Human Flourishing Project
Briefing Paper 1
Celia Deane-Drummond
CDeane-Drummond@cafod.org.uk

Why Human Flourishing? A Theological Commentary

Abstract

If we are fortunate enough to have children, then our desire for them will probably be that they live happy lives. Happiness is one way of expressing what the good life means. But happiness on its own does not really express the complexities of human existence and its fulfillment. In a global context we might choose, instead, to use the term human wellbeing; that is commonly measured in terms of statistical approaches to life expectancy, income and access to goods.

This gives some clues as to what might lead to human fulfillment, and disparities between different peoples, but it is not really enough. Factual accounts fail to probe the complexity of human relationships in different societal contexts and why these situations of gross inequality arise. A rather better term is therefore human flourishing, as this implies a richer, relational understanding of the human condition. But the possibilities for human flourishing in our present societies seem dwarfed by difficulties, not only in the developing world, but also in the developed world. This paper aims to set out what some of the difficulties are and why an alternative voice on human flourishing may be needed in this debate. This alternative voice is one that takes the religious aspect of human experience seriously, and argues for the incorporation of these values into a concept of human flourishing.

Such an alternative does not simply replace what has gone before, but seeks to transform it through opening up the underlying assumptions that have hitherto been accepted. Even those scholars who are not religious are beginning to recognize that there are philosophical reasons for religions having a public role in influencing wider society, as long as such religions refrain from fundamentalism. In the latter case religions need to be held to account for their negative, rather than positive influence. But the influence of religion can be channeled so that it is positive, rather than negative. Firstly, religious traditions can help society discover deformities in its

societal relationships. Secondly, religions also have what might be called a latent positive potential – that they may be able to inspire not just their own communities, but wider society as a whole.[1]

Introduction

A purely statistical approach to human wellbeing makes for sober reading. Previous to the current economic crisis the number of people living on less than a dollar a day dropped from 1.5 billion to 1.1 billion over the last 20 years. Yet also during that time, the gap between rich and poor widened; instability increased, and environmental degradation is compounding the problems faced by fragile communities. The standard utilitarian model of economic growth and development presumed in the West is being exported to, or even forced on, other cultural, social, political and economic and environmental contexts with relatively little consideration of its appropriateness in each case. Whilst economic growth is vital for poverty reduction in the developing world, growth in GNI does not equal human happiness or even a reduction in poverty. Indeed, in the UK as economic growth has risen, well-being has flattened out, social capital has declined and inequality has increased. The financial crisis has not only brought great hardship to people in the UK it has also demonstrated that whilst integration into the global economy has brought benefits to some people in developing countries, progress made can be wiped out in a matter of months as those developing countries are very vulnerable to global commodity prices and to a system which is dominated by much bigger players. A World Bank report, 'Global Economic Prospects 2010: Crisis, Finance, and Growth,' concludes that the crisis is having "serious cumulative impacts on poverty, with 64 million more people expected to be living in extreme poverty by the end of 2010 than would have been the case without the crisis."[2] During the recent period of growth global income inequality has increased: between 1990-2001, only 0.6 per cent of additional global income per capita contributed to reducing poverty below the $1-a-day line - down from 2.2 per cent between 1981-1990.[3] Gender disaggregated considerations

---

[1] Habermas, J., *Zwischen Naturalismus und Religion. Philosophische Aufsätze* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp 2005), p. 149. Jürgen Habermas is a highly influential philosopher who has become much more open in recent years to the possibility of the positive influence of religious belief on wider society.

[2] Taken from the World Bank website, http://econ.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTDEC/0,,contentMDK:22446906~pagePK:64165401~piPK:64165026~theSitePK:469372,00.html

[3] Simms, A and Woodward D, "Growth is Failing the Poor: The Unbalanced Distribution of the Benefits and Costs of Global Economic Growth." DESA Working Paper No. 20 March 2006. Found at http://www.networkideas.org/feathm/sep2006/pdf/20_Woodward_Simms.pdf

indicate the disproportionate inequality of women within this overall inequality. In January 2010, UK government figures showed that in the UK, the gap between rich and poor is growing ever larger.[4]

Based on the current model of economic growth, for poor people to get a bit less poor, rich people have to get very much richer and in the process, use up an increasing amount of ecological space. If everyone in the developing world were to live like us in the UK we would need three planets. Climate change is now threatening to undermine even the basic goods gained through development policies in order to enable survival for the poorest communities of the world. Some have argued that we are close to a tipping point, when the natural stability of the global climate system will suddenly collapse until a new steady state is reached. This new state will be one that makes vast tracts of the earth virtually inhabitable for many human populations, especially those living in the poorest parts of the world who are least able to adapt. But even more conservative estimates show up the increasing fragility of ecological systems, including threats to human livelihoods in poverty stricken vulnerable regions.

Such changes are not only disturbing, but imply amnesia wrought of our own lifestyles shorn from traditions that once brought stability and hope. Anglican Archbishop Rowan Williams in his Operation Noah speech given on October 13th 2009 sums up different facets of the malaise felt in the Western world:

'It has to do with the erosion of rhythms in work and leisure, so that the old pattern of working days interrupted by a day of rest has been dangerously undermined; a loss of patience with the passing of time so that speed of communication has become a good in itself; a loss of patience which shows itself in the lack of respect and attention for the very old and the very young, and a fear in many quarters of the ageing process – a loss of the ability to accept that living as a material body in a material world is a risky thing. It is a loss whose results have become monumentally apparent in the financial crisis of the last twelve months. We have slowly begun to suspect that we have allowed ourselves to become addicted to fantasies about prosperity and growth, dreams of wealth without risk and profit without cost. A good deal of the talk and activity around the financial collapse has the marks of McIntosh's

[4] 'An Anatomy of Economic Inequality in the UK: Report of the National Equality Panel.' January 2010

'displacement activity' – precisely because it fails to see where the roots of the problem lie; in our amnesia about the human calling.'[5]

Such amnesia in Western societies expresses itself in, for example, focusing on education in terms of acquisition of more and more specialist information, rather than developing life skills such as wisdom that, arguably, was characteristic of the classic tradition up to the Enlightenment period. [6]

2. Human Flourishing

But if, as Williams suggests, the present ecological and development crisis expresses a loss of what it means to be human, we need to consider very briefly what human flourishing might mean. Given the scenario above it may be that we are blinded to what this is and therefore have to find ways of expressing this once more. There is a generally agreed universal consensus that it is a matter of human rights to meet the basic physical and psychological conditions needed for human survival. Ecological goods are those that relate to the fact that it is no longer possible to think of human life in isolation from the ecological context in which human lives are situated. It is not enough, in other words, just to consider our own family, or society, rather, human society is bound up with the lives of other living forms, even though our increasingly urbanized cultures try to disguise this fact.

