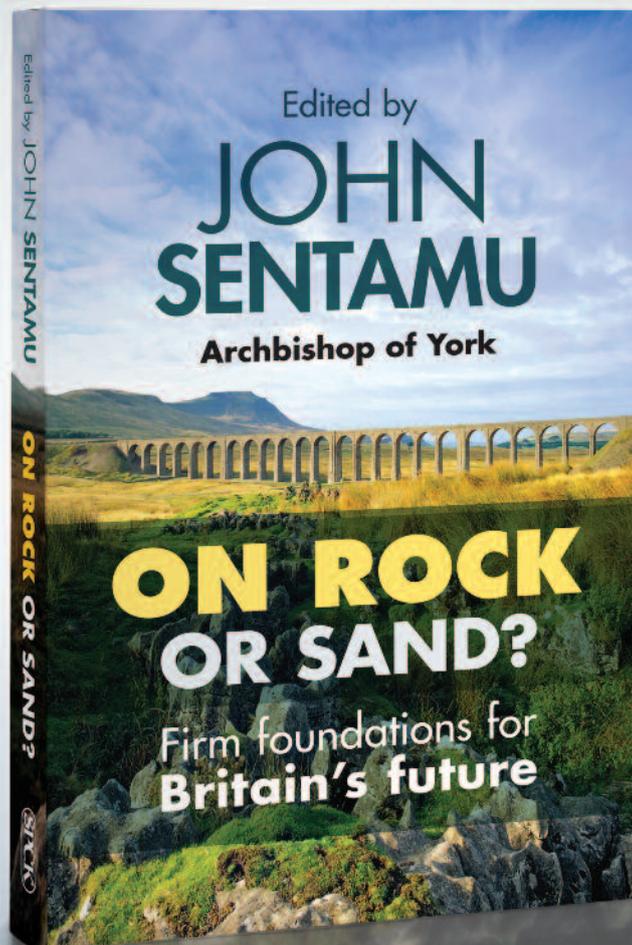


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Introductory Note

On Rock or Sand?, edited by Archbishop John Sentamu, made front-page news when it was published by SPCK in January 2015.

The Telegraph described it as ‘a stark assessment of the state of Britain in the run-up to the election’, while *The Evening Standard* said:

On Rock or Sand?. . . is in fact a collection of essays by assorted experts, and it’s got lots of concrete recommendations. But it’s bigger than that; it’s about articulating the basis on which the state rests . . . The book is a vivid reminder of the forgotten but obvious truth that most progressive British politics, from Wilberforce to Joseph Rowntree, have had a squarely Christian origin.

The book continues to generate much debate as we approach the general election in May. However, it was never simply intended to help people make more informed decisions in the voting booth, but to stimulate thought and action on issues that will remain with us long after the election has passed. The following study guide is therefore offered as a free resource for discussion groups and individuals who would like to develop a more thoughtful approach to, and engagement with, the issues addressed by the book.

After this introductory note, you will find a list of the chapters in *On Rock or Sand?*, with information on each of the contributors. Then follows the study guide, which provides key quotations and chapter-by-chapter summaries of the book’s main arguments, plus key passages from the Bible and a range of questions to encourage further thought and action.

Paul Bickley

Director of Political Programme at Theos Think Tank

www.theosthinktank.co.uk

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www.spck.org.uk

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Contents and contributors to *On Rock or Sand?*

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John Sentamu

The Most Revd and Rt Hon. Dr John Sentamu has been Archbishop of York since 2005. Prior to that, he was appointed Bishop for Stepney in 1996 and Bishop for Birmingham in 2002. He is Primate of England and Metropolitan, a member of the House of Lords and a Privy Councillor.

2 Building the common good

Justin Welby

The Most Revd and Rt Hon. Justin Welby has been Archbishop of Canterbury since 2013. Prior to that, he was Bishop of Durham from 2012. He is Primate of All England and Metropolitan, a member of the House of Lords and a Privy Councillor. Before ordination, he worked in the oil industry at a senior level. An expert on the politics and histories of Kenya and Nigeria, he has lectured on reconciliation at the US State Department. In the summer of 2012, he was asked to serve on the Parliamentary Commission on Banking Standards.

3 The way ahead for the British economy

Andrew Sentance

Dr Andrew Sentance was formerly an external member of the Monetary Policy Committee of the Bank of England (2006–11). He is currently Senior Economic Adviser to PwC (Pricewaterhouse Coopers, a multinational professional services network) and Professor at Warwick Business School. Earlier in his career, he held senior economic positions at British Airways, the Confederation of British Industry and London Business School.

4 Full education in a free society

Andrew Adonis

Lord Adonis has been a member of the House of Lords since 2005. He served for twelve years in government as a minister and special adviser. He was Secretary of State for Transport, Minister for Schools, Head of the No. 10 Policy Unit and senior No. 10 adviser on education, public services and constitutional reform. He has pioneered key public service reforms, including the Academy programme, which established over 200 independent state schools to replace failing secondary schools, and the university tuition fees and grants reform of 2004. He is a Trustee of Teach First.

5 The changing face of poverty

Julia Unwin

Julia Unwin CBE is Chief Executive of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust. She was a member of the Housing Corporation

Board for ten years and a Charity Commissioner from 1998 to 2003. Julia has researched and written extensively on the role, governance and funding of the voluntary sector.

6 Reflections on work

Oliver O'Donovan

Oliver O'Donovan was until recently Professor of Christian Ethics and Practical Theology at the University of Edinburgh. He has served the Church of England as a member of the Board for Social Responsibility, the Doctrine Commission, the Faith and Order Advisory Group and the General Synod.

7 Health and well-being in Britain

Kersten England

Kersten England has been Chief Executive in York since 2009. In addition to over twenty-five years in local government, Kersten's career has included work in the voluntary sector, higher education and central government. She is passionate about community capacity building, diversity and equality, supporting civic leadership and sustainable urban growth.

8 Ageing: blessing or burden?

James Woodward

The Revd Dr James Woodward is a Canon of St George's Chapel, Windsor. Until 2009 he was founding director of the Leveson Centre for the Study of Ageing, Spirituality and Social Policy, an interdisciplinary forum for developing the theory and practice of care for older people through conferences, research and publications. He continues to research, write and teach in this area.

