The Practices of Happiness

Political economy, religion and wellbeing

Edited by

John Atherton, Elaine Graham and Ian Steedman

Routledge Frontiers of Political Economy

The Practices of Happiness

There is growing evidence that rising levels of prosperity in Western economies since 1945 have not been matched by greater incidences of reported wellbeing and happiness. Indeed, material affluence is often accompanied instead by greater social and individual distress. A growing literature within the humanities and social sciences is increasingly concerned to chart not only the underlying trends in recorded levels of happiness, but to consider what factors, if any, contribute to positive and sustainable experiences of well-being and quality of life. Increasingly, such research is focusing on the importance of values and beliefs in human satisfaction or quality of life; but the specific contribution of religion to these trends is relatively under-examined. This unique collection of essays seeks to rectify that omission, by identifying the nature and role of the religious contribution to wellbeing.

A unique collection of nineteen leading scholars from the field of economics, psychology, public theology and social policy have been brought together in this volume to explore the religious contribution to the debate about happiness and wellbeing. These essays explore the religious dimensions to a number of key features of wellbeing, including marriage, crime and rehabilitation, work, inequality, mental health, environment, participation, institutional theory, business and trade. They engage particularly closely with current trends in economics in identifying alternative models of economic growth which focus on its qualitative as well as quantitative dimensions.

This distinctive volume brings to public notice the nature and role of religion's contribution to wellbeing, including new ways of measurement and evaluation. As such, it represents a valuable and unprecedented resource for the development of a broad-based religious contribution to the field. It will be of particular relevance for those who are concerned about the continuing debate about personal and societal wellbeing, as well as those who are interested in the continuing significance of religion for the future of public policy.

John Atherton is Canon Theologian Emeritus of Manchester Cathedral and Honorary Research Fellow of the William Temple Foundation and of Manchester University, UK, with doctorates from Manchester and Uppsala Universities. His research and publishing interests have increasingly focused on the relationship between political economy and religion. **Elaine Graham** is Grosvenor Research Professor of Practical Theology at the University of Chester, UK, and was until October 2009 the Samuel Ferguson Professor of Social and Pastoral Theology at the University of Manchester, UK. **Ian Steedman** has been Professor of Economics at Manchester University and Manchester Metropolitan University, UK. He has a longstanding involvement in microeconomic theory, the history of economic thought and in the intersections among economics, ethics and social thought.

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Introductory essay

Developing an overview as context and future

John Atherton

Economics and religion: their relative jurisdictions

The long historic relationship between economics and religion is of high importance. For example, Judaism's wisdom, prophetic and law traditions develop a strong constructive relationship with economic activities, located within the framework of God's purposes and laws. The early Greek word for stewardship, *oikonomia*, plays a prominent part in the Greek New Testament in Christian tradition in terms of illustrating moral and economic adequacy. It provides the root word for economics, as managing the household. In Muslim tradition, the Quran, reflecting the mercantile origins of the Prophet Mohammed, locates legitimate economic concerns within a deeply religious context.

From these origins, the three Abrahamic Faiths developed a significant, if sometimes intermittent, involvement with economic priorities and theories, including in the Middle Ages with an emphasis on connecting justice to wages, prices and financial transactions (Wilson 1997). The early modern period witnessed retreats from these positions of religious strength, with the emergence of commercial, financial and then industrial capitalism (Braudel 1981, 1982, 2002). The development of modern economics in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries witnessed, however, a revival of interest in the religious engagement with economics. In Christian tradition, this evolved as Christian political economy in the early nineteenth century, through the works of Malthus, Sumner and Whately (Waterman 1991), and in the Islamic tradition the resurgence of Muslim interest free banking in the post 1945 period (Mills and Presley 1999; Hussain 2007). Significantly influencing these religious and economic understandings was a subtext relating moral concern to the promotion of human wellbeing.

A majority of economists (and perhaps religious people to a lesser extent) would not see the need for or legitimacy of any such relationship. They would deny the value and relevance of a strong ethical dimension in economics, particularly as the twentieth century unravelled, from Robbins to Friedman and beyond (Sen 1992b: 7). Yet there is now a renewed interest to explore the connections between economy, religion and ethics. In terms of religion, for example, the work of the Dalai Lama and the Abbot of Worth in Britain (Dalai Lama and

Cutler 1998; Jamison 2008) reinforces the importance of the development of wellbeing and happiness research.

In seeking to clarify this re-emerging relationship there has been some convergence around a model which suggests three dimensions in economics which can guide the nature of religious engagement with it. The first, basic or foundational approach, relates to fundamental understandings of human nature and worth, including behaviour and beliefs, essentially an anthropology, which informs economic and religious understandings. The second dimension, as practice and policy, again reflects shared economic and religious interests. The third dimension, relating to the technical or scientific discipline of modern economics, is regarded by many if not most as the domain of economics alone. It is often argued, with some authority, that it is not the business of religion to interfere in this area of the autonomous nature of a discipline, such as economics as a social science. Support for this understanding is found in the work of the early Christian political economists, as elaborated by Waterman (Waterman 1991), with their distinction between what is essentially positive and normative economics. The former is the preserve of the technical or scientific field of economics, so for Whately: 'Scripture is not the test by which the conclusions of Science are to be tried' (Waterman 1991: 208). The latter is open, rightly, to the influence of ethics and religion, in terms of what kind of economics for what kind of society. However, these distinctions have been increasingly subject to critical scrutiny, particularly by developments in the philosophy of science which question the autonomy of scientific undertakings as value free (Sen 2009: chs 1/5; Putnam 2002). They have also been challenged by the tradition of ethical economics, as a legitimate and a necessary dimension of economics, from the early recognition of normative as well as positive in early Christian political economy, through the work of Malthus (linking to Adam Smith's earlier foundational work as moral philosopher), Marshall and Keynes to Sen, Stiglitz, Kahneman and Fogel today. The Swedish research project, 'Ethical Reflections in Economic Theory and Practice', 1996–2001 (Grenholm and Helgesson 1998, 2001) led by Carl-Henric Grenholm, one of the contributors to this book, particularly noted the critique of welfare economics by Sen and his wider scrutiny of the mainstream neoclassical economics' understanding of economic behaviour and the human (Sen 1992b: 31–32; Grenholm and Helgesson 2001: 11–14). None of these developments rejects the *relative* autonomy of the technical dimension of economics as a discipline in its own right, but they do question any attempt to promote economics as entirely value free or unduly autonomous, for example, as promoted by Friedman, that 'Positive economics is independent of every value proposition or of every ethical position' (Friedman 1953: 7).

These distinctions and definitions may be usefully deployed in critical conversation with the findings from a conference on the influence of Christian principles on economic thought, from a more biblically oriented perspective, held in the USA in 2002 (Henderson and Pisciotta 2005). This included examining the question 'whether and to what extent the content of faith is relevant to the practices of academic disciplines'. The result suggested three roles of the Christian

economist: first, as 'mainstream scholar' to 'excel in their discipline as it is understood among mainstream economists', but then to inform such work by Christian convictions, for example, by technical research on 'important issues that affect the world – issues that the Bible stresses, including the environment, debt forgiveness, healthcare and poverty'. Second, the Christian economist 'as policy advocate', recognizing that 'policy making can never be completely value neutral', and Christian values can be incorporated into economic policy. Again, as in the first role, contributions need to be 'scholarly – historically based, empirical and targeted for publication in top-quality, peer-reviewed journals'. Third, the Christian economist as 'philosopher', evaluating from a Christian perspective 'the philosophical presuppositions underlying the foundations of economics', for example, critiquing the 'neo-classical approach to understanding economic decision-making' (Henderson and Pisciotta 2005: 4, 5, 7). Again, this contribution confirms the emerging judgement that recognizing the relative autonomy of economics does not preclude, but indeed increasingly confirms, the value of interdisciplinary engagements between economics and other disciplines. In this endeavour, religion and ethics have both a historic and a contemporary place.

Locating political economy, religion and wellbeing in context

The interest in happiness and wellbeing particularly emerges in the latter half of the twentieth century in a number of research fields including economics, psychology and sociology. Although focused in particular disciplines, each includes developments which illuminate the subject of wellbeing and its wider dimensions. The latter involves ethics and religion, including spiritual concerns, with findings crossing disciplines, and reinforcing the importance of ethics and religion.

In economics, the pioneering work of Easterlin (Easterlin 1974, 2002) used national surveys of subjective wellbeing to question the supposed link between economic growth and welfare. He concluded that an increase in aggregate income does not buy greater popular happiness. Later work, by Inglehart *et al.* (2008), rather suggested that economic development, democratization, and acceptance of diversity were associated with an increase in feelings of free choice, linked to increased levels of happiness. Other research, for example, by Baker (Chapter 13, this volume), interestingly has linked these indices with religious participation. Easterlin's work was corroborated by Scitovsky's *Joyless Economy* (Scitovsky 1976), which argued that beyond a particular level of material comfort, further wealth does not add to wellbeing. Indeed, it could detract from it, unless accompanied by satisfying social and cultural activities. The later work of Oswald (1997), Easterlin (2002) and then Layard (2005) increased the profile of wellbeing research in economics, although it has always been contested (Johns and Ormerod 2007), not least because of its identity as subjective wellbeing – part of a long history of criticism, from Robbins (1938) who claimed it was impossible to say anything scientific about differences

between individuals' feelings. In the related field of economic history, recent creative contributions by Fogel and Clark have added additional dimensions to these economic enquiries. Fogel, as a Nobel Prize winner in Economic Science, has deployed statistical analysis of demographic and health trends to illustrate the dramatic improvements in wellbeing since the later nineteenth century (2004). His earlier work, *The Fourth Great Awakening and the Future of Egalitarianism* (2000) interacted technophysio evolution (the interaction of technological and economic change with physiology), political realignments and religious Great Awakenings in the USA in the development of more egalitarian societies (a key feature of greater wellbeing). Clark's more recent pioneering work, again heavily statistically oriented, suggests the movement into a post-Malthusian Trap economy and society. One of its key features is manifested in the emergence of the happiness hypothesis (Clark 2007: 374–377). Clark's thesis, particularly his interpretation of culture as a cause of the Industrial Revolution in Britain, has become the focus of much critical attention, with an edition of the *European Review of Economic History* (2008) dedicated to its rigorous scrutiny.

Developments in psychology reinforce the interdisciplinary achievements and potential of the work on wellbeing, particularly through the interaction between psychology and economics. For example, the work of the 2002 Nobel Prize winner in Economic Science, the psychologist Kahneman, indicates a large body of evidence that 'the interpersonal comparisons of feelings are possible, and economists are recognising the importance of studying human behaviour' (Diener *et al.* 2009: 16). His aptly titled contribution 'Objective Happiness' (1999) to *Wellbeing: The Foundations of Hedonic Psychology* (Kahneman *et al.* 1999) illustrated how the discipline of psychology has developed self-reporting subjective wellbeing to stand alongside objective measures as equally valid research tools in the social sciences. The work of Diener particularly reinforces these findings (Diener and Biswas-Diener 2008; Diener *et al*. 2009) in terms of a rigorous critical development of the definitions and measurement of subjective wellbeing/happiness. He has a clear recognition of the role of religion especially in the construction of such understandings. This conclusion is particularly highlighted by Haidt's work, *The Happiness Hypothesis: Putting Ancient Wisdom and Philosophy to the Test of Modern Science* (2006). The work of psychologists has also developed wellbeing research into engagement with public policy (Diener *et al.* 2009) and a critique of economic structures. The latter features particularly prominently in James's research, published as *Affluenza* (2007) and *The Selfish Capitalist* (2008), where he links increasing emotional distress with the emergence of more materialist selfish societies. The focus on the wellbeing of young children as a foundation of public policy, a particular feature of his work, is confirmed by other research, including Layard and Dunn's *A Good Childhood* (2009) and particularly the epidemiologist Wilkinson's (2005; Wilkinson and Pickett 2009).

The discipline of sociology has developed research into social capital which also illustrates the potential of interdisciplinary work for enriching other disciplines, including economics and psychology. As defined by Putnam, it involves

'Features of social life – networks, norms and trust – that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives.… Social capital, in short, refers to social connections and the attendant norms and trust' (Halpern 2005: 2). Putnam, and others, present strong evidence that increased social capital of communities benefits personal and social wellbeing, with a reduction being linked to diminished wellbeing. A major decline in social capital from 1960 to 2000, in terms of the severe erosion in volunteering and trust and the major increase in crime, family breakdowns and mental illness, warranted, for Fukuyama, its description as the Great Disruption (Fukuyama 2000). This material feeds directly into policy making in terms of addressing such social deficits by increasing social capital through improving volunteering and trust, with clear benefits for personal and social wellbeing (Putnam 2000, 2004; Halpern 2005).

This relationship between wellbeing research (including social capital) and public policy is of increasing importance, and is recognized in all the related disciplines. For example, in economics, Easterlin declares that 'Appropriate public policies can increase the average level of subjective well-being' (Easterlin 2003). So communities and individuals, once a modest level of economic wellbeing is achieved, need to focus more on relationships and public services or other non-economic, or more immaterial goods to improve the quality of life. In wellbeing surveys therefore, Scandinavian societies score significantly higher than the UK and the USA. Some economists involved in wellbeing studies also advocate a progressive consumption tax with household savings deductible from taxable income, to reward savings and discourage wasteful competitive consumption over status goods, while discouraging long hours of work to acquire unneeded goods (Frank 1999). Kasser (2002) and Offer (2006) suggest limiting advertising, while Layard (2005) argues for, and indeed influenced the UK government to pursue, welfare-to-work programmes, better health services, and ethics teaching in education. Psychologists have focused in particular on early childhood support (James 2007; Wilkinson and Pickett 2009), enhancing human rights, support (not disruption) of family and community networks, and improving employment rates and job security (Diener and Seligman 2004). Diener's latest book, *Wellbeing for Public Policy* (Diener *et al.* 2009), reinforces this commitment to link wellbeing and public policy. James (2007, 2008), with Wilkinson (2005; Wilkinson *et al.* 2009), and Fogel (2000) in economic history, argue strongly for reducing inequalities and promoting more egalitarian societies and relationships. This is firmly linked to improving wellbeing and reducing ill-being. In sociology, the proponents of social capital similarly argue for strong social wellbeing, including its clear benefits for personal wellbeing, through policies which focus on improving volunteering and trust, civic participation, and more egalitarian relationships. These objectives resonate strongly with Layard's Big Seven for increased happiness, namely family, friends, work, income, health, participation and philosophy of life. The significance of this relationship between wellbeing studies in key disciplines and public policy reinforces one focus of this book, that on practice as an integral part of wellbeing studies, including the involvement of religion in them. Forrester, Graham and Atherton, for example,

have developed a new focus on practical and public theology as part of its recent re-engagement with the public sphere (Atherton 2000; Forrester 2000; Graham 2004). The government has encouraged this involvement of faith-based organizations in promoting greater social cohesion, an important feature in wellbeing research.

The emerging socio-political context is also conducive to this renewed interest in happiness wellbeing studies. For example, developments in economic history, particularly the works of Clark and Fogel, highlight the growing wealth of a post-Malthusian era, and its association with more egalitarian trends in society (Clark 2007; Fogel 2000). This movement into more immaterial or post-materialist needs and possibilities (Inglehart 1997) includes cultural, religious and spiritual aspects. Promoting personal and communal agendas is likely to become more positively inclined to the pursuit of greater wellbeing. This trend is confirmed by the rise of a new middle class in the last 15 years in emerging economies. For *The Economist* (2009: 17), they now constitute over half of the world's population, creating not simply new markets, but also cultures that are more responsive to wellbeing agendas. A recent poll suggested that 'such people are happier, more optimistic and more supportive of democracy than are the poor'. They are 'more likely to invest in education and other sources of human capital' – all features of the happiness hypothesis. Finally, all these trends are reflected in the growing awareness that traditional economic measurements of national wellbeing are increasingly insufficient. Even in 1968, Robert Kennedy was arguing that 'the Gross National Product economic measurement does not allow for the health of our children, the quality of their education … or the strength of our marriages' (New Economics Foundation 2009: 2). It is not surprising, therefore, that governments, for example, France's Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress, and international organizations like the OECD are moving to develop broader definitions and measurements of human fulfilment (Stiglitz 2009). The National Accounts of Wellbeing, with an emphasis on personal and social wellbeing, have therefore been produced by the New Economics Foundation, and use the 2006 to 2007 Cambridge survey of 40,000 people in 22 European countries (EU and non-EU). Clearly, these possibilities do not remove the central significance of economic measurements, but they do complement them with equally necessary information for understanding and promoting greater human wellbeing. They are symptomatic of a changing context, reinforced by research in various disciplines, which suggests the growing importance of happiness–wellbeing studies and related public policies in academia, society and religion. That agenda is in turn feeding back into measurements of economic growth.

Religion in wellbeing studies

The renewed interest of religion in wellbeing studies is multidimensional, reflecting its historic interests, the current resurgence of religion globally, its association with broader ethical concerns, and the limited, though growing

recognition of religion's role, nature and possibilities in wellbeing research in secular disciplines and literatures. It is the combination of these factors, with the clear glimpses of religion's contributions to wellbeing in contextual trends, which confirms the significance of religion as a legitimate and necessary partner in the multidisciplinary endeavours of wellbeing research.

Identifying religious concerns for wellbeing as a renewed project is but to illustrate its historic interests in, and major contributions to, our understanding of wellbeing. The pursuit of happiness is deeply embedded in human history, certainly from the ancient Greeks' focus on *eudaimonia* or happiness as the good life, and the necessary virtues associated with its pursuit (McMahon 2006: 19–65). The early and medieval Christian tradition of Augustine and Aquinas located that Greek tradition in a deeply Christian framework, interpreting the pursuit of wellbeing as conforming to God's purposes, a *telos* which could only be fulfilled in the afterlife, as essentially 'an ultimate goal of self-fulfilment' (Kenny and Kenny 2006: 24). This long tradition was challenged and then complemented by the fourteenth-century Duns Scotus who rightly argued that the pursuit of happiness as development of the self must be accompanied by the pursuit of justice as divine law. That tension between 'independent and possibly competing ultimate goals' (Kenny and Kenny 2006: 25) was played out in the late eighteenth century in the differences between the deontology of Kant and the teleology of Bentham with the dominance of the latter in classical and early neoclassical economics, and now promoted by Layard. This raises important arguments over the philosophical and ethical adequacy of modern economics (Grenholm and Helgesson 2001: 21). This reference to historic Christian understandings is intrinsically significant, not least because it helps clarify confusions in the current definitions of happiness and wellbeing. For example, the distinction between Aristotle and Aquinas, and then Scotus, leads usefully into the current definitional work of the Kennys, philosopher father and economist son (Kenny and Kenny 2006), since they work with the wider concept of wellbeing as inclusive of subjective wellbeing, welfare and dignity. Yet this definition, valuable as it is, is restrictive by comparison with Diener's definition of subjective wellbeing, which includes: emotional wellbeing – how we feel; cognitive life satisfaction – how we judge we are doing in life; and psychological flourishing – to what extent we positively evaluate major domains or aspects of life, including health, work, relationships, leisure, religion or spirituality, and so on.(Diener and Biswas-Diener 2008: 4, 247–248). This more complex definition of subjective wellbeing or happiness certainly corresponds to Layard's Big Seven features of happiness, and equally certainly includes key elements of the Kennys' welfare and dignity concepts as well as their subjective wellbeing or contentment. The early work of Scotus, and to some extent that of the Kennys, also reminds us that the discipline of philosophy is an essential partner in the interdisciplinary work on wellbeing–happiness because, as Diener himself recognizes, the construction of subjective wellbeing, in terms of definition and measurement tools, has to be complemented by objective economic and social indicators of wellbeing, and because social as well as personal wellbeing has a strong ethical as well as

religious dimension. Wellbeing is therefore also associated with an ability to connect to values external to oneself.

