulnerability. However I've also tried to offer a sense of hope, particularly to the hope that comes from listening to people with disabilities and others who are building new approaches from within the skeleton of the old system.

I've also tried to demonstrate that what we take to be opposites - socialism and liberalism - are really 'terrible twins,' bankrupt ideologies, whose shared assumptions are soul destroying and ultimately toxic for the development of a just welfare state. I recognise that many will find this hard to swallow. We are so used to seeing these theories as opposites that it is very hard to see what unites them. What is more, my analysis inevitably simplifies things; there are many varied thinkers, many of whom are not simply liberals, nor simply socialists. In particular I ask for forgiveness in advance from readers who think of themselves as socialists or liberals and who may feel my criticisms are unfair. I recognise that my analysis, by focusing on the polar extremes of the socialist-liberal axis, is a simplification; I'm afraid I could see no other way of helpfully defining my own, contrary, position.

Despite its simplifications, I hope that this essay can open up some new horizons for thought and action. There are so many great thinkers, both old and modern, who can help us think about today's problems in new ways. Many of these are Christian, many are Jewish, others have no faith, but they are all passionately concerned to understand the reality of justice. Even if you are not persuaded by my own critique of the welfare state, I hope you will recognise the value of looking beyond the familiar theories, stepping off familiar and well trodden debates, and taking the intellectual road less travelled.

I also hope that this essay is useful to fellow Christians and church leaders. Many don't know the vital role the Church played in the creation of the welfare state, and I hope that the Church can maintain its courage in challenging injustice and in outlining what might be possible in a renewed welfare state. As many more citizens become increasingly reliant on the indignities of the food bank, it is vital that the Church remember what Christ teaches us about the dangers of charity and the need for justice.

I am particularly grateful to Mike Croft, Stephen Platten, Tony Robinson, Julia Unwin and to John and Margaret Sentamu for the chance to share some of these ideas in development. One of the joys of working with the church was to be able to talk to so many who had genuinely open minds about our current problems.

My own thinking on all these topics has been particularly influenced by the thought of John O'Brien who continues to be a source of intellectual inspiration and of practical encouragement. I would also like to especially remember the philosopher Judith Snow, a disabled woman and campaigner for inclusion. Judith sadly died recently; but I am quite sure that she is now in a place where her wonderful gifts are now fully recognised.

My special thanks to Hilary Russell of Together for the Common Good who invited me to contribute to their special edition of the *The Crucible* and to John Atherton of *The Crucible* itself. This essay builds on my essay *If Temple Came Back Today*, although I have significantly developed its argument further and at much greater length (for better or worse).[1] Also thanks go to John Sargent of L'Arche for enabling me to hear from Jean Vanier on two separate occasions. This was an inspirational experience and gave me much food for thought and has significantly influenced how I have framed this argument. Thanks also to Veena Vasista, who has challenged me along this journey with her own powerful arguments for the reintroduction of love into discussions of social policy.

For Christians and non-Christians alike I hope this essay offers a more lovable vision of the welfare state, and one that can help strengthen our resolve to build a fairer society together.

Summary

The creation of the welfare state was the great achievement of the post-war period, yet it has been taken for granted, misunderstood, and is now in grave danger. Our thinking has been trapped within the limited intellectual frameworks of socialism and liberalism; and this means that we've failed to see what is really important about the welfare state; nor have we understood how to defend or improve it. Hence, today, the welfare system is increasingly:

- Paternalistic - operating like a state-run charity
- Negative - seeing people only on in terms of their needs, not their capacities
- Materialistic - expecting far too little from life
- Meritocratic - centralising power and treating ordinary people with disrespect
- Individualistic - dismissing the role of the family and the community

The idea of 'welfare reform has now become so perverted that it has come to mean, not improving the welfare state, but destroying it. We are seeing society increasingly stigmatise people in poverty, people with disabilities, asylum seekers and immigrants. In particular the United Kingdom, which used to take such pride in its welfare system, is leading this destructive process; the UK is now the most unequal country in Western Europe.

However, there is a different tradition available to us, one rooted in Judaism and in Christianity. Thinkers like William Temple, Simone Weil and Jean Vanier have outlined ideas that give us the chance to make a Copernican shift in our thinking - away from a welfare state orientated towards power, and towards a welfare state inspired by love. At the same time, people with disabilities

and their allies have also shown in practice how a very different understanding of welfare can become a means to liberation and community. When we put together these ideas and practices we can begin to envisage a welfare state that is:

- **Just** - where we recognise our rights and our responsibilities to each other
- **Humane** - where we see each other as gifted, valuing our vulnerabilities and dependencies
- **Spiritual** - where we know that life is about flourishing and developing
- **Egalitarian** - where we are equals, working together as fellow citizens
- **Social** - where we create communities where we can contribute and belong

Transforming the welfare state in practice means shifting power to individuals, families and communities and changing the role of the state to ensure it is more effective in defending human rights. For each individual this will demand a greater awareness of our personal and social responsibilities. It will also require significant changes in the organisation of welfare, for instance, replacing the incoherent tax-benefit system with a system of Basic Income.

But beyond this it will require, not just political change, but something much deeper - constitutional change. The welfare system needs to have the protection of both constitutional law and the institutional change that can sustain it into the future. The Church itself may have a critical role in helping us achieve a just welfare state.

1. The rise and fall of the welfare state

The welfare state was a great achievement, but, in the space of just two generations, it has become weak and increasingly vulnerable to attack. Of course there are important social and economic forces at work, which are helping to undermine our inheritance; but, more importantly still, we seem to lack the critical intellectual faculties necessary to defend the welfare state from these attacks. Our thinking is wrong.

Ideas are essential. It is ideas that shape our fate, as Nadezhda Mandelstam puts it:

These rulers of ours who claim that the prime mover of history is the economic basis have shown by the whole of their own practice that the real stuff of history is ideas. It is ideas that shape the minds of whole generations, winning adherents, imposing themselves on consciousness, creating new forms of government and society, rising triumphantly - and then slowly dying away and disappearing.[2]

We need the right ideas to inspire us and to guide us. Today we no longer believe in the welfare state; we don't understand its true purpose, nor why it is so important. If we are going to defend the welfare state then we must love the welfare state, but to do this the welfare state must be worthy of our love. Unfortunately the welfare state, as it has been understood and defined by politicians and thinkers, is increasingly unloved and unlovable. This is a tragedy in the making.

Unfortunately the two theories that continue to shape the welfare state are the very theories whose failures have made the welfare state so necessary - liberalism and socialism. Moreover both of these ideologies are deeply inadequate; neither can be stated in a

way that offers a remotely plausible account of the purpose or the value of human life.

Liberalism is the view that the purpose of human life is to exercise freedom - each of us doing the best we can, for ourselves.[3] Now there is no doubt that each of us certainly does act, to some degree, from self-interest. But it is hard to see why we should consider this a moral philosophy; and it certainly makes for a peculiar political philosophy. A totally self-interested person is a totally immoral person; a mass of self-interested people does not make for a community or what, in the original Greek, was called the polis, from which we derive the term 'politics.'[4]

In the nineteenth century liberalism was made slightly more plausible by those, like John Stuart Mill, who tried to reconcile it with utilitarianism.[5] Their claim was that, in the long-run, free choice and free markets were the best means to bring happiness to everyone. Liberalism, joined with utilitarianism, provided the ideal theory to support the development of capitalism. It is of course easy to see why the rich and the powerful might be persuaded that it is so easy to reconcile self-interest and the greater good; the rest of us should perhaps be a little more sceptical.

In actual fact liberalism, with its hoped for utilitarian outcomes, did not lead to increased well-being and wealth for all; although it certainly did lead to growing industrialisation, productivity and extraordinary wealth for some. However, it also led to extreme inequality, poverty, insecurity, and then in turn, to revolution, war and totalitarian terror.

Socialism developed as a reaction to the injustices of liberalism; and its strength as a theory has always been that it is easy to identify what socialism is against - inequality, alienation and exploitation. Its weakness as a theory is that it has never been quite so easy to understand what it is actually proposing as an alternative.[6] In practice, socialism often seems to mean giving greater power to the state. If you are lucky this may lead to some measure of increased equality and better public services, although almost always combined with growing centralisation and bureaucracy. However, more often, socialism has led to totalitarianism and mass murder. It is certainly easy to understand why those who control the state might seek to convince us that

they can always be trusted to act in our best interests; however the rest of us may worry that those entrusted with such power may not always listen to the demands of justice.

In fact, Hannah Arendt is precisely right when she says:

...the alternative between capitalism and socialism is false - not only because neither exists anywhere in its pure state anyhow, but because we have here twins, each wearing a different hat.[7]

Capitalism always involves expropriation (legitimised theft) and the growing control of property by the wealthy, to the great disadvantage of the poor. However socialism, which does sound much better in theory, tends to be worse in practice, because it transfers control of property to the state; and this means that the state can go even further in exploiting ordinary people. As Arendt puts it:

All our experiences - as distinguished from theories and ideologies - tell us that the process of expropriation, which started with the rise of capitalism, does not stop with the expropriation of the means of production; only legal and political institutions that are independent of the economic forces and automatism can control and check the inherently monstrous potentialities of this process. Such political controls seem to function best in the so-called welfare states whether they call themselves socialist or capitalist. What protects freedom is the division between governmental and economic power, or to put it in Marxian language, the fact that the state and its constitution are not superstructures.[8]

As Arendt describes, the welfare state is essential because it can discipline limit the dangerous tendencies of capitalism and socialism. The welfare state involves the creation of institutions that protect the individual, the family and the community from the enormous power of concentrated economic interests created by capitalism, but also from the tyranny of an almighty nation-state, as witnessed in socialism.

Yet, we rarely see things this way. We have so far not developed the necessary ideas or theories to enable us to actually appreciate what the welfare state really does. Instead we remain in debt to these bankrupt nineteenth century ideologies, the very theories

that created the crisis that made the welfare state necessary. The further irony of this is that it to these defunct ideas that we turned when we came to design the welfare state.

The design of the welfare state

Initially the welfare state was shaped more by socialist thinking; for after the war years it seemed quite reasonable to believe that a rational state could effectively plan and organise for the provision of all our needs. Today it is increasingly being redesigned according to the principles of liberalism. However, as Arendt's acute observation suggests, there is more in common between these two ideologies than we may think. It is the shared assumptions of liberalism and socialism that form the real background for today's debates, and many of these assumptions are deeply troubling.

Perhaps the most important, and surprising, shared assumption of both liberals and socialists is that there is no such thing as social justice. This may seem a strange assertion, for we are certainly used to both socialists and liberals using the term; but when they do so they are only using it in a diluted form. They do not actually believe in social justice - as a matter of justice - as a fundamental feature of a decent society. In reality they both treat the welfare state as kind of state-run system of charity. This why there has been so little effort to underpin welfare with the kind of robust rights and institutional protections that justice demands.

Of course they are suspicious of social justice for slightly different reasons. Paradoxically liberals dislike almost all socio-economic rights because of their great faith in their favourite socio-economic right - the absolute right to private property. For the liberal taxation is always a form of dignified theft. They often concede that the operation of property rights and free markets will leave some unable to cope, and so they do tend to accept that some welfare provision must be made available for those who are unable to meet their own needs. However, they do not see this provision as an act of justice. It is just a form of charity. Cynically it might even be seen as a pragmatic requirement, in order to

keep at bay the anger and envy of those who do not feel they are benefiting form the liberal regime.[9]

On the other hand, Socialists are suspicious of any effort to constrain the will of the state, through constitutional protections or clear rules of distribution.[10] It is not just the right to private property, any right could impede the will of the state, and so comes under suspicion. It doesn't matter whether their own fundamental goal is the destruction of the bourgeoisie or equality for all, whatever it is, they must be free from such constitutional traps. For the socialist the welfare state is a means to achieve the ends of socialism (whatever those are) and so, quite logically, they do not want any rights or responsibilities to be defined so clearly that they can create any obstacles for the state in its mission.