There are key factors in what it means to be human that are common across different cultural traditions.[7] All humans, for example, exist in relationship with others and depend on each other. All humans exist in social structures that influence their understanding of what humanity means. As a result all humans are conditioned by *where* they live geographically, and the period *when* they live. The possibility for change is therefore latent in most, if not all, cultures. A religious dimension is also important in all cultures, even if in some it is not institutional religion.

If we think of these different aspects of *who we are* as human beings as a broad map of the characteristics of human life, then a description of *how we need to live* will

---

[5] http://www.operationnoah.org/calendars/campaigncalendar/13-october-hear-dr-rowan-williams-wisdom-noah, accessed on 14 October 2009.

[6] Cardinal John Henry Newman clearly identified this problem in his writing in the middle of the nineteenth century. For a discussion of this in relation to University education see 'Wisdom remembered: Recovering a Theological Vision of Wisdom for the Academe', in Nicholas Maxwell and Ronald Barnett, *Wisdom in the Universit*y (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 77-88.

[7] This list is adapted from Edward Schillebeecx, *Christ: The Experience of Jesus as Lord* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1983) pp. 731-42.

relate to such characteristics. Many of these goods will still be culturally bound, but it is still easier to argue as to what these goods might look like than get any consensus on the necessity for equal access to such goods either within or between different cultural contexts. Our human experience is therefore one that reflects a profound lack of equality of both opportunity and access to those goods that are considered *basic* to human existence, such as access to clean water, health and education programmes and adequate nutrition.

It is worth asking if we have now reached a cultural tipping point, where the continued oppression and disempowerment of those denied access to basic goods, combined with the excess and surfeit of those goods in richer, consumer societies, has gone too far, engendering a political and global instability that is potentially explosive. In this case, attempts by governments and policy-makers to solve the problem through technocratic means are bound to fail. They fail because in the first place they do not explore the underlying roots of what may or may not have gone wrong. They fail in the second place to fire the social imagination. An imaginative response is needed in order to generate sufficient hope that will lead to widespread cultural change. Yet the seeds of hope are there, since the generous response of the public to natural and other disasters shows that the public conscience in the face of dire need has not disappeared. What is much harder is to convince those in the richer, Western societies that a change in lifestyle is required in order to begin to address the massive global and social disparities between access to resources between different nations, and even within nations.

What is missing, therefore, is a strong sense of identity that allows human beings to take fuller and deeper responsibility appropriately rooted in a particular hope that believes that transformation and another world is possible.[8] Institutional religion has, it seems, failed to deliver the goods of security and identity in Europe that many have sought in previous generations. But the thesis aired in the 1960s that such secularization would lead to a lack of interest in religion has now been proved profoundly wrong.[9] The difficulty now is that while there is an interest in religious matters, it is not sufficient to give back the sense of identity that once existed. We end up as nomads in our own cultures, searching for lost icons.[10] Our sense of vocation, a call to holiness of life expressed in practical, dynamic acts of generosity to each other and our neighbours, near and far, has become dim. Yet the challenge

[8] See Caritas International, *Climate Justice: Seeking a Global Ethic*, working document, October 2009.
[9] Peter Berger, Grace Davie and Effie Fokas, *Religious America, Secular Europe?* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).
[10] Rowan Williams, *Lost Icons: Reflections on Cultural Bereavement* (London: Continuum, 2000).

of pervasive injustice is such that without a sense of vision it is unlikely that any will choose to act. What is needed in order to support such a change are political guarantees that are proper to the state of law, that are truly democratic and protect human rights.[11]

3. Religion and the public sphere.

When politics is thought of as secular, then it is freed from the influence of religion that retreats into the private sphere. However the secular nature of politics is not as clear-cut as it seems, since it still carries echoes of its earlier interwoven history of religion and politics. To claim that Christianity has had no influence on the way 'secular' politics has emerged is therefore a mistake. Further, some distorted theologies from an earlier epoch may appear in a disguised secular form. One role of theology may be to try and tease this process out.

Civic values are still held in post-Enlightenment societies, including, for example, marriage, the family and justice. But Alasdair MacIntyre comments on how in Western societies the contexts of such values are stripped bare; to leave a fragment of what was formerly the case. Classical ethics was about what humanity is and how it might become something better, drawing on vice, virtue and grace.[12] Bald injunctions to elevate family life or support international development, deprived of any sense of direction, are bound to sound hollow. The government white paper *Building Our Common Future* used the language of moral rightness of giving aid to developing countries, followed closely by self interest in terms of building up future markets for UK goods. To try and transform other nations into consumer cultures in the name of progress is not morally right, but the disjunction was not recognized. The question then becomes, whose justice should we follow, which rationality?[13] For MacIntyre, tradition situates our rationality, so that we arrive at rationality relative to our own particular tradition.

Does that mean that we are all now relativist, that each standard of reasoning and justice has as much or as little claim to my allegiance as any other? Does truth simply depend on my particular perspective? However, MacIntyre argues against this

---

[11] Pope Benedict XVI comments in *Caritas in Veritate* #41 that 'The State does not need to have identical characteristics everywhere: the support aimed at strengthening weak constitutional systems can easily be accompanied by the development of other political players, of a cultural, social, territorial or religious nature alongside the State'.

[12] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 2nd edn., (London: Duckworth, 1985).

[13] Adapted from Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (London: Duckworth, 1988).

as ‘fundamentally misconceived and misdirected’. This is because, for him, ‘relativism, perspectivism and enlightenment thought’ all share a common rejection of tradition.