The historic concern for wellbeing in Christianity and the other major faiths is now powerfully complemented by what is regarded in other literatures, for example, those of sociology, theology and political science, as the resurgence of religion in the later twentieth century. This resurgence is particularly illustrated by the rapid numerical growth of Islam but also Christianity, particularly in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Out of a global population of 6.5 billion, over one billion are Roman Catholics, and over 500 million and still growing, Pentecostals (Jenkins 2002: 2–6). These trends have also affected, but to a lesser extent, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism, including their greater political profile. In addition, this resurgence has taken a variety of forms, from Berger's 'furious religion' (Berger 1999: 2) including religious fundamentalisms, to a renewed interest, in Britain, the USA, Canada and Australia, in the reality and potential of faith-based contributions, including attention by governments. With regard to the latter, in 2001, UK Prime Minister Blair identified faith groups as:

> playing a fundamental role in supporting and propagating values which bind us together as a nation … looking outwards to the needs of others, beyond your own immediate members, is a prime expression of … beliefs and values … [leading to] some of the most effective voluntary and community organisations in the country.
>
> (Baker 2007a: 63)

All these developments could be seen as confirming the 'exceptionalist' argument in sociological, historical and anthropological literatures, that contemporary secularization, as the relegation of religious belief to the periphery of personal consciousness and society, is an exception to all recorded history and, equally important, to contemporary experience (Davie 2002: 109; Huntington 1998: 70; Macfarlane 2000: 256–257).

The relevance of religion in and for wellbeing studies is both confirmed and advanced by the recognition of the nature and role of ethics in wellbeing research. This relationship between ethics and religion acknowledges their strong affinity without denying their clear distinction. The major world faiths all include strong commitments to ethical standards and ways of living, personally, socially and politically. Yet the importance and integrity of ethics, philosophically and practically, is a significant historic and contemporary reality, requiring distinctive treatment without denying the interconnections between ethics and religion. For example, there is a strong tradition of ethical socialism in Britain, particularly prevalent in the nineteenth century, and certainly evolving into the twentieth century, as traced by Dennis and Halsey (1988). This is connected to, but should be treated as a distinctive strand from, English Christian socialism (Norman 1987). Steedman's research, reflected in his contribution to this volume (Chapter 1), also identifies the presence of an equivalent ethical strand, including in the interpretation of wellbeing, in the development of neoclassical economics.

Both Halsey and Steedman, along with Keynes (1933), recognize the importance of Alfred Marshall in this tradition. The examination of contemporary and emerging trends, including the movement to post-materialist contexts, for example, in the work of Inglehart (Inglehart 1997), also includes the central importance of values in personal and social wellbeing. The wellbeing literatures are also beginning to acknowledge the importance of this ethical dimension for the development of human wellbeing (Griffin 1986; Sumner 1996). For example, the Kennys' contribution includes a chapter, 'Happiness and Morality' (Kenny and Kenny 2006: 179–188), which carefully dissects this dimension, recognizing its varied and contested character historically and contemporarily. They usefully note three elements as essential for a moral system: 'a moral community, a set of moral values, and a moral code' (Kenny and Kenny 2006: 179). These confirm the interaction between personal and public morality, and its focus on 'non-material values, such as justice, freedom and love', the first being the subject of Sen's latest book, *The Idea of Justice* (2009). Such valuable philosophical clarifications resonate with the contribution of Layard on happiness, with its focus on the common good, a philosophy of life and the promotion, in public policy consequences, of the teaching of ethics in the educational syllabus (Layard 2005: 95, 199–201).

The emerging focus, in the study of religion in the academy, confirms its relevance in the analysis and promotion of wellbeing, including as the sociology of religion (the International Society for the Sociology of Religion) and the psychology of religion (the International Association for the Psychology of Religion). In the USA, these have strong connections with parent bodies, including the American Psychological Association (Francis 2007: 39). Such relevant research in the academy is confirmed by the growing evidence of the strong association between religious participation and a 'host of positive outcomes including lower crime rates and less delinquency', but also with family life, volunteering, health including mental wellbeing, and civic participation (Diener *et al.* 2009: 28). There is much overlap here with social capital literatures (Putnam 2000: Halpern 2005).

These constructive connections between religion and wellbeing are beginning to be clearly acknowledged in psychology, economics and sociology.

In psychology, the Dieners' basic introduction to happiness studies includes a useful chapter, 'Religion, spirituality and happiness', which acknowledges the historic and contemporary importance of religion for personal and communal wellbeing. It also recognizes the deep relationship between religion and spirituality, but also the latter's distinctive character, including as secular spirituality (Baker and Miles-Watson 2008). These interpretations are developed more comprehensively by the psychologist Haidt (2006).

In economics, the work of Layard particularly identifies and elaborates the nature and role of religion and spirituality in happiness, including in his foundational Big Seven as 'personal values (philosophy of life)' (Layard 2005: 71). Both religion and spirituality, and their connections and distinctions, are acknowledged particularly in the promotion of wellbeing, including the use of

classic tools from the religious tradition of spiritual development or 'mystical tradition' (Layard 2005: 192), in Buddhism and the Dalai Lama, the Roman Catholic tradition exemplified by St Ignatius Loyola's 'spiritual exercises', and Protestantism and the Quaker tradition. Layard also promotes its practical deployment as 'education of the spirit' through curriculum development (Layard 2005: 199). They are also located by Layard in a related self-help group, Alcoholics Anonymous, in psychological traditions, as positive psychology, and the development of philosophies of life, including as communally expressed (his chapter 7, 'Can we pursue a common good?'). In terms of his understanding of the nature of religion, he particularly notes its foundational recognition of the importance of that which lies beyond ourselves, or, in the language of religious tradition, the experience of the transcendent, again, also located in secular traditions and experiences, including Maslow's *Religions, Values and Peak Experiences* (1964: 1976). This acknowledgement of religion's core character is particularly evident in Layard's emphasis on what some 'call this source of comfort "divine" and … one of the most robust findings of happiness research: that people who believe in God are happier' (Layard 2005: 72).

In sociology, the detailed work of Putnam, as already noted, identifies the importance of religion as a very significant contribution to the development of strong social capital. This includes the robust performance of religious in comparison with non-religious contributions to the formation and nurturing of social capital, for example, as measured by their respective contributions to volunteering, charitable giving, altruism, trust and political participation. For Putnam, churchgoers were 'substantially more likely to be involved in secular organisations, to vote and participate politically in other ways and to have deeper informed social connections' (Putnam 2000: 66). This judgement also needs to acknowledge that certain forms of religion, including more hierarchical, introverted and dogmatic forms, are likely to contribute less to wellbeing or, indeed, to incorporate negative characteristics and outputs (Halpern 2005: 178–179; Farnell *et al.* 2003: 33–34).

Religion's nature, role and its measurement in relation to happiness–wellbeing

Current enquiries into religious capital are likely to be very productive for the field of religion and happiness research. For example, the Leverhulme Trust has funded a three-year research programme by the William Temple Foundation (WTF), 'Faith and traditional capitals: defining the scope of religious capital' (2007–2010). Religious capital, though a contested concept, can also be developed as part of various capital notions. It is normally regarded as a subset of social capital, but could also be located in the religious field, as religious capital (Faithful Cities 2006; Atherton 2008). Earlier WTF research into a variety of churches in deprived areas of Manchester concluded that religious capital usefully describes the output of faith communities as a contribution to personal, social and community wellbeing (Baker and Skinner 2006). As such, it

can be described, quantified and costed, as we shall see below. The WTF research also concludes that religious capital is connected to spiritual capital, as the motivating or energizing force of such outputs, in terms of beliefs, public and private worship, the living of religious narratives, norms, practices and networks, including spirituality. The Leverhulme research programme extends this material to include churches, mosques, Hindu temples, Buddhist groups and postmodern spirituality groups. Government is traditionally interested in the functional character of religion, as religious capital or practical outputs. What the WTF research is also recognizing is the equally significant contribution to practical outputs of the energizing or motivating forces, as spiritual capital, and the value of developing adequate measurement systems for this, in conversation with other related disciplines, including psychology and economics.

With regard to the latter, these developments or findings in religious research can be usefully interacted with what some secular literatures regard as the nature and role of religion in promoting greater human wellbeing. For example, what begins to emerge from these literatures can suggest a profile of the religious sources of wellbeing which has seven features, using the research of the British economist Layard (L), the American psychologist Diener (D) and the British practical theologian Swinton (S) (2001).

Reflecting on this profile of the religious sources of wellbeing (see Table 1), it becomes possible to discern connections with other profiles. For example, it links robustly to the New Economics Foundation's National Accounts of Wellbeing, as the table indicates, and its use of personal and social wellbeing categories. This, in turn, connects to key features of the Christian tradition as tested in Sweden and Britain (the central part of the table), and to other chapters in this book. These convergences, both secular and religious, suggest an emerging consensus on the shape of wellbeing. This is of particular importance for building partnerships to promote greater wellbeing in the twenty-first century. Yet it also reveals clearly where much of the particular religious added value lies; for example, note the clear gaps in the National Accounts of Wellbeing, when compared to the secular profile of religion and the Christian traditions' accounts – namely, connections to a reality greater than the self, as the transcendent, as God, leading to the importance of ritual, including as worship and meditation, and of the religious upbringing of the young. These three features are the particularly powerful parts of the energizing force, as spiritual capital, of religion's distinctive added value. In terms of their implications for public policy, both the shared and distinctive features can be connected to two main contemporary practical expressions of Christianity, including links with public policy: on the one hand, as working in partnership with others, including government, business, civil society and other faiths, as expressing the shared values noted in Table 1 (it is here that the major potential of religious contributions to public policy is located; see also Jones (Chapter 14, this volume), Gilbert (Chapter 12) and Atherton (Chapter 6); on the other hand, religious contributions can be critical of, and sometimes embody alternatives to, mainstream society including its dominant academic traditions (reflecting, in particular, distinctively different

Table 1 Mapping religion and the sources of wellbeing in the twenty-first century

Supportive secular sources of religion	*Christian tradition*	*National accounts of wellbeing*
1. Comforting beliefs (D), as generating *positive* emotions including forgiveness, *hope*, *transformation*. (S)	Forgiveness, reconciliation, awareness of sin	Emotional wellbeing – as *positive* feelings. Satisfying life (*positive* evaluation of life). Feeling optimistic about your *future* (resilience and self-esteem).
2. Connecting to reality greater than self (D): 'people who believe in God are happier' (L)	Engagement with God, and the Other	
3. Experiences of ritual (D), including meditation, secular and religious (L)	Eucharist, communion, hymns, liturgy	
4. Regulation of lifestyle and behaviour (restricting alcohol and drug intake) (S); acquisition of *life skills* (S), including *participation in society* (L) and *coping skills for illness, stress, loss* (S) and for better health, especially mental health (L)	Lif style – choice, courage to be vulnerable, vulnerability – trust, value of love for others	Resilience and self-esteem (being able to deal with life's difficulties). Competence (feeling accomplishment from what you do, and being able to use your abilities) (as positive functioning)
5. *Social support and networking*. (D, L, S)	Family relations, solidarity with vulnerable, trust, love – giver and receiver, trust	Social wellbeing (supportive relationships – families, friends), trust and belonging
6. Growing up religiously (D, L)	The nurturing of children, students and the study and teaching of ethics	
7. *All sustained* by, and in turn generating a *philosophy of life*, including a *common good*. (L)	Philosophy of life and meaning, linking involvement with contexts	Positive functioning – as meaning and purpose – feeling that your own life is valuable, worthwhile and valued by others
D – Diener, L – Layard, S – Swinton		*Personal wellbeing*: Emotional wellbeing (positive feelings, absences of negative feelings); satisfying life; vitality; resilience and self-esteem (self-esteem, optimism, resilience); positive functioning (autonomy, competence, engagement, meaning and purpose). *Social wellbeing* Supportive relationships Trust and belonging

religious values noted above, and in Table 1): for example, as fair trade (Northcott, Chapter 7).

Ways of identifying and then measuring such religious contributions to wellbeing can be developed from these profiles of the religious contributions to society, particularly in terms of religion's added value. As observed above, some secular research has already noted and estimated this religious added value. For example, Putnam's research in the USA judged that faith communities, compared to their secular equivalents, are 'arguably the single most important depository of social capital in America' (Putnam 2000: 66). Nearly 50 per cent of all associational memberships are church related, and half of all volunteering occurs in a religious setting. This research was confirmed by the North West Development Agency's two reports in 2003/2005, identifying and then costing the actual contributions of faith groups to society. It concluded that they contribute between £90.7 and 94.9 million-worth of voluntary action each year to the region, not including their major contributions to the education of children, students and adults. Importantly, much of this work is self-funded: 73 per cent of respondents said they received no government funding (*Faith in England's Northwest* 2005: 3).

These findings are extended by the work, for example, of the Center for Spirituality, Theology and Health at Duke University in the USA, which reports:

> a series of clinical studies which suggest amongst other things: improved rates of recovery for cancer patients who report involvement in faith communities; enhanced longevity amongst those who attend synagogues; slower rates of cognitive decline in those experiencing the onset of dementia and [a] marginal impact on aspects of coping strategies in relation to recovery from serious illness for religious people.
>
> (Center for Spirituality, Theology and Health 2008; Graham 2009: 11–12)

It is the extension of the measuring of impacts beyond religious capital as the practical outcomes of religion, into spiritual capital as the energizing force of religious outcomes, which is also likely to be important for identifying ways of extending the contributions of religion to wellbeing in the area of public policy. Here the work of Leslie Francis (Chapter 8, this volume) is significant. His deployment of the secular Oxford Happiness Inventory, from the field of positive psychology, alongside his own scale of attitudes to religion, is particularly productive. The latter uses, in Christianity's case, five key components of Christian faith: God, Jesus, Bible, prayer and church. His scale is usefully valid across age groups, Christian denominations and languages. It has also been tested, appropriately adapted, in Judaism, Islam and Hinduism. His work suggests positive associations between attitudes to religion and happiness scales, after taking into account gender and personality differences. In addition, the WTF is seeking to develop further ways of measuring such spiritual capital using the seven features of secular understandings of the religious contribution to happiness (see Table 1), confirmed and extended by their correspondences to the major insights

and experiences of Christian tradition. This has been provisionally called a spiritual capital added value index (SCAVI). As such, it would sit alongside the work in psychology, economics and sociology, as a substantial profiling of the religious contribution to the promotion of greater wellbeing. This would therefore be located as an important part of these wider understandings, including as contributions to public policy.

Interpreting the range of religious or theological contributions to wellbeing–happiness

As an academic discipline, with historical and contemporary significance in the academy, Christian theology plays an important role in the development of religious contributions to wellbeing studies. The nature and role of other religions in relation to wellbeing can similarly be charted.

The nature and role of religious beliefs and experiences, whether shared with other disciplines and practices or identified as distinctively and critically different (or, indeed, elaborated as both shared and different), have featured prominently in this introduction to happiness and religion studies. As in any social science or discipline, Christianity represents a range of theological views, languages and practices, varying from hard to soft theologies of God's revelation to the human. These are often related to a spectrum of religious traditions within and between denominations. Added to this is a range of aspects of this study of 'the human experience of God, or systematized reflection on the human experience of God' (Francis 2007: 36), varying from biblical studies of sacred writings, church history and systematic theology to Christian ethics and practical or pastoral theology. Most of these ranges of theological experiences, opinions, traditions and practices are represented in this collection.

Since this project on happiness and religion is so strongly linked to other disciplines owing to the nature of the shared subject of study – human flourishing – and because of its connections to the work of other disciplines, it is appropriate to develop this understanding of the complex nature of the religious contribution, both in itself and in relation to the following chapters, in terms of the different ways in which theology engages with other disciplines. For Leslie Francis, in his 'Empirical theology: defining the task and selecting the tools' (2007), this can best be represented as a spectrum moving from theology as essentially intradisciplinary to theology as interdisciplinary. It is a mode of interpretation which applies as much to the social sciences as to theology.

First, theology as intradisciplinary emphasizes the proper independence of theology from the social sciences. It therefore claims the relative independence of other social sciences, and generates greater focus on more robust traditional theological concepts as against deploying more modern concepts. It can therefore generate strong critiques of the findings and assumptions of secular disciplines, including in the political economy and happiness literatures. It can also possess a more idealistic view of faith groups in terms of their beliefs and practices, in contrast to its more critical views of secular beliefs and practices. For

example, the chapters criticizing capitalism, global trade and institutions resonate with this perspective. This critical stance relating to happiness literatures emphasizes, for example, the Christian tradition of abstinence and ambivalence over materialism, and locates ultimate happiness in the afterlife. Here, note the emphasis, in Rodwell and Miles-Watson, from the disciplines of environmental science and anthropology respectively, on the importance of locating wellbeing in an exploration of past and future, as well as present in terms of indigenous understandings of community life, the communion of saints, and constructive engagement with the non-personal.

The second way of working theologically relates to the interdisciplinary perspective, as theology's constructive or positive engagement with the social sciences essentially as a process of interaction or two-way traffic. The theologian in such a perspective can advance debate in social sciences in the same way that the social scientist would advance debate in theology, to their mutual benefit. The chapters by Atherton, Berry, Brown, Francis, Gilbert, Graham, Grenholm, Heslam, Jones, Reader, Riordan, Sedgwick, Steedman and Thatcher contain illustrations of this perspective.

There is also an emerging recognition of the value of interacting these two ends of what is essentially a spectrum of interpreting theological studies and the nature of their relationships with other studies. For example, both ends of this spectrum acknowledge the growing importance of faith-based experiences and contributions to personal and social wellbeing, as a distinctive or authentic field of interest (Bourdieu 1992: 1–44). This includes a recognition of its added value, including its two operational forms as partnerships and as distinctively different, as noted above. Particular considerations of this religious intradisciplinary added value are included in Northcott (Chapter 7) on fair trade, representing the latter way of operationalizing religious engagement with society, while the former, more partnership-interdisciplinary oriented, will be found in the works of Thatcher (Chapter 11) on family, children and marriage; Baker (Chapter 13) on volunteering, membership of faith groups and happiness; Lorimer (Chapter 15 on circles of support for the rehabilitation of paedophiles; and Gilbert (Chapter 12 on mental health and spirituality.

In addition, two contributions to knowledge are raised by this theological engagement with happiness, which are also of wider significance. First is the recognition of the growing importance in the academy and public policy of the nature and role of religion in the public square. This has become even more relevant with the emergence of a post-secular or post-materialist age, which requires continuing engagement with the forces of secularization, and yet also recognition of the reappearance of religion's significance. This involves acknowledging the historic identity, and the past and contemporary engagements of religion with society. In terms of the religious capital or practical contributions of religion to society, this also involves a proper recognition of the actual and potential role of religion in its contributions to personal and social wellbeing, without in any way discounting its manifest dangers. The task is to promote dialogue between the secular and religion in the academy and public policy. It certainly is not to

assume that the secular is right or wrong, but to pursue an open-ended commitment to improving wellbeing, including the recognition of the nature and value of religion. It is encouraging that these wider contributions to wellbeing studies are both confirming the importance of such a religious offering to the theory and practice (including public policy) of wellbeing, and also helping to clarify the nature and role of religion in such a public square. Both Riordan's contribution (Chapter 16), particularly its reference to the common good (also found in Layard), and Graham's contribution (Chapter 18) noting the value of the liminal, between public street and religious sanctuary, are also creative contributions to this development of the constructive participation of religion in the public arena for the greater wellbeing of all.