However, in the post-war years, as the British welfare state was brought into existence, there was a significant consensus between liberals and socialists, that they must focus on the challenge of 'meeting needs.' As William Beveridge put it, it was essential to attack the "five giants on the road of reconstruction": want, disease, ignorance, squalor and idleness.[11] This negative, even martial, language is quite characteristic of our thinking about welfare - for welfare is seen as a response to a merely negative problem: a need which must be met, a problem demanding a solution. The poor need benefits, the sick need healthcare, children need an education, the homeless need a house and the disabled need care. In practice the welfare state has been largely organised around those five conceptions of need:

1. **Income** - An increasingly complex system of benefits, tax-credits and allowances was developed to fund pensions and provide some system of social security to help people through unemployment, disability or need.
2. **Health** - The NHS was established to provide free high quality healthcare for all; this was funded from general taxation and organised by a centralised department within Whitehall.
3. **Education** - Free school education was established. This was initially organised by local authorities, but is now increasingly run from Whitehall. Access to university education has been progressively widened; but this is increasingly funded by student debt.

4. **Housing** - Locally provided council housing has now given way to Housing Benefit, a system for families on low incomes, which effectively subsidises the rents charged by social and private landlords.
5. **Disability** - Not part of the initial welfare settlement, support for people with disabilities has emerged in the form of a patchwork of benefits and services, often highly-means-tested.

This negative conception of need, while quite natural, turns out to be rather problematic. For it seems we can quite easily convince ourselves that at least some of these needs just apply to some other groups - the needy. 'We' don't need welfare; only 'they' need welfare. In fact, today, terms like 'welfare,' 'welfare state' and 'welfare reform' are, in the imagination of the public, almost entirely associated with the benefit system and with ideas like 'scrounger' or the 'unemployed.' This is despite the fact that benefit fraud is minuscule (0.7%) despite the fact that employment levels are very high and despite the fact that everyone depends upon the securities and supports of the whole welfare system.

I remember attending some discussion of the welfare state in London where one of the speakers, a Professor of Economics and advisor to government, stated that the welfare state existed so "We can provide support to those who cannot manage on their own." I found myself forced to observe that this statement was hardly true, given that most of the people in the room - academics, civil servants and leaders of charities - were all directly or indirectly beneficiaries of the welfare state. In fact a significant part of the population work in jobs that are funded by the tax payer - but they choose not to see this as 'a benefit' of the welfare state.

In fact, since its creation, the social security system, that is meant to reduce poverty, has grown in complexity, but not in generosity. The UK is now the most unequal country in Europe, as we have allowed the value of benefits for all, and wages for many, to keep drifting downwards.[12] The UK's benefit system is stigmatising and mean-spirited and it is full of unfair rules that penalise people for earning, saving, forming a family, taking risks and contributing.[13] Even those working in the system struggle to understand it and it is not surprising that £17 billion (nearly 20% of benefits, excluding pensions) goes unclaimed.[14]

The most popular parts of the welfare state are those that are universal and free - health and education. When the welfare state is growing then more money is spent on those areas; when the welfare state is shrinking - as it is today - those are the areas that are protected from cuts. We seem to suffer from a strange kind of collective amnesia; we forget that all of us are beneficiaries of the welfare state and somehow imagine that the welfare state exists for 'other people.' All of this means that cuts and so called 'welfare reforms' tend to target the very groups - people in poverty and people with disabilities - that one might assume the welfare state should protect.[15]

The welfare state is also more than this set of need-meeting institutions or public services. Arguably even more important than public services has been the post-war commitment by the state to ensure economic growth by, if necessary, printing money and stimulating demand. This policy is sometimes called Keynesianism, named after John Maynard Keynes, another one of the architects of the British welfare state. In its first phase Keynesianism was largely delivered by spending on public services, and it proved highly successful at reducing unemployment to a minimum and encouraging growth. However, over time, this policy also became associated with inflation and stagnation.

Interestingly, the first attack on Keynesianism, led by liberals, was called monetarism and involved tight controls on the money supply; this then devastated industry in the UK. Monetarism was then quietly abandoned and today we have a new kind of Keynesianism - 'privatised-Keynesianism.' Now it is the banks, rather than the state, who produce most of the extra money that our economy requires.[16] However this policy also seems to be leading to growing levels of private debt and extreme house price inflation.[17] The recent banking crisis is likely to be just the first of many such crises if this policy continues.

The shift from state-Keynesianism to privatised-Keynesianism has been combined with other changes in policy towards industry and employment. Government has tried to promote increased growth, productivity and competitiveness following the principles of liberalism: increase wage differences, reduce price controls, increase competition and privatisation. The conflict about how

best to promote economic productivity now largely defines our understanding of what makes someone a socialist or a liberal.

However, while socialists and liberals often disagree about how to promote economic growth, this disagreement masks their shared assumption that welfare is an entirely material matter. For both, there is no question that economic growth is nothing but good. The cost of almost any amount of debt or inflation can be discounted, as long as we can maintain sufficient confidence in our ability to keep the economy 'growing.' There is little concern for human activities that are not part of the money economy – parenting, caring, volunteering. There is no interest in personal development or fulfilment. There is little concern for beauty, art, nature or anything which money can't measure.

Furthermore, if we treat the welfare state as a paternalistic mechanism for meeting the material deficiencies of the needy then it is perhaps not too surprising to find that socialists and liberals share another assumption, which is that this mechanism must be operated by the best and the brightest. In other words, liberals and socialists tend to be meritocrats, in its quite literal sense, as one who believes the 'best' should control the rest.[18] This comment by Beatrice Webb, one of the many Fabian thinkers who were influential in the design of the welfare state, is very revealing:

We have little faith in the 'average sensual man', we do not believe that he can do more than describe his grievances, we do not think he can prescribe the remedies.[19]

Given their commitment to meritocracy it is perhaps not surprising to also discover that other Fabians, like George Bernard Shaw and William Beveridge himself, were also keen advocates of eugenics. If you see people in poverty or people with disabilities as fundamentally deficient it makes sense to try and eliminate the person rather than the need – before or after birth. Of course, this same deeply patronising view of ordinary people, was also very prevalent amidst the liberal and aristocratic thinkers with whom they did battle. Almost all agreed that only they had the brains necessary to do the right thing, on other people's behalf, only a very small minority questioned this elitist assumption.[20]

Given this deeply meritocratic starting point it is also not surprising to find that UK welfare state is one of the most

centralised in the world. Although local authorities have very large populations, they have very few powers or flexibilities.[21] Very little can be left to local discretion and the long-term trend continues to be towards centralisation and regulation, despite a rhetoric of 'localism' and devolution.

Moreover those institutions that are centralised, like the NHS and the education system, while they are better protected financially, find that they must pay a heavy price for being managed by the 'brightest and the best.' These centralised public services are the object of wave after wave of reorganisation: centralisation, localisation, rationalisation, standardisation, liberalisation, regulation, marketisation and privatisation. There is no evidence that any of these contradictory structural changes have been effective; but this is not the point. As the ruling elites compete with each other to 'be in charge' they must each offer their own account of 'the problem' and their own 'solution' to solve the problem.[22] There is no awareness that the constant reorganisation of an institution like the NHS actually undermines the efforts of people working within the institution to make it better themselves. Instead doctors, teachers, nurses, social workers, and administrators must jump to whatever Whitehall wants next.

Even the privatisation of public services, which is certainly a growing trend, has led to no real market freedoms or liberalisation. Instead privatisation tends simply replaces a public system with a private system; but one that is enmeshed by contractual control or corrupting forms of financing. [23] Often the only 'efficiencies' that created by this process are reduced salaries for frontline workers - salaries which then must be topped-up by the benefit system.

The fifth and final assumption that is shared by both liberals and socialists is that there is no such thing as society. Again, this may seem an extraordinary claim; however if you strip away the rhetoric of the 'Big Society' it is clear that both liberals and socialists, in practice, take an approach which is ferociously individualistic.

Ideally we are to function as independent economic units, each being as self-reliant as possible, while dutifully paying taxes to fund the public services, which can then be orchestrated by the central elite running the welfare state. This kind of individualism

is perhaps to be expected of liberalism, it is its defining idea; but it is much more surprising to see that it has also been a pragmatic assumption of socialists. The ideals of mutualism, cooperation and sharing, which played such a vital part in the development of the welfare institutions by trade unions, coops and local associations, were completely abandoned when the welfare state was created. It was replaced with an atomised relationship between a bureaucratic service and an individual 'recipient.'

Again the atomisation of modern society has deep roots and is one of the destructive factors that led to the devastation of the first half of the twentieth-century.[24] It is also natural that a welfare state that is seen primarily as an institution by which the best 'do good' to the least, might quite naturally seek to treat each individual as merely that, an individual. Power comes through community, and recognising the validity of such communities would require a more negotiated and mediated approach to welfare.

Together these are the five key assumptions of the designers of the welfare state - both socialist and liberal. These assumptions are largely unconscious, powerful and often seem quite natural. However they are, with thought, quite questionable. Welfare does not need to be treated as matter of state patronage; need does not need to be imagined as a merely negative state; human beings are not merely material or economic creatures; there is no need for a meritocratic hierarchy to rule over us; and we are quite capable of meeting together, thinking together and acting together.

Our current crisis

Today we may lament the choices that were made in the past, or we may believe that these choices, right or wrong, were simply a natural consequence of the common beliefs of the time, and a price worth paying. However this is irrelevant to the problem we face today. For increasingly it looks as if the post-war welfare state has become unsustainable - not because we can't afford it - but because we have forgotten why it's important, and so we are increasingly choosing not to support or defend it.

For instance, while the welfare state was never firmly rooted in justice, now our commitment to justice has begun to wane even further. Critics of the welfare state talk about an 'entitlement culture' - extraordinarily, as if entitlements were a bad thing.[25] Human rights legislation is also under attack and the practical means for accessing justice - legal aid, advocacy and welfare rights - have all been significantly reduced.[26]

Government and politicians are increasingly happy to talk about their fellow citizens in deeply disrespectful ways. Seemingly positive terms like the 'Big Society' are matched by headlines that talk about 'skivers' or 'scroungers'. The efforts of politicians, civil servants and journalists to target the poor and disabled people remind us of Isaiah:

They use lies and vicious rhetoric, while dreaming up more schemes to defraud the poor; while all the time the poor just cry out for justice.[27]

Vicious newspaper headlines are fed by Government press releases and misdirection. For example, politicians make constant reference to benefit fraud, yet benefit fraud is only 6% of tax fraud; while the media talk about benefit fraud 600% more than tax fraud.[28] And it is also worth noting that this problem began with New Labour who coined the term 'benefit thief.'[29] What is perhaps most disturbing is that this seems to be a very popular policy and politicians now seem to be competing to demean ordinary people.

Today the 'cost' of the welfare state is increasingly presented as a cause of economic decline and the only politically acceptable way of reducing public spending is to cut the areas of public spending that are less popular. Recent benefit cuts, which are misnamed 'welfare reforms', have involved significant cuts in benefits, targeting people in poverty and disabled people.[30] In other words, in the name of the economy, we impoverish the poor. This is despite all the evidence that such policies are counter-productive, even on narrow economic terms.