There are other problems of relativism in as much as it opens up the possibility of other goods filling the gap that was once filled by tradition. William Cavanaugh makes the point starkly in talking about how we are coerced into buying goods that we do not really want due to the power of marketing. In other words, in the absence of any objective moral standards, something else takes its place in the form of an ideology that fills the gap that was once held by traditional religious beliefs. He makes the following comment:

> *How do people end up feeling coerced in a free market? Theoretically, in a free market every individual is free to choose what he or she regards as good. But in a culture without a sense of what is objectively good, all that remains is power. The will is moved not by attraction to the good, but by the sheer power of marketing to move the will.*[14]

But in such a scenario is a simple recovery of tradition, as suggested by MacIntyre, really enough? The benefits of modern science and technology are also self-evident. Modernity has brought basic goods in many parts of the world such as curative impacts of modern medicine for basic health, immunization programmes to tackle disease, a decrease in child mortality and an increase in life expectancy along with rising levels of basic sanitation and literacy.[15] The health care index in the richest nations of the world continues to show a slow rise, even if we might be concerned that technological innovation has opened up very difficult areas of ethical decision making about the beginning and end of human life.

In addition, some respect for individual and moral autonomy is important, and political power needs to include provision for the protection of civil liberties. Further, those in power need to have it by popular consent and that political power should not be used to force citizens to adopt a complete system of beliefs and values, either secular or religious. In the Catholic tradition, ‘rights are derived from the essential

---

[14] “Liturgy as Politics: An Interview with William Cavanaugh”, http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=3308, accessed 16 February 2010, For further details see W. Cavanaugh, *Being Consumed*: *Economics and Christian Desire* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008).

[15] As listed in, for example, United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Report 2007/8, *Fighting Climate Change: Human Solidarity in a Divided World* (New York: UNPD, 2007) and UN *Millennium Goals Report 2009*, op cit.

conditions of human flourishing, rather than from the single value of sovereign individual choice'.[16]

4. The Turn to the Self

One of the most marked characteristics of liberal, Western society is the focus on individual choice, the elevation of the self and a stress on personal autonomy. Such a focus leads to a disconnection of self from others, and a breakdown in relationships, alongside an attempt to fill the void through a craving for individual freedom expressed as a desire for personal autonomy. This trend expresses itself in, for example, high profile media debates about the individual right to choose when and the means through which to die. This contrasts sharply with the situation in the poorest regions of the world, where the luxury even to contemplate such an option is not there, nor is the technology available to prolong the ageing process. In such a context, freedom means freedom from oppression, weak governance and from human rights abuses. In Western society, by contrast, individual choice and the satisfaction of our individual desires seem to trump all other ethical considerations. It is as if human dignity is narrowly pursued just in terms of particular individual choices, rather than a richer understanding of human personhood.

Consumerism also expresses this distortion of desire, perhaps temporarily curtailed by economic considerations. But conforming to a culture of such individual consumerism does not lead to real happiness. In our own U.K. context it also pervades the lives of children, especially girls, who are commonly subject to depression, lack of self-esteem and underachievement.[17] Children in Britain are growing up in one of the most privileged nations in terms of Gross National Product, but, like those in the USA, are among the unhappiest in the world.

Trends in developed societies include not just an increasing individualism and focus on autonomy and individual freedom, but also disconnection from the social and natural fabric of human lives, especially in the Western world. Christian beliefs that focused on the individual will have committed the same error.[18] This historical

---

[16] Roger Ruston, *Human Rights and the Image of God* (London, SCM Press, 2004), p. 11.
[17] For statistics see, for example, *Faith in the Future: Working Towards a Brighter Future* (London: Theos, 2008)
[18] Known in theological jargon as voluntarism, this understood the exercise of power over property as the *jus* or right of individuals, where God's power is arbitrary. Although Millbank names this idea as a heresy, the point is that theology influenced the cultural climate in a profoundly significant way. See

mediation of ideas is important, as it means that we cannot analyze where we are now without some awareness of where we have come from, our shared history.

If we anaesthetize the reality of human brokenness, and breakdown in relationships with others, sometimes leading to violent eruptions, then a narcissistic fearful turning inward is likely to be expressed in extremes of depression and inactivity, leading to a lack of trust in both individuals and political institutions,[19] or over confidence in our ability to solve problems. Neither is helpful.

The lack of connectedness with each other expressed in lack of trust is also reflected in a wider brokenness and disconnection with the natural world, a failure to recognize that we are part of a wider ecological network of relationships. Dependence on others and awareness of the creaturely nature of the human condition shows that it is the acknowledgement of human vulnerability and proper response to disability in self and others that makes us truly human.[20]

While in secular discussion the term 'environment' is sometimes used, or sometimes 'stewardship' in religious contexts, such language becomes problematic if it confers the sense of humanity managing the earth, and therefore implies that somehow the natural world is separate from human living and human ecology.[21] Human life is deeply embedded in diverse ecosystems. In religious language the word 'creation' shows up the distinctive belief that the relationships in which we find ourselves are creaturely, that is, we are creatures alongside other creatures. Creation also implies that all creatures exist in relationship with God, as Creator of all that is. Such relationships may be broken or marred according to the Christian tradition of sin. The biblical record of human sinfulness is not just individual wrong-doing and abuse of freedom, but comes to be expressed through oppressive social and political structures. Historically, since the Enlightenment, much Christian theology has also contributed to the problem of personal disconnection by focusing on humanity alone and ignoring other creatures and the wider ecological matrix of relationships.

A much more ancient tradition of the early Orthodox Church was one that stressed the importance of understanding human life in embodied relationships with all life forms and accountable to the Creator, rather than in individualistic or narrowly

---

John Millbank, 1986, 'The Body By Love Possessed: Christianity and Late Capitalism in Britain', *Modern Theology*, 3 (1) pp. 35-65.

[19] See *Faith in the Future*, op cit.

[20] Alasdair MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues* (London: Duckworth, 1999).

[21] The varieties of use of the term stewardship and its biblical mandate is outside the scope of this paper. However, if its use implies management, then it needs to be avoided.

human terms.[22] In this case, the knowledge of biological science prior to the rise of experimental science was somewhat rudimentary. The ancients envisaged all of life as a stable balanced system of unchanging forms existing in a hierarchical arrangement, where human agents were mediators between God and creation. The most common cultural attitude towards the natural world up until a few hundred years ago was predominantly one of fear. The ancient fathers were therefore speaking into a context that has some resonance with our own terrors as to the future of life on earth in the face of predicted climate devastation. All life, according to this view, is a precious gift from God, to be respected and nurtured. Freedom is now understood according to community goals, as freedom to act well in solidarity with those who are poor and in solidarity with the earth.