The second innovative contribution is to push the findings in wellbeing literatures beyond the traditional though generally accepted anthropocentric interpretation of personal and social wellbeing to include, and engage with, the non-personal (or beyond the human). This is elaborated in terms of a more adequate environmental understanding, so central to the future of human wellbeing, and includes the inanimate as well as the animate world (Rodwell, Chapter 17). This is complemented by Miles-Watson's anthropological study (Chapter 9, therefore also adding another discipline to the wellbeing studies), relating to understandings of indigenous peoples, and the wider religious traditions and experiences of encompassing the non-human as an intimate part of human experiences and wellbeing. Both go significantly beyond the traditional confines of sustainability in wellbeing understandings, for example, as found in the work of Nobel Economic Laureate Stiglitz's valuable reflections on moral growth as 'growth that is sustainable, that increases living standards not just today but for future generations' (Stiglitz 2005).

Outline of the book

The book includes the findings of a research network funded through the innovative and highly creative 'religion and society' programme, reflecting the collaboration of two research councils, the AHRC and ESRC. The network represents the work of 18 academics and a reflective practitioner, Charlotte Lorimer. Most come from the UK, but two are from the wider EU, from Sweden and Estonia. All the contributions were developed and refined in two residential consultations but each essay remains the sole responsibility of its author. The division of the 19 essays into three parts reflects the multidisciplinary nature of wellbeing research, encompassing political economy (Part I), and other social sciences (Part II), and more foundational, philosophical reflections (Part III). All come from religious traditions. They reflect the differences in theological traditions and experiences, including location on the continuum from intradisciplinary to interdisciplinary, as noted above.

The essays can also be usefully located in relation to the emerging debate in economics, for example, through the work of Layard. In terms of his Big Seven constituents of happiness: family and marriage occupy the essays by Thatcher

and Brown, but particularly the former. Income is referred to in Atherton's essay, and friendship in both Miles-Watson's and Gilbert's. Work engages the attention of both Sedgwick and Brown, and health, particularly mental health, of Gilbert's essay. Participation is explored by Baker, and philosophy of life particularly by Riordan and Graham.

Four other related features in wellbeing research, most prominently part of Layard and other economists' work in this field, are also addressed. The first explores, from a faith-based perspective, the negative alternatives to wellbeing or good social capital (reflecting the other end of the spectrum, as ill-being, unhappiness, life dissatisfaction and bad social capital). These include the impact of crime on individuals, families and communities (perpetrators and victims), addressed by Christopher Jones, and as a case study of rehabilitation, in the related essay by Charlotte Lorimer. Adrian Thatcher's essay explains the added value of marriage, particularly with regard to the development of children (a key aspect of wellbeing) recognizing the less effective, and in some cases damaging, other forms of relationship. This therefore relates to recognizing the problem of the high incidence of the breakdown of relationships in the post-1960 period in the West. John Atherton's essay on the pursuit of more egalitarian societies, not least given the increasingly recognized damaging consequences of inegalitarian societies for wellbeing, again explores resonances and differences in faith-based contributions to such ways of improving wellbeing. Finally, Tony Berry's essay on institutional functioning and malfunctioning highlights the importance of another capital, institutional capital, for wellbeing, not least with reference to the deficiencies of the Church of England as an institution.

Second, the place of ethics in relation to economic theory is examined in some detail by Ian Steedman, with reference to the neoclassical tradition in political economy. Carl Henric-Grenholm, from Uppsala University, explores economic theory from the particular perspective of theological ethics, in conversation with philosophy (Nussbaum) and economics (Sen).

Third, the growing recognition of, and advances in, alternatives to mainstream economic practice and theory is paralleled, in certain important respects, in Chapter 7 by Northcott on fair trade, representing the contribution of faith-based traditions exploring different ways of constructing economic theory and practice.

Finally, recognition of the position and importance of developing adequate measurement systems in wellbeing studies is paralleled and complemented by the research by Leslie Francis with regard to its related potential for measuring the distinctive religious contribution to happiness.

Conclusion: future directions

The emerging recognition of the valued understandings of the nature and role of religion in wellbeing studies crosses key disciplines, including economics, psychology and sociology. There is also an emerging acknowledgement of the value to be gained from a creative interaction between them which is of mutual benefit

for the disciplines involved, and, more importantly, for the pursuit of greater wellbeing. Building on these initial findings, the work of 19 contributors in and to this research network has both confirmed and developed these understandings. This is particularly, understandably, with reference to the nature and role of the discipline of religious studies, located in the historic but also contemporary significance of religion in human development. The added value character of that religious contribution is especially relevant to the multidisciplinary endeavour. In the light of this general conclusion, the research project suggests three main findings which, in themselves, also contain implications for future research, including within the multidisciplinary engagement with wellbeing. Although each is of value in itself, they move logically from the more general to the particular, from the value of happiness–wellbeing studies, to that of the religious contribution, and to that of developing more adequate measurements of the latter.

First, the research into religion and happiness was clearly, rightfully and creatively, located in the wider wellbeing studies, their definitions, roles and measurements. The contribution of each discipline, particularly economics, psychology and sociology, was both of significance and particularly enriched by interdisciplinary activity. This research project confirmed this and has also demonstrated the value of incorporating the religious contribution, as theory and practice, into these studies. Compared with the other involved disciplines, this religious contribution needs far more work done on it, but we argue that the possibilities and feasibility of this have begun to be seriously demonstrated. A similar judgement relates to the value of interdisciplinary work on such a shared and vitally significant research subject as human wellbeing. All disciplines, while respecting, rightfully, the importance of pursuing their relative autonomy, will clearly benefit from these interactive processes. The value of behavioural studies in psychology, and increasingly in economics, illustrates this. Our research also suggests the high relevance to this multidisciplinary project of the disciplines of philosophy, anthropology and environmental science.

Second, the research has begun to elaborate further the hints in the wider literatures of the nature and role of religion in wellbeing. This has been the project's particular focus, enriched and provoked by location in these wider frameworks, as the reflection on theology as intra- and interdisciplinary revealed. Yet, equally, this spectrum also confirmed the importance of theology itself, as a discipline in the academy, for example, in wellbeing research. It is the development of its self-understanding, including, though not exclusively, in critical conversation with other disciplines, that will reinforce and elaborate this contribution in itself and to wider studies. Engaging such a research area as wellbeing also has implications, as we have begun to see, for the discipline of theology, including in its various subject disciplines, from the study of sacred literatures, church history and dogmatics, but particularly for Christian ethics and public or practical theology. The recognition of the importance of engaging the issue of the proper role of religion in the public square, in the academy, as well as public policy, will also necessarily benefit from these developments, including, for

example, constructing more adequate measurements of faith-based contributions to personal and social wellbeing. The extension of the study of human into non-human wellbeing will also become of increasing importance given the emerging environmental crisis.

Finally, the development of more adequate measurement systems emerges as of particular though not exclusive importance, from the above general recognition of wellbeing studies, and then for the particular contribution of religion to them. Serious progress has already been made in other disciplines in valuing and measuring the practical contributions of religion to personal, social and national wellbeing. What is absent is an equally strong endeavour to clarify the nature, role and measurement of the motivating or energizing force behind that religious contribution. This research project has indicated how this is beginning to be refined and achieved, and how it can be developed further. Success in this task will complement the wider endeavours within the discipline itself and equally importantly, develop its contribution to wider interdisciplinary studies. Driving all this, is the shared commitment to promoting greater human wellbeing, now extended into non-human wellbeing, and even further, as Layard has recognized, in his reflections on personal values and philosophy of life. The latter has perhaps been more carefully elaborated by Beatrice Webb over 100 years ago, when she argued that, in terms of the pursuit of ends other than means, it was 'best to live "as if" the soul of man were in communion with a superhuman force which makes for righteousness' (Tawney 1953: 128). This represents, for many, the summation of the religious contribution to wellbeing. Yet some of its power arises from a shared understanding of wellbeing between morality and religion, integral to religion's nature and role. It is to the comprehensive and plural character of the religious contribution that this research has pointed, clarified and acknowledged as a value in itself, but also of wider significance.

Part I

Political economy

1 Economic theory and happiness

Ian Steedman

The general diffusion of any interesting idea is liable to generate a penumbra of popular misunderstandings and false assumptions, no matter how careful are those who promulgate that idea. The claim that increases in national income per head, beyond a certain minimum level, will give rise to no increase in human happiness is no less subject to this risk than any other challenging claim. In particular, it may come to be associated in popular thought with the notion that economists are bound to be surprised by such a claim, or even to regard it as a direct refutation of their most fundamental ideas. Any such notion is, of course, nonsense and ought to be exposed as such, both because truth is better than falsehood and because intelligent policy discussion about wellbeing can only be hindered by misperceptions of what economic theory does and does not have to say on this issue.

The modest purpose of this chapter is thus, first, to recall what has been said about wellbeing and income by a number of major economists. Specifically, we shall consider some of the writings of Marshall, of Wicksteed, of Pigou, of Hicks and of de Van Graaff. Second, we shall turn to a brief consideration of some recent contributions to the literature on 'the economics of happiness'.

Alfred Marshall (1842–1924)

Since Marshall's *Principles of Economics*, which went through eight editions from 1890 to 1920, is unquestionably one of the founding works of modern mainstream economics, we begin by considering what Marshall had to say there about economics and wellbeing; for our purposes it will suffice to restrict our attention to the eighth edition (1920), without mentioning differences among the various editions.

Marshall's *Principles*, naturally enough, is not a treatise on the ethics of the good life but that does not inhibit Marshall from giving many indications of what he took to be components of such a life and of how he took them to be related to economic matters. On the very first page of the text we read that the *Principles* is:

> on the one side a study of wealth; and on the other, and more important side, a part of the study of man. For man's character has been moulded by his

> every-day work, and the material resources which he thereby procures, more than by any other influence unless it be that of his religious ideals; and the two great forming agencies of the world's history have been the religious and the economic.
>
> (1920: 1)

Character is not only shaped, Marshall claims, by the nature of one's work: 'very often the influence exerted on a person's character by the amount of his income is hardly less, if it is less, than that exerted by the way in which it is earned' (2). Nevertheless, it 'is true that in religion, in the family affections and in friendship, even the poor may find scope for many of those faculties which are the source of the highest happiness', even if the conditions of 'extreme poverty … tend to deaden the higher faculties' (2). We learn at once, then, that for Marshall 'character' is of central importance (being related to both occupation and income) and that 'the highest happiness' relates to religion, family affections and friendship. It is thus unlikely that the remaining 850 pages of the *Principles* will teach any simple doctrine that happiness increases if and only if real income per head increases.

Leaving the question of character aside for the moment, we may dwell briefly on some of Marshall's further hints as to the constituents of happiness. In the course of denying that economists are necessarily 'adherents of the philosophical system of Hedonism or of Utilitarianism' (17, n.1), Marshall hints (indirectly) that 'true happiness is not to be had without self-respect, and that self-respect is to be had only on the condition of endeavouring so to live as to promote the progress of the human race' (ibid.). Somewhat less grandly, he speaks of 'the pursuit of science, literature and art for their own sake' and of 'the desire for excellence for its own sake' (88–89; this in connection with 'wants and activities' – see below). Moreover, 'a person's happiness often depend[s] more on his own physical, mental and moral health than on his external conditions' (133–134). Marshall can thus refer to 'those habits of body, mind, and spirit in which *alone* there is true happiness' (136, emphasis added). The constituents of happiness are to be found in a person's dispositions, not in their possessions.

What motivates people to act as they do? Marshall does not imagine that they always and everywhere pursue their true happiness! Yet their motivations are taken to be complex, even when they engage in economic activity. Thus:

> What makes one course answer better than another, will not necessarily be a selfish gain, nor any material gain; and it will often have been argued that 'though this or that plan saved a little trouble or a little money, yet it was not fair to others,' and 'it made one look mean,' or 'it made one feel mean'.
>
> (21)

Considerations of trouble, money, fairness, reputation and self-respect can thus all function as motives. With respect to the earning of money, as a motive, it must be remembered that

> Money is a means towards ends, and if the ends are noble, the desire for the means is not ignoble. [Money] is sought as a means to all kinds of ends, high as well as low, spiritual as well as material.
>
> (22)

And if economics says much about earning money, 'this is so, not because money … is regarded as the main aim of human effort [but because] it is the one convenient means of measuring human motive on a large scale', *pace* Carlyle and Ruskin (ibid.). Earnings are, in any case, only one of various motives influencing a choice of occupation, others being the pleasure of the work itself, the delight in striving for achievement, social standing and class solidarity (23).

If the economist cannot always give full weight to the powerful motives of family affection, charity, duty and love of one's neighbour, this is 'not because they are not based on self-interest' but because their action is not law-like. Were they governed by discernible laws, economists could and would take fuller account of them (24). Economics is by no means restricted to the consideration of self-regarding motives, 'in fact the variety of motives [is] among the chief subjects with which we shall be occupied in this treatise', Marshall writes (25). It is thus no surprise that he will have no truck with the idea of 'economic man'. For Marshall, economists:

> deal with man as he is: not with an abstract or 'economic' man; but a man of flesh and blood. They deal with a man who is largely influenced by egoistic motives in his business life … but who is also neither above vanity and recklessness, nor below delight in doing his work well for its own sake, or in sacrificing himself for the good of his family, his neighbours, or his country; a man who is not below the love of a virtuous life for its own sake.
>
> (26–27)

Marshall's 'man as he is', we learn, 'desires not merely larger *quantities* of the things he has been accustomed to consume, but better qualities of those things; he desires a greater choice of things, and things that will satisfy new wants growing up within him'. He comes to 'desire change for the sake of change' (86) and this leads Marshall 'to remark with Senior that, "Strong as is the desire for variety, it is weak compared with the desire for distinction" ' (87). While Marshall *tends* to see such changing wants in a positive light (see below on 'Wants and activities'), he is far from blind to their downside. He notes 'the Buddhist doctrine that … real riches consist not in the abundance of goods but in the paucity of wants' (136) and remarks on his own account that 'the only direct effect of an increase in wants is to make people more miserable than before' (690). He observes too that

> after a time new riches often lose a great part of their charms. Partly this is the result of familiarity, which makes people cease to derive much pleasure

> from accustomed comforts and luxuries, though they suffer greater pain from their loss.
>
> (135)

(Even in a much earlier work of 1879, *Pure Theory of Foreign Trade and Domestic Value*, Marshall had stressed that custom and habit can introduce irreversibilities into consumption behaviour.) How, then, could Marshall have been shocked by the claim that time-series income growth need not be correlated with happiness?

If Marshall was well aware that life is far from being exhausted by 'economic' considerations, he did not, of course, belittle them. He saw them as being of great importance, in that they influence the things that do ultimately matter. The 'question [whether all can have a fair chance of a cultured life] cannot be fully answered by economic science. For the answer depends partly on the moral and political capabilities of human nature' (4); but economics is nevertheless of great relevance to any answer. Any reader who has been unduly influenced by uncritical versions of the 'economics and happiness' thesis may then be surprised to find that Marshall goes straight on to assert that 'the bearing of economics on the higher wellbeing of man has been overlooked' (ibid.); that is perhaps not a statement that Marshall would retain in a hypothetical 2010 edition of his *Principles!*

As Marshall draws closer to detailed, specific questions about the relation between measured economic magnitudes and wellbeing he seems to vacillate somewhat (the same is true of both Wicksteed and Pigou). On the one hand, he can write that 'A shilling is the measure of less pleasure, or satisfaction of any kind, to a rich man than to a poor one' (19) and, again, that 'a pound's worth of satisfaction to an ordinary poor man is a much greater thing than a pound's worth of satisfaction to an ordinary rich man' (130). And he can ask quite explicitly 'how far the exchange value of any element of wealth, whether in collective or individual use, represents accurately the addition which it makes to happiness and wellbeing' (85). Indeed he opens Book III, chapter VI with the words, 'We may now turn to consider how far the price which is actually paid for a thing represents the benefit that arises from its possession' (124). At the same time, however, he can suppose that 'this is not important in comparing two [large] groups composed of rich and poor in like proportions' (19, marginal summary and text) and that for large groups of people 'there is even some *primâ facie* probability that equal additions to their material resources will make about equal additions to the fullness of life, and the true progress of the human race' (20). This is no ill-considered chance remark on Marshall's part, for he writes much later in the text (131):

> On the whole however it happens that by far the greater number of the events with which economics deals, affect in about equal proportions all the different classes of society; so that if the money measures of the happiness caused by two events are equal, there is not in general any very great difference between the amounts of happiness in the two cases.

It will be clear here that Marshall is both recognizing the theoretical problem of principle and *hoping* that in practice it will not matter too much.

Even if two alternative ways of increasing income by the same amount will indeed change happiness by the same amount, questions remain as to the extent and permanence of that amount. We have already seen that Marshall was aware that familiarity can wear away an initial increase in happiness; he notes too that an increase in income can be misused, for example, through

> that unwholesome desire for wealth as a means of display which has been the chief bane of the well-to-do classes in every civilized country … it would be a gain if the moral sentiment of the community could induce people to avoid all sorts of display of individual wealth.
>
> (136–137)

And he later refers to 'a mere increase of artificial wants, among which perhaps the grosser wants may predominate' (690). For Marshall, it would seem, there are bad as well as good ways of deploying increased command over resources.

Such considerations bring us back to Marshall's concern with *character* and his related emphasis on activities or pursuits (as opposed to wants). These are rather delicate matters in that they are simultaneously of great importance to Marshall and yet difficult to pin down and to render at all precise. Only a brief outline can be attempted here and the interested reader is referred to Whitaker (1987, section II) and to Raffaelli *et al.* (2006: entries by Bateman, Coats and Raffaelli) for further discussion.

We noted above that the very first page of the *Principles* takes 'man's character' to be of central importance and for Marshall it is not something fixed; it evolves, and progress – real progress – is essentially concerned with the uplifting of character. Wants (sometimes thought to lie at the heart of economic theory) are, for Marshall, only of secondary, albeit genuine importance. Thus:

> even for the narrower uses of economic studies, it is important to know whether the desires which prevail are such as will help to build up a strong and righteous character. And in the broader uses of those studies … the economist … must concern himself with the ultimate aims of man, and take account of differences in real value between gratifications that [have] equal economic measures.
>
> (17)

Since 'human nature can be modified [and has been] very much even in a few generations' (752), one cannot assess economic events or policies while ignoring their effects on character. While earlier economists had ignored this, according to Marshall, 'modern economists keep constantly in mind the fact that [man's character] is a product of the circumstances under which he has lived' (764; this should surely have been made a prescriptive rather than a descriptive statement? I.S.).

What did Marshall regard as an improvement in character? Unsurprisingly, perhaps, he provides no neat, compact answer to this question but he certainly writes with approval of an increased willingness to postpone immediate gratification for the sake of future benefits, of prudence and self-control, of self-respect, of unselfishness and of willingness to act for the public good (680). He is similarly positive about:

> an increase of intelligence and energy and self respect; leading to more care and judgement in expenditure, and to an avoidance of food and drink that gratify the appetite but afford no strength, and of ways of living that are unwholesome physically and morally.
>
> (689)

Such qualities of character are linked not only to wants/desires but also to ways of acting, to activities and pursuits. While Marshall devotes Book III to 'Wants and their satisfaction' (and no Book to activities), he insists that 'while wants are the rulers of life among the lower animals, it is to changes in the forms of efforts and activities that we must turn when in search for the keynotes of the history of mankind' (85). And he soon repeats and develops the point:

> Speaking broadly therefore, although it is man's wants in the earliest stages of his development that give rise to his activities, yet afterwards each new step upwards is to be regarded as the development of new activities giving rise to new wants, rather than of new wants giving rise to new activities.
>
> (89)

The agents studied by Marshall, then, were poles apart from the caricature 'economic man' who is of a fixed nature and selfishly concerned only with acquiring material means to satisfy his given wants. His difficulty – and let no one underestimate its genuine nature – was that it was (and is) easier to speak of outputs, purchases and consumption than of ultimate goals, evolving human character, and so on. Marshall took the former to be related to the latter and *therefore* worthy of discussion but he could never have suggested that measured national income per head is of ultimate significance, or is even guaranteed always to promote that which is.