Meritocratic interference with the welfare state is also becoming more extreme. Educational policy increasingly focuses on the needs of the market, despite the fact that the actual function of a markets is to reconcile the diverse supply of our talents with the range of our needs. The market doesn't 'require' certain sets of specific skills. Policy measures like sanctions, penalties and workfare

are justified on the presumption that without such measures people would not behave appropriately.[31] At the same time, despite a commitment to 'localism,' central government has cut local government more deeply than any other area.

Today faith in the state has been replaced with a renewed faith in the market - forgetting that we only turned to the state in desperation, after we discovered that, on its own, the market destroys social justice. Once the rhetoric is stripped away all we see are state-employed civil servants being replaced with state-funded private businesses. There is no evidence that this process has led to any positive change. However we do see a small number of influential global businesses (e.g. SERCO, Capita, A4E and G4S) eating away at the public sector, whilst also able to fund the think tanks that advise Government, and also offering other benefits, like jobs on the board, to politicians and civil servants. The potential for corruption is now enormous and it seems likely that there has been a fateful breakdown in the boundary between the public and private spheres.

Democratic politics has also changed. In the UK in particular, victory in party political competition hinges on winning the support of a narrow band of voters - those with middle incomes. Hence, all the main political parties try to appeal to 'the squeezed middle'. Over time it has become apparent that the interests of the 'middle' can be 'usefully' divided from those of the poor. In fact, it is not uncommon for political leaders to appeal to the middle by encouraging the middle to blame others: disabled people, families in poverty, immigrants or asylum seekers.

Instead of a society committed to justice the welfare state is becoming a system of state-run patronage - a complex, bureaucratic act of charity by the powerful, supposedly on behalf of the weak, but often only serving its own interests. Citizenship plays no part in the emerging welfare state, instead we are divided one from another in an elaborate hierarchy of privilege: tax-payers against benefit scroungers; the deserving against the undeserving; the clever against the stupid; home owners against renters.

What little security the system still provides is paid for at greater and greater cost, as those who are deemed 'recipients' are increasingly stigmatised, sanctioned and controlled. The goal is not

to enable personal development or mutual dependence, instead we are encouraged to seek 'independence,' which paradoxically means becoming dependent upon an increasingly narrow definition of unrewarding work.[32]

None of this invalidates the welfare state. But it certainly seems that the welfare state, as a project of justice, is now in rapid decline. It is no longer possible to believe that the intentions of government are good. We can no longer believe that more state spending means more social justice. The powerful seem to treat the welfare state either an unfortunate cost to be minimised or as an opportunity for social engineering. This does not mean the welfare state has failed; but it does mean that we have failed the welfare state. We have fallen out of love with the welfare state, but that is our failing, not its.

This is the price we pay for failing to think. The many failures of liberalism and socialism should have opened our eyes to the need for a deeper, richer and more realistic understanding of our humanity and of society. New ideas are required to inspire better forms of living and organisation; fortunately, such ideas, do exist.

2. The Copernican revolution

William Temple was Archbishop of York, and then Canterbury, and he played a significant role in the development of the welfare state in Britain, even coining the term.[33] As Ted Heath describes, Temple was a profoundly important figure in the development of the UK's post-war welfare state:

Temple's impact on my generation was immense. He believed that a fairer society could be built only on moral foundations, with all individuals recognising their duty to help others.[34]

His book *Christianity & Social Order* remains a profound and relevant exploration of why we need the welfare state and what kind of welfare state we need.[35] Yet, despite Temple's influential advocacy for the welfare state, his own vision of the welfare state had no significant impact on the actual design of the welfare state. His insights were rooted in the ancient, but still living, Jewish and Christian traditions; whereas those who actually designed the welfare state were inspired by the dead ideologies of liberalism and socialism.

However it is not too late to learn from Temple, and there are other thinkers who can also offer insight into the kind of welfare state we really need, a welfare stare that can serve love and can so become lovable. There are also communities who are demonstrating that this vision can be realised in practice. In particular it is encouraging to see that Jean Vanier is increasingly recognised as someone who has connected these deeper insights with practical action. Vanier offers us a radically different picture of what welfare should mean. For instance, when Vanier was recently awarded the Templeton Prize, he said:

There is a revolution going on. We are beginning to realise that everyone, every human being is important. We are beginning to see that every human being is beautiful. At the heart of this revolution are not the powerful, the wealthy or intelligent. It is people with intellectual disabilities who are showing us what is important - love, community and the freedom to be ourselves.[36]

In his commentary on the Gospel of St John Vanier also writes:

Frequently it is only when those who are powerful experience failure, sickness, weakness or loneliness that they discover they are not self-sufficient and all-powerful, and that they need God and others. Out of their weakness and poverty they can then cry out to God and discover God in a new way as the God of love and tenderness, full of compassion and goodness.

I must say that for myself it has been a transformation to be in L'Arche. When I founded l'Arche it was to 'be good' and to 'do good' to people with disabilities. I had no idea how these people were going to do good to me! A bishop once told me: "You in L'Arche are responsible for a Copernican revolution: up until now we used to say that we should do good to the poor. You are saying that poor are doing good to you!" The people we are healing are in fact healing us, even if they do not realise it. They call us to love and awaken within us what is most precious: compassion.[37]

It is this revolution, in both thought and action, that we must embrace.[38] And, as Vanier says, this is a revolution that has already begun, led by people with disabilities and their families. For instance, people with disabilities have already rejected the institutional and segregated services that were first provided by the welfare state. Instead they battled for the right to control their own lives, have their own support, access mainstream education and housing, get jobs and be recognised as full and equal citizens.[39] They didn't seek isolation or care; instead they sought inclusion, contribution and rights. Organisations, like L'Arche, have also demonstrated that people with and without disabilities can come together, as equals, and can live together, with lives of growing meaning and richness.

A Copernican revolution in welfare is possible. But it means a radical change in our thinking and in how we practice welfare. It means moving away from the frailty and inhumanity of the

liberal-socialist model of welfare, towards something richer and more human. Instead of paternalistic handouts, welfare should be underpinned by a commitment to justice. We should value each other as uniquely gifted individuals, supporting each other to flourish, and develop full and meaningful lives. We should treat each other as equal citizens, each of us making our own distinct contribution to communities which we nurture and which nurture us.

Love and justice

Temple offers a vision of the kind of welfare state we should want. It is a vision that has deep roots in the Christian tradition, but it is also a broad vision that connects with other traditions. It could even be attractive to those who have no faith, but a strong sense of justice. For at the centre of this vision is an assumption that the welfare state must be founded on love - and love means justice. As Temple says:

It is axiomatic that Love should be the predominant Christian impulse, and that the primary form of Love in social organisation is Justice.[40]

Paradoxically, while we sometimes use the term 'charity' to mean love, justice means precisely not charity, at least in its common usage. Simone Weil makes this point powerfully:

Christ does not call his benefactors loving or charitable. He calls them just. The Gospel makes no distinction between the love of our neighbour and justice.[41]

Weil goes on to argue that our notion of charity as kindness is false and dangerous, it deludes us into thinking that there is something virtuous about giving people what we in fact owe them. Temple makes a similar point:

If the present order is taken for granted or assumed to be sacrosanct, charity from the more to the less fortunate would seem virtuous and commendable; to those for whom the order itself is suspect or worse, such charity is blood-money. Why should some be in the position to dispense and others to need that kind of charity?[42]

So, the welfare state must be founded on justice; and this means an appropriate balance of rights and duties. The welfare state is a way of bring these rights to life, defining what we owe each other, and using the law and social institutions to support the fulfilment of these obligations.

This raises a very interesting question as to what extent should these duties be reflected in laws or to what extent should they flow from social norms and other social structures. We probably do not know how best to promote virtues of a just society in the hearts of its members. Arguably the current welfare state has ducked this issue by assuming that our only significant duty is to pay our taxes and then to leave everything to the state or its agents. This is an assumption that we must question.

Certainly people with disabilities have made very clear that they do not want charity, they want justice; and justice includes clear and defensible rights. Building on the *United Nation's Declaration of Human Rights* people with disabilities have helped to define the *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*.[43] This convention tries to help define human rights more clearly and specifically in the context of the lived experience of people with disabilities, in particular the barriers, exclusions and prejudices they often face because of their disabilities.

For instance, people do not want to be placed in residential care, with no freedom to move, to choose who they live with or how they live. Instead people want all the same rights as other citizens: to have a home of their own, with people of their choosing and with the ability to develop a life of meaning based on their choices, preferences and talents. People do not want to be placed in a day centre - unable to work, play and meet others with the freedom that the rest of us take for granted. Our lives should not be defined by the bad decisions of those who built institutions, care homes or day centres. We should be free to shape our own lives, in community with others.

Rights should be at the heart of welfare because rights exist to enable the individual themselves to shape their own life in their own way. Charity is a gift and is defined by the giver; rights put the recipient in charge of their own life, guaranteeing both freedom and the additional assistance or resources necessary for the person to exercise that freedom.

Love and humanity

Love does not just demand that we fulfil our duties and respect other people's rights; love also asks us to value the other person - to see in that other person another real and valuable human being. This may seem a simple thing, but we are quite prone to cut ourselves off from others, especially when those others are perhaps different, challenging or weak.[44]

One of the ways that we can begin to wake up to the reality that everyone has value is by considering the fact that each individual is a gift. We each come into the world as a gift. We are each unique and we are each full of potential – and the potential of each individual is quite distinct. My gifts and your gifts are not the same and they cannot be compared by any simple measure.

Moreover, we can even think of life as the way in which we give our gift, that the challenge of life is to find the best way to share and express our gifts. This is often very difficult, particularly where prejudice, low expectations or a lack of resources makes it harder for us to find the right opportunities for the full expression of our gifts.

One leading thinker, who has been central to articulating this conception of giftedness, is Judith Snow, a woman with disabilities from Canada, who writes:

The gift of surviving and growing through change belongs to the outcast. Ancient writings tell us this and modern experience confirms it. Living on the edge of chaos changes the people who survive it. You become very aware of the value of things ordinary citizens take for granted; things like having your opinion listened to, having the chance to make a mistake, to be forgiven and to have the chance to try again; things like having friends and family who celebrate holidays with you and who will tell their friends that they are looking for a job. Living on the margin either burns you out and kills you, or it turns you into a dreamer, someone who really knows what sort of change will help and who can just about taste it; someone who is prepared to do just about anything to bring about change. If these dreamers are liberated, if they are brought back into the arms of society, they become the architects of the new community; a community which has a new capacity to support everyone's needs and interactions. But how can this really be, especially since these dreamers

still have the characteristics that marked them as outcasts in the first place? They will still lack good judgement, or find it hard to learn to read, or be disabled. Solving this problem is critical, for otherwise the outcasts and the ordinaries are very good at maintaining an invisible wall between their worlds.[45]

Snow is proposing that we radically rethink what we mean by a gift, by considering where the real value in life belongs. For Snow, everything is a gift: disability is a gift, need is a gift. Snow challenges the prevalent conception of need as mere emptiness - something that must be filled, usually by someone else. We imagine that the needy lack gifts while the giver seem blessed with gifts to give. But we are deceived by appearances.

First, imagine a world where nobody had any needs; this would be a world where we did not need each other, where we would all be isolated and empty. In fact, it is need itself that creates community - for need calls out for action and for connection. Need creates meaning and the opportunity for contribution. The gifts of the giver become empty and meaningless without the needs of the other. Need is the primary gift by which community is called into existence.