The idea of stable life forms gave way to the idea of changing forms with the rise of evolutionary theories, but the notion of the balance of nature persisted and is still remarkably common in public consciousness. Today ecologists envisage a much more fluid, dynamic ecological system that is subject to change and disturbance. It is this very possibility of disturbance that is felt so keenly through disruptions to ecosystems by changes in climate or more direct human interventions, such as pollution.

Archbishop Rowan Williams summed up the central importance of interrelation to a Christian understanding of humanity in his Operation Noah speech

> *So for humanity to be a point of focus in creation is not for it to be separate from the rest of creation or to have solitary privileges and powers over creation. It is to realise that it is unimaginable without all those other life-forms which make it possible and which it in turn serves and conserves. And if that is the case, then respect for humanity, a proper ethical account of humanity, has to be bound up with respect for life itself in all its diversity.*[23]

The Jewish institution of the Sabbath reflects an earlier mandate of the sabbath of creation, so that according to this tradition the crown of creation is not humanity, but humanity in relationship with all creatures, celebrated by the Creator. In this view, it is flourishing of all life that is affirmed, not just human life in isolation. Indeed human life that is disconnected from one another and the natural world is not the kind of life

---

[22] For an excellent summary of Orthodox thinking on this issue, see Elizabeth Theokritoff, *Living in God's Creation: Orthodox Perspectives on Ecology* (New York/Crestwood: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2009).

[23] http://www.operationnoah.org/calendars/campaigncalendar/13-october-hear-dr-rowan-williams-wisdom-noah, accessed on 14 October 2009.

that can be thought of as flourishing. Such values were eventually transported into the Christian idea of Sunday as a day of rest, and then in secularised form as a day where shops were closed. The squeezing out of this rhythm of the working week in the Western world in the name of economic prosperity and individual choice epitomises the disconnection from both creation and ancient religious traditions. But it also leads to a damaging view of human life as one that has no rhythm or place to reflect. Without that space it becomes difficult to make correct decisions, especially decisions under pressures of growing global complexity.

4. The State, Market and Civil Society

Human beings as complex cultural beings develop social and political systems that provide a social context to embodied relationships. Sometimes we might envisage a state system as a fixed entity that cannot be the subject of change. In much the same way as we used to think of nature as somehow fixed, so the state seemed to have an enduring quality. However, underlying systems of politics are not so much fixed, as particular human imaginings of what the state is and exists for. As William Cavanaugh has suggested, 'Modern politics was not discovered, but imagined, invented'.[24] More striking, perhaps, is his idea that the modern nation state is founded on violence and coercive power.[25] This means that politics, like religion, is historically highly contingent, rather than fixed in its form. Cavanaugh argues that if we forget the contingent nature of politics, then the Church becomes just one more interest group amongst others, vying for an audience in civil society, but not really questioning the legitimacy or otherwise of the state as such.

The idea of the fixity of the state is called into question by globalisation. But rather than understanding this simply as a challenge to nation-statehood, Cavanaugh believes that this also represents 'the hyperextension of some of the most dangerous pathologies of the nation state'.[26] He believes that this is the case because globalisation is a universal story, a 'grand narrative' that is detached from particular localities. In this he suggests the modern nation state is exerting a particular power over the local under the universal. Here GATT and NAFTA represent a voluntary loss of sovereignty for the nation state, but they are examples of an expression of the

[24] William Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination* (London: Continuum/T & T Clark, 2002) p. 2.
[25] http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=3308, 'Liturgy as Politics: An Interview with William Cavanaugh', accessed 16 February 2010.
[26] Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, p. 4.

generalisation of the state project across space.[27] This contrasts with earlier traditions, where the individual existed in relation to a more complex set of loyalties to social groups. Such local groups now become re-cast as 'intermediate associations' between state and the individual, but their purpose becomes one of reproducing the projects of the state, rather than challenging the conceptual space of the state. The state is then left as the arbiter of what is good, but in a way that tends to simplify the complexities of diverse communities. But the trend now is towards institutional crisis, so that even those mediating structures are eroded, and transnational economy tips out of control.

The potential for economic collapse becomes obvious once the global market is viewed as a hyperextension of a particular model of the state. The financial dealings of a relatively miniscule group of privileged (some would say spoilt) dealers in the Western nations in the autumn of 2008 did not just have repercussions on the financial state of their immediate investors, but the economic downturn affected millions of others in the so-called developing world. Estimates by the International Development Committee of how much this is likely to be vary, but it represents millions of lives that are now no longer going to be pulled out of what is known as the poverty trap.[28] These estimates are, of course, presuming that the trajectory towards a particular utilitarian model of economic growth and development is both sound and valid in economic terms. What is missing is a more radical critique of the reasons why this situation has arisen in the first place.

6. Practical implications: economics

One of the myths of our generation in the Western world arising directly out of the split between morality and the public sphere is that certain aspects of the way we live our lives, such as our technology, economics, science, politics and policy are perceived as morally neutral. But the workings of a global market economy are not neutral in as much as the way it has evolved contributes to particular situations of injustice. The economic crash of 2008 did not just come out of the blue. For those with ears to hear and eyes to see there were warning signs some ten years earlier

---

[27] Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, p. 104.

[28] International Development Committee, Fourth Report, *Aid Under Pressure: Support for Development Assistance in a Global Economic Downturn*, Volume 1, May 2009. This report translates the economic downturn in terms of an additional 90 million people in poverty by the end of 2010 and 400,000 more deaths of children, setting back the Millennium Development Goals by three years. The language used here is as expected: the language of protection against the impact of the economic downturn, rather than a more radical reform of the economic process as such.

with the collapse in 1998 of a hedge fund named, ironically as it turns out, Long Term Capital Management, owing investors US $4 billion. But the finance industry did not heed these warning signs and chose to carry on business as usual. There may have been those who were alert to such dangers, but any warnings were summarily dismissed. What has opened up in the wake of the recent economic collapse is a profound dis-ease about the state we are in, a vacuum of political and economic thought in which it would be all too easy to give way either to a creeping sense of despair or what philosophers call anomie, a sense of alienation from social and civil society.