Philip Henry Wicksteed (1844–1927)

Wicksteed would not normally be thought of as a 'welfare economist' and we shall therefore consider him more briefly than either Marshall or Pigou (see the following section). It is nevertheless highly relevant to refer to him here, since his *Common Sense of Political Economy* of 1910 provides a brilliant demonstration that economic theory has not the least need of any concept of the 'economic man', that the agents considered in economic theory are 'whole persons' with a wide range of motives – including the social, the altruistic, the cultural, the polit-

ical – and that any idea that human flourishing could be reduced to having a high income is merely laughable. (The same could be said of Adam Smith, of course – and has been; see e.g. Rothschild 2001). As Lionel (later Lord) Robbins put it in his 1933 Introduction to the *Common Sense*, with reference to 'the belief that the whole structure of Economics depends upon the assumption of a world of economic men, each actuated by egocentric or hedonistic motives', Wicksteed 'shattered this misconception once and for all' (xxi).

Right from the beginning, Wicksteed rejects outright any 'attempt to establish any distinction whatever between the ultimate motives by which a man is actuated in business and those by which he is actuated in his domestic or public life' (4). His approach 'does away at a stroke with the hypothetically simplified psychology of the Economic Man' (ibid.). We must take the economic agent

> as we find him, and are to examine the nature of those relations into which he enters, under the stress of all his complicated impulses and desires – whether selfish or unselfish, material or spiritual – in order to accomplish indirectly through the action of others what he cannot accomplish directly through his own.
>
> (ibid.)

He soon moves on to illustrate his argument by considering a simple economic purchasing decision, which quickly proves to turn on considerations of social standing, respect for others, concern for the agent's children and concern for suffering in a distant country (21–23). Nor is this example to be regarded as somehow exceptional, for Wicksteed later states expressly that *all* motives are always to be taken account of in explaining any economic action (163–165; Wicksteed acknowledges but shows little interest in the only serious alternative, that of paying no attention to *any* motives at all).

Wicksteed's background assumption here is not that agents have other ultimate goals, in addition to that of acquiring goods and services. To the contrary, such acquisition is *never* an ultimate goal in his view. These

> things, of which money gives us command, are, strictly speaking, never the ultimate objects of deliberate desire at all … there is no ultimate object of desire which itself enters into the circle of exchange and can be directly drawn thence.
>
> (152)

One can buy an aspirin but not the absence of a headache, a luxury yacht but not genuine self-respect or the sincere admiration of others. If goods and services are only means towards the more subtle constituents of wellbeing, why should any intelligent person suppose that more goods and services will always ensure greater welfare?

If all motives bear on all actions, what does it mean to speak of 'economic' as opposed to other activity? For Wicksteed, the crucial point is that in a

straightforward sale and purchase, the seller is not seeking to further the interests of the purchaser, and the latter, likewise, is not aiming to further those of the former. Wicksteed characterizes such a situation as one of 'non-tuism' (180), part of his point being that neither the seller nor the purchaser is necessarily guided by egoistic selfishness; they could each be aiming to benefit some (different) third party. The famous trio who provide your dinner (Adam Smith's butcher, brewer and baker) need not be pursuing selfish ends just because they are not pursuing *your* ends.

Wicksteed has been well described as 'a purist' of economic theory – and his response to being told that economic growth might not increase happiness, or that particular economic policies might fail to increase happiness even though they increase economic output, could only have been 'Well, fancy that. Now tell me something interesting'.

Arthur Cecil Pigou (1877–1959)

While Wicksteed could be somewhat critical of Marshall's economics, Pigou was among the foremost – perhaps was the foremost – of Marshall's disciples. He was very open about this and, indeed, dedicated his *Wealth and Welfare* (1912) to 'Dr. Alfred Marshall'. This work was later expanded into *The Economics of Welfare* (1920), which Sir John Hicks took to be the 'standard representative' of the earlier welfare economics. He went on to say:

> It is such, not only in its own right, but as the culmination of a great line of economic thought. A whole series of economists, among whom Dupuit, Walras, Marshall and Edgeworth deserve particular mention, [contributed to this line] … the *Economics of Welfare* is essentially a systematisation of this tradition.
>
> (1939: 697)

Medema, however, gives a slightly different emphasis, suggesting that,

> While Pigou claimed to build his welfare economics on Marshall, the line of descent runs more strongly from Sidgwick to Pigou … the most accurate characterisation of Pigou's work here would be to say that he put Sidgwick's ideas into a Marshallian theoretical framework.
>
> (2006: 640)

In this section we shall consider *Wealth and Welfare* (WW hereafter) and *The Economics of Welfare* (EW hereafter, citing the 4th edition of 1952), without attending to any delicate questions concerning changes over time in Pigou's theory. We shall also touch on the late (1951) paper by Pigou.

As Hicks (1975: 311) has observed, the central subject of EW, Parts I, II and IV, is the national income (the National Dividend in Pigou's terminology) rather than welfare. The reason for this is clear – Pigou took it that national income

tended to be positively related to welfare. Indeed, Hicks suggests that Pigou was 'too optimistic' concerning the relation between merely economic welfare and total welfare (318) and de Van Graaff has agreed (see below). But Medema goes too far in saying that Pigou was simply 'tipping his hat to economic welfare in the broader sense' (2006: 641) when he made his various qualifying remarks about any positive relationship between the national income and welfare. As we shall see, Pigou drew clear and explicit attention to many significant doubts and qualifications about any such relationship. He may have been 'too optimistic' in his practical judgement of how matters would tend to work out on balance – but he was very clearsighted about potential pitfalls and himself considered, some 90 years ago, several of the issues much bruited about by present-day critics of economic growth. Without in the least seeking to play down Pigou's emphasis on the National Dividend and his 'optimism' concerning its positive relationship to wellbeing, we shall focus here on the more interesting matter of his awareness of the complexities surrounding these issues.

Pigou states immediately that 'Welfare can belong only to states of consciousness' and that 'Welfare means the same thing as good. It … cannot be defined, in the sense of being analysed.' Thus 'welfare includes states of consciousness only, and not material things or conditions' (WW: 3). Nor does he reduce consciousness to 'satisfaction', for he writes explicitly that 'Every conscious state is a complex of many elements, and includes not only satisfactions but also cognitions, emotions and desires' (WW: 5; see also EW: 10, 14 for similar statements).

Unsurprisingly, Pigou soon starts to narrow his focus. 'Of welfare in general economic welfare is one part. It is welfare arising in connection with the earning and spending of the National Dividend', or, in other words, 'of those parts of the community's net income that enter easily into relation with the measuring rod of money' (WW: 3). In EW (11) he almost repeats this and then quotes with approval Cannan's statement, in *Wealth*: 17, that 'there is no precise line between economic and non-economic satisfactions'. (Wicksteed would perhaps have omitted the word 'precise'.) Pigou then faces at once the difficulty that economic welfare and welfare in general can change in different directions. Even more pointedly, something affecting economic welfare may also affect other aspects of welfare and hence the better policy with respect to the former may or may not be the better with respect to overall welfare. Pigou states that this is of practical importance, not just a logical possibility (WW: 4–5). He even says that 'anything in the nature of rigid inference from effects on economic welfare to effects on total welfare is out of the question' (WW: 11). The matter is of course taken up again in EW: 'an economic cause may affect non-economic welfare in ways that cancel its effect on economic welfare. This … requires careful consideration' (EW: 12). Pigou even states that the divergence between the change in economic welfare and that in total welfare 'will be very wide' in some fields (EW: 20) but does then make the bold (hazardous?) judgement that they will 'probably' be of the same sign.

Behind any economic aggregate such as the national income there lie, of course, innumerable individual decisions and choices. Pigou notes very clearly

that choices are based upon *expected* outcomes which need not always accurately reflect *actual* satisfaction outcomes; choice can lead to disappointment (or favourable surprise). He suggests, in fact, that expectations of satisfaction 'are frequently erroneous' (WW: 9). In any case, desire is not necessarily proportionate to the 'good', as Pigou illustrates through the examples of gambling, opium, basic food and clothing, the arts, and drinking (WW: 10–11). As he put it nearly 40 years later, if 'some sorts of satisfaction are in their nature better than others' (shades of J.S. Mill?) then the maximization of satisfaction is not equivalent to that of goodness (1951, as partially reprinted in 1952: 846). The whole of Book I, chapter II in EW is devoted to these issues. After speculating that the possible disproportion between expected and achieved satisfaction is perhaps not a major problem in practice, he writes: 'To this general conclusion, however, there is one very important exception. [It] has to do with people's attitude toward the future' (EW: 24). There is, he thinks, a general tendency to attach too great an importance to the present and the immediate future, relative to the more distant future; as he puts it, 'our telescopic faculty is defective' and this preference for the present is a 'wholly irrational preference' (EW: 24–25). Noting that some of the satisfactions resulting from our present actions may accrue not to us but to others (some of them not even known to us), Pigou deduces that the practical consequence of 'our [defective] telescopic faculty' is that we shall both save too little and take inadequate care of 'Nature's gifts' (EW: 26–28). (Only the ignorant can suppose that an awareness of environmental issues is a recent novelty for economists; see also WW: 7–8.)

Like Marshall, Pigou makes it clear both that people learn and change and that such change can be related to economic events; he is interested too in character:

> The core of feeling and purpose, which we call people's character, is susceptible … of modification … The surroundings of work react upon the quality of life. Ethical quality is affect by the occupations … into which the desires of consumers impel the people who work to satisfy them.
>
> (WW: 5–6)

Personal relations at work, Pigou suggests, affect welfare, whether for the better or for the worse (ibid.). EW has a lot more to say on the matter of hours of work; Pigou suggests, for example, that, 'From a mistaken view of their own real interest, work people may welcome an addition to the hours of labour of a sort which augments the dividend but damages economic welfare' (EW: 85–86) and the point is strongly emphasized again later (467). More generally with respect to work, Pigou notes that people are both ends and means, and worries that society might so concentrate on people as the second (means) that it sacrifices 'the non-economic welfare embodied in the first' (people as ends) (EW: 13). Even more pointedly, 'efforts devoted to the production of people who are good instruments [of production] may involve a failure to produce people who are good men' (EW: 14).

Of course it is not only work and workplace relations that can change people. Thus 'non-economic welfare is liable to be modified by the manner in which income is spent' and the 'effect upon the quality of people produced by public museums … is very different from the reflex effect of equal satisfactions in a public bar'. In Pigou's judgement, such matters are 'obviously of large practical importance' (EW: 17). Moreover, easier provision of a good or service may increase the desire for it and Pigou cites libraries, savings banks, public houses, lotteries and concerts as possible examples (EW: 82–83; see also WW: 26). What matters most in this connection is the long-term response; when a group of people have fully adapted and *themselves* changed in desires, habits and expectations, 'will they really derive more satisfaction from the last state of their environment than they did from the first?' Pigou continues:

> The point is a very important one. If the *per capita* income of this country were, say, twenty times what it actually is, it may well be that a further increase in it would not ultimately – the population being supposed constant – add anything at all to economic welfare.
>
> (EW: 84)

Can anyone seriously suppose that a Rip van Winkle Pigou would be in the least shocked by the 'new' economics-and-happiness literature?

Some of Pigou's examples quoted above make it clear enough that, like Marshall, he was ready to give voice to his own values in the course of presenting his analysis. It is no great surprise, then, that Pigou can worry that higher wages could be spent on such worthless pleasures as drink (WW: 28–29). Essentially the same point is put more generally when Pigou claims that 'a sudden and sharp rise of income is likely to be followed by a good deal of foolish expenditure which involves little or no addition to economic welfare' (EW: 91). He is not entirely pessimistic here, however, and – returning to the theme of learning and adaptability – he suggests that the higher income can be adjusted to, with 'capacities and faculties adapted for the enjoyment of the enlarged income' (ibid.). But Pigou is unlikely to forget that we can consume foolishly, for he has cited Sidgwick to the effect that while we give to others what is *good* for them, we give to ourselves what we *like* (EW: 18)!

Pigou is more generally alive to the role of 'others' when he remarks that 'The satisfaction a man obtains from his economic environment is, in great part, derived, not from his *absolute*, but from the *comparative*, magnitude of his income' (WW: 23). The point is put even more forcefully in EW by means of a quotation from J.S. Mill:

> Men do not desire to be *rich*, but to be richer than other men. The avaricious or covetous man would find little or no satisfaction in the possession of any amount of wealth, if he were the poorest amongst all his neighbours or fellow-countrymen.
>
> (89–90)

(At both WW: 28 and EW: 90, Pigou suggests that this phenomenon is more important at higher income levels.) It is to be hoped that no one takes the recent attention to income relativities and happiness to be an exciting innovation in welfare economics.

From his earlier work until his late work Pigou was only too aware that maximizing per capita income is not equivalent to maximizing wellbeing. Thus in the 'Conclusion' to WW we read:

> Man does not live by bread alone; and, therefore, besides estimating the probable economic consequences of his action, a reformer needs always to beware lest, in his ardour to promote economic benefit, he may sacrifice unwittingly some higher and more elusive goal.

And at the age of 74 Pigou could still write that:

> Nobody supposes that economic welfare is coincident with the whole of welfare or that the State ought to pursue it relentlessly without regard for other goods – liberty, for instance, the amenities of the family, spiritual needs and so on.
>
> (1951, as in 1952: 845)

John Hicks (1904–1989) and Jan de Van Graaff (1928–)

Since it would be entirely impracticable to attempt here a survey of welfare economics since Pigou, we shall simply refer to a few further observations made by Hicks (who was already quoted in the previous section) and to the single, greatest book on modern welfare economics, that by Van Graaff.

According to Hicks (1975: 311),

> economics is not ethics, though it borders on ethics; the line between them is a place where it behoves one to walk very delicately. It is now quite clear that neither the [Pigovian nor the subsequent] Welfare Economics have been walking delicately enough.

Delicately or not, he goes on to suggest that

> an increase in the Social Product … is clearly not always 'good' in an ethical sense … A richer society may be a more stupid society, or a more discontented society – one does not have to go far to find examples.
>
> (318)

This is not to say that one can measure wellbeing: 'We have indexes of production; we do not have – it is clear we cannot have – an Index of Welfare' (324). (Is Hicks wrong here, or are the much-cited happiness measures *different from* welfare measures?) The economic theory of exchange, or catallactics, will never suffice as

the basis of an adequate welfare economics, Hicks suggests, for 'there is more in life than there is in catallactics' since 'real human beings' have multiple motivation (325). Even these very brief quotations from a leading mainstream economist of the later twentieth century will indicate that it can come as no shock to 'orthodoxy' to hear that rising income does not ensure rising wellbeing.

Jan de Van Graaff's *Theoretical Welfare Economics* of 1957 is a brilliant exposition and discussion of the welfare economics which succeeded that of Pareto from the 1930s onwards. Here we need only draw attention to certain particular points bearing directly on the relation between conventional welfare economics and the economics-and-happiness literature.

After drawing attention to 'the classical distinction between general welfare and economic welfare' (5), Graaff (quoting Little, *Oxford Economic Papers*, 1949) notes that one must avoid any suggestion that there are 'segregable parts of states of mind' which may be attributed to economic causes (ibid.). This both strongly recalls Wicksteed's stance and completely explodes the fallacy that economic theory supposes an 'economic man' somehow divorced from the real, flesh-and-blood individual.

Turning to Pigou's old worry about the distinction between (*ex ante*) expectations of satisfaction and (*ex post*) actual, realized satisfaction, Graaff notes that 'most people probably feel that the latter [welfare *ex post*] is the more significant concept'. Without demurring, he continues:

> It is, however, very hard to think of a way of defining welfare *ex post*. We could, of course, simply assume … that we had a lie-detector and could question people to find out if they were better off yesterday than the day before,

but this is not a helpful assumption (33). While Graaff was obviously not commenting on today's happiness studies, one may perhaps detect a latent scepticism towards them. Do the respondents have any strong reason to care, or think hard, about how they answer the relevant questionnaires?

Graaff devotes a whole section entitled 'EXTERNAL EFFECTS' (43–45) to what he sees, rightly, as a major difficulty for conventional welfare economics, namely the fact that what a given individual wishes to consume at some given date may well depend on that individual's history of consumption, on what others have been and are consuming, and on 'the whole complex social process of taste formation … that mysterious complex of effects which operates through *time*' (43). He notes Alfred Marshall's awareness of these issues (*Principles*: 67–70, 88–90) and emphasizes that they relate to the choice of an occupation no less than to the choice of consumption commodities (44). He later reiterates that 'external effects in consumption are of the first importance' (154) and chooses in his 'Conclusion' to stress very heavily both the fact that an individual's consumption choices are influenced 'very markedly' by those of others and that this is a central obstacle to the achievement of clarity and simplicity in welfare economics (169–170).

Graaff is here giving very clear recognition to an issue often alleged to be something that economists never think about. The same is true of his acknowledgement that 'Social institutions may become ends in themselves, and may not just be means to the attainment of more outputs and fewer inputs' – individuals may have preferences over the extent of the market, the role of state bureaucracies and over degrees of monopoly or competitiveness per se (120–121). That a good economic theorist like Graaff recognizes these issues does not mean that he finds them easy to analyse; he does not (and says so). But then who does manage to say anything very helpful about them?

Graaff's reaction to difficulties in conventional welfare economics – difficulties which he expounds far more effectively than 94.7 per cent of those who airily dismiss that theory – is to insist that the best input the economist can provide to policy discussion is 'through contributing to our understanding of how the economic system actually works in practice – rather than through normative welfare theory itself' (170). Is such a 'modest' approach to be looked down on? Is it always emulated in the happiness literature?

Richard Layard

Happiness. Lessons from a New Science (2005) was a bold intervention in the discussion of public policy, intended to have an effect on both public opinion and government policy. Its general spirit was captured in the Preface: 'It is time to have a go – to rush in where angels fear to tread. So here is my effort.… It will need massive refinement' (ix). Given the book's purpose – and its generally genial tone – one should not be overly pedantic in commenting on it. Many readers will indeed find it easy to warm to Layard's obvious goodwill, his insistence that people's feelings matter, that happiness is multidimensional and hugely dependent on interpersonal relationships, that rampant individualism is in danger of swamping any concept of the common good, that people value trust, stability and community, that much advertising is intrusive and harmful. Yet one can still be surprised at the brusque confidence with which he sweeps aside the concerns of noted philosophers who have criticized the philosophy of utilitarianism espoused by Layard. And one might feel cautious about the boldness of his 'the only thing that matters is the feelings of everyone concerned' (121), when he does not indicate whether *all* feelings are to be accorded equal respect. Do envy, malice and xenophobia matter as much as compassion? One may feel confident that Layard would answer, 'certainly not!' but that leaves one unsure just how (and which) feelings matter. After mentioning various desires for status, Layard writes that 'These are not ignoble sentiments of envy; the desire for status is basic to our human nature' (150). How does the second part of this statement support the first part? Three pages later, moreover, Layard returns to 'the ignoble sentiment of envy' (153) and appears *not* to deny that the desire for status is an ignoble sentiment but only to argue that it must just be accepted as a feature of human nature when public policy is being determined. Some readers might prefer greater conceptual clarity.

Our task here, however, must be limited to the consideration of what Layard has to say about economics and economists. The task is not simplified by the fact that Layard generally speaks simply of 'economics' *tout court*, or of 'standard economics' (127) or of 'mainstream economists' (231), or of 'traditionally minded economists' (145), without naming names or citing specific works. This may be appropriate to the nature of his book but it makes it harder for the commentator to be quite sure who or what Layard has in mind.