Now, imagine someone with a great deal of money, we imagine this person as possessing something good, a gift. Yet this money only becomes effective, and a source of contribution, because other people need that money, in order to then convert it into some thing else they need or value. This can give the person with money power. However, if we were to transport that person, and all their money, into a desert, their wealth would turn into a meaningless pile of paper. Money only has value because of the role it plays in a community of need.

The same is true of all the gifts we might imagine. All our talents and skills require others who can benefit from them, appreciate them or who can participate in their giving. All our wonderful personal qualities mean nothing, if there is no one to enjoy them. Power and influence only make sense, only have value, when they serve society.

As Vanier argues, we have lost sight of our basic humanity. Instead we have fallen for the inadequate Enlightenment account of humanity, with its ideal of the rational, competent and goal-

orientated human being - the 'rational I'. This whole way of thinking about ourselves is self-defeating. The more an individual advances, the more he must leave others behind; the more we worship such individual striving, the more people we condemned those inevitably left behind. We think we are building, while we're merely destroying. Instead, as Vanier says, we must begin with acceptance and love, as St Paul understands it:

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.[46]

As Vanier observes, what comes first is patience. The modern view of love so often misses this point; instead we slip into that dangerous Enlightenment way of thinking where all the focus is on what we do, in the name of love. This kind of love becomes just another badge that we then try to award ourselves.

As well as an important thinker, Vainer also established the social movement know as L'Arche. The L'Arche movement encourages people with and without disabilities to live in community together. He argues that the primary value of L'Arche does not lie in what it achieves for people with disabilities, but in the message that is inherent to its way of being: we must meet together as fellow humans. For in the meeting of the 'strong' and the 'weak' we are each transformed. The weak may be supported, but the strong also get the chance to find out what really matters and who they really are.

In fact nobody is really 'weak' or 'strong'. Instead the desire to be amongst the strong, and to avoid the weak, is just a symptom of a society's failure to welcome all and to comprehend the true value of each individual. We are like little children, each wanting to be picked for whichever team we think will win; and so we allow ourselves to be shaped and judged by the wrong values. We even mark ourselves by those distorted values - forgetting what is really important to us, focusing instead on what is important to 'them.' The rat race is a race to nowhere.

We strive to do, to change, to improve - yet so often we fail to just be with each other, to meet each other, and to accept

each other. Movingly, Vanier tells the story of a male prostitute in Australia, who, dying in the arms of a member of L'Arche, said:

You've always wanted to change me; but you've never met me.[47]

Vanier also asserts the importance of our vulnerability. All of us, quite literally, are vulnerable; for we can all be wounded. We are all mortal, we all live in dependence upon others and will suffer illness and disability and eventually will die. But this vulnerability is not our enemy - it is a fundamental feature of our human condition - and it is what safeguards us from over-weaning pride.

Vanier captures exactly the fundamental flaw in the thinking and behaviour of the powerful - they behave as if the point of life is to climb higher and higher, even to the point of clambering up upon the backs of the weak. But where are they going? What will they find when they get there? They will be empty and alone.

Love restores us to our basic humanity, our fragility and our neediness. What we see and respond to in others is what we are in ourselves, merely human. But this recognition of our basic humanity is also a recognition of value. Each of us matters, each of us is a unique gift to the world. The challenge is to recognise and express that gift.

Recognising and valuing our giftedness, and our vulnerability, is central to the Copernican shift. For it helps us to understand the basic fact of our interdependence, which is the fundamental fact of social reality - we need each other. Interdependence goes much deeper than the economic exchanges that dominate contemporary thinking. Interdependence is in the family, in the relationships of child to mother and father. Interdependence is in friendship, love and community, in everything which gives life joy, beauty and meaning. Interdependence is everywhere and should be the source of mutual respect and humility in all that others do for us. It is, as Rebbe Shmelke said:

The rich need the poor more than the poor need the rich. Unfortunately, neither is conscious of it.[48]

Love and the spirit

Love also has a purpose; and the proper purpose of love is the full and free development of each individual. As Temple puts it:

The aim of a Christian social order is the fullest possible development of individual personality in the widest and deepest possible fellowship.[49]

Each human life is full of potential, distinct potential, not to be compared with or ranked against another person's potential. For as the great Hasidic thinker, Rebbe Yaakov-Yitzhak, the Seer of Lublin said:

There are many paths leading to perfection; it is given to each of us to choose our own, and by following it with great dedication, we can make it become our truth, our only truth.[50]

This perspective is somewhat missing from contemporary thought. Social policy often reduces human beings to bundles of needs, desires, or some other shallow version of human happiness. These philosophies convert human beings into mere containers, where only the contents really matter - so much pleasure, need fulfilment, desire satisfaction or whatever. Individuals, on this view, don't really exist. It takes a much richer metaphysics to recognise that the glory of human life is in its distinctness, and in the unfolding of diverse potential of the many different individuals. So, in the Christian tradition, the welfare should not exist just to meet needs, it should promote our full development.

At this point the thinking of Weil is particularly valuable. In particular her book *The Need for Roots*, which was written on behalf of the Free French Government during the war, offers a striking template for a very different kind of welfare state. As she suggest, many of our rights do relate to material needs, the same kinds of need that Beveridge described:

- Food
- Safety
- Housing
- Clothing

- Heating
- Hygiene
- Medical attention

This is straightforward; but it is not her main interest. For in addition Weil identifies a range of spiritual needs - things that essential to the welfare or development of the human soul. She outlines these needs as a list, but many of these needs also come in the form of pairs, that need to be balanced:

- Order, but also Liberty
- Obedience, but also Responsibility
- Equality, but also Hierarchy
- Honour, but also Punishment
- Freedom of Opinion
- Security, but also Risk
- Private Property and Collective Property
- Truth

This framework provides many different ways of examining the nature of a good welfare state. For example, Weil's account creates a clear alternative to liberal and socialist thinking about property. She rejects the socialist perspective that private property is theft; instead she says private property meets a vital need of the soul, for it helps us to build a world around ourselves, and so it helps us to be at home in the world. However, she also rejects the absolute property rights of liberalism, for we also need a shared world which we can enjoy with others. This is psychologically truthful and a great improvement over the simplifications of liberalism and socialism.

Moreover, we can also use Weil's framework to think about how we design welfare systems. For example, if we want to meet someone's basic need for food then we can do so in at least two ways. First, we can meet it directly - by giving someone food. Or, instead, we can give someone money to buy food or the land upon which to grow it. The advantage of this second approach is that it means that the person can now exercise liberty, and responsibility. This is why food banks or welfare cash cards are much worse than

a decent systems of income security and property rights. Food banks damage the soul.

However, we can also design very different systems for giving people money. For instance, if we make the system highly dependent upon the person's poverty, that is highly means-tested, then we can push people into a position of deep insecurity and, at the same time, we will make it riskier for people to take risks. A bad system of income security will be inadequate, insecure and yet will reduce people's willingness to take risks. That is exactly the kind of system that we have developed in the UK, and this kind of welfare system also damages the soul.

Recognising the reality of spiritual needs has also been a very important issue for people with learning disabilities. Often material needs are met, but with no regard for people's spiritual needs. Often people with learning disabilities are even treated as if they do not have dreams, aspirations, gifts to express or roles to fulfil. Instead the combination of powerful, pre-defined services, and low expectations from society, conspire to undermine people's personal development.

It was for this reason that thinkers like John O'Brien developed approaches such as person-centred planning, which purposefully helped people to stretch themselves or to raise expectations.[51] These advocates of people with learning disabilities discovered that enabling people to have full and meaningful lives means helping people to define and develop their own personal destinies.

So this is not just a matter of better understanding our real needs, it is also about demonstrating that, as human beings we have a spiritual destiny which cannot be expressed in merely material terms. This vision is at the heart of the Copernican revolution in welfare, because it asks us to consider each and every human being as a sacred and spiritual being. It strips away the illusion that any of the trappings of power or wealth, that we so often cling to, can define who we really are or who we are meant to be.

Love and equality

Love is also universal, it does not discriminate, everyone is equal. For the Christian all the obvious inequalities and differences, which can seem so important, simply fall away. As Temple put it:

But if all are children of one Father, then all are equal heirs of a status in comparison with which apparent differences of quality and capacity are unimportant; in the deepest and most important of all - their relationship to God - all are equal.[52]

We are not only equal in our relationship with God, we are also made equal by Christ's presence in us. We are all of equal worth, for we are all redeemed by God; but we are also equal in our unworthiness. The immeasurable mercy of God makes a joke of any effort to assert our own merit:

Christ who is your life is hanging before you, so that you may look at the Cross as in a mirror. There you will be able to know how mortal were your wounds that no medicine other than the blood of the Son of God could heal. If you look closely, you will be able to realise how great your human dignity and your value are... Nowhere other than looking at himself in the mirror of the Cross can man better understand how much he is worth.[53]

For Weil the equal worth of all human beings is a fundamental feature of moral reality. It is our ability (however imperfect) to sense that all human beings are equal is a form of spiritual awareness. For bare material facts won't convince you of our fundamental equality; it will only demonstrate the many inequalities and differences in the world. We have to see beyond the world in order to sense our fundamental equality:

The combination of these two facts - the longing in the depth of the heart for absolute good, and the power, though only latent, of directing attention and love to a reality beyond the world and of receiving good from it - constitutes a link which attaches every man without exception to that other reality.

Whoever recognises that reality recognises also that link. Because of it, he holds every human being without any exception as something sacred to which he is bound to show respect.

This is the only possible motive for universal respect towards all human beings. Whatever formulation of belief or disbelief a man may choose to make, if his heart inclines him to feel this respect, then he in fact also recognises a reality other than this world's reality. Whoever does not feel this respect is alien to that other reality also.[54]

The Judeo-Christian commitment to equality is much stronger than the liberal idea that we are all equal simply because 'everybody's got equal rights.' In fact it is even misleading to think that justice even demands equal rights. Justice actually demands, not equality of rights, but discrimination - the ability to see who needs what, and who should do what. We must identify and clarify each person's unique entitlements, and also ensure that somebody else has the corresponding responsibilities. Our real equality is much more fundamental, much deeper, than our status as a holder of rights.

Equality, in the Christian tradition, is not a goal, but a starting point. We all are equal and it is only false pride and idolatry which allows one to set themselves up as greater than another. Equality is rooted in the virtue of humility, how we understand our distance from God and our duty to serve God, through man. Christ's instruction to his disciples imposes a particular strong version of this duty on those who hope to lead:

But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.[55]

Yet, while we are fundamentally equal, there is always a danger that our obvious differences will still become a source of shame or pride. And this danger is particularly grave when one person gives to another, for the act of giving (charity in its modern sense) is an act of power. So for the welfare state it is fundamentally important that such acts do no harm to our dignity.

A just welfare state must therefore operate in a spirit of citizenship - treating everyone as an equal. For it is by citizenship that otherwise unequal individuals can come together as equals.

Citizenship means respecting difference; indeed it honours difference, for it is through our differences that community has meaning, while mere sameness is just sterility.[56] Although the term citizenship has often been misused by revolutionary movements it is in fact an essential element of a just society. For it is by understanding what effective citizenship requires that we can evaluate the true impact of the welfare state. A society where some are left excluded and treated as of lesser value is a society that is failing this task. As society that has organised itself to welcome everyone and to ensure that everyone has a place of dignity is succeeding at this task.

For people with disabilities this question of citizenship is central to their ambitions and their challenge to the existing order. They do not demand services or resources, or if they do it is only as a means to a different end. What they seek is inclusion and respect - this is citizenship. People do not want to be seen as of lower worth, nor do they accept that the powerful are of greater worth.