9 Improving the health of our representative democracy

Ruth Fox

Dr Ruth Fox is Director and Head of Research of the Hansard Society. She regularly contributes to current affairs programmes on radio and television, commenting on parliamentary process and political reform. She has also served as an independent member of the Northern Ireland Assembly's Committee Review Group, and worked as historical adviser at the Public Record Office (now the National Archives) after being awarded a PhD in political history from the University of Leeds.

10 Building our future*Philip Mawer*

Sir Philip Mawer was the Secretary General of the General Synod and subsequently the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards and the Prime Minister's Independent Adviser on Ministers' Interests. He is currently Chairman of Allchurches Trust Limited (the charitable owner of the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group).

11 Conclusion: Firm foundations for Britain's future*John Sentamu*

1 Introduction: Hope today for a brighter tomorrow

'Part of [the Church's] responsibility is to hold up the mirror to contemporary society to see clearly whether it reflects what a healthy and hopeful society should look like' (page 19).

Summary

Political dysfunction, economic distress and social disaffection didn't result from the financial crisis, but it has given them greater impetus.

Together the State and the market have delivered growing inequality and financial hardship for many. Substantial levels of public debt will continue to limit what governments can do in the near future. How are we to recover confidence and a sense of direction in our society, when the institutions of common life – political parties, for instance – are so fragile?

None of these problems can be wished away, but our individual and collective public response should be framed by a commitment to the 'common good', or what the Church Father John Chrysostom called the 'common profit'.

Against the mood of our time, the concept of common profit emphasises that human flourishing is primarily social and relational rather than personal and individual. 'Because we are interdependent, the common good is more like a multiplication sum, where if any one number is zero then the total is always zero. If anyone is left out and deprived of what is essential, then the common good has been betrayed.'¹

The common good isn't an abstract political principle, and it shouldn't be reduced only to what the State does or doesn't do – an overly powerful state can trample the common good just as much as an overly powerful market. Rather, it's a value which should infuse the actions of State, market and civil society.

The idea of the common good is drawn from Scripture, but many critics would argue that in a plural and diverse society there is no room for Christian language or ideas in public life. For example, in her book *Dishonest to God*,² philosopher Dame Mary Warnock asks 'what part Christianity should continue to play in legislation and politics and what influence it has and should continue to have in Parliament, whose responsibility is to Christian and non-Christian alike'.

There are many good answers to the question. The first is to ask, 'What do we lose if Christianity plays no part in legislation and politics?' It's true – law is not the same thing as religion or morality. Historically, however, our law and morality have been deeply rooted in Christian ideas about what it is to be human, and what makes for a good society. The ideas include the belief that all human beings are of equal worth

and dignity in God's sight; the need for the State to be limited; and the importance of work not just for subsistence but for community and relationships.

The second is to say that in a liberal democracy, citizens – religious and otherwise – are encouraged to participate in political discussion, to offer justification for their views, and to support the passing of laws they believe to be for the common good. Those of religious faith are yet free to hold and pursue political views that are informed by their faith, though we would do well to engage humbly and respectfully and to work with those starting from different positions.

The third reason for Christians to engage in public life is one that should be heard mainly by Christians who might think that the gospel has no public implications. Jesus' parable of the neighbourly Samaritan affirms not only that we must love our neighbour, but that our neighbours are those we encounter, who need help and – indeed – those who help us. The priest and the Levite in the story manage to justify avoiding their God-given obligation (probably using 'religious' reasons!). We must not. Love of neighbour can be demonstrated in personal response and charitable activity: it can also be demonstrated in political action.

Key text: Luke 10.25–37

Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. 'Teacher,' he said, 'what must I do to inherit eternal life?' He said to him, 'What is written in the law? What do you read there?' He answered, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.' And he said to him, 'You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.'

But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbour?' Jesus replied, 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while travelling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, "Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend." Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?' He said, 'The one who showed him mercy.' Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'

Questions

- 1 At the end of the parable of the neighbourly Samaritan, Jesus tells the lawyer to ‘go and do likewise’. What are the implications for Christians who want to ‘love their neighbours as themselves’?
- 2 Think about the idea of the ‘common good’. Can you think of people you know, or groups of people you know, who are left behind in our society? How could they be helped?
- 3 Have you ever encountered someone who thought religion should be kept out of politics? What did you say to them?
- 4 Are there things about your community that you would like to see change? How could you go about it?

2 Building the common good

‘Stability is not found in arrival at the end of the journey . . . but through the journey itself, a journey that is taken together. All involved . . . are invested in the value of the journey, in the knowledge that we are travelling together to that treasured destination we may call “regeneration”. This destination . . . is where we find the vast disparity of prospects within our society reduced to the point where solidarity becomes truly real and tangible’ (pages 51–2).

Summary

The UK is slowly recovering from the Great Recession – it’s the right time to think about the moral basis of our prosperity, and whether future prosperity can be made more sustainable and equitably distributed than in the period before 2008. We must cultivate an economy where everyone can participate and, in so doing, can live in stability and hope.

When God created us, he intended us to work and not be idle. In the parable of the vineyard, some workers find themselves excluded from productivity and purpose and denied their part in the God-given vocation to have dominion over the earth and enjoy its fruits.

In the same way, there are many individuals in our country who long for employment but, for reasons beyond their control, can’t find a way over the wall. More than this, entire towns and regions are left outside the vineyard. The UK has the largest variation in living standards between regions in the European Union, with London accounting for 22 per cent of UK ‘gross value added’ (a measure of the contribution

to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) made by an individual producer, industry or sector), and the banking system is ever more concentrated on the capital city. Areas away from London, even when they grow economically, do so less quickly than London and the South-East.

There have been numerous attempts by successive governments to rescue cities and regions in decline – the economic planning of the 1960s, and the market-based, ‘trickle-down’ strategy of the 1980s and 1990s. In recent years, governments and planners have tried regeneration-from-the-centre projects. None of these have worked so far; even when money has been poured into city-centre redevelopment projects, nearby boroughs have been left untouched. Some have come to the conclusion that the changing demands of the market can’t be resisted, and that we should plan for growth and expansion in London and the South-East while abandoning struggling regions to stagnation.