While he has a number of criticisms to make of 'economics', Layard is an informed critic who can write, for example, that 'Economists do not of course believe in "homo economicus"' and can note that altruism 'is not inconsistent with sophisticated economics' (141). Yet he spoils this by writing also of the benefits of voluntary exchange that 'All this comes about through the naked pursuit of self-interest' (129). This nonsense is 'supported' by the 'famous words of Adam Smith [which] cannot be quoted too often' about expecting our dinner from the butcher, the brewer and the baker having 'regard to their own interest – to their self-love … their advantage' (129). In fact, of course, the great Smith nodded at this point since, in Wicksteed's terminology, it is only the 'non-tuism' of the butcher, brewer and baker that is relevant here, their 'selfishness' or otherwise being quite beside the point. (They may be seeking to maximize their gifts to a niece, to the Tories and to the kirk, respectively.) It is to be regretted that Layard should here provide encouragement for a crude – and popular – misunderstanding of economics. He perhaps does the same thing in writing that 'economics offers the sophisticated tool of cost-benefit analysis to tell us what government should and should not do' (127). No such analysis can ever 'tell' anyone what *ought* to be done, it need hardly be said, but the quoted statement could easily be (mis-)read by econophobes as 'evidence' that economists arrogate to themselves the right to determine policy. And whether many 'mainstream economists' need to be told that 'many of the most important things that touch us do not reach us through voluntary exchange' (231) may well be doubted – certainly such past economists as John Stuart Mill, Alfred Marshall and A.C. Pigou would simply raise an eyebrow and ask, 'What's new?' (As we saw above, Wicksteed even insisted that *no* ultimately valued thing ever enters the circle of exchange!)

A careless reader of Layard's *Happiness* might be left both with the idea that the growth of per capita income (beyond a certain level) is irrelevant to happiness and the belief that 'economists' take happiness to depend on nothing but per capita income. In fact the book contains material countering both that idea and that belief; unfortunately, it *also* gives them some encouragement!

The claim that overall happiness has remained constant, as income per head has grown, has been challenged (see the following section) but, purely for the sake of the argument, suppose it to be a valid claim. Would it follow that income levels are irrelevant to happiness? Quite obviously not, since happiness could be both positively related to income *and* negatively related to 'other things', which have been increasing (and/or positively related to 'other things', which have been decreasing). Only the incredibly naive assumption that happiness must

depend on only one thing would allow its constancy to suggest anything at all about what does or does not produce happiness. Layard makes this perfectly clear at various points. Thus he writes, for example, that, 'Since the Second World War, greater national income has indeed brought some increase in happiness, even in rich countries. But this extra happiness has been cancelled out by greater misery coming from less harmonious social relationships' (34–35). And:

> In many ways life is better than fifty years ago: we have unprecedented wealth, better health and nicer jobs. Yet we are not happier. Is it because there are other new features of our experience that are bad and offset the new features that are good?
>
> (75)

His answer is 'Yes' (78). Thus to say, even if truly, that 'income has increased but happiness has not' is *not* to say that income has no effect on happiness; that would be an elementary *non sequitur*. (To reinforce the point, it may be noted that Layard properly refers several times to rising health levels; if health is improving while happiness is constant, is anyone going to suggest that 'therefore' health is irrelevant to happiness?) Matters become yet more complex, of course, if rising income both tends, in itself, to increase happiness *and* provokes an increase in some 'other thing' tending to reduce happiness.

Unfortunately, Layard's book also contains such phrases as 'if extra income has done so little to produce a happier society' (155) and 'So here we are as a society: no happier than fifty years ago. Yet every group in society is richer' (223), which could too easily be (mis)read as encouraging the idea that income per head is irrelevant to happiness, despite Layard's more measured statements to the contrary. Similarly unhelpful is the second sentence of the book – 'economics equates changes in the happiness of a society with changes in its purchasing power – or roughly so' (ix). That last phrase is no excuse for the preceding words, which provide econophobes with what they want to hear – will they all persevere as far as p.134 to read: 'Let me hasten to add that most economists recognise some weaknesses in the GNP as a welfare measure'? (And even this recognition ought to refer to the 'weakness' of GNP as a measure of *economic* welfare, never mind as a measure of total welfare.) It is perfectly proper to address a book to a wide audience but it is not proper to pander to popular prejudices. But let us end this paragraph on a happier note, with Layard's claim that 'we in the West are probably happier than any previous society' (235).

Layard's book provides a clear, popular exposition of why economic policy making to increase happiness is not likely to be easy; indeed, 'sensible policy development is quite difficult' (145). The most general reason for this is that 'Almost every policy affects happiness through many channels'; thus policies designed to increase geographical mobility, for example, may both increase income per head and weaken family life and communal cohesion, leaving it unclear whether they promote overall happiness (ibid.). Hence the assessment of any one possible policy involves both keeping track of *all* its consequences and

weighing those (good and bad) consequences against each other; neither the 'keeping track' nor the 'weighing' need be that easy. Two more specific difficulties in promoting happiness, to which Layard draws sharp attention, relate to income relativities and to our ability to adapt. Suppose that the happiness of a given individual at a given time depends (positively) on the individual's income at that time *and* (negatively) on both the average income of others at that time – because the individual cares about status and relative social standing – and the individual's own past income – because adaptation to past standards raises expectations about what is acceptable today. Under these circumstances, 'it is quite difficult for economic growth to improve our happiness' (42). Layard stresses these points again in his concluding chapter. The race for (inherently relative) status is 'a zero-sum game … That is one major reason why as a society we have not grown happier' (228). And, 'If things get better, we after a while take them for granted … This is another reason why growth has not increased welfare as much as we expected' (229). *Insofar as* these claims are valid, any failure of happiness to increase over time can hardly be blamed on poor economic policy (narrowly conceived) or on poor economic reasoning.

(As noted above, Pigou had explained 90 years before Layard that a given policy could have *opposite* effects on economic welfare and overall welfare. Similarly, the claim that individuals care about their *relative* income was familiar to both Pigou and John Stuart Mill, while the idea that people *adapt* to their circumstances was clearly set out by both Marshall and Pigou – and indeed by Jean Jacques Rousseau in the 1750s.)

Nothing said above must be taken to imply that Layard makes no interesting criticisms of 'economics'. Even when due allowance has been made for specific attempts by particular economists to grapple with the issues about to be mentioned, it is still fair to consider, with Layard, that inadequate attention is paid within *contemporary* economic theory to a number of matters. These include the possibility of considering the intensity of preferences and of diminishing marginal utility (51–52, 120–122, 133, 134); the fact that preferences may be partially endogenous (7, 138, 141, 231); the importance of income relativities and reference groups (42, 44–46, 52); the adaptation of preferences to circumstances (48–49, 67, 143, 229); the importance of social relationships (67, 225–226, 228); and further issues in motivation and human nature (127–128, 135, 225–226). Such issues are fully worthy of greater attention than they often receive (and the implications of such increased attention would extend beyond the happiness discussion), so that it must be hoped that 'economists' will respond to Layard's observations.

With apologies to Easterlin, Frey, Oswald, Van Praag and other leading contributors to the happiness debates (see e.g. Bruni and Porta 2005), we turn now to a critical discussion of such work.

Helen Johns and Paul Ormerod

Not all economists are entirely convinced by every claim made in the economics-and-happiness literature. We consider here some of the arguments put forward

by Johns and Ormerod in their *Happiness, Economics and Public Policy* (2007; Philip Booth and Samuel Brittan add a Foreword and a Comment, respectively).

Many (but not all) studies of happiness levels work with a three-point scale for the measurement of those levels. As Johns and Ormerod point out (31–33, 75–76), it therefore takes a large shift in the proportion of respondents who claim the highest level to bring about any great increase in the recorded *average* level of happiness. Hence no great significance should be attributed to the fact that the average level shows little or no tendency to increase. However, some studies do already – and all studies could – employ a more differentiated scale for happiness level recording, so that this criticism – while well taken – is perhaps less powerful than the following.

Johns and Ormerod go on to show (34–40, 77–86) that, if per capita income is not well correlated with happiness measures, *nor are* leisure time, declining infant mortality, life expectation, unemployment, increasing gender equality, public spending, income distribution or crime levels! Yet who can seriously believe that *not one* of these magnitudes has any bearing on people's happiness? And if we do not believe that, why should we believe any analogous claim that per capita income has no bearing on levels of happiness? The 'evidence' presented is, after all, of precisely the same nature in each case, so that one cannot casually take it to show the unimportance of one (or more) variable(s) but not to show the unimportance of other variables.

It is not only the 'evidence' from happiness studies that Johns and Ormerod find questionable; they are also concerned about the policy lessons sometimes thought to follow from such studies. They note that

> defining happiness is a question that has occupied some of the greatest minds in the Western world and yet it still remains open. So it is questionable whether it can easily be resolved by the application of simple policy recommendations.
>
> (20)

This general consideration is reinforced by the fact that if people adapt strongly to their circumstances and if they care more about relative incomes than about absolute income levels, then policy attempts to increase happiness are tightly circumscribed (*passim*). Johns and Ormerod object strongly to the idea that the proper goal of public policy making may be characterized as being 'that of maximising *measured* happiness – and that all other values are subordinated to this end' (71). Not the least of their reasons for so objecting is that the maximization of measured happiness may conflict with morality.

> For example, ethnic cleansing might well increase the happiness of those who do not like sharing their neighbourhood with people who are ethnically different from themselves, but it is not a course of action that could conceivably be deemed moral.
>
> (20)

It does not follow from the above that Johns and Ormerod have no time for any kind of happiness study; while sceptical about time-series studies, for the reasons noted above, they do take seriously the findings of panel, or longitudinal research, 'which tracks specific individuals over time' (14). And they take such studies to 'imply [the happiness increasing effects of] increased support for marriage, reductions in incentives to single parents, and the promotion of religious faith in various ways. This is not', they suggest, 'a set of policy conclusions that most proponents of the happiness research tend to emphasise' (48). Be that as it may, such conclusions may not be entirely uncongenial to some of the contributors to this volume.

Concluding remarks

It can only be perfectly proper to discuss the complex web of interrelationships connecting happiness, human wellbeing, the level and distribution of national income, economic and social policies and so on. Such discussions can only ever be hindered, however, by suggestions (explicit or implicit) that thoughtful economists are committed to naive ideas about 'economic man', to simple-minded views of human motivation, to the fallacy that it is easy to foresee all the effects of a given economic policy or, heaven help us, to the assumption that a growth in real income per head will ensure greater wellbeing. Economists of the calibre of Marshall, Wicksteed, Pigou, Hicks and Graaff (along, of course, with many others) have repeatedly given the lie to any such suggestions. They have taken it for granted that economic output is, at best, a support for the things of ultimate importance.

2 Happiness, welfare and capabilities

Carl-Henric Grenholm

In his book on *Happiness* Richard Layard has argued that increasing income and material wellbeing is not commensurate with increasing happiness, once a modest level of income has been achieved. His thesis is that in richer societies increasing prosperity and standards of living have not been accompanied by increasing happiness or wellbeing. Happiness should be a goal for public policy, which seems to be a challenge for economics and the conceptions of a good human life presupposed within mainstream economic theory.

As an economist Layard obviously has a conception of what happiness and human wellbeing means. He accepts a utilitarian theory according to which our goal should be to promote happiness, which means to maximize the sum of human wellbeing. It is of great interest to compare this position with conceptions of welfare within welfare economics and neoclassical economic theory. Here welfare is often understood in terms of preference satisfaction. An interesting issue is whether happiness would be a more appropriate conception of a good human life.

In this chapter I will deal with two basic problems within ethics and economics. The first problem concerns the conception of a good human life within political economy and economic theory. What are the objects to value in economic analysis? Should we understand the good in terms of welfare, happiness or preference satisfaction? The second problem concerns the conception of equality and the relationship between happiness and equality. What goods should be the objects for an equal distribution and why should such an equal distribution be promoted? Is the happiness hypothesis a reasonable argument in favour of equality?

My starting point will be an analysis of the conceptions of wellbeing and welfare within mainstream economic theory. Welfare economics and neoclassical economic theory often presuppose an understanding of welfare in terms of preference satisfaction. There is a necessary connection between preference satisfaction and welfare, according to several economists. I will argue that this is a conception of human wellbeing which can be criticized from several perspectives.

I will then give a critical analysis of the conception of happiness presupposed in the work by Richard Layard. In his book happiness is related to a utilitarian

understanding of wellbeing, and a necessary condition for happiness seems to be good relationships to other human beings. I will discuss whether this is a reasonable understanding of a good human life which is to be preferred to the conception of welfare within mainstream economic theory. I will also examine whether this is a conception of happiness which can be accepted from the perspective of Christian social ethics.

Finally, I will give a critical analysis of another alternative to the conception of a good human life within traditional welfare economics. This is the neo-Aristotelian position developed by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum in their 'capabilities approach'. They share the idea that happiness may be understood in terms of human self-actualization, and they reject the utilitarian theory that welfare is pleasure or preference satisfaction. In dealing with the capabilities approach I will also discuss the meaning of equality and reasonable arguments in favour of an equal distribution.

Values in economic theory

What conceptions of a good human life are presupposed within economic theory? Several economists today would deny that there are any ethical assumptions at all in neoclassical economic theory. They argue that economic research and theory are free from moral values and normative implications. Milton Friedman, the main representative of the Chicago school, describes his field as 'positive economics', which is an objective science in the sense that it does not presuppose any moral values or norms. Its goal is not to tell us 'what ought to be the case' but to describe 'what is the case' (1953: 7).

However, the position that economic theory does not imply any ethical assumptions seems to be difficult to defend. Neoclassical economics is often involved in a study of individual markets and a study of individual market decisions. In its models of consumer choice and the behaviour of producers neoclassical economics assumes that we are rational individuals, seeking to promote our own preference satisfaction. These models often presuppose ideas on what is good or valuable, distributional values, and norms of equality (Helgesson 1998).

In his doctoral dissertation, the philosopher Gert Helgesson has made a careful analysis of explicit and implicit values and norms in neoclassical economic theory. His focus is on two concepts in neoclassical economics, namely stability and efficiency. The concept of stability plays a central role in various forms of equilibrium analyses, and it may sometimes be used evaluatively. However, it is more obvious that the understanding of efficiency in neoclassical economics presupposes assumptions of what is good and valuable.

In mainstream economics, efficiency is most often interpreted as Pareto optimality. This criterion for economic efficiency is described by Amartya Sen in the following way:

> A social state is described as Pareto optimal if and only if no-one's utility can be raised without reducing the utility of someone else. This is a very

> limited kind of success, and in itself may or may not guarantee much. A state can be Pareto optimal with some people in extreme misery and others rolling in luxury, so long as the miserable cannot be made better off without cutting into the luxury of the rich.
>
> (1992b: 31)

The Pareto principle may be interpreted and applied in different ways. However, it usually maintains that an alternative, *x*, is better than another alternative, *y*, if (a) *x* is better than *y* for at least one individual, and (b) *x* is at least as good as *y* for all individuals. An economy is Pareto optimal (efficient) if it is impossible to make someone better off without making someone else worse off. To make someone better off usually means to increase his or her welfare. This means that efficiency concerns welfare, and welfare is most often understood in terms of preferences. According to this preference interpretation of welfare, you are better off with outcome A than with outcome B if you prefer A to B. There is a necessary connection between preference satisfaction and welfare (Helgesson 2002: 169, 180, 201).

According to most economists the Pareto principle is rather uncontroversial. No one would dispute that we exclude an alternative, if there is another alternative that is better for some and not worse for anyone. However, the controversial issue is what is regarded to be better for an individual. There are at least two different interpretations of the Pareto principle. One is the *welfare* interpretation, according to which an alternative is better for the individual if it promotes her welfare. This is the position within traditional welfare economics, where welfare is often understood in terms of utility or pleasure. Another is the *choice* interpretation, according to which an alternative is better for an individual if she prefers this alternative. However, the distinction between these two interpretations is not always made in economics today, since welfare is often understood in terms of preference satisfaction (Granqvist 2000: 13).

Many economists today would argue in favour of the choice interpretation of the Pareto principle. This is an interpretation which is related to a preference-satisfaction theory, according to which an alternative *x* is better for a person than an alternative *y*, if and only if the person prefers *x* to *y*. According to this position, all preferences which are expressed by an individual on a market should be taken into account. The preference of an individual is simply what she would choose, if she would have to make a choice between two alternatives. It is not necessary that the preferences are well-informed and thoroughly considered (Granqvist 1993: 29).

Is this a reasonable conception of a good human life and human wellbeing? Should we understand the good in terms of preference satisfaction? There are at least two serious objections against this position. One is that we sometimes have preferences which are based on bad information and therefore do not promote our own good. This means that what is good for us does not always coincide with our actual choices. A more reasonable preference theory should therefore understand preferences as choices we make when we have considered every alternative thoroughly (Broome 1998: 28).

Another objection against the idea that there is a necessary connection between preference satisfaction and welfare is that we sometimes have preferences the satisfaction of which does not increase our welfare. Some of our preferences are welfare irrelevant, which means that they do not affect our welfare at all. There are also welfare-decreasing preferences, which means that getting what we want would be bad for us at least in the long run. This may of course depend on false beliefs or irrationality (Helgesson 2001: 60).

It is of course possible to develop a more sophisticated preference-satisfaction theory, according to which the preferences to be satisfied are those which are well-informed and deeply considered. However, as Elizabeth Anderson has shown in her book *Value in Ethics and Economics* (1993), there are strong objections even against such a more sophisticated preference-satisfaction theory. She defends a pluralist theory of value, according to which there are different kinds of goods which are rationally valued in different ways. From this perspective she delivers a critique of rational desire theory, which maintains that what is good for a person is what she would desire if she were fully rational. One objection to this theory is that there are many valuable things besides the objects of rational desire. Another objection is that not all desires can signify values, because certain sources of motivation often incline us to seek things we find to be bad. The conclusion is that we cannot accept the idea that welfare is equivalent to preference satisfaction (1993: 14, 129, 163).

The happiness hypothesis

We have seen that there are strong objections against the idea that a good human life should be understood in terms of preference satisfaction. What then would be the alternative? Should we understand the good in terms of happiness instead of welfare and satisfaction of desires? This seems to be the position of Richard Layard in his book *Happiness*. He argues in favour of an understanding of happiness which is an alternative to the conception of welfare within mainstream economic theory. Is this a reasonable conception of happiness and a good human life?

In his book Richard Layard argues that economic growth contributes to human wellbeing, but once a nation's per capita income has achieved a certain level increasing national income has not been accompanied by increasing happiness. Layard describes this paradox in the following way: 'There is a paradox at the heart of our lives. Most people want more income and strive for it. Yet as Western societies have got richer, their people have become no happier' (2006: 3). The thesis of Richard Layard is that people in Western societies are no happier today than people were 50 years ago, even if the average living standards have more than doubled. When people become richer in comparison with other persons in their society, they become substantially happier. However, when whole societies have become richer, the overall happiness in these societies has not risen. On the contrary, when incomes have risen expressions of unhappiness, such as depression, alcoholism and crime, have increased. This demonstrates

that once subsistence income is guaranteed, national income is not the most important factor affecting happiness (2006: 29, 35).

This position of Richard Layard may be called 'the happiness hypothesis'. The terminology is used by the psychologist Jonathan Haidt in his book *The Happiness Hypothesis* (2006), where he argues against the Buddhist and Stoic idea that happiness comes from within and cannot be found by making the world conform to your desires. Haidt defends the hypothesis that happiness comes from within, and happiness comes from without. This means that external conditions of life can make you lastingly happier, and one of these conditions is relatedness to other human beings (2006: 87, 105, 238).