The idea of meritocracy which is now so popular (what would have in a different age been called aristocracy) is doubly dangerous. First it allows those who do have power to delude themselves that they are better, just by the very fact that they have managed to work their way into a position of power. Second believing that you are the best quite easily allows you to treat others as second-best or worse. In fact the stigmatising and shaming of people with disabilities and those in poverty seems to be less a matter of liberal economics and more an effort to pick out groups that the majority of the community can feel superior to. In the Christian tradition this is the sin of pride, and it is the fundamental sin, at bottom of all the others.[57]

In the face of this meritocratic arrogance and general prejudice people with disabilities have again and again demonstrated that they can take a full and effective place within community, that they can take control of their own lives and they can contribute to society. However this often means overturning some of the welfare systems that obstruct them. For example, in the United Kingdom much support to people with disabilities was organised by the provision of services, into which people were slotted. However innovations like personal budgets and direct payments have

enabled people to take increasing levels of control over the funding for their own support. This improves their lives and their capacity to be part of the community.[58]

This will be critical to the Copernican revolution in welfare. Power and control must not radiate down from the centre, instead people and communities must be able to self-organise, share and improve their own situations.[59] Citizenship cannot be given as a gift from the powerful to the weak; citizenship is exercised when all of us have the rights and necessary means to work together as equals.

Love and community

This brings us to the fifth and final element of a transformed welfare system - our communities. For full human development is impossible without diverse communities, offering multiple opportunities for exchange and meaning. Musical talent means little without fellow musicians or an audience to enjoy the music. A loving heart needs family or friendship, a relationship where it can express itself. Bravery must have opportunity for challenge, risk and achievement. Frailty calls out for those who can understand, support and cherish. Our different talents find their meaning in community. As Temple puts it:

A democracy which is to be Christian must be a democracy of persons, not only of individuals. It must not only just tolerate but encourage minor communities as the expression and the arena of personal freedom; and its structure must be such as to serve this end.[60]

The connection between human development and the need for diverse communities is obvious once you see it, but it is often missed. Indeed, shallower notions of equality, like 'equal opportunities' often threaten the very diversity that human life requires. A just welfare state should encourage vibrant living communities, not sterile conformity, standardisation or bureaucracy.

This is not just an idle dream, this is an intensely practical issue for the welfare state. It is still not the state which gives birth to

children, loves them, brings them up and supports them. It is still not the state that provides fellowship and companionship through life; we do not marry the state. The state will not hold our hand through illness or at the point of death. Only we can do these basic acts of welfare. Love, love exercised by ordinary people, is what must be at the heart of the welfare state.

Perhaps this is where Temple's term 'welfare state' has been unhelpful. For in the United Kingdom at least, the state is treated very much as just one distinct element of society. Moreover given that we live, not in a democracy, as the ancients would have understood it, but in an system which allows us only a very limited influence over competing oligopolies, then the very business of 'ruling' is something which most of us feel very distant from us. Aristotle's definition of a citizen - "one who has a share in both ruling and being ruled" - seems a pipe dream to us.[61]

Today we have even confused conformity with justice, often preferring standardisation to diversity, even if those standards are set far too low. Direct central control or regulatory control of services is seen as desirable. Bureaucratic control, regulation and punishment of ordinary citizens, particularly those on low incomes, is seen as normal. Community, which is necessarily chaotic, diverse and heterogenous - what Vanier calls "crazy" - is seen as a problem. Often, in the cause of raising standards or ending 'postcode lotteries' increasing levels of power are ceded to the central state.

The paradox is that we are building a system which turns each of us into increasingly isolated and disconnected individuals and which erodes the sense of belonging and contribution that is essential to the maintenance of love and justice.

Again it is useful to return to the thinking of Arendt and Weil. For both argued that the tragedy of the twentieth century is partially explained by people's experience of being uprooted - being thrown away or discounted - unable to find a place, a role or a life of meaning. This was true for millions of displaced people, refugees or asylum seekers; but it was also true for millions of peasants and workers who found themselves uprooted by industrial society - first uprooted from the country, then uprooted by their replaceable role in the mass production process.

This process of displacement leaves people insecure and uprooted - and dis-enchanted with their country (if they even have one). For several reasons Weil thought that this problem was particularly severe in pre-War France and that this partially explained the failure of France to defend itself from German attack in 1940:

The war has shown how serious are the ravages of this disease [uprootedness] among the peasants. For the soldiers were young peasants. In September 1939, one used to hear peasants say: "Better to live as a German than die as a Frenchman." What had been done to them to make them think they had nothing to lose?[62]

Weil tried to understand how France could become a place worthy of love. She argued that it is not the glory, size, or GDP of a country that really matters. What really matters is whether a country can offer people a way of life that is fully rooted. This involves a very different kind of patriotism to the vainglorious boasting that we are used to:

As for a remedy, there is only one: to give French people something to love; and, in the first place, to give them France to love; to conceive the reality corresponding to the name of France in such a way that as she actually is, in her very truth, she can be loved with the whole heart.[63]

We need roots not just because being rooted is itself good for the soul; we also need roots because the very obligations that give life to our rights depend upon the ties of family, community, association and country. It is these social forms that shape and strengthen our rights. Only with roots can we discover and fulfil our duties; only with roots can we ensure that we both have rights and that we respect the rights of others. Roots are the prelude to our duties, without them we are adrift.

This may seem like a problem of the past, but this is not true. Industrial productivity may be a good thing, but it has a very high price. Particularly today, when we are surrounded by so much wealth, it only takes one financial crisis, an illness or bad luck to turn our lives upside down. We are all uprooted now; although the welfare state helps us to avoid some of the consequences of this fact. Moreover war and injustice also ensure that there are many more people, refugees, immigrants and asylum seekers,

who find themselves rootless and who need to be welcomed into community.

In fact it is worth noting that much of what we take for granted within the welfare state began life in the efforts of ordinary people to create systems of mutual support within our communities. The cooperative movement enabled people to lift themselves out of poverty. Mutuals and friendly societies created ways in which people could get practical support, funding and healthcare.[64] Most of this was swept away by national legislation, before and after World War II and as the UK shifted to a centralised and nationalised system. There were many benefits achieved from the creation of the welfare state, for these mechanisms of mutual support were patchy and often fragile; but it is important not to assume that welfare demands nationalisation or standardisation.

In fact today, as the welfare state is being radically cut back, it is inspiring to see people return to the idea of cooperation and mutualism. As the state fails, many people are left increasingly adrift in poverty and isolation; but where people reach out to each other, offering peer support - getting help and giving help - then they discover a new and much more empowering way of being. For instance, people with mental health problems, instead of becoming reliant on professional help, start to see they can help others, by practical action and sharing the expertise that comes from their own lived experience of mental illness.[65] Others are demonstrating that when we focus on neighbourhoods, on smaller geographical communities, we can unlock more commitment, energy, helping people transform their lives together.[66]

For the welfare state to thrive, for it to become lovable again, we will need to return to these experiences and to the insights of Weil and and Arendt. We will need to design a welfare state that supports community life and which encourages roots, loyalties and the inevitable creativity and diversity that this unleashes.

Making this Copernican shift in welfare means following Temple's insight that love should be central to our understanding of the welfare state. However it also means going further and learning from Vanier and others; for if we take the idea of love

seriously, then we will need to build a radically different welfare state to the welfare state we currently have. Not only would justice need to be central to the welfare system, we must also recognise how much we need each other; such a welfare system would need to both serve love and to act in the spirit of love. This then would become a lovable welfare state – and hence a defensible welfare state.

3. Making the Copernican shift real

I have argued that, behind all the apparent conflict, liberals and socialists share some common assumptions about welfare and that these assumptions underpin the original design of the welfare state, and lurk behind the current destruction of the welfare state. At the heart of this shared view is that welfare is an exercise in power.

As an alternative to this I have suggested that there is a different way of thinking, involving a Copernican shift in perspective. Instead of power, we must start with love; and when we do so, we can see that the welfare state that we really need is very different to the one we've got. Love is justice, and so it asks that we value each other, nurture each other, respect each other and, together, build the community that can maintain an ongoing commitment to justice.

What is striking about this vision is that it lies latent in what we've already achieved. In fact it is already being realised, in fragments, wherever people come together as equals to support each other. It will not be achieved by revolutionary action or by simply issuing new Acts of Parliament (although better laws would certainly help). For the welfare state is not just a structure, a law or a system; it is also us, it is our habits, responsibilities and freely chosen actions. We choose to build or destroy the welfare state by our actions. We cannot just sweep away the old design and replace it with a new design; but we can start to build with a different template, with a different vision, amidst the decline and fall of the old approach.

The task may not be easy, but there are many sources of inspiration. Human beings have an immense capacity to innovate and to seek better solutions, despite all the opposing forces they

face. There are those who are learning that they can overcome mental illness by working together in community.[67] There are others who are helping women fix their shattered lives by building respectful relationships that help people regain hope and faith in themselves.[68] Mass movements to confront poverty have been inspired by those who help people look within and build from a starting point of absolute poverty.[69] Organisations like L'Arche, and many others, have demonstrated that those who society rejects can become the foundation stones for a better society.[70]

Welfare with dignity

Of particular relevance here is the experience of the Jewish people. The Old Testament is just as clear as the New Testament that social justice is paramount. In fact to attack the poor is blasphemy:

You insult your Maker when you exploit the powerless; when you are kind to the poor, you honour God.[71]

Also, like the early Christians, Jews have often had to build systems of social justice without the full protection and support of the state. Paul Johnson describes how Judaism led the way in the development of the welfare state:

Moreover, philanthropy was an obligation too, since the word 'zedakah' meant both charity and righteousness. The Jewish welfare state in antiquity, the prototype of all others, was not voluntary; a man had to contribute to the common fund in proportion to his means, and this duty could be enforced by the courts. Maimonides even ruled that a Jew who evaded contributing according to wealth should be regarded as a rebel and punished accordingly. Other communal obligations included respect for privacy, the need to be neighbourly (i.e. to give neighbours first refusal of adjoining land put up for sale), and strict injunctions against noise, smells, vandalism and pollution.

Communal obligations need to be understood within the assumptions of Jewish theology. The sages taught that a Jew should not regard these social duties as burdens but as yet more ways in which men showed their love for God and righteousness.[72]

What is even more interesting is the fact that the Jews also thought very hard about how welfare should be delivered in the spirit of love and justice. The great Jewish thinker Moses Maimonides developed this account of the eight levels of charity, within which he demonstrated that there are many different ways to provide welfare and that often it can be corrupted and not serve justice as it might. This analysis should be much better known, so I quote it in full:

Level One - There are eight levels in charity, each level surpassing the other. The highest level beyond which there is none is a person who supports a Jew who has fallen into poverty [by] giving him a present or a loan, entering into partnership with him, or finding him work so that his hand shall be fortified so that he will not have to ask others [for alms]. Concerning this [Leviticus 25:35] states "You shall support him, the stranger, the resident, and he shall live among you." Implied is that you should support him before he falls and becomes needy.

Level Two - A lower level than this is one who gives charity to the poor without knowing to whom he gave and without the poor person knowing from whom he received. For this is an observance of the mitzvah for its sake alone. This [type of giving] was exemplified by the secret chamber that existed in the Temple. The righteous would make donations there in secret and poor people of distinguished lineage would derive their livelihood from it in secret. A level close to this is giving to a charity fund. A person should not give to a charitable fund unless he knows that the person managing it is faithful, wise and capable of administering it in a proper manner as Rebbe Chananya ben Tradyon was.