The value of a city cannot be judged by its economic output alone; a society that thinks struggling cities and regions should be left to their own devices lacks solidarity. The concept of solidarity has a deep theological heritage, although today it is more closely associated with a political ideology than with its Christian foundations. It is, however, key to cultivating a vineyard with room for everybody to work, so that everyone can live in stability and hope. The idea of solidarity stands in stark contrast to the view of society that prevails in our greatly secularised culture: the view that it’s every person for him- or herself. Solidarity is built on the understanding that we are all God’s image-bearers, and that we share in a common journey towards God.

A good society, in Christian terms, doesn’t leave people behind, alone or abandoned; but you don’t need to be a Christian to share that ideal. In fact, solidarity can’t depend on one group within society but has to be developed with all other groups if it is to endure. An economic programme based on solidarity has four essential building blocks:

- 1 a Living Wage
- 2 good housing
- 3 excellent education and training
- 4 greater financial access.

The point of the Living Wage is to attempt to eradicate hand-to-mouth existence and to pay a sufficient amount to remove the anxiety that bare subsistence generates, thereby creating the possibility that people will encounter some joy through work. In a short space of time some businesses, charities, religious institutions and parts of the public sector have become ‘Living Wage employers’. Working in return for a Living Wage should be the future for the many, not the few.

Good and affordable housing is widely recognised as necessary for generating economic prosperity. When people have good, well-designed housing, they begin to put down roots and invest in the well-being of the community, generating a renewed sense of solidarity. But planners need to have the imagination to understand the importance of community structures.

Education and training in schools, universities, or through apprenticeships and vocational training are too often seen as no more than preparation for economic activity. But the loss of a 'job for life' means that people need not only skills but also the character to adapt and retain their integrity through decades of change.

Improving financial access means ending the 'poverty premium', ensuring that everyone has access to the financial services that can help them integrate into the economy and provide for a more stable life. Progress has been made through the Post Office and high-street banks, but more has to be done, not least through the Church's own work to support the credit union sector.

All these areas need reform and radical imagination; we can't rely on the invisible hand of the market to restore justice. A principle of gratuitousness (generosity) should undergird our everyday normal economic activity. This will only come through a mass conversion of our hearts and minds to a widespread commitment to solidarity rooted in the inherent dignity of all people, a dignity beyond their mere economic value.

Key text: Matthew 20.1–16

For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the labourers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the market-place; and he said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went. When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, 'Why are you standing here idle all day?' They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard.' When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the labourers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.' When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.' But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what belongs to you and go;

I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?' So the last will be first, and the first will be last.

Questions

- 1 Think about the parable of the vineyard. What does it say about the importance of work? What does it say about God's view of justice?
- 2 Have you encountered the idea of solidarity before and, if so, where? What are your reactions to the idea? Why would anyone feel that they might owe something to people outside their family or friendship groups?
- 3 How could you incorporate generosity into your life – not just in charitable giving, but in economic relationships with employers and employees, or people you buy and sell goods from?
- 4 If you lived in a country where some parts were wealthy and some parts poor, what kind of things would you want to do to help the poorer areas catch up?

3 The way ahead for the British economy

'We should be optimistic and hopeful that we can find a successful way ahead for the British economy, built on the principles of sustainable growth, shared prosperity and responsible business' (page 76).

Summary

We live in a time of economic change, challenge and opportunity.

The world economy is being reshaped by globalisation and technological change, with many positive outcomes. Average living standards in Asia, Africa and Latin America have improved significantly, and the numbers living in extreme poverty have fallen. However, we can also see downsides in pressure on natural resources, environmental challenges and rising income inequality, including in the UK.

The 2008 crisis was a watershed for the economies of the Western world of the sort we rarely see in peacetime. Only the shocks of 1930 and 1974 are comparable. In both those cases, when a sustained period of economic growth eventually emerged, it was very different in character from the period that had gone before. The post-Second World War recovery was more technologically advanced and socially inclusive than the period that had preceded it. The growth in the 1980s was driven by developments in service industries, finance and information technology.

In our recovery, we won't see a return to the levels of growth we saw before the 2008 crisis. We no longer benefit from the economic tailwinds of easy access to credit, cheap imports or confidence in the ability of central banks to stave off crisis. For the moment, Western economies face a long period of adjustment to slower growth; we need to prepare for a 'New Normal'.

We face two social and political challenges. First, we must work out how we can control public finances: by late 2014, national debt stood at around £1.4. Demographic trends and rising public expectations have created upward pressure in many areas of public spending, at the very time when companies and 'high-value' individuals have more choices than ever about where they can locate and earn their income. Second, a low-growth environment is closely linked to a lack of employment security and to low wages for less-skilled workers. This situation will result in even greater income inequality, with poverty becoming much more of an in-work phenomenon than it has been previously. Unemployment has risen particularly sharply among the under-25s, for whom it totals just under a million.

Prospects are not utterly bleak – the UK has a diverse economy which is strong in a number of service industries and in high-end manufacturing, such as the pharmaceutical and car industries and high-tech engineering. So while we can't hope to hold back the big global tides that are shaping our economy, we do have the chance to choose how best to respond to them. The principles of sustainable growth, shared prosperity and responsible business practices should inform our thinking, public policy and the way we contribute to the economy as individuals and churches.

The writer to the Hebrews encourages us to 'Keep [our] lives free from the love of money, and [to] be content with what [we] have' (Hebrews 13.5). Sustainable growth would mean we reject the path that looks for the maximum possible growth rate in the short term, seeking, instead a pattern of growth that avoids the need for later corrections, that can be properly underpinned by investment, and that doesn't exacerbate climate change.

The writer to the Hebrews also says, 'Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God' (Hebrews 13.16), and 1 Timothy 6.18 says, 'They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share'. Shared prosperity is not just about redistributing wealth through the tax and benefit system; it is also about making sure that communities have access to the right skills, education and employment opportunities.

Business, from large multinationals to small and medium-sized enterprises, is the core of our economy. Nearly 25 million people – over 80 per cent of the workforce – work in the private sector. If a culture of personal and collective responsibility permeates the business world, our economy and society will benefit. Developing an approach to

business that is honest and deals fairly, makes proper assessments of the risks and consequences of business decisions, and recognises that its moral responsibilities reach beyond the factory gate or office door is one way in which we can seek to love our neighbour.

Key text: Proverbs 11.1, 3–4, 15, 16b–18, 24–26, 28

A false balance is an abomination to the Lord,
but an accurate weight is his delight . . .