Those who did have excessive income as traders in the finance sector were prepared to take risks with assets that were not their own - the so-called derivative market sold the riskier aspects of enterprises to those prepared to shoulder it. These decisions were taken in the name of individual freedom and with the hope of financial gain. But no one could really anticipate exactly what that risk entailed, and high complexity precluded accurate assessment. Catherine Cowley, an economist turned religious sister, criticized the way derivative markets suffer from a lack of transparency alongside a market structure constricted to a small number of institutions, leading to a lack of resilience. In *The Value of Money*, published in 2006, she suggests that 'Lack of transparency can lead to highly destabilizing erosions of liquidity as market participants misjudge the level of risk. The growth of options markets and the spread of associated dynamic hedging strategies may increase the risk that an initial price change in underlying markets could be amplified by positive feedback effects'.[29] In the light of the financial crash of 2008, the media have since heralded Cowley as a prophet, but she brought to her analysis of the financial sector two vital ingredients; a rigorous reason and a refusal to turn away from uncomfortable truths.

In fact the all-pervasiveness of the market means that those public goods that were once thought of as a public right are now subject to ever greater pressures of commodification; education, health provision and environmental goods in the West are now increasingly geared towards individualistically crafted market demands and according to market outcomes. The goods that we wish to share with the least developed nations in the name of fostering human liberty turn out to be goods that are now becoming shorn from their social and institutional contexts. This is the final crowning glory of 'superdevelopment', a consumer society shorn from its roots.

---

[29] Catherine Cowley, *The Value of Money* (London: Continuum, 2006),127.

Embedded in 'superdevelopment' are addictive cultural patterns of consumption that Alistair MacIntosh terms 'eco-cidal', self-destructive expressions of a cultural psycho-pathology.[30] Trying to find a technological solution to the problem misses the point; the economic systems cannot simply be repaired in order to function better, rather, the basis on which that system is based needs to be challenged. The process of 'superdevelopment' is not, however, inevitable or simply due to the dominance of capitalist economics. Rather, as Pope Benedict XVI has claimed in his most recent encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* on authentic human development, 'Without internal forms of solidarity and trust, the market cannot completely fulfill its proper economic functions'.[31] Part of the problem here is that the market itself becomes an ideology that allows it to be used for selfish ends rather than for building up the common life.

Finding strategies to end poverty is not as simple as it sounds once we admit to the fact that the solution is not merely economic, at least in the way economics is commonly understood. If we think that it is, then we are following the development model that associates economic growth with progress and this is simply a way of trying to create another society in our own broken image. Underlying this model of development is a philosophy of economic utilitarianism that aims for maximum benefit narrowly calculated in terms of income.[32] Such an economic model actually undermines the conditions required for human flourishing. The dominant economic policy strategies in the UK are those that conform to utilitarian models, rather than offer alternatives. Yet, ironically perhaps, it is economically mistaken to assume that it is economically beneficial to try and gain maximum output from minimum pay. Instead, evidence from the London Citizens' Living Wage Campaign shows that treating workers with dignity as part of a shared project actually increases productivity.[33]

Alternative economic models of prosperity without growth, such as those aired by the Sustainable Development Commission, do not sound like the best of all possible worlds, but at least are challenging the assumption of prosperity and growth as irreducibly linked. Those in the developing world need to have the opportunity for basic human needs to be met, such that some growth is necessary. Those in the richer nations of the world need to focus less on growth, and more on what makes

---

[30] Alastair McIntosh, *Hell and High Water: Climate Change, Hope and the Human Condition* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2008)
[31] Pope Benedict XVI *Caritas in Veritate*, #35.
[32] For discussion on this aspect see Working Paper 3.
[33] http://www.londoncitizens.org.uk/livingwage/index.html, accessed 2 March 2010. Companies such as KPMG and Barclays offer a business case for a Living Wage based on gains from higher productivity and lower staff turnover; Rev. Angus Ritchie, personal communication.

for human happiness. Richard Sennett has provided evidence that financial rewards do not make people happy, and the instability of present patterns of work in capitalist societies have a corrosive effect on character and family life.[34] But if prosperity is re-defined not narrowly in terms of income, but in a richer more relational way in terms of human flourishing, then the possibility of some growth in the poorest regions of the world alongside a reduction in growth or 'downsizing' in other regions becomes more realistic. As economist Tim Jackson comments, 'Prosperity consists in our ability to flourish as human beings- within the ecological limits of a finite planet. The challenge for our society is to create the conditions under which this is possible. It is the most urgent task of our times'.[35]

Increasing awareness of climate change has brought to the surface knowledge of our interconnectedness in global terms, that what we do and choose in our own daily lives has an impact through a myriad of other similar decisions on the lives of those in other parts of the world. Globalization is pervasive in human societies, but climate science brings to the surface a natural globalization - a global ecology. If humanity makes choices for continued growth economics that disrupt local and global ecological systems then the risks are predictable but their extent is not known with absolute certainty. The assumption of classical economics is that people will always make the most reasonable choices, but this is clearly not always the case.[36] Alternative models of economics that take into account more than just human rationality are therefore likely to be more effective in dealing with complex global issues. This is one reason why it is so important to stress what Pope Benedict XVI names in *Caritas in Veritate* as an economics of gratuitousness, for this amounts to a way of living economically that takes global solidarity seriously.

7. Practical implications: governance and power

It is the misappropriation of power at all levels of society that leads to many human rights and other abuses. Even the manner in which different nation states have been set up are often grounded in a bloody history of coercion and violence. The sobering reality is that weak governance in many of the poorest regions of the world provides

---

[34] R. Sennett, *The Corrosion of Character: Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999).
[35] *Prosperity Without Growth? The Transition to a Sustainable Economy* Sustainable Development Commission, 2008.
[36] Paul Ormerod, *Butterfly Economics: A New General Theory of Economic and Social Behaviour,* (London: Faber and Faber, 1999).

the context for further conflict and strife that undermines even the best efforts to foster the most basic elements of human flourishing. The focus on Iraq and Afghanistan by the UK media ignores the stark reality that there are at least thirty-three other ongoing conflicts of extreme violence in other parts of the world. CAFOD's comments on the crucial issue of weak governance and security are pertinent here:

> *Conflict tears apart families and splinters communities; it destroys social infrastructure and makes work to prepare for a better future, such as education, next to impossible. Conflict undermines efforts to reduce maternal mortality or defeat the scourge of deadly diseases. Conflict and lawlessness encourage criminality, deter investment and prevent normal economic activity. Of the 150 wars fought between the end of World War II and the mid 1990's, more than nine out of ten were fought in the developing world.*[37]