Level Three - A lower level than this is an instance when the giver knows to whom he is giving, but the poor person does not know from whom he received. An example of this were the great Sages who would go in secret and money into the doorway of the poor. This is an appropriate way of giving charity and it is as good a quality if the trustees of the charitable fund are not conducting themselves appropriately.

Level Four - A lower level than this is an instance when the poor person knows from whom he took, but the donor does not know to whom he gave. An example of this were the great Sages who would bundle coins in a sheet and hang them over their shoulders and the poor would come and take them so they would not be embarrassed.

Level Five - A lower level than that is giving the poor person in his hand before he asks.

Level Six - A lower level than that is giving him after he asks.

Level Seven - A lower level than this is giving him less than what is appropriate, but with a pleasant countenance.

Level Eight - A level lower than that is giving him with sadness.[73]

Maimonides shows how love can be diminished whenever the act of giving also damages the dignity of the person.[74] In its highest form the gift brings no shame, because it is not even seen as a gift. In its lower forms, such as begging, then being seen to receive a gift lowers the apparent status of the beggar, while the act of giving inflates the pride of the donor. Clearly the typical food bank provides a very low form of charity.

In fact we can build on Maimonides and extract from his analysis 8 Principles for Giving, all of which are relevant to the design of the just welfare state:

1. **Active** - Do something - we must act to help meet need, as best we can.
2. **Egalitarian** - Don't look down on people - respect each other, for we are all equals.
3. **Sufficiency** - Don't deny people what they really need - give people enough to achieve citizenship.
4. **Entitlement** - Don't make people beg - we are all entitled to what we need.
5. **Respectful** - Don't expose people to scorn or stigma - we should feel no shame in our need.
6. **Freedom** - Don't make your gift personal - we are free, and should not feel dependent on any particular donor.

7. **Universalism** - Don't distinguish givers from receivers - we should all be seen as contributing and receiving from a system that works for the benefit of all.
8. **Prevention** - Don't let people fall into need in the first place - we must secure each other from need.

Ultimately, as Maimonides suggests, we must confront some fundamental facts of the human condition. We are needy beings, our survival depends on both material and spiritual food. But life is inevitably insecure and this means we cannot guarantee, on our own, that we will always be able to meet our needs. This means that we need the security that can only come from the commitment of other people to help us to meet those needs. However we do not want to replace the inevitable insecurities of life with the insecurities of dependence, beggary or patronage. In other words we will always have needs, and one of the most fundamental needs is the need for security with dignity and justice. The challenge is to find patterns of living that help us to meet those needs in the right way.

Copernican policy reform

If we accept this challenge then many of the things we take for granted about the organisation of the welfare state start to look very different. If we are interested in promoting a welfare state orientated towards love then we might ask:

1. **Income** - Why do we divide, demean and mistreat those who fall on hard times and need extra income?
2. **Health** - Why do we continue to allow people to buy their way to better and longer lives?
3. **Education** - Why do we not want to advance the talents and abilities of all children, rather than encouraging the majority to think of themselves as failures?
4. **Housing** - Why do some people find themselves unable to own their own home, and why do we choose to fund landlords rather than help people own their own home?
5. **Disability** - Why do we not ensure that everyone has the assistance necessary to become an active citizen, sharing the rights and responsibilities of community with everybody else?

This is not the space to reflect on all these issues, but perhaps the most important is the problem of how to ensure sufficient income security for all citizens. How communities solve the problem of income security has changed over time.[75] Moses created one solution: family land rights were protected and the jubilee system was created in order to release people from debt and slavery. In the same way, the feudal system also created a community, bound together by their lord, where people collaborated to meet their needs. But by the nineteenth-century only paid employment offered any hope of providing the necessary security.

One very practical area, which remains at the centre of all discussions on welfare, is the organisation of income security - or what is often called (rather inaccurately) the benefit system. For Temple, Beveridge and other pre-war thinkers, it seemed obvious that the problem of insecurity must be met by ensuring people had access to work.

The worst evil afflicting the working-class in England is insecurity; they live under the terrible menace of unemployment. And in our own time a new and horrible evil has appeared - long-term unemployment on considerable scale. Unemployment is a corrosive poison. It saps both physical and moral strength. The worst effect of it, especially now that the community takes some care of its unemployed members, is not the physical want, but the moral disaster of not being wanted. This brings most misery to the mature man who has been in regular work for many years and relies on it as the framework of his life; but it does most harm to the young man who never forms habits of regular work at all.[76]

As this quote suggests, the designers of the welfare state had a deep fear that system of income security might undermine incentives to work. Hence these systems have typically been ungenerous and severely means-tested. For although means-testing actually reduces incentives to work it also excludes people on modest means from any entitlement, and hence from the putative 'danger' of becoming reliant on benefits. 75 years later this design principle, which continues to dominate policy-making on income security, remains: keep benefits low and get people into work at any cost.

However, increasingly work is not a path to security. We've been persuaded that economic wealth also means increasing levels of job insecurity - for employers require the maximum level of

contractual flexibility in order to respond to market demands. So work is not a way of achieving a modicum of security, it is just participation in a growing flux of uncertainty as technology, roles, hours, pay, pensions and every other employment right are prone to rapid change. Only a diminishing group of employees can consider their positions secure; most of us are living in a world where the connection between employment and income security has been severed. This is reflected in the fact that benefits and tax credits are now used to support the incomes of nearly 50% of families.[77]

One of the most important questions for our time is whether the distribution of employment roles, via the labour market, is really adequate to achieve the security we need for personal and community development in a spirit of equal citizenship.

Work, in all its forms, is essential to a flourishing communities; and employment, which is just one kind of work, certainly has a valuable role for some.[78] However real security does not come from employment, it comes from recognition of our mutual dependence and from our commitment to each other and the communities that we form together.

The welfare state must create the essential security that a just society demands. We are dependent beings, we do not live on air. Personal development and community life is impossible without some basic securities, and in the modern world that security is found in the commitment that we make to secure each other from need. Mutual dependence, is inevitable; the challenge - as Maimonides correctly identified - is to ensure that this mutual dependence does not become toxic or tyrannical.

One possible answer to this problem is to move to a system of Basic (or Citizen) Income where we guarantee to each other a basic income that is sufficient to live on, and we all contribute to this system by means of a fair system of taxation. I have argued elsewhere that such a system is both affordable and efficient, and this is not the place to repeat those arguments.[79] Instead it is simply important to recognise that much we take for granted about the welfare state is not necessary - there are other possible designs. In my opinion the early designers paid far too little attention to the psychological or spiritual dimensions of welfare. Dependency is an

unavoidable fact of the human condition, not a flaw, but a blessing; but we must endeavour to identify ways in which this dependency is not corrupted. Creating universal protections, like a system of Basic Income, is one way to help ensure that one group does not exploit or look down on another.

Constitutional reform

Now, while policies like Basic Income may offer some hope of a welfare state designed in the light of justice, this simply raises another more difficult question: How do we become the kind of society that would create and sustain a just welfare state? For as things stand, even if we agreed on better policies, there is something about the nature of political decision-making that suggests these policies would not be implemented in the right spirit and would be undermined over time.

Certainly, in the United Kingdom, it is the on-going destructive process that is most obvious. Little seems to stand in the way of this process of destruction, even as Government's change. It is not just in the dominance of liberalism, but there is a much bigger problem. Understanding this problem is critical. Too much attention has been given to the battle between socialism and liberalism; far too little attention has be paid to what lies behind the smokescreen of this conflict and what is really undermining the welfare state.

To begin with it may be worth remembering one of the most brutal but realistic reasons that the welfare state was created was the threat of communism. The sad fact is that the modern welfare state was never an idealistic project; rather it began in nineteenth-century Germany, as Bismark tried to offer industrial workers an alternative to revolution.

The growth of welfare state, after World War II, was not just a way of responding to the legitimate demands of troops returning from war; instead there was real fear that communism would spread beyond the Iron Curtain. The subsequent collapse of communism is certainly a good thing; but at least one negative

consequence of that collapse is that it has weakened the support of the powerful for the welfare state. The rich no longer fear that the poor will seize their wealth from them.

When fear goes then discipline is necessary, and for a society this means creating new constitutional disciplines to ensure that there are significant forces to balance the inevitable operation of greed and self-interest. Fear must be internalised and turned into some means of self-discipline - this is the role of a constitution and civil society. As Arendt observed above, the welfare state works because "only legal and political institutions that are independent of the economic forces and automatism can control and check the inherently monstrous potentialities of this process." However this suggest that we will need to be much more careful about understanding the balance of legal and political institutions that are actually effective at checking the gravitational forces of capitalism or socialism.

This is a constitutional question, not dissimilar to the questions that were asked as reformers wrestled with how to discipline the autocratic states that began to emerge in the modern era. Then democratic, legal and civil institutions were all thought necessary to ensure that the state did not become a tyrant. However there has been no similar examination of what is necessary to ensure that the welfare state acts in the spirit of justice.

Modern defenders of the welfare state must do this work; they must understand the conditions that can really protect people's rights and which can check the forces of expropriation - protecting people from both the state and from capital. This whole issue requires much more thought and more careful analysis; but a good place to begin might be to examine what has gone wrong in the UK, and why the welfare state has lost much of its institutional protection.

- We might consider the role of our democracy and the party political system. For it is clear than in the UK party politics is shaped by the economic interests of median income earners to whom politicians pander. We live in a medianocracy where some votes matter much more than others.[80] Changes to Parliament, in particular reform of the House of Lords, might reduce the level of corruption in the current system.

- It is important to recognise the important role played by civil society in the welfare state: trade unions, the Church, charities or other forms of association that might advocate in the interests of the weak. If these bodies become too weak, or their interests become muddled with those of the powerful, then they will fail to effectively advocate for the weakest. Clearly the growing influence of the state and big business on the media and civil society is having a toxic effect.
- Legal and constitutional protections would be framed so as to be less subject to minor shifts in political influence, local government structures could be protected from the boundary commission, key institutions like the NHS would not be subject to on-going structural reform. A certain structural solidity is important, not only to protect rights, but also to enable people to collaborate and work within a reasonably solid framework.
- Key prohibitions may be useful, for instance means-testing is often deeply damaging - allowing hidden taxes to be placed on the poorest and reducing social solidarity. Universal guarantees are needed, which can be combined the flexibility for inter-pretation and innovation at the level of the individual and the community.
- We should honour and support citizenship and other forms of work beyond employment - in particular family life and volun-teering. There is no reason we could not follow the example of ancient Athens and place local people in roles within their community by lot, as we do with jury duty. There is no need for the professionalisation of all functions, this only serves to distance people from each other.

Ultimately the problems we face are constitutional. For too long we have allowed the welfare state to become a toy of the party political system and we have failed to attend to the ethical and political underpinnings that might maintain justice within the welfare state. We have naively allowed central power to grow, believing that such power must be exercised in the interests of justice, only to find that such power can be misused or corrupted.

Conclusion

The United Kingdom is hardly a Christian society today, but nevertheless the Church has a critical role in advocating for justice and resisting the blasphemy that is the oppression and stigmatisation of people in poverty, people with disabilities, immigrants and asylum seekers.

Some of this work will require work at the grassroots. However here the Church needs to think carefully about how to work. It is easy to become complicit with injustice, offering food banks rather than challenging the policies that make them necessary. After all our problems have nothing to do with drought or poor harvests - they are problems that have been created by the combination of severe income inequality with a financial crisis caused by over-borrowing, primarily by the better-off.