The integrity of the upright guides them,
but the crookedness of the treacherous destroys them.
Riches do not profit in the day of wrath,
but righteousness delivers from death . . .

To guarantee loans for a stranger brings trouble,
but there is safety in refusing to do so . . .

The timid become destitute, but the aggressive gain riches.
Those who are kind reward themselves,
but the cruel do themselves harm.
The wicked earn no real gain,
but those who sow righteousness get a true reward . . .

Some give freely, yet grow all the richer;
others withhold what is due, and only suffer want.
A generous person will be enriched,
and one who gives water will get water.
The people curse those who hold back grain,
but a blessing is on the head of those who sell it . . .

Those who trust in their riches will wither,
but the righteous will flourish like green leaves.

Questions

- 1 How should Christians respond to the ‘New Normal’, where we might feel less wealthy than before?
- 2 As governments of whatever persuasion try to force the deficit down, public services will be asked to do more with less. What might the implications be for us as individuals and churches?

- 3 How do you react to the idea that doing good business is one way we can love our neighbour? Do you know of an example where this is the case? Think about a bad experience with business you've had. What do you believe could have been done differently?
- 4 The chapter identifies two groups that aren't doing well in the wake of the 2008 crisis – the young, and the low-paid and less-skilled. What actions should be taken (a) by governments, (b) by businesses and (c) by you to help them?

4 Full education in a free society

'Getting our educational system right is crucial to our future economic and social well-being . . . For the religiously inclined, this is a moral imperative; for the policy-maker, it is a social and economic necessity' (page 90).

Summary

By early 2013 – nearly five years after the start of the downturn – 1.65 million young people between 16 and 24 were economically inactive or not in education, employment or training. Unemployment is two and a half times higher among young people than in the population as a whole. The relative position of pensioners is improving, while young workers are noticeably worse off than the average worker.

A critical factor in this is education: 19 per cent of people who leave education at 16 are unemployed; while among those with degrees, only 4.7 per cent are unemployed. It is not being young that makes you unemployed, but being young and unskilled. The least educated and trained are always at greater risk of unemployment.

Youth unemployment blights the lives of individuals and communities, diminishing human flourishing. The effects of unemployment are long term: those who experience a significant period of unemployment are more likely to experience future periods of unemployment. They're also left with what has been called a 'wage scar', which means that they can expect lower wages even when they do find work. This is not just a personal catastrophe but a significant problem for the national economy: the UK spends £4.5 billion on a combination of benefits for the under-25s.

The past 25 years have seen a significant improvement in school standards, with nearly 60 per cent of school-leavers achieving five or more GCSEs between A* and C, including in English and Maths, up from 30 per cent in the mid 1990s. However, this is still far short of what is required. The challenge is to turn a 60 per cent system into a 90 per cent system; with a will, this result is achievable. First, we will need, however, to bridge class divides: while 63 per cent of children who are not eligible for

free school meals achieve five or more good GCSEs, only one in four white boys on free school meals does so.

Nevertheless, the situation can be improved. In 2007, inner London schools were second only to the North-East as the worst performing schools in England. By 2012, they were second only to outer London schools as the best performing in England. The 'London Challenge' initiative achieved this improvement by systematically partnering successful schools and their management teams with their less successful counterparts, driving up standards.

Alongside a revolution in school standards, there needs to be a radical upgrade in the quality *and* quantity of youth apprenticeships. Many 'apprentices' are well into their 20s and are, in reality, mainstream employees. Of 780,000 school leavers in 2011, fewer than 130,000 started an apprenticeship. Only a third of large businesses and 1 in 10 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) offer apprenticeships, and only a quarter of apprentices are studying for qualifications equivalent to an A level or higher. The Richard Review of Apprenticeships¹ recommended a series of reforms, including a single apprenticeship qualification per occupation that requires minimum standards of numeracy and literacy, as opposed to the staggering 11,775 qualifications that are currently meeting public funding criteria.

As young people make the move to the world of work, more has to be done to ensure that they do not suffer from in-work poverty. Those under 21 have a lower National Minimum Wage rate than those over 21; three-quarters of 16- to 20-year-olds are paid below the higher Living Wage, compared to just 14 per cent of 41- to 50-year-olds. Yet if the National Minimum Wage were increased to the Living Wage rate, the taxpayer would save over £2 billion through savings from the private sector, partially offset by the consequent increase in public sector pay.

Getting our educational system right is crucial for our future economic and social well-being. Schools, colleges and universities are critical for fostering social cohesion and sound common values, and for providing individuals with the means to flourish. For the religiously inclined, this is a moral imperative; for the policy-maker, it is a social and economic necessity.

Key text: Proverbs 16.16

How much better to get wisdom than gold!
To get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver.

Questions

- 1 What do you think an education system should do for society? What should it do for young people?

- 2 Young people – particularly those from lower socio-economic backgrounds – have been particularly badly affected by the economic downturn, while other groups have been more insulated from its effects. What could be done to help young people in the short term? Think of your own family and friends.
- 3 Some countries attach a greater value to vocational education than we traditionally have in the UK. Why is that? What is the result?
- 4 Is education and training something that only the State should do on our behalf? How are other groups, like businesses, unions and faith groups involved? What more could or should they be doing?

5 The changing face of poverty

‘To treat people in poverty as somehow different from everyone else . . . is to turn a blind eye to the evidence and to turn away from the social contract. The truth is that there is no convenient distinction between those who are “deserving” and those who are “undeserving”’ (page 110).

Summary

The debate about how to tackle poverty is neither new nor over.

Our current approach rests on the traditions of rigorous research pioneered by Joseph and Seebohm Rowntree, the crusading ability of people like Archbishop William Temple, and the administrative skills of William Beveridge. Together, they shaped an informal and implicit social contract, setting expectations about the rights and responsibilities of individuals, families, community institutions, the State and the market.

The way we experience poverty is changing. Household income has always been the greatest determinant of poverty. The absence of money in households erodes autonomy and self-expression. In recent years, public attention has focused on the system of income support, and great strides have been taken to improve the income conditions of families with children and older people.

But the income available from work, always prescribed as the best and safest possible route out of poverty, now provides no such assurance – we live in a low-wage economy. People working full-time increasingly need housing benefit, and childcare costs mean that for working families there is little disposable income. Where work is low paid, unreliable and inconsistent, it is more than possible to be employed and still live a life of considerable poverty. Very low pay is now frequently experienced in

every decade of life, disproving the notion that low pay is a ‘starter wage’, with inevitable promotion and progression to follow. This represents a significant rupture in the social contract.