In his book Richard Layard defends a different kind of 'happiness hypothesis'. According to Layard, increasing income and material wellbeing are not commensurate with increasing happiness once a modest level of income has been achieved. Beyond a certain minimum level increases in national income per capita will not give rise to increases in human happiness in a society. Below that level there is an impact of income on happiness, but above this minimum level an increase in prosperity is unlikely to generate an equivalent increase in happiness. When income rises, sociality factors for greater happiness become more significant than income (Atherton 2008: 108).

Layard obviously presupposes a conception of happiness. He argues in favour of a utilitarian position, according to which the best public policy is one which produces the greatest possible happiness in a society. In social ethics, the principle of utility means that an action is right if it produces the greatest overall happiness, and in individual ethics a right private action is one that promotes the greatest happiness of everyone affected. This is a utilitarian position inspired by that elaborated by Jeremy Bentham (Layard 2006: 111, 115).

Happiness is, according to Layard, not equivalent to self-realization. He argues against such an Aristotelian understanding of happiness and in favour of a hedonistic position. This means that happiness is pleasure and a state of feeling good. Layard also argues against the idea of John Stuart Mill that some types of pleasure have a higher quality than others. Instead, he means that every good feeling is happiness, and feeling bad is misery. According to Layard happiness is an objective dimension of our experience, and it can be measured. At any moment we can find out if people are happy by asking them how they feel (2006: 4, 13, 22, 224). Layard writes:

> So by happiness I mean feeling good – enjoying life and wanting the feeling to be maintained. By unhappiness I mean feeling bad and wishing things were different. There are countless sources of pain and misery. But all our experience has in it a dimension that corresponds to how good and bad we feel.
>
> (2006: 12)

What makes people happy? Layard argues that there are seven different factors which contribute to human happiness. The first is family relationships, and mar-

riage seems to be the most effective form of family life in its association with happiness. The second is income, which is significant for wellbeing to a certain level. The third factor is work, as a provider of income, relationships outside the family, and an opportunity to contribute to the wider society. The fourth factor is community and friends, and a fifth contributor to happiness is health, particularly mental health. The sixth factor is personal freedom, which is related to the opportunity to participate in society. Seventh, personal values and philosophies of life are also important for happiness and wellbeing (Layard 2006: 65–72; Atherton 2008: 122).

This means that sociality factors are of great importance for happiness, particularly in richer societies. Human beings are social beings, and human interaction is an end in itself. Therefore friendship and marriage make people happier, and unemployment causes misery, because it breaks a social tie. Layard argues that some of the factors that can explain the variation in happiness among countries are the divorce rate, unemployment rate, level of trust, membership in non-religious organizations, quality of government, and the fraction of the population believing in God (2006: 70, 78, 225).

Is this a reasonable understanding of a good human life? Layard's position is an interesting alternative to traditional economic theory. In his critique of mainstream economics he argues that human happiness is not only dependent upon increased national income and that we need an alternative vision of how wellbeing is generated. Happiness is a more important goal of policy than increased gross national product. Layard also argues that human wellbeing is not equivalent to preference satisfaction and choices in a market. Instead happiness should be understood in terms of pleasure and feeling good. This is a hedonistic alternative to a preference-satisfaction theory (2006: 133, 147).

There are at least two strong objections against this kind of hedonistic utilitarianism. The first concerns equality and the distribution of happiness. According to utilitarianism the social goal should be the greatest overall happiness in the society. It does not matter at all if there is an unequal distribution of happiness among the persons living in the society. If some persons are feeling extremely bad while others enjoy a comparatively high level of pleasure, this can be accepted as long as the overall sum of happiness is high. Justice and an equal distribution of pleasure is not a goal in itself, which cannot be accepted from the perspective of a principle of human dignity. All humans have an equal worth, and therefore we should strive for not only increased happiness but also an equal distribution of happiness.

The second objection concerns the hedonistic idea that happiness means feeling good. This is a limited understanding of a good human life, which can be criticized from both a philosophical and a theological perspective. In Aristotelian philosophy happiness is taken to be much more than pleasure. It is related to flourishing and integral human fulfilment, which means the realization of the potentials we have as humans. A similar understanding of happiness is elaborated within the Christian tradition. Here happiness is understood not in terms of pleasure or preference satisfaction but in terms of human flourishing. Happiness

is the fulfilment of all human beings, which is possible in the love of God and in the love of another (Atherton 2007b).

In order to achieve an adequate understanding of what happiness means it is necessary to elaborate an anthropological position. In Christian social ethics, happiness as human fulfilment is related to a Christian view of humans, which often understands human flourishing as something which is possible in a relationship with other human beings. A Christian view of humans can be related to a personalist position, according to which the person is interrelated to other persons, an interdependent social being living with others, and called to fulfil herself in a relationship with a transcendent reality. This means that happiness in Christian tradition is taken to be possible only in a relationship to other human beings and to God. From such a personalist perspective happiness is much more than feeling good and often independent of pleasure (Atherton 2008: 201, 218).

The capabilities approach

So far I have argued that welfare and a good human life should not be understood in terms of preference satisfaction. We have also seen that an interesting alternative would be to understand the good in terms of happiness. However, Richard Layard does not give a convincing analysis of the meaning of happiness, and his utilitarian position can be criticized from several perspectives. Would it then be possible to elaborate a more reasonable understanding of happiness as a value within economic analysis?

One interesting effort to elaborate such a position is made by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum in their 'capabilities approach'. This is a neo-Aristotelian alternative to the conception of a good human life within traditional welfare economics. They argue that happiness may be understood in terms of human self-actualization, and they reject the utilitarian theory that welfare is pleasure or preference satisfaction. The objects to value are, according to Amartya Sen, not individual utilities defined in terms of pleasure or desire-fulfilment. Instead a good human life should be understood in terms of functionings and capabilities (1992a: 42).

In his book *Inequality Reexamined* (1992a) Amartya Sen is mainly dealing with the conception of equality and the question of what goods should be the objects for an equal distribution. He maintains that most political philosophers seem to be egalitarians, in the sense that they demand equality of something. However, they have different conceptions of equality. The debate in contemporary political philosophy deals primarily with the question 'Equality of what?' Most philosophers agree that justice is an equal distribution, but they have different opinions concerning what objects should be equally distributed. There are many different proposals, such as freedom, power, welfare, opportunities for welfare, resources, and capabilities (1992a: 1, 4, 12; Hansson 2000).

Sen argues that justice should be understood as an equal distribution of capabilities. A person's cabability is according to him a kind of freedom, namely the freedom to achieve the various combinations of functionings that are import-

ant for the person. Functionings are constitutive of a person's wellbeing, and the relevant functionings can vary – from such elementary things as being adequately nourished and being in good health, to more complex achievements such as being happy and having self-respect. Capability is primarily a reflection of the freedom to achieve valuable functionings. It reflects the person's freedom to lead one type of life or another, and thereby it constitutes the person's freedom to have wellbeing (Sen 1992a: 39, 49).

This is an understanding of a good human life which is different from the positions within both traditional welfare economics and utilitarianism. According to welfare economics social welfare is the sum total of individual utilities, and the individual utility is often regarded to be a function of the income of that individual. Utilitarianism argues that the only intrinsic value is individual utility defined in terms of happiness or desire-fulfilment. Thereby these positions ignore the importance of freedom and concentrate only on achievements. Their focus is upon the actual achievements, not upon the freedom to achieve (Sen 1992a: 6, 32, 88, 136).

According to Sen, there are also important differences between the capabilities approach and the theory of justice elaborated by John Rawls. In Rawls's theory justice is taken to be an equal distribution of primary goods, including liberties, welfare, and the social bases of self-respect. These primary goods are not constitutive of freedom as such, but are rather understood as means to freedom. However, in the capability perspective on justice, individuals' claims are to be assured in terms of the freedoms they actually enjoy to choose the lives they have reason to value. This perspective concentrates directly on freedom as such, rather than on the means to freedom. Thereby it takes into account that human beings are diverse and that there are variations in our ability to convert resources into actual freedoms (Sen 1992a: 8, 36, 42, 49, 79, 86, 148).

In his book *Development as Freedom* (2001) Sen has elaborated a theory of global justice from the capabilities approach. Global justice is an equal distribution of capabilities, and capability is the substantive freedom to achieve alternative combinations of functionings. Development is from this perspective to be understood as a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy and increasing their possibilities to realize themselves as humans. Such a development can be achieved by removing the most important causes of unfreedom, namely poverty as well as tyranny, bad economic conditions as well as social deprivation, and neglect of social welfare systems as well as intolerance of repressive states (Sen 2001: 3, 75).

A similar approach to development and global justice is taken by the feminist philosopher Martha Nussbaum in her book *Women and Human Development* (2001). Her focus is also on human capabilities, that is, what people are actually able to do and to be. There are some functionings that appear to be of central importance in human life, and the important question is whether or not the person is capable of this. This means that justice is not a distribution of welfare, opportunities or resources. Instead, justice should be understood as an equal distribution of some capabilities for truly human functionings (2001: 34, 70).

According to Nussbaum, there are some central capabilities which should be secured to each and every person. She defends a universalism, according to which there are some universal values and norms for human capability. It is possible to achieve an agreement upon these universal values by cross-cultural discussions and comparisons. The common capabilities may be the object of an overlapping consensus, among people who otherwise have very different comprehensive ethical or religious conceptions. This means that Nussbaum defends a universalism which is rather sensitive to pluralism and cultural differences (2001: 41, 76).

In her defence of universal values Nussbaum presents a list of central human capabilities. They include being able to live to the end of a human life of normal length, being able to have good health, being able to move freely from place to place, and being able to have attachments to things and people. They also include being able to live with others, being able to live with concern for other species, and being able to participate in political choices. This is a conception of minimum goods upon which we can agree in spite of different world views and different views of human nature (2001: 78).

According to Nussbaum, there are different types of capabilities. Basic capabilities, such as the capability for seeing and hearing, are the innate equipment of individuals necessary for developing more advanced capabilities. Internal capabilities are developed states of the person herself that are sufficient conditions for the exercise of the requisite functionings. Combined capabilities are internal capabilities combined with suitable external conditions for the exercise of the functionings (2001: 84).

Of great importance for the capabilities approach is, according to Nussbaum, the idea of human dignity, which means that each person should be treated as an end. A consequence of this idea of human worth is that all humans should have the capability for central functionings in human life. This is the principle of each person's capability, which means that the capabilities are sought for each and every person (2001: 72). In respecting this principle the capabilities approach is closely related to a focus on human equality. It entails promoting for all citizens a greater measure of material equality than exists in most societies. However, Nussbaum also maintains that defenders of the capabilities approach might differ about the degree of material equality we should strive for. In contrast to Rawls, she argues that individuals vary greatly in their needs for resources and in their abilities to convert resources into valuable functionings (2001: 68, 86).

The capabilities approach of Martha Nussbaum is an alternative not only to the theory of justice elaborated by Rawls but also to welfarism and traditional welfare economics. According to welfarism we should accept a preference-based approach, which means that all existing preferences are the bases for social policy. Nussbaum delivers several objections against this position. One is the argument from adaptation, according to which individuals adjust their desires to the way of life they know. Another is the institutional argument, which maintains that people's preferences are in many ways constructed by the laws and institutions under which they live. A third argument is that there are some

objects which are good in themselves, even if we do not desire them (2001: 112, 119, 136, 142).

Happiness and equality

We have seen that the capabilities approach is an interesting alternative to the conception of a good human life within traditional welfare economics. It is also a reasonable alternative to the conception of happiness as pleasure or feeling good. This is a neo-Aristotelian approach, which entails an adequate understanding of a good human life as related to human flourishing. Human development is constituted by a freedom to achieve valuable functionings, not only by resources to satisfy human needs or preferences. The capabilities approach is also a theory of justice, according to which capabilities are social goods which should be distributed equally.

Some objections may be raised against this theory. One is that freedom is not the only value to be distributed equally. In his theory of justice John Rawls argues that there are three primary goods which should be equally distributed, namely liberties, welfare and the social bases of self-respect. According to Rawls we should accept two principles for just distribution. The first is that each person should have an equal right to basic liberties such as political freedom and freedom from oppression. The second is that welfare should be equally distributed, unless an unequal distribution works to the advantage of all human beings, and that power should be equally distributed, unless it is bound to positions that are open to all (1976: 60).

Amartya Sen argues convincingly that freedom is an important value and that it may be understood in terms of capabilities. However, welfare as satisfaction of needs is also an important value. In order to protect human dignity we should strive for an equal distribution not only of freedom but also of welfare in this sense. We might accept what Rawls calls the 'difference principle', according to which a just distribution of welfare means an equal distribution, unless an unequal distribution would be to the greatest benefit of those least advantaged (1976: 76). However, not only freedom but also welfare should be the object of an equal distribution.

A second objection is that the capabilities approach presupposes an ethical universalism which is controversial. The defence of universalism given by Martha Nussbaum is not quite convincing. Even if there are some capabilities which are highly esteemed in some different cultures, this does not mean that there are universal values that are accepted in all cultural contexts. Nussbaum describes a dialogue with women in the USA and India, but this is not sufficient empirical evidence for the thesis that there is a universal overlapping consensus of common values. There are reasons to believe that our deeper understandings of functionings, capabilities and justice are influenced by our different social positions, cultural traditions and experiences.

However, there are strong reasons to prefer the capabilities approach to the happiness approach of Richard Layard. One argument in favour of the capabilities

approach is that it entails a reasonable understanding of what happiness means. There are good philosophical and theological arguments to maintain that happiness is not limited to pleasure and feeling good. Happiness should be understood in terms of human fulfilment and human flourishing. Such an Aristotelian perspective on happiness can be expressed in terms of functionings and capabilities, which indicate what people actually are able to do and to be.

A second argument in favour of the capabilities approach is that it entails a theory of justice as an equal distribution. The goal is not only to increase the overall happiness in a society, but also to promote an equal distribution of the capabilities. This means that the criterion of a right action is not only that it produces the greatest possible happiness in a society. In order to be right, the action should also contribute to an equal distribution of a good human life.

Martha Nussbaum gives a strong argument in favour of such a principle of equal distribution. She argues that the capabilities approach relies on some deep moral intuitions and considered judgements about what respect for human dignity requires. According to Nussbaum, the central human capabilities are implicit in the idea of a life worthy of human dignity. The idea of human dignity indicates that the capabilities should be pursued for each and every person, treating each person as an end and none as only a means to achieve an end. A life without the capabilities is not a life that is worthy of human dignity (2007: 70, 74, 76).

The utilitarian theory of Richard Layard entails a different kind of argument in favour of equality. According to Layard inequality is bad because extra income brings less benefit to the rich than to the poor. Extra income increases happiness less and less as people get richer, but it means a lot for the happiness of poor people. In poor countries extra income increases happiness much more than in rich countries. To promote equality is thus a good means to produce the greatest possible happiness (2006: 52, 230).

As John Atherton has described, the happiness hypothesis may be used in an argument in favour of equality in two ways. First, there is a connection between income and happiness for those who are worst off. Poverty reduction increases the happiness of poor people. Second, there is a positive relationship between more equal societies and greater happiness. For the overall happiness in a society, inequality seems to have damaging consequences (2008: 130).

However, this utilitarian perspective gives a rather weak argument in favour of equality. From this perspective equality is a goal only if it increases happiness. If it does not contribute to overall happiness, equality should not be promoted. This is a position to be refuted. Equality is an important social goal in itself, independent of its consequences for the overall happiness in a society.

A more convincing argument in favour of an equal distribution is the principle of human dignity. Duncan Forrester has given a strong defence of this principle in his book *On Human Worth* (2001). He argues that each person is of infinite, and hence equal, worth and should be treated as such, independently of their ability, contribution, success, work or desert. This principle is the main reason for an equal distribution of social goods (2001: 30).

There are different arguments in favour of such a principle of equal human worth. One is that human beings are equal by virtue of their common humanity. Another is that there is a quality which is common to all humans, such as a free and rational will (2001: 43, 44). According to Christian theology, God ascribes the infinite worth of each person, independently of the individual's qualities and achievements. We are all created to be God's image and likeness, and therefore we are equal (2001: 45, 82).

If we accept such a principle of equal human worth, we have a strong argument in favour of an equal distribution of social goods. All humans are equal, and therefore justice means an equal distribution. We should strive for equality, even if it does not increase the pleasure in the world.

Conclusion

Two basic problems are dealt with in this chapter. One concerns the conception of a good human life within political economy and economic theory. What are the objects to value in economic analysis? The other problem concerns the relationship between equality and happiness. Is the happiness hypothesis a reasonable argument in favour of equality?

I have argued that welfare economics and neoclassical economic theory often presuppose an understanding of welfare in terms of preference satisfaction. This is a conception of human wellbeing which can be criticized from several perspectives. A good human life should not be understood as satisfaction of desires.

From this perspective I have given a critical analysis of the conception of happiness presupposed in the work of Richard Layard. According to him happiness should be understood in terms of pleasure and feeling good. I have argued that there are strong objections against this kind of hedonistic utilitarianism. Happiness should rather be understood in terms of human flourishing.

Finally, I have analysed another alternative to the conception of a good human life within traditional welfare economics. This is the neo-Aristotelian position developed by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum in their 'capabilities approach'. I have argued that this is a rather reasonable understanding of a good human life and the meaning of happiness. I have also argued that the capabilities approach gives an important perspective on the relationship between happiness and equality. We should strive for equality, even if it does not increase the overall happiness in the world. The reason is that all humans have an equal worth.

3 Happiness through thrift

The contribution of business to human wellbeing

Peter Heslam

Introduction

Commercial enterprise faces unprecedented opportunities to be an agent of positive social, material and spiritual wellbeing – of human happiness – in the contemporary world. This is partly because under the impact of globalization, business is becoming the predominant form of global culture as people all over the world belong to the same community of work. It is also because global business enterprise demonstrates an ability to lift people out of poverty. Although recognition of this is growing, many people concerned about poverty remain to be convinced. During 2005, the plight of the world's poor reached the top of the international agenda, due largely to the mobilization of a large conglomeration of NGOs, campaign groups, trade unions, celebrities and faith groups under the banner 'Make Poverty History'. The emphasis was on aid, debt relief and the reform of global trade rules. While the last of these gave tacit recognition to the importance of commerce, the campaign as a whole largely ignored the positive potential of business.

Obfuscating the contribution of business to human wellbeing is a major oversight, not least because foreign direct investment has now overtaken aid as the primary source of funding in the developing world. This shift promises greater effectiveness in delivering positive outcomes in terms of human happiness, in the rounded sense of wellbeing, because it gives people hope for the future and a vision of dignity, freedom and wellbeing that can be achieved through their own honest endeavour. This moral and spiritual vision is embodied in the habit of thrift, central to which is the delay of gratification that psychologists have long maintained is fundamental to human happiness. Without this vision, people perish as they resign themselves to a life sentence of poverty once aid fails to materialize or to deliver real change. There is no conceivable way to banish the poverty that prevents human wellbeing in the long term, therefore, other than through the vigorous growth of enterprise. This has been true for every rich country and it is true for every poor one now.

Business alone is not enough, of course. To really prosper, a nation requires the social institutions that characterize free societies, such as property rights and the rule of law. It also needs the cultivation of norms and the exercise of virtues

beyond the requirements of the law. These norms and virtues are instilled, nurtured, shaped, inspired and sustained through strong relationships, and through social institutions and networks (including religious ones) that are built on trust. As they do so, they form the kinds of mindsets and patterns of behaviour that characterize thrift. Business thrives on this habit – thrift derives from the verb 'to thrive' – and as it does so it mounts an assault on poverty.