In particular the Church will need to think about how it can, as William Temple did, build alliances and connections beyond itself. Significant social change takes place when a wide range of different groups and perspectives come together in the name of justice. Above all, the Church is in an ideal position to welcome others to come together, eat together, think together and begin to plan together.

I will end with the Benediction (blessing) which was composed by Jean Vanier's sister Therese and which ended the ceremony at which Jean Vanier was awarded the Templeton Prize:

May oppressed people and those who oppress them, free each other.
May those who are disabled and those who think they are not, help each other.
May those who need someone to listen, touch the hearts of those who are too busy.
May the homeless bring joy to those who open their doors reluctantly.
May the lonely heal those who think they are self-sufficient.
May the poor melt the hearts of the rich.
May seekers of truth give life to those who are satisfied that they have found it.
May the dying who do not wish to die be comforted by those who find it hard to live.
May the unloved be allowed to unlock the hearts of those who cannot love.
May prisoners find true freedom and liberate others from fear.
May those who sleep on the streets share their gentleness with those who cannot understand them.
May the hungry tear the veil from those who do not hunger after justice.
May those who live without hope, cleanse the hearts of their brothers and sisters who are afraid to live.
May the weak confound the strong and save them.
May violence be overcome with compassion.
May violence be absorbed by men and women of peace.
May violence succumb to those who are totally vulnerable, that we may be healed.

Notes

1. Duffy S (2014) If Temple Came Back Today in Crucible July-September 2014 pp. 17-25.
2. Mandelstam N (1999) **Hope Against Hope**. New York, The Modern Library. p. 165
3. Liberalism has taken on another meaning in the United States, roughly equivalent to a very moderate form socialism; here of course I am using the term in its British sense. In America liberalism is often called libertarianism.
4. The term polis which we associate with the term 'politics' is best translated from the Greek as community. See Lane M (2014) **Greek and Roman Political Ideas**. London, Pelican.
5. Strictly, utilitarianism should also be listed as a distinct theory; and often socialists and liberals seek justifications for their own views by using utilitarian arguments. In fact utilitarianism, despite its many philosophical weaknesses, has come to be the dominant theory of social science (perhaps because it encourages the use of quantification, which seems scientific). However, in practice, utilitarianism is only useful because it is fundamentally quite an empty theory. It has its own dangers, but they do not need to be considered here.
6. Reading Marx one is always struck by his fiery and many-sided critique of liberalism. However, his articulation of the goal of revolution or emancipation is always rather unclear, for instance: "The actual individual man must take the abstract citizen back into himself and, as an individual man in his empirical life, in his individual work and individual relationships become a species-being; man must recognise his own forces as social forces, organise them, and thus no longer separate social forces from himself in the form of political forces. Only when this has been achieved will human emancipation be completed." [From **On the Jewish Question**] If obscure, this is not meaningless, and there are some similarities between this Marxist goal and my argument in this essay. However, the negative weight of his thinking seems to be more destructive than creative; hating injustice is not enough.
7. Arendt H (2013) **The Last Interview and Other Conversations**. Brooklyn, Melville House. p. 83
8. Arendt H (2013) **The Last Interview and Other Conversations**. Brooklyn, Melville House. p. 81
9. This statement by Hayek is typical of the way in which liberalism tends to address the problem of welfare: "We shall again take for granted the availability of a system of public relief which provides a uniform minimum for all instances of proved need, so that no member of the community need be in want of food or shelter." Note, that for all the Hayek's scepticism about the state's ability to provide for needs with state planning here the state can be left to busy itself with the work of "public relief." Hayek F A (1960) **The Constitution of Liberty**. London, Routledge & Kegan. p. 300
10. Marx saw human rights as closely linked to liberalism: "Thus none of the so-called rights of man goes beyond egoistic man, man as he is in civil society, namely an individual withdrawn behind his private interests and

whims and separated from the community. Far from the rights of man conceiving of man as a species-being, species-life itself, society, appears as exterior to individuals, a limitation of their original self-sufficiency. The only bond that holds them together is natural necessity, need and private interest, the conservation of their property and egoistic person." [From **On the Jewish Question**] However socialists have made use of the idea of rights, for instance the USSR and other countries under Soviet control had explicit charters of rights. However, as Scruton observes, "Moreover although there are written codes of law in all the countries affected, the absence of judicial independence makes the passage from the written statute to its meaning and application uncertain, and it is commonly assumed that all laws ostensibly guaranteeing rights, liberties or privileges to the citizen will not be applied against the state or its agents." [Scruton R (1983) **A Dictionary of Political Philosophy**. London, Pan Books.] Of course, trade unions have always tried to achieve real improvements in socio-economic rights - both legal and contractual - for they operate on behalf of groups who know that rights really matter.

11. Beveridge W (1942) **Social Insurance and Allied Services**. London, HMSO. p.6
12. Duffy S (2015) **Poverty UK**. Sheffield, The Centre for Welfare Reform.
13. Duffy S and Dalrymple J (2014) **Let's Scrap the DWP**. Sheffield, The Centre for Welfare Reform
14. Duffy S and Hyde C (2011) **Women at the Centre**. Sheffield, The Centre for Welfare Reform
15. Duffy S (2013) **A Fair Society? How the cuts target disabled people**. Sheffield, The Centre for Welfare Reform.
16. Crocker G (2014) **The Economic Necessity of Basic Income**. Sheffield, The Centre for Welfare Reform.
17. Dorling D (2014) **All That is Solid**. London, Penguin.
18. The term 'meritocracy' was coined by the Michael Young in his satirical book The Rise of the Meritocracy. It is shocking, but telling, that the term meritocracy is now used as a positive concept, without embarrassment, by liberals and socialists alike. [Young M (1958) **The Rise of the Meritocracy**. London, Penguin.]
19. Our Partnership, cited in Young M (1958) **The Rise of the Meritocracy**. London, Penguin. p. 138
20. An early critic of meritocracy, eugenics and the emerging power of the state was G K Chesterton. His debates with Shaw outline many of the issues that emerge in my analysis. Unfortunately, while many of Chesterton's arguments were very powerful they had no impact on the growing consensus. See Chesterton G K (2003) **Essential Writings**. Maryknoll, Orbis Books.
21. Duffy S (2012) **Real Localism**. Sheffield, The Centre for Welfare Reform.
22. Socialist Health Assocation (2014) Reform of the National Health Service Chronology http://www.sochealth.co.uk/resources/national-health-service/reform-of-the-national-health-service/ (accessed 12 March 2014)
23. A good example of this kind of public-private corruption is the use of Private Finance Initiatives in order to fund public capital investments. In an effort to appear to reduce public spending Government lets private companies borrow to invest, but then signs long-term contracts for

service delivery with the private 'partner.' The evidence suggests that these deals are very poor value for money.

24. Arendt wrote: "To me modern masses are distinguished by the fact that they are 'masses' in a strict sense of the word. They are distinguished from the multitudes of former centuries in that they do not have common interests to bind them together or any kind of common 'consent which, according to Cicero, constitutes inter-est, that which is between men, ranging all the way from material to spiritual and other matters. This 'between' can be a common ground and it can be a common purpose; it always fulfils the double function of binding men together and separating them in an articulate way. The lack of common interest so characteristic of modern masses is therefore only another sign of their homelessness and rootlessness. But it alone accounts for the curious fact that these modern masses are formed by the atomisation of society, that the mass-men who lack all communal relationships nevertheless offer the best possible 'material' for movements in which peoples are so closely pressed together that they seem to have become one. The loss of interests is identical with the loss of 'self,' and modern masses are distinguished in my view by their selflessness, that is, their lack of 'selfish interests.'" [From A Reply To Eric Voeglin in Arendt H (1994) **Essays in Understanding 1930-1945**. London, Harcourt Brace & Company p. 406] There is very little discussion of atomisation or extreme individualisation in modern political debate, yet it seems one of the most striking features of society today. As Arendt suggests, people who feel isolated and alone are easy to manipulate and are ineffective at resisting oppression.
25. Hockey J (2012) The End of the Age of Entitlement. Melbourne, The Age (19 April 2012)
26. Gray L (2013) Legal Aid Cuts: What Has Changed? http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-22936684 BBC News (18 June 2013) (accessed 12 March 2014)
27. **Isaiah 32:7**, my translation from the Vulgate
28. Duffy S (2013) Is Fraud Always Wrong. Huffington Post http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/dr-simon-duffy/is-fraud-always-wrong_b_3936987.html (accessed 12 March 2014)
29. Jones O (2012) **Chavs: the demonization of the working class**. London, Verso.
30. Duffy S (2014) **Counting the Cuts**. Sheffield, The Centre for Welfare Reform
31. Friedli L and Stearn R Positive affect as coercive strategy: conditionality, activation and the role of psychology in UK government workfare programmes. Med Humanities 41 (1): 40
32. It is hard not to be reminded of the viciously absurd signs used at many Nazi death camps - arbeit macht frei. I discuss our narrow conception of work in Duffy S (2015) **Is Work Good?** Sheffield, The Centre for Welfare Reform.
33. Temple W (1928) **Christianity and the State**. London, Macmillan.
34. This quote is from Ted Heath, UK Conservative Prime Minister from 1970 to 1974 and cited by the William Temple Foundation. (www.williamtemplefoundation.org.uk accessed 28th May 2015)
35. **Christianity and Social Order** by William Temple can be downloaded from internet at http://islandnet.com/theologo/temple.pdf All the quotes from

Temple come from directly from this version. The original versions is Temple W (1942) **Christianity and Social Order**. London, Penguin.

36. These are my memories of what he said that evening rather than an exact quote.
37. Vanier J (2004) **Drawn into the Mystery of Jesus through the Gospel of John**. Ottawa, Novalis.
38. For an interesting rethink of the concept of revolution see Vasista V (2014) **[R]evolution Road**. Sheffield, The Centre for Welfare Reform.
39. Race offers a good overview of this emerging revolution for people with learning disabilities in Race D (2007) **Intellectual Disability**. Maidenhead, Open University Press. Another good overview, although one that focuses on the United States, is provided in Shapiro J P (1993) **No Pity - People with Disabilities Forging a New Civil Rights Movement**. New York, Times Books.
40. Temple, p.47
41. Weil S (1951) **Waiting on God**. London, Routledge and Kegan Paul. p.97
42. Temple, p.11
43. UNCRPD - http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml
44. This is a depressingly real feature of human behaviour, as I have argued previously [Duffy S (2013) **The Unmaking of Man: Disability and the Holocaust**. Sheffield, The Centre for Welfare Reform] compassion and respect for weakness is not 'natural' it needs support, not just from social norms and standards of morality, but also from social structures that increase our respect for the other person. Melville puts the matter sharply, "So true it is, and so terrible too, that up to a certain point the thought or sight of misery enlists our best affections; but, in certain special cases, beyond that point it does not. They err who would assert that invariably this is owing the invariable selfishness of the human heart. It rather proceeds from a certain hopelessness of remedying excessive and organic ill. To a sensitive being pity, is not seldom pain. And when at last it is perceived that such pity cannot lead to effectual succour, common sense bids the soul be rid of it." [Melville H (2010) **Bartleby The Scrivener**. Brooklyn, Melville House.]
45. Judith Snow cited in Pearpoint J (1990) **From Behind the Piano**. Toronto, Inclusion Press. p. 124
46. **1 Corinthians 13:4-7**
47. From a talk given by Jean Vanier at the House of Lords in 2015
48. Cited in Wiesel E (1972) **Souls on Fire**. New York, Summit Books. p. 134
49. Temple, p.62
50. Cited in Wiesel E (1972) **Souls on Fire**. New York, Summit Books. p.138
51. O'Brien J and O'Brien C L (Eds) (1998) **A Little Book about Person Centred Planning**. Toronto, Inclusion Press.
52. Temple, p.11
53. St Anthony of Padua, cited in Pope Benedict XVI (2011) **Great Christian Thinkers**. London, SPCK. p. 256
54. Weil S (1974) **Gateway to God**. Glasgow, Collins. p. 39