All this comes at a time when the cost of essentials is rising, and poorer people are often less likely to be able to take advantage of the ways that the better-off hold down costs. Housing is all too often a cause of poverty, with an extra 3 million people deemed to be in poverty once they have paid their housing costs. This is caused in large part by the emphasis on housing as the most common means of accumulating wealth, and the shortage of housing in many parts of the country. In the past, we broke the link between poverty and squalor – this victory is now in danger of being reversed.

The way we experience poverty is deeply related to place. Poverty is not evenly distributed across the country – the great period of de-industrialisation is a defining aspect of modern poverty; some areas suffered a shock from which they have not yet fully recovered. Where local growth can be created and harnessed, we must not see poorer, under-resourced and under-skilled communities as obstacles to growth to be displaced by regeneration. Instead, we need to help people in those areas lead full, engaged and productive lives.

Our current welfare state was formed at a time when there was a greater acceptance of state intervention – control of prices and rents went alongside a centrally directed economy and gave government greater capacity to align income and costs. Now, as political perceptions change, people in poverty are criticised and described as idle; all the main political parties approach welfare based on the assumption that, unless the receipt of help is made as unpleasant as possible, the poor will opt not to work. Most of the evidence suggests that people who are poor are desperate to change their circumstances and try extraordinarily hard to do so. The tone of the debate – which falsely pits the working poor against benefit claimants – and the fierce application of sanctions will result in one of two things: either people will take inappropriate jobs that they cannot possibly maintain or, as in the USA, they will avoid claiming benefits altogether, resulting in a life lived in penury under the radar.

Social justice cannot be pursued by one actor alone. Local networks of care and reciprocity – such as churches and other community organisations – are often an unacknowledged bulwark against poverty. The State is where we can most obviously share responsibility, pool risk and work for the common good, but the State can’t end poverty alone. Important markets, such as energy and housing, are vital, and have to function properly. Employers have to recognise their responsibility to pay a wage (a Living Wage) that properly reflects income needs, which will secure a greater, more sustainable prosperity.

Our responses should be shaped by those affected, but modern poverty in the UK lacks a voice. It is only in rare cases that bodies, often faith institutions, create a platform for the poor to describe their own experience of poverty.

Key text: Matthew 25.31–46

‘When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, “Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.” Then the righteous will answer him, “Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?” And the king will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” Then he will say to those at his left hand, “You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.” Then they also will answer, “Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?” Then he will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.” And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.’

Questions

- 1 Have you, or anyone you know, experienced poverty? What effect did it have on individuals, their families and relationships?
- 2 How is poverty, as experienced now, different from poverty as experienced in the past? How has the implicit ‘social contract’ changed?
- 3 Should the Church be concerned about poverty? Why? What should it contribute to the debate around poverty in the UK?

- 4 Do you know how close you live, work or worship to a place where people are struggling against poverty? Do you know why they are struggling? Have you ever wondered how you and others in your church could help to improve their lives?

6 Reflections on work

‘We talk a great deal about the circumstances of work, about unemployment, working conditions and remuneration, but it sometimes seems that we avoid talking about work itself. This, perhaps, is because the subject takes us too deep for comfort into questions about our human nature, questions that belong to religion and ethics before they belong to economics’ (page 111).

Summary

We talk a lot about employment, unemployment, working conditions and pay, but it sometimes seems we avoid talking about work itself. The subject takes us too deep for comfort into questions about our human nature – questions that belong to religion and ethics before they belong to economics.

There are three essential aspects to good work. The first is that work engages with the material world, making a purposeful difference. Human creativity is not like God’s creativity – God grants being, but human creativity is an exercise in sympathetic intelligence, exploring and revealing good things already latent in the order of nature. It requires both intelligence and love.

The second is that work is communication with other human beings – it satisfies our social instincts. When we are at work, our co-operation can be relied upon. Through our labour, we give ourselves and make ourselves indispensable to others.

The third is that work and rest depend on each other. Uninterrupted and undifferentiated exertion is not work but merely labour. Work is what we rest from, and rest is what we work towards. This is embodied for Jews and Christians in the institution of a weekly day of rest and worship. This weekly rhythm tells us that work is not its own justification. It brings God’s purposes, which make our human work purposeful, before our minds. Work and worship become constitutive of our vocation.

We tend to think that work goes wrong when there’s a lack of activity or a surfeit of activity – idleness or drudgery. These, however, are symptoms of problems rather than causes. We can come to a sharper understanding of work by revisiting the three aspects of good work.

First, we often wonder whether our work is ‘for’ anything in an ultimate sense, in the light of judgements higher than those of our employers or peers, and thus whether it provides us with a vocation. Good working structures can help combat the vocational vacuum, but the stability of employment will also be of decisive importance. We can hardly expect people to give the best of themselves in work if they are not really secure.

Second, work may sometimes afford us no real experience of co-operation. In an age such as ours, where many people never meet those they work with and for, the problem has become acute. In the past, markets were ways of overcoming the distance between producers and purchasers, constructing places where they could meet. The market of modern economic practice is largely placeless – but the ensemble of instantaneous transactions never amounts to a rational social whole.

Third, work can go wrong when it is abstracted from the meaning of life, when a gap opens up between the worker and the material world. This does not just mean intellectual abstraction – work can become abstracted from the rest of life if it offers too little time or resources for it. It can also become abstracted when workers don’t understand what it is for or how it is to be done.

We need to look beyond quantitative measures of unemployment, to qualitative measures of underemployment, mismatches between work and workers, failures in education and training for work, unsatisfying or degrading work, exploitation, and so on. The greatest problems confronting us may sometimes not lie with the work that is not available but the work that is, which may weave together idleness and drudgery in troubling ways.

Employment usually creates an imbalance of power, resurrecting on a large scale the master–servant relation characteristic of a small household business in the pre-industrial age. We need to re-conceive working relations as co-operation. The Apostolic Church laid its emphasis on how masters and servants could be engaged in a co-operative equilibrium as brothers and sisters engaged in mutually supportive service. This is not easy in modern corporations, which grow in scale beyond the reach of interpersonal relationship. The key is to recognise the real bottom line, which is not profit in the private sector or political objectives in the public sector, but the effective performance of the work in hand. When we recognise this, we will see that the primary intellectual resource of any business is the skilled working practices of its employees.