Norms, virtues, relationships, trust, social institutions, networks and habits – these are all aspects of what social scientists increasingly call 'social capital'. Consequently, the wealth creation that is needed for human wellbeing cannot be regarded along narrowly economic lines that ignore the role of social capital. This chapter will therefore explore the development potential of the contribution business is able to make to social capital as it pursues its commercial objectives. But as social capital is a broad category it will be broken down into four of its key elements, even though they interact and overlap with each other: institutional capital, relational capital, moral capital and spiritual capital. Together they constitute a fresh research agenda that helps to throw light on the question 'What causes wealth?' Contrary to popular perception, this question is generally a greater preoccupation of the poor than of the rich.

Institutional capital

When a company, of whatever size, contemplates the possibility of beginning operations in a particular low-income country, it generally looks for certain institutional features such as private property, the rule of law, an independent judiciary, an effective and impartial police force, a free press, and a limited, functioning state. Without them, firms lack the assurance they need that their property rights will be upheld, the honouring of contracts can be enforced, the government can be held to account and that their freedom to operate will not be unduly hampered through poor or excessive regulation that gives opportunity for corruption.

This holds out the promise that foreign direct investment in developing countries will drive the development of institutional capital, which in turn will spur economic growth – a 'virtuous circle' of ever increasing institutional development and economic prosperity. The problem, however, is how to get this circle turning and opinions are divided as to whether economic growth leads to institutional growth, or vice versa. There is no space here to engage with this debate but the evidence does seem to suggest that making investment conditional on too many institutional reforms may not help economic development. It appears, in fact, that most significant institutional development occurs only when societies grow richer, partly because such development becomes more attractive to people whose income is rising and partly because it is less likely to be reversed once a country has passed a level of economic development amounting to around $6000 per capita GDP (Przeworski and Limongi 2000). This emphasis on the importance of economic growth does not suggest that economic growth is *sufficient* to create the institutional conditions favourable to growth, only that it appears to be

necessary. Over the long term, economic and institutional growth are nearly always co-developments.

The symbiosis of this relationship calls attention to the fact that other sectors of society, besides business, have a role to play in institutional development. Indeed, it is often when business works in partnership with government and civil society that each side of the partnership finds it can maximize leverage. And leverage is all important, as the people who are in the best position to tackle corruption and other failures of governance are generally the very people who benefit from it the most. Efforts to stimulate institutional development therefore have to strive towards conditions in which public and private agents consider it to be in their own interests to shun bad governance. But while it is well established that institutional development facilitates economic development, more research is needed into how business can stimulate institutional development. The fact that Transparency International's corruption scale (www.transparency.org) indicates that the freer and more open the market, the less corruption there is, should serve as a spur to this research.

Relational capital

Previously considered a marginal issue, relationships have come to be regarded as a key component of business success due to their impact on morale, motivation and productivity. Although their economic value defies precise measurement, staff retention and career development provide a rudimentary indication of a company's relational health (Tomorrow's Company 1995: 11). A 'relational health audit' has, however, been devised as a measurement and management tool (www.relationshipsfoundation.org) and many of the Most Admired Companies drawn up by *Fortune* magazine calibrate these kinds of measurements. The best companies to work for, it seems, are those that excel in the management of internal and external relationships. A champion in this area is Starbucks, which has actively sought to develop strong relationships with its key constituencies, including producers (Gulati *et al.* 2002: 3–6). Stimulated in part by Starbucks' success, 'relationships management' has risen to a place of prominence in expatriate executive training, the key emphasis in which is developing trust. A recent study by McKinsey of 231 global companies identified three management practices as essential for business performance, all of which have important relational implications: clear roles, an inspiring vision, and an open and trusting culture (Leslie *et al.* 2006).

But the development significance of strong relationships of trust extends well beyond competitive advantage and includes the role of business in peacebuilding. Conflict, warfare, violence and terrorism represent the most extreme forms of relational breakdown and they thwart economic growth. Indeed, such conflict represents the greatest deterrent to commercial investment. In the 1990s the *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman captured the link between peace and business in his well-known 'Golden Arches Theory' of conflict prevention, according to which no two countries with at least one McDonald's

restaurant have ever gone to war with each other. While this observation over-simplifies the role of business in peace building, and may indeed no longer be true, the contribution of commercial enterprise to peace and security has to be part of any investigation into the role of enterprise in alleviating poverty.

Endorsement of this suggestion appears to come from Pope John Paul II, who established a clear link not only between poverty and violence but also between development and peace. Indeed, he calls for economic development as the key to peace (*Centesimus Annus* #52). A similar vision appears to have inspired the 2009 New Year message of Pope Benedict XVI (www.vatican.va). But it also features in the work of the thirteenth-century theologian Thomas Aquinas, and in the loftier impulses of the seventeenth-century Dutch seaborne empire. These were expressed in the ideal of *Commercium et pax*, commerce and peace, the proud motto of Amsterdam that was reflected in its harbour crowded with foreign ships. Without meaning to simplify a complex issue, when people are at peace they tend to trade; and when they trade they tend to promote peace. Trade appears to help forge the strong relationships it demands, converting them into the relational capital that builds and sustains prosperity. But the dynamics here are little understood and require detailed investigation, partly in the search for business models that are effective in breaking the conflict trap that has locked so many countries and regions into poverty (Collier 2007).

Moral capital

The banking crisis of 2007/2009 confirms the suspicion of many that the market is unable to act as a moral agent because, based on greed, it is inevitably indifferent or hostile to virtue. It is, therefore, the duty of the state to impose ethical behaviour on business by means of regulation. The state does indeed have a regulatory role – libertarianism is only alive in textbooks. As the economist John Maynard Keynes (1883–1946) is famous for having argued, the invisible hand of the market needs assistance from the visible hand of the state. The state must, for instance, try to prevent certain markets from emerging (such as those in dangerous drugs or slavery), and to keep business away from those areas of human life in which it has neither a legitimate role nor competence. Regulation is necessary for human beings to be able to exercise freedom, including the freedom the market brings. There are three key reasons, however, why regulation is unable to secure an ethical market economy and why it *is* possible to look to business as a valid agent of the moral capital required to achieve and sustain prosperity. The first is that profit, on which society turns, is business's primary moral obligation, not least because it is only if this obligation is fulfilled that business can make any further contribution to moral capital, or to any other kind of capital. Profit is a means of serving what is the end of all economic activity, which is the human person. Within a competitive context, it can serve as a measure of how well this end has been served.

Second, enterprise is capable of inculcating and promoting ethical behaviour. Although the market economy is often regarded as the driver of rampant

consumerism, environmental destruction and family breakdown, such things merely reflect the fact that market freedom, like any other freedom, gives people opportunities both for virtue and for vice. Because freedom contains this inbuilt challenge, so too, by extension, does the 'free market'. Business faces this challenge on a daily basis, and its leaders need to be inspired, incentivized and resourced in order to meet it. Substituting legal coercion for this is misguided not because it imposes too much on business, but too little.

Third, the moral role of business is revealed in the fact that as Benjamin Friedman has demonstrated, economic growth can correlate positively with moral development (Friedman 2005). More detailed research is needed in this area, not least to establish causality, but Friedman's finding may find support, as did that of his namesake at the *New York Times*, in the encyclicals of John Paul II. The pontiff wrote: 'The advancement of the poor constitutes a great opportunity for the moral, cultural and even economic growth of all humanity' (*Centesimus Annus,* #28). The Pope's departure from zero-sum economics recognizes that economic and moral growth can and should coincide. For him, 'the training of competent business leaders who are conscious of their responsibilities' is a way in which rich countries can help poor ones (*Centesimus Annus,* #35).

Spiritual capital

Capitalism is as much about the human spirit as it is about material wellbeing. That is why spiritual capital, which is primarily about meaning and purpose, is an integral, though often overlooked aspect of business. It is aligned to, and dependent on, a broad definition of wealth that encompasses the enrichment not only of the body and mind but also of the spirit – a notion of wealth that inspires people to give of their best in creating it because it is about ultimate concerns. In business, spiritual capital is generally expressed in the overall aim of an entrepreneur or a company – their vision, motivation, values and how business objectives are worked out in relation to broader and deeper goals to which most humans aspire. It is about what is sometimes referred to as the 'spirit', or even the 'soul' of a company (Pollard 1996; Batstone 2003; Ressler and Mitchell Ressler 2007). As more people seek meaning and purpose in their lives through their work, giving attention to this matter is increasingly seen as important to the recruitment and retention of a motivated and productive workforce. Much work still needs to be done in this area. Indeed, the study of spiritual capital, like that of 'happiness', to which it closely relates, is a science in its infancy (Layard 2005). Further scientific analysis is also needed, for instance, into the nature of 'spiritual intelligence', that aspect of human intelligence which is often referred to as SQ, to correlate with IQ, the 'Intelligence Quotient', and EQ, 'Emotional Intelligence' (Goleman 1995). This would bring greater rigour and clarity to an area in which the findings of neurology, neuroscience, neuro-econonomics and positive psychology may offer promising insights into the role of business in spiritual development.

This field of investigation is not, therefore, one in which theology or religious studies has a monopoly of insight, reflecting the fact that a person may be high in SQ but have no religious faith, just as a religious person may have little SQ. SQ is about the innate human capacity to form meanings, outlooks, ideals and beliefs, and is, therefore, precultural, more primary than religion. It is a form of intelligence that allows humans to recontextualize problems by seeing them from a wider point of view and to draw on the best of their impulses in finding solutions (Marshall and Zohar 2004: 31–51).

It is true, of course, that the spirituality of most human beings takes religious form and preliminary research into religious capital is getting underway (Baker and Skinner 2006; Furbey *et al.* 2006). This is able to build on the insights of earlier studies which suggest that religious teaching, inspiration, motivation and support can play a significant role in stimulating and maintaining spiritual capital (Paloutzian 1981; Zika and Chamberlain 1987; Seligman 1988; Schwartz and Huismans 1995). Rabbi Harold Kushner (1987) echoed these findings in proposing that religion satisfies 'the most fundamental human need of all. That is the need to know that somehow we matter, that our lives mean something.' His words reflect the observation made by Viktor Frankl (1959) that, among inmates in Nazi concentration camps, greater stamina and resilience were generally shown by those who retained a sense of meaning and purpose that was often grounded in their (largely Jewish) faith. They also reflect the findings of a leading social capital researcher, Robert Putnam (2000), which suggest that religion contributes over half of the social capital of the USA.

Thrift

Despite a century of controversy following Max Weber's seminal essays that came to be published as *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, recognition is growing that immaterial factors such as worldviews, mindsets, attitudes, beliefs, virtues and values can have considerable impact on economic development.[1] Thrift is one of the most important of these factors, as it gives rise to behaviour that is fundamental to the kind of commercial enterprise that embodies, exemplifies and helps build the institutional, relational, moral and spiritual forms of social capital. As the credit crunch of 2007–2009 stemmed from a deeper institutional, relational, moral and spiritual crunch, this behaviour needs to be reinvigorated as part of any serious attempt to recover long-term economic stability and its associated benefits for the poor.

For most of the twentieth century, nearly everyone in advanced economies had access to grassroots saving and investment institutions, including building societies, mutual funds, savings book accounts and credit unions. While most of these pro-thrift institutions provided loans, they demanded evidence of creditworthiness and required a substantial deposit before granting a loan. Lotteries, casinos, predatory interest rates (usury) and other forms of thriftlessness were outlawed, and although pawnbrokers, bookmakers and loan sharks existed, their operations were generally considered disreputable.

Today the institutional landscape looks very different. While a pro-thrift sector still exists, it fails to serve ordinary citizens. Indeed, many commercial banks and investment funds have abandoned small savers and investors in favour of 'high net worth individuals' to whom they supply an ever increasing variety of tax-efficient investment opportunities. Simultaneously, financial institutions targeting low-income ('sub-prime') consumers have proliferated, along with credit card, hire purchase and student loan companies, cheque-cashing outlets, loan brokers, lotteries and online gambling facilities. The growth of this anti-thrift sector is partly responsible for the high levels of debt that have become an accepted feature of advanced economies but now threaten to undermine them.

The emerging two-tier institutional framework serving rich investors and poor debtors not only raises questions about the morality of debt, about which today's moral and religious leaders are generally outspoken, but also about the importance of thrift, about which such leaders are generally silent. Despite this silence, Hebrew and Christian scriptures provide solid foundations for a theology of thrift. Indeed, the word probably derives from an Old Norse word meaning, as noted earlier in passing, 'to thrive'. Literally it means 'prosperity' or 'wellbeing' – meanings encompassed in the Hebrew notion of *shalom*, which is broader than material prosperity and is central to the scriptural theme of redemption. The connotation thrift has with redemption is made clearer still when consideration is given to that aspect of thrift that has specifically to do with saving (from waste), in view of the scriptural notion that God saves human beings from the destructive waste of human waywardness. Thrift is able, therefore, to work redemptively, not least in preserving resources so that they can meet human needs and in saving the environment from the destructive wastefulness of carelessness and over-consumption. Not to be confused with 'stingy', thrift is an amalgam of attitudes and habits that helps people thrive because it involves the wise and grateful stewardship of the natural resources with which human beings are entrusted. It is a form of wellbeing that leads to the human flourishing that is reflected in, while not being limited to, the eudaemonistic kind of happiness that is characterized by fulfilment, rather than by hedonic pleasure.

Jesus's well-known warning against laying up treasure on Earth (Mt 6:19–21) cannot be understood, therefore, as an admonition against thrift but rather against greed and miserliness, which undermine thrift. In fact, the fear that generally accompanies these vices is evident in the words and actions of the third servant in Jesus's Parable of the Talents (Mt 25:14–30). This servant's fear, based on a harsh picture of God, led to actions that were unimaginative, unproductive and risk-averse. The fearless words and actions of the two servants who 'put their money to work', in contrast, reflect a God who inspires the kinds of imagination, productivity and responsible risk-taking that characterize the thrift needed to convert the barrenness of money into the fruitfulness of capital.

Having made this conversion, which underlies all investment and entrepreneurship, these two servants are welcomed into God's *shalom* economy: 'I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness' (Mt 25:21, 23). Their thrift is rewarded with greater stewardship responsibility and

happiness. This resonates with two further meanings and dimensions of thrift: 'prudence' and 'providence', words that appear in the names of two large investment companies that began as explicitly pro-thrift institutions: the Prudential and Friends Provident.

All this seems a long way from the situation today, in which debt levels have increased disproportionately to income. While easy access to credit can open the door to greater opportunity and freedom, it can, in the absence of thrift, close that door. Indeed, the repossessions associated with the sub-prime lending that preceded the credit crunch slammed shut many doors, not all of them metaphorical. While it is common to attribute all this to individual greed and recklessness, institutions also play a role in shaping human choices. They have the potential either to build or undermine the norms, values, habits, trust and sense of purpose – the social capital – that augment individual decisions with wider social considerations and commitments. Because such capital reduces the need for litigation and monitoring, it is 'efficient' and promotes economic growth. Anti-thrift institutions, in contrast, promote a culture of debt in which people find it almost impossible to delay gratification and fulfil goals that go beyond material concerns. They instil a psychology that predisposes people towards the hedonic rather than the productive use of money.

This psychology is alien to the creative, future-orientated and purposive mindset that is commended in Jesus's parable and which encourages investment. Grounded in hope, this mindset has been stimulated and sustained by the eschatological dimensions of Christian faith. This is reflected in research by Barro and McCleary (2003, 2006, 2007), which shows that belief in Heaven, Hell and the afterlife is particularly conductive to behavioural patterns that encourage economic growth. Their findings are supported by Ferguson (2004), who argues that the decline of Protestantism has been accompanied by a decline in Europe's work ethic, leading to the continent's economic stagnation. However true this is, the lottery presents itself to poor debtors as a means to future redemption. Decoupled from hard work, reward is attached to chance and fate. Would-be habitual savers and investors prepared to delay gratification are being made habitual bettors content only with instant gratification. If, as many psychologists have argued, the delay of gratification is fundamental to happiness, it is perhaps unsurprising that increasing levels of debt have been accompanied by the declining levels of happiness to which a growing number of researchers in economics, sociology and psychology attest.

Those who argue that nothing can be done about this, either because the obstacles are too high or because the market needs to be left entirely to its own devices, are like those who argued that nothing could be done about the wearing of seat belts or smoking in public places. There are, moreover, precedents for taking decisive action. The British government introduced a new threepence coin in 1937 depicting the thrift plant on one side, thereby promoting thrift by way of a pun made visual on a means of spending that was tangible and commonplace. Soon afterwards, during wartime, the British and US governments actively encouraged their citizens to exercise thrift by issuing war savings.

The contrast with the overriding response of the UK government in the wake of the economic crisis of 2007–2009 could not be sharper, the emphasis being on measures to encourage high street spending, such as lowering VAT and the cost of borrowing. The extent to which the shift from 'thrift is good' to 'spending is good' reflects Keynes's influence is a moot point but brief attention does need to be given to the 'paradox of thrift', with which his name is associated, because it is a widely held economic standpoint that resists the promotion of thrift. Should saving habits increase, this doctrine maintains, falling demand for goods and services results in lower economic growth and hence lower savings overall. Prodigality, therefore, rather than thrift, ensures a country's wealth. Economists holding this view, sometimes called 'stagnationists', argue that measures should be taken to reduce savings, such as reducing the investment opportunities of the rich by increasing their taxes. While many economists are critical of the paradox of thrift, it has found fertile soil among today's moral and religious leaders, where it finds expression in a closely related paradox: while consumption, and the advertising that fuels it, is good for the economy it is bad for society because it corrodes its moral and relational fabric (Charry 2004). In basic theological terms this is the idea that, in a fallen world, sin holds out greater material rewards than does redemption. Or, in moral terms that are often associated with Adam Smith, vice is better for the economy than virtue.

Smith does indeed give ground to the stagnationists and not only in the passage containing the famous quote: 'It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest' (Smith 1776: I.ii.22). Elsewhere he argues that the illusory appeal of wealth deceives us into hard work and productivity (Smith 1759: IV.i.10) and he conceded that there was some truth in Bernard Mandeville's well-known analogy of the beehive in his *Fable of the Bees*, according to which 'every part was full of vice, yet the whole mass a paradise'. Yet Smith was sharply critical of Mandeville's notion that economic growth is an unintended consequence of sins such as vanity, gluttony and greed, condemning it as 'ingenious sophistry', 'great fallacy' and 'wholly pernicious' (Smith 1759: VII. ii.98–106).

The value of Smith's critique of Mandeville lies partly in the challenge it makes to the assumption that the benefits of the market economy are contingent on vice. Although, from the perspective of redemption, private vice can lead to public virtue, there is no reason to downplay or dismiss the role of private virtue in promoting this outcome. Insofar as the current shaking up of the market economy is due to the impact of vices such as greed, it appears to indicate that a flourishing market economy owes more to virtue than to vice. Were capitalism to be based on material accumulation, as many critics contend, it would be logical to expect the aristocracy and peasantry largely to have been responsible for its rise, for while there is plenty of evidence that these classes generally prized accumulation – the former for vainglory, the latter for survival – there is little to suggest that this was characteristic of the more market-orientated middle classes, which rose on the tide of free trade. For them, the

Calvinistic Netherlands of the seventeenth century often served as a model of commercially based bourgeois culture. Under a Dutch king (William III) and Queen Mary II, they adopted Dutch institutions such as a central bank, a stock market and forms of commercial organization that gave birth to the modern company. They also adopted the habits of thrift required to make these institutions work, so that, by the end of the eighteenth century, England had in many ways become a commercial society (Langford 1992; Micklethwait and Wooldridge 2003; Gregg 2007; McCloskey 2007). The king no longer believed he had the right to seize money from the City of London, and the state of the economy, as Montesquieu observed, had begun to play a more significant role in politics (Montesquieu 1748). The change was far less radical than it had been in the Netherlands – the British upper classes exhibited anti-trade snobbery right up until the middle of the twentieth century (Heslam 2008: 170–172) – but the shift towards thrift-based wealth creation from heredity-based or deprivation-based wealth accumulation was crucial to the legendary social, moral and technological accomplishments, entrepreneurial spirit and commercial acumen of the Victorian era.