The uncontrolled arms trade has left millions of people living in fear of violence. Where conflict is acknowledged, this consumes 250% of an average country's GDP. Environmental stress is one of the factors that ignite conflict, which may be one reason why Pope Benedict XVI 2010 World Day Message of Peace stressed the need for environmental responsibility. But the developed world has its own history of conflict to contend with in the manner in which nation states have emerged. Cavanaugh has put this starkly thus:

> *The whole apparatus of the state arose to enable princes to wage war more effectively. As Charles Tilly has written, "War made the state, and the state made war." The modern nation-state is founded on violence. If the church is going to resist violence, it has to emerge from its privatization and have a political voice, one that seeks not to regain state power but to speak truthfully about it. Christians can atone for their complicity with violence in the past by refusing to be complicit with state violence now.*[38]

---

[37] CAFOD, 'The critical importance of a civil society perspective: CAFOD's contribution to DFID's strategy on security and development,' November 2004. http://www.cafod.org.uk/content/download/4213/38332/version/3/file/FINAL%5B1%5D.dec.sec.dev.cafod.pdf, accessed 19 February 2010.

[38] http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=3308, 'Liturgy as Politics: An Interview with William Cavanaugh', accessed 16 February 2010.

The kind of governance that makes for human flourishing is one that takes accountability, transparency, justice, fairness, equity and participation seriously. Its absence provides the breeding ground for conflict and breakdown in civil society. Clear principles, such as that of subsidiarity, which respects the autonomy of intermediate bodies, are hard to maintain without the basic elements of good governance. Poor governance arises because of dysfunctional relationships between actors, institutions and systems of state. Catholic social teaching and a biblical mandate consistently presses for the establishment of systems of governance that protect the interests of the weakest members of society. Failure to do so is not simply doing harm to our neighbour, but amounts to a form of structural sin. The Church as a powerful system of governance also has to accept that it too may be complicit in some cases, or turn a blind eye to situations of cruelty. While the abuse of children is often highlighted in Western societies, more subtle manipulation of power in other jurisdictions needs to be faced honestly and in repentance. The Church as a community of saints and sinners should be the first to put its house in order in this respect if it is going to speak with authenticity in the public realm.

There are other examples that show additional misappropriation of power through secular transnational companies taking advantage of weak governance in poorer nation states. Though he has yet to make specific recommendations to address this issue, UN Special Representative on Business and Human Rights John Ruggie recognised there is a “global imbalance” - companies are able to use national and international legal frameworks to defend their interests but it is far more difficult for citizens of corporate abuse to bring successful claims against TNCs. As well as their lobbying capacity, companies have huge advantages over civil society in terms of access to information, resources and legal expertise.

If these represent the all too human flaws built into capitalist expressions or hyperextensions of the classic market economy, it is understandable that socialism has offered the possibility of a better, more socially responsible, alternative. Yet, as contemporary liberation theologians are now beginning to admit, socialism has also consistently failed to deliver the goods promised to permit human flourishing. The bureaucratic loss of individual autonomy in statism is just as unsatisfactory as an alternative to liberal capitalism.

Ivan Petrella suggests that ‘society is made and imagined….it is a human artefact rather than expression of underlying natural order’, and as such it is ‘contingent’,

rather than fixed.[39] Petrella's fluid understanding of society compares with that of Cavanaugh. Petrella argues that different threads from different systems, including for example, capitalism and socialism, need to come together. This is a little different from Cavanaugh's approach which critiques the state system as imagined and constructed by humans, but does not offer practical steps for reconstruction. Petrella wants to press for the positive power of economic actors making a particular structure, even if that structure offers some constraints.

The mistaken belief that one model fitted diverse political domains dominated development politics and policy, at least until relatively recently. In utilizing overarching models it largely failed to take proper account of the context, namely, real lives of real people with real needs and desires. Women, in particular, suffered disproportionately, thus reinforcing androcentric (male) dominance of power structures. Such an approach was mistaken not only because it imported the broken legacy of the dream of modernity, but also because it had a negative practical impact on the empowerment of those who were recipients of aid programmes.

While issues that focus on the role of women are often difficult to incorporate due to sensitivities to local customs, once we reflect on misappropriations of power there is a clear need to take into account the particular concerns of women in development policies. The lack of detailed consideration of the particular importance of women in developing societies is evident in much Roman Catholic social teaching, including *Caritas in Veritate*. Pope Benedict XVI speaks of the covenant of humanity with the earth, so that our just treatment of the earth is mirrored in just relationships with each other and *vice versa*. Hence while he speaks in favour of the dignity of all people, this is not specifically commented on in relation to women as such and their particular needs in the developing world. An exception to this is his strong criticism of the way women are subject to enforced sterilization in some poor countries.[40] But he strongly objects to the language of individual rights if it is used at the expense of duties. Hence, for him, 'The sharing of reciprocal duties is a more powerful incentive to action than the mere assertion of rights'.[41] But like his predecessor, Pope Paul VI, Pope Benedict XVI agrees that developing nations need to supported in such a way that they are "artisans of their own destiny", rather than being manipulated by other more powerful players on the world stage.

---

[39] She is drawing here on the work of Roberto Unger's social model. Ivan Petrella, *The Future of Liberation Theology: An Argument and Manifesto* (London, SCM Press, 2006), pp. 95-7.
[40] *Caritas in Veritate*, #28.
[41] Ibid, #43.

One of the striking features of Mary Grey's reflection on a group of Kol tribal women of the Banda district of Uttar Pradesh living in dire poverty is that what they most crave is respect. On top of their list was 'to live in dignity' and be given respect as a human being, and this came even before meeting basic needs such as water, and freedom from violence.[42] In other words, we need to learn to hear the wisdom from cultures that have not yet morally disintegrated to the extent that we find in the affluent nations of the Northern hemisphere.