Government has to safeguard the economic infrastructure to ensure that living by their work remains a normal possibility for men and women, and guard by regulation against the worst abuses of working relationships. Business or institutional leaders can maintain the humanity of work by valuing and maintaining the integrity of working practices.

We should not neglect to say that work is a matter of prayer. In the Collect for Trinity XVII in the Book of Common Prayer, we are invited to pray that God's grace shall precede and follow us, that we may continually 'be given to all good works'.

Key text: Colossians 3.23

Whatever your task, put yourselves into it, as done for the Lord and not for your masters.

Questions

- 1 Thinking about the chapter, what would you say the differences are between work and employment?
- 2 What are the characteristics of good work? How does this fit – or not – with your experience? What's the relationship between work and rest?
- 3 We've talked a lot about unemployment in previous sections, but how can work 'go wrong'?
- 4 Do you think that there are enough opportunities for good work in our society? If not, what could be done to change that?

7 Health and well-being in Britain

'Our approach to health and well-being is neither equitable nor sustainable'
(page 132).

Summary

When it comes to Britain's health and well-being, there is much to celebrate: life expectancy rates continue to rise, diseases such as HIV & AIDS and cancer can be survived, and those who have chronic health conditions live fruitful and good lives with the right support. However, we face seven key health and well-being challenges.

- 1 Health inequalities, as demonstrated by the fact that life expectancy at birth varies depending on deprivation, and regional life expectancies show a stark north–south divide. Men born in Kensington and Chelsea can expect to live 10 years longer than men born in Manchester.
- 2 Children in the UK have among the worst levels of well-being in the developed world, taking in measures like educational attainment, mental health, substance

misuse, involvement with the criminal justice system and economic inclusion, as well as the incidence of premature death.

- 3 A dramatic and costly upward demand curve for health care due to lifestyle-related diseases: 61.9 per cent of adults are overweight or obese, as are 28 per cent of children aged between 2 and 15. Health problems associated with the cost of being obese or overweight cost NHS England £5 billion every year.
- 4 There is major demographic change, with more people living longer, with increased demand for complex and specialist care over the long term. Dementia, physical frailty and isolation often see older people expensively hospitalised, with variable outcomes.
- 5 There is a relative lack of investment in preventative, community-based and mental health provision: in 2013–14, £1.8 billion was allocated to Public Health England from a total budget of £95.6 billion for NHS England and £2.52 billion for health improvement projects by local authorities.
- 6 The lack of integration of health and social care services, in spite of the fact that no neat distinction can be made between the two. There are real complexities in integrating a national health system that is designed to be free at the point of use and a local social care system that is assessed against ability to pay. Funding for local authorities that deliver social care has been reduced dramatically, creating further pressures on the health system.
- 7 The health system, although relatively protected from cuts as part of the deficit reduction programme of national government, has seen demand and costs rise ahead of available funds.

In Christian thinking and practice there are some core principles which shape our approach to health and well-being. They have spiritual, physical and emotional aspects, and depend on realising the common good. We have been given the gift of life, and that comes with the responsibility to look to our own well-being, but our individual well-being is inextricably linked with that of others (as in St Paul's image of the body). No one is beyond God's love, and everyone is loved and entitled to care. Death and dying are an inevitable part of life. Inattention to these different aspects can damage our health and well-being.

In negotiating the challenges for health and health care, we need to tackle poverty and inequality; ensure equitable access to health and social-care services for people of all socio-economic backgrounds; and re-balance health and social-care services. We also have to acknowledge that vibrant and active communities with high levels of mutualism and association will increase well-being, and recognise that there is an individual duty and responsibility for self-care. Across this agenda, there are valuable

examples of work already being done that should help us shape our approach, although, in many cases, we will require cultural change as we move towards co-design and co-delivery.

We can refocus our policy-making and our efforts by making our collective well-being, not profit, our prime motivator and by setting goals for the public good, not just growth, in recognition of the fact that well-being and health are far more important indicators of wealth than money or material gain.

Key text: 1 Corinthians 12.12–26

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot were to say, ‘Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body’, that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear were to say, ‘Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body’, that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I have no need of you’, nor again the head to the feet, ‘I have no need of you.’ On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think less honourable we clothe with greater honour, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honour to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it.

Questions

- 1 Thinking back over your life, can you think of ways in which our approach to health and well-being has changed? In what ways has it improved? How could it get better?
- 2 Thinking about the chapter – but also stories of Jesus’ healings (e.g., Mark 2.1–12, Matthew 9.18–26, John 5.1–18) – can you identify different aspects of health and well-being?

- 3 Of the seven challenges to health and health care set out in the chapter, are there any which you find particularly worrying? What small actions could you take to begin to redress them on an individual level?
- 4 Who is responsible for your health? Whose health are you responsible for?

8 Ageing: blessing or burden?

'It is perhaps the mature aged, rather than the young, who can become for us the prophets of our time, witnessing to a present pregnant with wisdom for living and pointing to a future filled with hope' (page 184).

Summary

Globally and in the UK, we are experiencing a revolution in the opportunities that are offered by a steady increase in life expectancy. In 2014, there were 10 million people in the UK who were over 65; by 2030, there will be 15 million; by 2050, there will be nearly 20 million. Already, around one seventh of public expenditure is directed towards those above working age. Continuing to provide state benefits at today's average would mean spending an additional £10 billion a year for every one million people over working age, which will place potentially unsustainable pressure on public budgets.

An ageing population presents society with serious public policy and financial questions. It will also reframe our attitudes to time and work, with many over the age of 65 rightly feeling that they still have a useful part to play in society. But pastoral experience indicates that, on a personal level, it is often loneliness that besets many older people – partners may die, social networks can shrink over time, family members often live at a distance. Negative attitudes towards older people – indifference, pity, resentment, fear or even perceptions that they are greedy and selfish, can seriously affect them. Ageing is also an inner journey, with emotional, psychological and spiritual tasks – not least, finding a way of dealing with death. There is infinite value in this process. The inner work done in later life can be the means by which the treasure of wisdom can be passed to younger generations.