55. **Luke 22:26**
56. Duffy S (2016) **Citizenship and the Welfare State**. Sheffield, Centre for Welfare Reform.
57. Dante places pride at the bottom of Mount Purgatory, for pride is like treating yourself as God, making an idol out of the self. It is this radical displacement which authorises us to sin and embrace other evils.
58. Duffy S (2013) **Travelling Hopefully - best practice in self-directed support**. Sheffield, The Centre for Welfare Reform.
59. Duffy S (2006) **Keys to Citizenship: A guide to getting good support for people with learning disabilities, second revised edition**. Sheffield, The Centre for Welfare Reform
60. Temple, p.41
61. Aristotle. **Politics III** 1
62. Weil S (1987) **The Need for Roots: Prelude to a Declaration of Duties Towards Mankind**. London, Ark. p. 155
63. Weil S (1987) **The Need for Roots: Prelude to a Declaration of Duties Towards Mankind**. London, Ark. p. 78
64. Gladstone D (1999) **Before Beveridge: Welfare Before the Welfare State**. London, Institute of Economic Affairs
65. Duffy S (2012) **Peer Power**. Sheffield, Centre for Welfare Reform
66. Gillespie J (2011) **Positively Local**. Sheffield, Centre for Welfare Reform. Broad R (2015) **People, Place, Possibilities**. Sheffield, Centre for Welfare Reform.
67. Duffy S (2012) **Peer Power**. Sheffield, Centre for Welfare Reform
68. Duffy S and Hyde C (2011) **Women at the Centre**. Sheffield, Centre for Welfare Reform.
69. Vidyarthi V and Wilson PA (2008) **Development from Within**. Herndon, Apex Foundation.
70. Vanier J (1995) The heart of l'Arche : a spirituality for every day. New York, NY : Crossroad
71. **Proverbs 17:5**
72. Johnson P (1987) **A History of the Jews**. London, Weidenfield and Nicholson. p. 158
73. Maimonides (2005) The Law of Gifts to the Poor in Maimonides. **Mishneh Torah: Sefer Zeraim. The Book of Agricultural Ordinances**. New York, Moznaim Publishing Corporation. p. 188
74. This principle has been important in Judaism and Christianity from the beginning. [**Matthew 6:1-3**] Hannah Arendt wrote:
75. "Politically, the crucial factor was that Christianity sought out such seclusion and from within that seclusion claimed control of what had formally been public matters. For Christians do not content themselves with performing charitable deeds that go beyond politics; they explicitly assert that they "practice justice," and in both the Jewish and early Christian views, the giving of alms is a matter of justice rather than charity - except that such acts must not appear before the eyes of men, cannot be seen by them, indeed they must remain so hidden that the left hand does not know what the right hand is doing - that is, the actor

is barred from beholding his own deed (Matthew 6:1)." [**The Promise of Politics**, p. 158]

76. We have a tendency to pat ourselves on the back rather too much for the creation of the welfare state. It is almost a defining feature of any society that it has some system of income security for its members. There are many different examples of such systems in Herodotus' **Histories**.

77. Temple p. 60

78. Duffy S and Dalrymple J (2014) **Let's Scrap the DWP**. Sheffield, The Centre for Welfare Reform

79. There is a grim fascination in observing the misuse of the word 'work.' Politicians who must have been brought up by someone, and who often have children themselves, talk as if taking care of your family and home isn't work. Grand awards are occasionally given to people for 'volunteering' but people on low incomes can be punished for volunteering. The fact that work is being redefined as taxable work tells us a great deal about the nature of the underlying fallacy. See Duffy S (2015) Is Work Good? Sheffield, The Centre for Welfare Reform.

80. Raventos D (2007) **Basic Income: the material condition of freedom**. London, Pluto Press and also Duffy S (2011) **A Fair Income: tax-benefit reform in an era of personalisation**. Sheffield, The Centre for Welfare Reform.

The Need for Roots Series

The Need for Roots is a series of publications from the Centre for Welfare Reform which explores the purposes, values and principles that ground and nourish the changes in relationship, practice and policy necessary to creatively support full citizenship for all people. Our aim is to foster the sort of inquiry that will lead to a deeper understanding of core words like person, community, citizenship, justice, rights and service, as well as newer terms emerging from efforts to reform social policy such as inclusion, self-direction and personalisation. Proceeding as if the meaning of these key words is obvious risks them becoming hollow and spineless, functioning as rhetorical filler or tools of propaganda and fit only for reports and mission statements.

We have named the series after the title of the English translation of a book by Simone Weil, a philosopher and activist. She wrote in 1943, at the request of the Free French Resistance, to chart a way her native France could renew itself and its citizens after victory over the Nazis. Far more than her specific conclusions we admire her willingness to search deeply in history for the distinctive strengths of her people and their communities, to think in a disciplined and critical way about human obligations and rights and the conditions necessary for their expression, and to risk mapping out in detail how her ideas might be realized in practice (a meaningful effort even though few if any of these specific recommendations were judged practical enough to attempt). As well, we are awed by her courage, throughout her short life, to struggle to live in a way that coherently expressed her beliefs and the insights generated by that effort.

We offer this series because we think it timely. Real progress reveals powerful ways that people at risk of social exclusion, because they need some extra help, can contribute to our common life in important ways. But there are substantial threats to sustaining and broadening this progress to include more people.

We want this series to benefit from the experience of all disabled people, of people who require additional support as they grow old, of people in recovery from mental ill health and trauma. We invite them to consider this series as a way to speak for themselves. In describing its social context we will speak from our experience of the people who have taught us the most, people with learning difficulties and other developmental disabilities, their families and allies.

In the span of two generations the life chances of people with learning difficulties and other developmental disabilities have markedly improved. Family organising and advocacy have redefined private troubles as public issues

and attracted political support and rising public investment in services. The growing cultural and political influence of the disabled people's movement has established the social model of disability as a corrective to an individualistic medical model, declared the collective and individual right to be heard and determine one's own life course and the direction of public policy, and struggled with increasing success for the access and adjustments that open the way to meaningful civic and economic roles. People with learning difficulties have found allies and organised to make their own voices heard, increasingly in concert with the disabled people's movement. Discrimination on the basis of disability is illegal in more and more jurisdictions and the *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* asserts the right to full citizenship and the assistance necessary to exercise that citizenship. The population confined in publicly operated institutions has fallen dramatically and institutions in any form are losing legitimacy. Social innovators have created effective practices and approaches that assist people to develop their capacities, exercise meaningful direction of their own lives, and participate fully in their communities. More and more people with learning difficulties enjoy life in their own homes with chosen friends or partners, are employed in good jobs, join in civic life, and use generally available public services and benefits.

These improvements in life chances merit celebration, but the journey to citizenship for all is far from over. Governments' responses to fiscal crises have cut public expenditures in ways that fall disproportionately and harshly on disabled people and their families. Scandalous mistreatment, hate crime, neglect, and abuse continue to plague everyday life for far too many disabled people. People whose impairments call for assistance that is thoughtfully designed and offered in a sustained way by trustworthy, capable, committed people are particularly vulnerable to exclusion and deprivation of opportunity. The thrust to self-direction is blunted by rationing, restrictions on people's discretion, and risk management. Authorities turn aside people's claims on control of funding and family requests for inclusive school experiences for their children or entangle them in labyrinthine procedures. Far too few people with intellectual disabilities and their families hold the expectation of full citizenship and too many straightforward desires for access to work and a real home are trapped in bureaucratic activities adorned with progressive sounding labels; so rates of employment and household formation remain low.

There are even deeper shadows than those cast by inept or dishonourable implementation of good policies or clumsy bureaucracies nervous about scarcity and risk. Powerful as the social model of disability and the language of rights has been in shaping public discussion, individual-blaming and controlling practices thrive. Authorities typically moved from unquestioned control of disabled people's lives in the name of medical or professional prerogative to the unquestioned control of disabled people's lives in the name of a gift-model of

clienthood,which assigns authorities responsibility for certifying and disciplining those eligible for publicly funded assistance. As the numbers of people diagnosed with autism increases, more and more families organize to seek public investment in discovering or implementing cures. Most worrying, lives are at risk in the hands of medical professionals. Even in the area of appropriate medical competence, people with learning difficulties are at a disadvantage, experiencing a higher rate of premature death than the general population. The growing power of testing during pregnancy enables what many researchers and medical practitioners call "secondary prevention through therapeutic abortion," framed as an option that growing numbers of parents accept as a way to avoid what they imagine to be the burdens of life with a disabled person. Medical researchers seek even more ways detect and terminate disabling conditions. Some defences of euthanasia seem to assume that disability makes life an intolerable burden - despite all the evidence to the contrary.

An adequate response to the mixture of light and shadow that constitutes current reality has at least three parts. Two of these are more commonly practiced and the third is the focus of this series of publications. First, keep building on what works to develop, refine and broaden the practices necessary to support full citizenship. This will involve negotiating new boundaries and roles in ordinary economic and civil life and generating social innovations that offer people the capacities to life a live that they value. Second, intensify and sustain organizing and advocacy efforts: build activist groups; strengthen alliances; publicly name problems in ways that encourage positive action; agitate to assure adequate public investment, protect and improve positive policies and get rid of practices that support exclusion and unfair treatment; and educate to increase public awareness of the possibilities, gifts and rights of all disabled people. Recognize that both of these initiatives will need to be sustained for at least another generation and probably as long as humankind endures.

These two initiatives - building on what's working and organising for social change - have two advantages over the third. They both encourage immediate practical actions that concerned people can take today and don't demand making time for study and reflection. Neither questions a commonsense view of history as steady progress: we may suffer setbacks at the hands of today's opponents but our trajectory is upwards and we can act free of the backward ideas of the past. Our culture offers few resources for sober consideration of the shadows that haunt our efforts, the ways we are ensnared by history and enduring human potentials for indifference, tragedy and evil. So it is understandable that we take refuge in the idea that progress is inevitable if we are smart enough, indifference can be enlightened by proper marketing, and tragedy and evil discarded as superstitions.

The third initiative, growing deeper roots, is a call for a different kind of action. *L'Enracinement*, the French title of Simon Weil's book, means something closer to "rooting" –actively putting down roots rather than just acknowledging that roots are needed. Deepening the roots of our work is a matter of conversation, with the words written down by the authors in this series, with one's self in reflection, with friends and colleagues in discussion, with a wider public in debate and political action. We hope that time spent in study will add meaning to our current efforts, foster a better understanding of challenges and possibilities, and generate and refine creative actions.

John O'Brien and Simon Duffy

To find out more about The Need for Roots project visit the Centre for Welfare Reform's website.

Publishing information

Centre for Welfare Reform

The Centre for Welfare Reform was established in 2009 to develop and help redesign the welfare state in order to promote citizenship, support families, strengthen communities and increase social justice. The Centre's fellowship includes a wide-range of social innovators and local leaders.
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The Centre for Welfare Reform and its partners are publishing a series of papers that explore the underlying features of a fair society. The series aims to engage different thinkers from many different traditions in celebrating human diversity and ensuring its survival.

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