This resistance to grand schemes of justice and its appropriation in particular practices is a view shared by economist Amartya Sen. For him, there is little point in generating grand contractual theories about justice making if they fail to deliver us from the gross injustices that afflict the material world. His goal is to promote an understanding of development as freedom to secure certain capabilities. His highly influential work, known as the capability approach, marked a watershed in development thinking away from bald economics to persons and their particular contextual needs.[43] Analyses of chronic poverty show that endowments need to match opportunities; economic growth alone may exacerbate chronic poverty for some groups.[44] Unjust social structures at familial, local, and community level and social exclusion give little opportunity for many of those in chronic poverty. In Sen's latest book published in July 2009 *The Idea of Justice* he spells out how he envisages what justice must entail, namely, those goods that are arrived at through consensual reasoning in a community.[45] His ideas are certainly a welcome shift away from crude economic models of development. He is also suspicious of contractual theories of justice such as those of John Rawls, in that it assumes a theory of justice that others have to conform to, rather than a looser understanding of justice that is appropriate for different cultures.

In political terms this means, for example, far greater support for the so-called developing nations of the world in international negotiations. Part of the problem is that the current systems of governance do not enable the kind of empowerment that is desirable for human flourishing. A concrete example of this disjunction in power is highlighted by the way that the talks leading up to the Climate Summit in

---

[42] Professor Mary Grey is a feminist Roman Catholic theologian. Mary Grey, *Sacred Longings: Ecofeminist Theology and Globalization* (London: SCM Press, 2003).
[43] Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).
[44] Andrew Shepherd, *Understanding and Explaining Chronic Poverty*, CPRC Working Paper 80, (2007) p. 15.
[45] Amartya Sen, *The Idea of Justice* (London: Penguin, 2009).

Copenhagen have been set up.[46] The representative capacity of poor nations is very small; only a fraction of those from richer Western nations are represented, for example. This puts such countries at an unfair starting point in terms of representation of their interests. While non-government organisations may try to address this issue, it is far from sufficient. There are other weaknesses in political capacity through a lack of ability to coordinate the efforts of different smaller nations with similar interests. Furthermore, delegates do not have the same support prior to the meetings or during the meetings in terms of technical knowledge in relation to the issues at hand that hinders their possibilities for negotiation.

It is understandable that given such poor capacity they will resort to lobbying for a single issue, such as support with climate adaptation, rather than longer- term strategies for low carbon investment and development. Further, even if some agreement is reached, the lack of support in the home states due to fragilities in governance will mean that implementation is difficult. These examples show the gross inequality of power in the very process of setting up negotiations that has not yet been adequately appreciated by the Western world, or addressed in political terms. This is particularly offensive for those in the developing world since they are the ones who are least responsible for causing the problem in the first place. Yet sustainability understood as securing the future in economic, social and environmental terms, depends on such negotiations to be successful. It gives an important example of the social and global issues at stake when disjunctions of power are not addressed.

Another example is the failure in practice to live up to the demands of trade agreements that promised partnership between the European Union and Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) known as the Cotonou agreement. 'The Cotonou Agreement has the principal objectives of reducing and eventually eradicating poverty, consistent with the objectives of sustainable development and the gradual integration of ACP countries into the world economy'.[47] A Tearfund report entitled *Partnership Under Pressure* highlights the failure of the EU to adhere to this agreement in the following ways:

1. The European commission (EC) has shown disregard to ACP (African, Caribean and Pacific) institutions, processes and politicians.

---

[46] For this information I am grateful to Sol Oyuela, CAFOD Climate Change Policy Analyst, who has actively taken part in the negotiations leading up to the UN Summit in Copenhagen.

[47] http://tilz.tearfund.org/webdocs/Website/Campaigning/Policy%20and%20research/EPAs%20report%20web2.pdf

2. The EC and ACP are poles apart with respect to Singapore issues of investment, public procurement and competition policy, but these are forced into negotiations, even though this is offensive to ACP.

3. Aid is linked with concessions made in EPA in way that is unfair.

4. The threat by EC of loss of market access to ACP contrary to the Cotonou agreement shows further abuse of power.

5. There is a consistent failure to consider alternative agreements that are more favourable to ACP.

6. The time span for such agreements works in favour of EC.

Accepting that power is being misused is a hard shift to make for the minority who are in positions of power. Indeed there may be occasions where intervention through development programmes in the name of progress has actively promoted the disintegration of other socially rich cultures. This is a grave sin for which we need to make recompense. Here we can learn from those on the margins of the global community, such as those indigenous communities that have retained the art of paying attention to the natural world and each other. This includes being attentive to the natural rhythms of the biological world and working with the grain of nature rather than against it. This need not be a romantic affirmation of all aspects of societal or religious life in poor communities, but a readiness to listen to one another in far more ways than just allowing them to structure their own development, even if this is important.

8. Practical implications: environmental policy

The belief that purely technological solutions such as carbon capture technologies will be the answer to complex environmental problems, including climate change, is a symptom of the desire to be in control and exercise human power in what seems to be a situation where that power is denied.

The financial impact on the world's poorest of the most recent economic downturn is compounded even further by the disproportionate impact of climate change on poor communities. Humanly induced climate change is just one symptom of unsustainable patterns of production and consumption. This is why we can speak openly of climate justice; those who have contributed the very least to climate

impacts in terms of carbon footprint are recipients of the most drastic impacts of floods, drought and associated food insecurity, disease and other environmental hazards. The dumping of toxic wastes produced in the Northern hemisphere on nations such as Brazil is illegal, but the fact that it has occurred at all shows the extreme poverty of social conscience. If the climate change debate has shown up anything, it is the interdependence of people and planet; the two cannot be sheared apart but need to be thought through together.

Global environmental harms are not simply confined to climate change. The loss of myriads of plant, insect and animal species through extinction is exacerbated though loss of habitat. Ecologists do not even gain the opportunity to identify most of these species before they disappear. Some of this is due to the clearing of the rainforests, often to meet the needs for consumer goods by wealthier nations. These forests, as a source of rich biodiversity as well as what climate scientists call carbon capture, are also home to native indigenous populations that are losing their livelihoods. Misguided attempts to gain 'carbon credits' have even seen forest clearance in parts of Mozambique for biofuels, making a mockery of the reason why biofuels are sought as an alternative. The Ecuadoran government pledge not to drill oil in environmentally sensitive rainforest might seem like a breakthrough for climate change, but this kind of blackmail is somewhat morally suspect.[48] It is also doubtful that the international community will ever raise sufficient funds in order to prevent such action. Such strategies echo the breakdown in trust through inappropriate forcing of genetically modified maize seed on Brazilian farmers, disrupting livelihoods and even religious identity.[49] GMOs are not inherently evil, but the way they have been used in this case according to market demand shows up a total lack of moral accountability. The global market, in separating source from recipient, permits deceptive practices in those countries that do not have the appropriately robust legislative structure to deal with such changes.