The Dilnot Report has set out proposals for funding care that enables the financial risk to any one individual to be pooled, through taxation, insurance or a mix of them both. The report proposes a system under which the individual will be responsible, on a means tested basis, for the costs of his or her care to a suggested level of £35,000, after which the State would take up the burden. The cost to the public purse of the package would be less than £2 billion – a significant figure, but one that should be viewed against the implications of not making this investment. The government did adopt the idea of a cap on care cost in the Care Act 2014, but it set the cap at £72,000

– an important step, but not sufficient. A new social contract is needed which – on the basis of an honest assessment of the respective roles of the State, voluntary associations and individual citizens – assures the weak and vulnerable of proper protection.

This new social contract will only be possible if we reimagine old age, holding together the burdens of getting older with the opportunities and blessings of mature years, and dispelling some of the many myths around ageing. Longer life and increased numbers of old people result in many positive things for the community and our common life, against a culture that is frenetically orientated towards youth and holds a very eccentric view of the good life as one that can only be lived between 18 and 40. Most old people are not dependent – in fact, a million of them are still in paid work. In 2011, there were around 300,000 people in care homes – only just over half a per cent of the population of England and Wales. The affordability of state pensions is not simply a matter of ageing but of the changing nature of work, which requires a different approach to old-age provision. Far from being only cared for, older people are important contributors to intergenerational care, whether as grandparents or as carers for elderly partners or relatives.

Ageing is much more than a ‘problem’ amenable to technical or medical solutions. The Christian tradition would value ageing as a blessing, rooted in the affirmation of human dignity regardless of age. Beyond middle age, people become more alive to spiritual questions, as they face up to limitations, deficiencies and mortality. A society that pits the old against the young is a failing one – the old need the young and the young need the old.

Age can be a wise and challenging teacher. Older people can show how little time we give, in our bureaucracy and busyness, to consider what substance and depth mean in being human. It is no accident that older people become more spiritual, since age is essentially a spiritual task.

Key text: Psalm 92.12–15

The righteous flourish like the palm tree,
and grow like a cedar in Lebanon.
They are planted in the house of the Lord;
they flourish in the courts of our God.
In old age they still produce fruit;
they are always green and full of sap,
showing that the Lord is upright;
he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

Questions

- 1 What is your personal reaction to the observation that we live in an ageing society? Do you see it as a problem, a blessing or both?
- 2 Do you think that older people contribute a lot to wider society – what more could they do and how?
- 3 Can you think of ways in which the old are pitted against the young? What is the effect of this division on society?
- 4 There are significant policy and financial questions raised by an ageing population. What Christian principles do you think could undergird our response to some of these policy challenges?

9 Improving the health of our representative democracy

‘Public disillusionment with and disengagement from politics are not new phenomena but we are experiencing them today in heightened form . . . ultimately nothing will change unless politicians themselves change, in terms of both their approach to the values and ethics that should underpin politics and their own personal conduct in future, and how they go about politics itself’ (pages 211–12).

Summary

There is a huge gap between public expectations and the capacity of our elected representatives to meet them, and between the public’s democratic ideal and the reality of day-to-day politics. A damaging ‘anti-politics’ mood is gnawing at the democratic roots of our society, casting doubt over the legitimacy of our elected representatives.

There has never been a golden age in politics. Historically, politicians have rarely been held in high regard. But the challenges facing us today with regard to the public’s perception of politics are greater in depth and scale than before. The Hansard Society, which tracks attitudes to politics, have found that only a third of people say that our system of government generally works well, while in the 1970s nearly half thought that was the case. Only a quarter feel they have any influence over local decision-making and even fewer – 15 per cent – say they have any influence at the national level.

Our democratic system is designed for mass participation, but people are voting less in national elections than they have in the past; some local elections – such as those

for police and crime commissioners – attract very low turnouts. There is growing inequality in participation.

Political parties, which perform important functions in a democracy, are struggling to attract members. In the 1950s, 1 in 10 people belonged to a political party – now, just 1 per cent of the adult population are party members. The narrowing social base of political parties means that politicians are drawn from a small pool of activists, and are disliked by the public for their perceived lack of life experience.

Nevertheless, as the Scottish independence referendum demonstrated, the words ‘apathy’ and ‘apathetic’ aren’t a fair description of what is happening – so what is?

Civil society is experiencing decline and is being overtaken by individualistic time-limited forms of participation. Politics is ill-fitted to this age of consumerism, where people are encouraged to believe that any personal desire can be satisfied. Politicians have to chart a difficult course between competing demands and limited resources. Consumerism discourages forthright debate about the negotiations and compromises that constitute politics, and encourages politicians to engage in a marketing game. The unwillingness to answer straightforward questions, evasiveness and adversarial finger-pointing are the result.

The institutional context is changing, and becoming increasingly complicated – factors include managerial reforms in public policy, the marginalisation of local government, devolution, the growing role of the European Union and the increasingly technical nature of public policy. Increasingly, politicians are themselves reliant on independent experts and arms-length bodies. For citizens, this creates alienation from the system, compounded by the perception that politicians are caught up in webs of influence that ordinary people usually don’t see.

The media – including television – generally do little to benefit our democracy in terms of nourishing political engagement. The press is increasingly adversarial and confuses reporting and comment. Many of the big strategic political problems facing the country cannot be readily explained in 30-second sound bites on the evening news; the media simply do not provide the space for real public deliberation.

Few of the measures so far taken to improve low public confidence in democratic institutions have helped; in fact, some may have unintentionally exacerbated the problem. The creation of new posts – directly elected mayors and police and crime commissioners – has been met with a great yawn by a public that simply anticipates more buck-passing when things go wrong. What should be done?

First, there is now a case for less democracy and more accountability. People are confused by the patchwork quilt of elections and voting systems, about who does what and whom they should hold responsible for the decisions that affect their lives.

We should empower nationally and locally elected representatives, and clearly delineate their lines of responsibility and, therefore, accountability.

Second, the public now want politicians who have a high moral outlook, who regard their political work as a vocation rather than a job, and to prioritise it over private gain. A ‘duty of care’ could be introduced for Members of Parliament, setting out their responsibility to uphold the reputation of parliament. The public would welcome a political discourse based, to a greater degree, around values and vision rather than one built on old class divisions, ideological interests or indeed a purely technocratic concern with policy implementation.