One question to ask is whether in Western economies the market itself is ever going to be sufficient to change consumer habits so that they are more environmentally responsible. Michael Sandel in his first Reith lecture delivered in 2009 argues that reliance on the market itself is not enough; we are witnessing the end of market triumphalism, but this has given way to a new market skepticism. But Sandel may have simplified the issue here, since elements of that triumphalism persist in the way

---

[48] "Pay us oil money or the rainforest gets it" *New Scientist* Issue 2732 (3 November 2009), http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg20427323.200-pay-us-oil-money-or-the-rainforest-gets-it.html accessed 20 February 2010.

[49] World Council of Churches, *Global Consultation on Genetics*, Johannesburg, 2-6 December 2007.

the elite still demand bigger bonuses to their income. The question that persists is how to connect values and markets. This opens up the possibility of a common framework of what the good entails that includes the actions of citizens as well as politicians:

> *A new politics of the common good isn't only about finding more scrupulous politicians. It also requires a more demanding idea of what it means to be a citizen, and it requires a more robust public discourse - one that engages more directly with moral and even spiritual questions.*[50]

He also believes that replacing consumer greed with other citizen virtues that are more responsible is not enough, since what is more fundamental is the way the market has dominated areas that are outside its domain. In other words, he suggests that we need to 're-think the reach of markets into spheres of life where they don't belong'[51].

The economization of environmental goods betrays such a category mistake- treating the natural world as if it is economic units is inappropriate. A similar mistake is the economization of the development agenda; one that treats human beings as just monetary value, for life is much more than this, and the category we need to be thinking more about is that of interdependence and relationship. This is one reason why the low carbon growth discourse in the government white paper *Building Our Common Future*, in spite of its pledges, fails to grasp the nettle, for it uses the language of economic growth and carbon emissions still embedded in the same economic framework.[52] Michael Sandel points to another danger of the increasing inappropriate dominance of market mechanisms, that is, it serves to squeeze out more intrinsic reasons of why we need to give value to both people and planet.

Christianity does offer profound intrinsic reasons as to why people should be given value and dignity, drawing on the idea of humans as being made in the image of God. It also offers a reason for earth care through its belief in creation as a gift from God and the total self-offering of love of God for the world in the incarnation. Further, it has a way of responding to suffering and the breakdown of relationships by offering a narrative about Christ as one who suffered, died and rose again. The possibility of reconciliation between people and between people and planet is the basis for hope, not just in an individual sense, but also at a wider societal level.

---

[50] http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/rmhttp/radio4/transcripts/20090609_thereithlectures_marketsandmorals.rtf
[51] Ibid.
[52] White Paper: Building Our Common Future, http://www.dfid.gov.uk/About-DFID/Quick-guide-to-DFID/How-we-do-it/Building-our-common-future/

9. Conclusions

This paper has attempted to set out an outline of why it is that we need an alternative understanding of human wellbeing through a dynamic and relational conception of human flourishing. It does this by suggesting some of the ways in which different aspects of our social, political and religious lives cohere and connect with each other. Importantly, such social life is part of a shared story, not only with peoples from other parts of the globe, but also with that of all living forms as well. Human flourishing and that of planet earth are intricately bound up together. The giving of proper respect through solidarity between peoples, and learning from shared experiences, is imperative in order to shake our society out of the amnesia into which we have fallen. Perhaps such listening will re-awaken seeds of hope that are latent within our own cultural and religious traditions.[53] Such imaginative possibilities for an alternative way of envisaging human flourishing are vitally needed in response to the negative social and political impacts of the global economy. We have, in the affluent nations, gradually lost the art of paying attention to each other, the natural world and to God. This is expressed in inappropriate consumerism in some nations, matched by abuse of power towards vulnerable nations and communities.

Instead of freedom expressed through personal autonomy, we need to recover the freedom expressed through the development of virtues. Such virtues include an ability to recognise when market mechanisms are engulfing those areas of common life that need to be given intrinsic value. The virtue of *caritas*, or love, is primary both in relation to God, our neighbour and the natural world. But we also need to develop the art of practical wisdom that is orientated towards the common good. Such an orientation towards practical wisdom comes before we can even discern what justice making might entail. One aspect of that practical wisdom is being ready to learn, or *docilitas.* In the classical tradition practical wisdom and justice making was always united with *caritas*, the open outgoing love that both moves us to generosity as well as compassion for the other. Generosity means far more than just giving from our excess, rather it is allowing another's problems to become one's own. But finding the wellspring for such active generosity so that the problems and issues of another become our own requires a much greater deepening of our cultural and religious life.

---

[53] C. Deane-Drummond, *Seeds of Hope: Facing the Challenge of Climate Justice* (London: CAFOD, 2009).

For most Protestant believers such inspiration takes the form of the Bible understood as the Word of God, active and piercing in its challenge to love God with all our heart and soul and might and our neighbour as ourselves. For most Catholic believers this may be present, but the Eucharist is more often the place where God's love is experienced as real and active, showing us the generous self-offering of Christ in perfect obedience. Such liturgical practices are not to be thought of as remote from the world of science, policy and politics, but point to new ways of thinking about it, such as a radical re-thinking of the economy in terms of gift.[54] If we have gone wrong, it is in our failure of imagination, our failure to dwell within our traditions so that they inform and serve our public and political life.

A theo-political imaginary offers a challenge to the very basis of our political and economic institutions. It reminds us that they are essentially human constructions. As such the possibility that they can be transformed is within our grasp. The rhetoric of 'sustainability' does not make sense without a sense of continuity with our history. We need, in other words, to reawaken the memory of our traditions in order to have the confidence to move forward into a future transformed by that encounter. Such a memory does not need to eclipse the goods that have been hard won since the Enlightenment. Such goods include personal liberty and access to education, medicine and so on. The problems come when market mechanisms dominate to such an extent so as to squeeze out intrinsic reasons for valuing people and planet.

[54] The idea of a gift economy appears in Pope Benedict XVI's encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate*, 2009, but also in other works, such as D. Stephen Long and Nancy Ruth Fox, *Calculated Futures: Theology, Ethics and Economics* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2007).