Third, we need to make the case for politics – not the politics of ritualised disagreement, but a politics of open, honest debate about what is possible and what is desirable, and how political decisions affect our daily lives.

Fourth, we need to rejuvenate citizenship education. The level of understanding of the system is worryingly low – nearly 6 in 10 voters don’t know that British Members of the European Parliament are directly elected by British voters. Political literacy should be seen as a basic social skill.

Fifth, we need a principled and strategic approach to political reform, where it has recently lacked any organising principle or shape. Technology has lowered some barriers to participation but lacks a deliberative element and a way to organise and negotiate across different interests.

Key text: 1 Timothy 2.1–3

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings should be made for everyone, for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.

Questions

- 1 How do you feel about Britain’s democratic life? Does political debate, as you see it, address your hopes and concerns? Do you feel you have any chance of exerting an influence?
- 2 In your view, why do fewer people get involved with political parties and vote in elections? Are they apathetic or is it something else?
- 3 Many people are cynical about politics: can cynicism ever be a Christian position?

- 4 Politicians are not generally well liked or trusted. What would a good politician look like? What kind of values would he or she have? What issues would she or he care about?

10 Building our future

In this chapter, Sir Philip Mawer reviews and summarises the arguments of the other contributors.

11 Conclusion: Firm foundations for building our future

'This Well-being State – justified by our recognition of one another's common humanity, expressed in neighbourly love and guided by the principles of Freedom, Fellowship, Service and the Rule of Law – is the firm foundation, the rock, we need for Britain's future' (page 257).

Summary

The theologian Henry Chadwick once said that any community, church or nation that forgets its memory becomes senile.¹ Our society is now suffering from apathy, disempowerment and forgetfulness of our history, culture and tradition. There is a lack of interest, or boredom, born not only of material excess but also of the lack of a shared vision of what our society should aim to be. As Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett argue in *The Spirit Level*,² there is no popular movement capable of inspiring people with a vision of how to make society a substantially better place to live for the vast majority.

Although it has its detractors, the Established position of the Church of England bears witness to two enduring gospel truths. First, that the love of God extends to all, rich or poor, saint or sinner, believer and unbeliever. Second, that everyone and every institution, including the Church, sit under the judgement of God. With its strong tradition of social reform, the Church continues to have a role to play. It should confidently and vigorously exploit the opportunity that it has been given to demonstrate the good news of the kingdom of God to all communities in England.

Reports such as *Faith in the City*³ and *Faithful Cities*⁴ were real and courageous examples of the Church standing up and proclaiming the virtues and rights of those who are weakest in society. But the Church lost its nerve and moved on to internal 'churchy' matters. It did not consistently act prophetically in standing up and being a voice for the powerless, the weak and the dispossessed. It is more important than ever that churches of all denominations are advocates for the voiceless.

We can help our society rediscover a big vision, drawing on the inspiration of those who have gone before: campaigners such as William Wilberforce, Elizabeth Fry and Josephine Butler; activists such as Bruce Kenrick – the first chairman of Shelter – Samaritans founder Chad Varah and Amnesty International’s founder Peter Benenson; businessmen such as the ‘chocolate trinity’ of George Cadbury, Joseph Rowntree and Joseph Storrs Fry; Christian martyrs such as Oscar Romero, Janani Luwum and the martyred Melanesian brothers. For these people, faith was not the crutch to lean on but the very act of leaning.

In *Christianity and Social Order*,⁵ Archbishop William Temple formulated three principles that we can use to set the moral compass of our time: freedom, fellowship and service.

To secure freedom, the State has to enforce the laws that secure basic liberties, oversee an economic system that gives opportunities to earn a decent living, and ensure that the social infrastructure is in place to secure health care, education and housing for all. This is a vision not of negative freedom, but of a society where people are enabled to take responsibility for their own lives and for others.

In fellowship, we recognise that we are mutually dependent and reject the consumerism and individualism that has dominated Britain for the past 30 years. Fellowship is expressed through family life, school, college, trade union, professional association, city, country, nation, church, synagogue, temple or mosque. These groups should be treated with respect – protecting them where threats emerge, but often by simply leaving them alone.

Having learnt the infinite worth of each individual, and the value of interdependence, it is through service to both family and community that society as a whole benefits. The road to recovery is not a path to riches but of service, where we recognise our common humanity, and stand ready to serve our neighbours because they are made in the image of God and are called by him to live a purposeful life.

This is an ethical vision, but one which can’t be delivered on a personal level alone. The state has a role to play. We should be thinking not just of a welfare state, but of a well-being state – one which concerns itself with the flourishing, happiness and blessedness of all people living in community. This well-being state – justified by our recognition of one another’s common humanity, expressed in neighbourly love and guided by the principles of freedom, fellowship, service and the rule of law – is the firm foundation we need for Britain’s future.

Key text: Jeremiah 29:4–7

Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

Questions

- 1 Thinking about the principle of loving one's neighbours, do you think our society is better or worse than it was in the past?
- 2 This chapter includes a list of Christians from our history who have sought 'the welfare of the city'. Which do you find the most inspiring and why?
- 3 On what issues could the Church collectively, and Christians individually, act today? What would it look like if the Church were acting prophetically?
- 4 This chapter argues that the Church should look for a society where people experience greater freedom and fellowship and serve one another more. Are you inspired by that vision? What could you do now to see it realised?

Notes

1 Introduction: Hope today for a brighter tomorrow

- 1 Catholic Bishops Conference, *Choosing the Common Good* (Stoke-on-Trent: Alive Publishing, 2010).
- 2 Mary Warnock, *Dishonest to God* (London: Continuum, 2010).

4 Full education in a free society

- 1 Doug Richard, The Richard Review of Apprenticeships (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2012).

11 Conclusion: Firm foundations for building our future

- 1 Professor Henry Chadwick, General Synod, February 1988.
- 2 Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett, *The Spirit Level: Why equality is better for everyone* (London: Allen Lane, 2009/London: Penguin, 2010).
- 3 Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Urban Priority Areas, *Faith in the City: A call to action by church and nation* (1985).
- 4 Church of England Urban Commission on Life and Faith, *Faithful Cities: A call for celebration, vision and justice* (London: Church House Publishing/Methodist Publishing House, 2006).
- 5 William Temple, *Christianity and Social Order* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1942; London: Shephard-Walwyn/SPCK, 1976).

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