The transformative potential when moral fibre converges with commercial entrepreneurship is reflected in the demise of absolute poverty in the West and in an increasing number of countries elsewhere. Yet many of the countries that have become wealthy, at least in part, through this convergence have jeopardized livelihoods by spending far more than they have been earning and building up huge trading deficits. Meanwhile, several Asian cultures are excelling in the habits of thrift, in the case of China inspired in part by Confucian values, and it is to these countries that the West has been turning to meet its expanding borrowing requirements. There is no space here to discuss how thrift can be recovered and promoted within the debt-based culture of the West. But opinion formers and policy makers, who are increasingly emphasizing the importance of 'happiness', can perhaps draw inspiration from the way in which happiness is obtained in the Parable of the Talents and consider the following four suggestions: a public education campaign on thrift linked to government-backed bonds; the creation of a range of innovative thrift-based financial institutions that are relational and community-based; the development of national lottery ticket outlets as places where savings tickets may also be sold; and the prioritizing of entrepreneurship in education and in international development policy.

The second of these suggestions could draw from the experience of microfinance organizations in developing countries, such as the Grameen Bank, whose operations have strong relational dimensions – the pressure to repay is mediated through a group of fellow borrowers. With regard to the third suggestion, adverts could use a slogan such as 'Every ticket wins'. Millions of consumers, currently bombarded with gambling and credit options, would be offered a rare opportunity – the opportunity to invest. This would be no more, and no less, than the freedom and opportunity of the market economy – an economy built on thrift.

Conclusion

The core activities of wellbeing-enhancing commercial enterprise, dependent as they are on the exercise of thrift, are crucial to the exercise of soft power in the world today. The hard power of military might is, regrettably, sometimes necessary to secure human development. But soft power is chiefly about the positive potential of the institutional, relational, moral and spiritual dimensions of human culture that are as much part of the commercial sphere as they are of any other sphere of human society. The human wellbeing that is supported by social capital is increased when thrift-based business furthers these dimensions. It is partly due to insufficient regard for soft power that Western countries have sometimes relied too heavily on military solutions in furthering the cause of freedom, democracy, peace and security around the world. Much of the social capital that these countries enjoy has been built through economic activity, the commercial societies of the Netherlands, Britain and the United States having served as models for the rest. The resulting economic growth has raised prosperity to unprecedented levels for most human beings. In the process, business around the world has accumulated vast amounts of knowledge and experience about the conditions for growth, sometimes as a result of its own failings, such as those associated with the economic crisis of 2007–2009.

Globalization, which is not unidirectional (from West to East) but multidirectional, and increasingly so, holds the promise that this expertise can be disseminated to those areas of the world that are most in need of it. As key agents of soft power, entrepreneurial companies are the primary means through which this can be achieved. Business leaders need therefore to avoid all types of behaviour that encourage irresponsible risk taking and excessive debt, but they should also ignore the condescending attitudes that are often expressed towards them. These are reflected, for instance, in the fact that, whereas in many countries a career in the military often enjoys immense prestige, business is barely recognized as a profession. These attitudes are ironic in a global situation in which commercial power has overtaken military power as the chief means of human development. Business is the institution to which the world is becoming increasingly committed. It is the social form distinctive of an increasing amount of cooperative activity outside the family, government and personal friendships. While nation-states have been on the defensive, and voluntary associations, political parties and trade unions have been in decline, business has been gaining in strength, despite all kinds of setbacks. As a result, its potential to act on the world stage as an ambassador and agent of social good has never been greater.

This chapter has been written out of a desire to see that potential realized. Given the size of the challenge, however, it has been able to do little more than call attention to some of the key research fields that need to be explored. But hopefully this will help stimulate not only those who conduct academic research but also those who lead and advise companies, or who help shape perceptions of business within other spheres of society, to think creatively about the role of business in today's world. While the development case for business has been the

main theme of this chapter, the business case for development has been a sub-theme and one that is of no less importance in the search for effective solutions to poverty. Attempts to improve living standards and quality-of-life issues without the involvement of the private sector are bound to fail, just as business ventures without concern for such aspects of wellbeing will be disappointing in the long run. In this sense, although the relational, institutional, spiritual and moral aspects of business may be referred to collectively as soft power, they are no longer the soft issues they have often been thought to be. In a fragile and divided world they are becoming the hard issues, essential not only for reducing poverty and increasing wellbeing but also for successful business.

Note

The need for this growth is reflected in the suggestion by Rodney Stark (1996: 209) that 'historians today are more than willing to discuss how social factors shaped religious doctrines … [but] have become somewhat reluctant to discuss how doctrines may have shaped social factors'.

4 Happiness, work and Christian theology

Peter Sedgwick

Theology and the meaning of work

The question of why people work is not the same as the meaning men and women find in it. People work for all sorts of reasons: because they have to, to earn money, to 'keep the wolf from the door', and perhaps, if they are lucky, also to find meaning and fulfilment when they turn up to work in the morning. Almost 70 years ago William Temple in *Christianity and Social Order* spoke of service as the great meaning of work. However, such a meaning was hard to find when work was brutalizing and the only work available. The Church of England Mission and Public Affairs Council General Synod motion on Faith, Work and Economic Life (GS Misc 890B 2008: para 1) at their session in July 2008 quoted William Temple's *Christianity and Social Order* (1942) in its briefing paper: 'Nine-tenths of the work of the Church in the world is done by Christian people fulfilling responsibilities and performing tasks which in themselves are not part of the official system of the Church at all.' The Synod document goes on to speak of all economic activity, and all work, as relational:

> From the entrepreneur whose activity creates work for others, to the worker in manufacturing or the public sector, to the mother with children, the volunteer or the solitary who prays alone – all their work is, or can be, at an important level, directed to the good of others. The ends to which work is directed are therefore a reflection of the many ways, seen and unseen, in which the Spirit's life finds expression in people's relationships with one another.
>
> (2008: para 3:2)

Further reflections from the Synod paper are the opportunity for discipleship, and offering the 'potential for enabling us to participate in the creative activity of God' (2008: para 3.2). Temple wrote consistently about vocation. Service was vocation, and vice versa, and Temple's condemnation of the brutalizing effects of industrial work was that it made the expression of vocation so difficult. God's vocation may be to self-sacrifice, but only a saint could follow this road as a contribution to human welfare, as Temple notes (1942: 70–71). Most employees

find this very difficult (Suggate 1987: 89). Certainly Simone Weil, the French social activist, left wing in her politics, and mystical in her theology, sought this road in the 1940s. She eventually died of her lifestyle, as she identified with those suffering in the world, but this was a very unusual and costly expression of vocation. Neverthless, the call to holiness and sanctity may be found through the self-sacrifice of the self in boring and demeaning work, as Weil showed, and it is important that this aspect of Christian spirituality is not lost in the search for the contemporary feel-good factor in popular spirituality. For millions of people across the globe who do still work in terrible conditions it is their faith which makes of their work something which is offered to God. This is not to deny that such work needs to be improved (this is not an argument against campaigning against sweated labour) but it is to say that people can and do make of their work a way of serving others and offering their lives to God. Temple himself wrestled with whether a Christian idea of vocation and self-realization would involve the dimension of self-sacrifice. He was, after all, from a privileged and wealthy family – the only Archbishop of Canterbury to be the son of an Archbishop of Canterbury, in the days when they had large numbers of servants. What was, however, clear for Temple was that service and vocation for a Christian were intrinsically related. It was certainly true that self-realization can be part of a Christian's call to a particular vocation. 'Inclination is often a true guide to vocation', said Temple, but whatever the inclination the ultimate determinant is 'because in that field he can give his own best service'. Service is possible in commerce and industry as much as in teaching or medicine, claimed Temple, but it is much harder the less rewarding work is (Temple 1942: 70–71).

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s theologians, and the General Synod, have struggled to find the meaning of work in an increasingly globalized capitalism (CCBI 1997; Brown and Sedgwick 1998). However, this is not an easy task. Indeed, it would be much easier to find many attacks on the destructive effects of employment. Companies were once run by CEOs who had fought in the Second World War. Companies were like armies. They were hierarchical, slow moving, and what mattered was their manufacturing capacity. In the past 25 years all this has collapsed. Companies are very light, fast, interested in intellectual data and finance, and hire and fire at will. It is a familiar story. In the past, business ethics was rather like military ethics. If you instilled the right spirit into the company it would not rape or pillage, just as an army should not. Today who knows what deals are struck, what financial data manipulated, what spin put on intellectual data? The opportunities for malpractice are very high. Predictably, then, the past decade was one of the most corrupt in American business history, despite courses in business ethics in most business schools. Enron, WorldCom, and many other famous business names express the 'new corporate culture' (Byron 2006: 25).

It is, for example, very easy to find references to the brutalizing effects of modern capitalism on human dignity, and indeed family life, in contemporary theological writings. One example may stand for many. Cullen (2007) speaks of traditional Catholic beliefs of the family as vindicating 'an entire capitalist

economic system'. This leads to unjust, abusive pillorying in the service of an opaque political ideology. Another example may be cited from the same collection of essays. Manion (2007) writes: 'We are willingly duped into conspiring to keep ourselves chained to the forces of dehumanising capitalism which moves us ever further from a life with meaning, purpose, direction and fulfilment.' For both authors, and for many others, capitalism is the great evil, sin incarnate, to be overcome by either feminist socialism or an appeal to Pope John Paul II. The stringent criticism by the Papacy of modern employment is graphically shown in *Laborens exercens* (1984) and *Centesimus Annus* (1991). *Centesimus Annus* (1991: para 42) writes:

> Alienation is found in work when it is organised so as to ensure maximum returns and profits with no concern whether the worker grows or diminishes as a person … through increased isolation in a maze of relationships marked by destructive relationships.

John Paul II grew increasingly critical of modern capitalism and consumerism in the modern world. There is much that could be echoed here by Archbishop Rowan Williams. Writing of the liking by young people for clubbing and dancing, Williams (2000: 69) speaks of the egalitarian innocence of going clubbing:

> You appear equal, but behind this is the 'Byzantine politics of the fashion industry. The very clothes you wear to go clubbing are mired by capitalism. How does all this work? What makes it possible? Whose labour, in what conditions, whose investment, whose profit?

The dance industry is put alongside the export of live animals in barbarous conditions in the succeeding lines of the paragraph. It is clear that there is a sea change from the optimism of Temple – that somehow service could be possible in modern employment, if only industry were reformed (hence Temple's preference for nationalization of industry) – to the distaste of modern Catholic theologians in both Anglicanism and Roman Catholicism for the world of work.

Meaningful work and the search for inwardness

Nevertheless, it is within work that many people find a context in which they can ask questions about their identity. It is not clear whether this interest about meaning at work is driven by concern about identity, or whether it is rather that the world of work offers a location in which people can ask such questions. It is probably a bit of both. The rise of highly educated workforces (Cardiff has 31 per cent of its workforce with an NVQ 4 or above, which is a diploma or degree, far more than the UK figure of 24 per cent, and in great contrast to the overall Welsh figure of 21 per cent) doing highly skilled work does not make work more meaningful. Yet it is this rise in the skilled workforce which makes such questions possible. The new report by *The Work Foundation* (2008: 6) says:

> It seems impossible to imagine that in times of deep hardship, industrial strife, hunger and war, ideas so superficially felt as meaningful work might have some appeal. For much of the twentieth century, many young people sought meaning through a stance of opposition to 'the capitalist order' and by extension, the world of work. Has that period now passed?

The report goes on to examine the belief that the question of 'meaningful work' is a new phenomenon in human history. If there is reasonable economic and physical security in the majority of the industrialized West, if there is no realistic alternative to contemporary Western capitalism, and if risk is now seen as primarily about personal, health and relational issues (which could be combined, as with the rise of AIDS), then the question of meaning becomes more an internal one. *The Work Foundation* report quotes a 2006 survey which found that 51 per cent of workers said that their work was a means to an end, and yet also that 78 per cent found their work to be stimulating; 69 per cent said that work was a source of personal fulfilment; and 86 per cent denied that their work was meaningless. Other surveys have also found that work came second only to the family as the most important role in people's lives, while it has often been noted that a vast majority of people would seek to work even if they had an income to allow them to live comfortably without working. Work offers 'a sense of purpose or redemption, a source of challenge or enjoyment, (an) ability … to confer or reinforce social identity or identities' (Baldry *et al.* 2007: 40).

It is clear that companies can attempt to maximize the contentment found by employees, and that this may be seen as part of the Human Resources culture of belonging, commitment and engagement. There is much to admire in a company that celebrates achievement, nourishes talent and recognizes the desire of employees to develop their potential. Such an argument is predicated on the belief that employers and employees have shared interests. Over the past three decades management training has emphasized the need to create a culture of excellence, which will lead to commercial success for the company. Peters and Waterman's *In Search of Excellence* (1982: 323) defined a business generation.

How can you attach a meaning to work? You can take a questionnaire and ask a worker what they feel about their work, on a spectrum from meaningless to meaningful. You can also, for yourself, find meaning in what you are doing, irrespective of how satisfied you are with how the conditions of employment are. Experiencing work as meaningful or finding that the work which you do gives purpose, meaning and value to the rest of one's life is to move into the edges of philosophy or theology. It becomes lived experience, expressive, and leads into spiritual and ethical enquiry. Ultimately this may be seen as a search for the transcendent, or the ways of God with the world. Meaningful work is not however necessarily the same as vocation. Vocation involves the service of others, whereas meaningful work need not involve this element of service. *The Work Foundation* report argues that 'vocation plus self realization becomes meaningful work' but in fact it is not clear why meaningful work need involve the service of others. The report (2008: 42) struggles with this concept, which it calls a

'tentative double negative'. 'Proper concern for one's happiness and wellbeing is not incompatible with a moral point of view about the work that one does.'

Meaningful work does unite three things. First there is the craft ethic, well explored by Richard Sennett (2008) in his book *The Craftsman*. Sennett believes that Ruskin's ideal of the craftsman is able to be resurrected today, including the lamps of beauty, truth and life. Craftsmanship is doing things well for the pleasure of achieving this ideal. However, it should be noted that Sennett writes from the perspective of someone without any expressed belief in God. This means that the ethic of the craftsman fills the void left by the abandonment of belief. A Christian understanding of work as vocation has to go further than this, and explore the offering of work to God and the expression of love as service to others. Second, there are moral motives, such as trust, caring and perhaps vocation. I have already said how the report from *The Work Foundation* (2008: 38) struggles with this concept. Third, there are compensation motives, which include but go far further than pay. They can include leadership, authority, power and recognition. All three can create a feeling of intrinsic satisfaction.

The concluding section of the report by *The Work Foundation* acknowledges that unemployment remains a problem in Western Europe, especially in France among young people, as it was throughout Europe in the last century. There is also a question of the work–life balance, and an issue of the power of the state. Yet none of these have the hold that the new culture of inwardness has, especially on the young. It is interesting that the report ends up quoting Charles Taylor, but without the clear religious message of his latest work, *A Secular Age* (2007). The report ends by challenging organizations to recognize the aspirations of workers.

A Christian idea of work as vocation will want to stress that work is something that can be offered in prayer to the Creator, and the spirituality found in the activity of earning a living. This has always been part of the work of religious orders. At least one industrial chaplain, Peter Stubley (2002: 23), found inspiration from the Franciscans which was world affirming, ascetical and recognized the importance of human work. When the Franciscans were revived following the Reformation in 1921 in Dorset, their initial ministry was to the unemployed tramping the roads. The importance of a theology of vocation is that it finds a purpose in the valuing of work, as an offering by the created order to their Creator in love and adoration, with the sacrifice of self to serve others (altruism in happiness and social capital literatures). This goes beyond, although it includes, the idea of work as self-actualization in *The Work Foundation.*

Layard on happiness and work

We are now in a position to see the significance of Layard's study of happiness, especially as it relates to employment and work–life balance. Layard strongly emphasizes the importance of work for happiness. In this he follows earlier writers such as Robert Lane's *The Market Experience* (1991). The insights from social psychology are crucial to the engagement with economics, especially as it

engages with the literature on happiness. Lane is a distinguished social psychologist at Yale who has long established a bridge between economics and psychology. Neither Lane nor Layard (2005: 233), however, accepts that just any form of employment will produce happiness. It must be family friendly, with more flexible hours, more parental leave, and easier access to child care. He notes that family breakups can occur owing to shortage of time. This creates internal strain, which then breaks up the relationship, causing yet further unhappiness. Work becomes the enemy of the person seeking happiness. Flexible working practices are one of the main challenges of the modern workplace, as is entitlement to parental leave. In this, as in so much of his book, Layard looks to the Scandinavian societies as those that have moved closer to this ideal. Child care must be high quality, and there should be no social pressure on parents to work, unless they are living on benefits. Each family should decide for themselves if they want both parents to work, or not, unless they are on state benefit. Here Layard (2005: 178) argues that they should be willing to work at least part-time, once the children are of school age. He recognizes the delicacy of the situation, but nevertheless he feels that there are limits to the generosity of the state.

Layard discusses how low unemployment can be achieved, and also how the unemployed should be treated. Layard argues for the welfare to work approach, because he fears that the demoralization of the worker in long-term unemployment will lead to the inability to change the situation, and also the refusal to accept responsibilities to wider society. However, Layard does not accept that the United States and British model of hire-and-fire does anything positive to contribute to labour productivity. What would be far more rewarding would be to improve the apprentice system, which does not work well in Britain. The lowest paid tenth of workers in Britain and the United States earn only half the level of their counterparts in western Germany. This suggests to Layard (2005: 176) the existence of a pool of unskilled, disengaged workers.

Layard (2005: 67) talks of work providing not only an income but also an 'extra meaning of life'. It is not clear if this is the same as what *The Work Foundation* calls 'meaningful work'. It seems that Layard goes part of the way to *The Work Foundation*'s report, but not the whole way. He speaks of the self-respect and relationships created by work. He also says it is important that work should be fulfilling, so that we have control over what we do, and if the creative spark among us is denied we feel half dead. However, he does not elaborate much more on this point. Layard is rather mainly concerned with enforced unemployment, for he says that there is much less change in happiness between work and being 'out of the labour force' compared with work and unemployment. Unemployment is not something that one habituates to, even after two years, although it hurts less if other people are out of work in one's locality as well. Even when one is back in work there is a psychological scar. Kenny and Kenny (2006: 119) also refer to the social stigma of unemployment, and argue that employment is important because of the nature of human dignity. Human dignity echoes the Aristotelian idea that the happy life is one of reason expressed through action. Yet a third thinker, alongside Charles Kenny and Richard Layard, would be the

economist Amartya Sen. Sen, however, feels that being out of the labour market is more of a problem than perhaps Layard allows. Kenny and Kenny (2006: 119) show that Sen is certainly concerned that many legitimate welfare claimants do not claim because of concerns with dignity. Losing employment for Sen leads to social exclusion, fewer opportunities either to make decisions or to express yourself through action, and a weakening of social values. This may also include cynicism about social relationships. Kenny and Kenny (2006: 126) note as well that low-paid work does not always add to dignity. Adam Smith argued for a minimum wage, but this was not adopted, to the great detriment of the dignity of the working poor.

There is one area where Lane goes far beyond Layard. Lane argued as a psychologist (he calls himself a psychosocial economist) that there is a direct correlation between the cognitive complexity of job content, and the cognitive complexity of those who work at such jobs. It is a symbiotic relationship. Complex jobs attract people with more flexible minds, which in turn are developed further by the jobs themselves. Equally, jobs that are self-directed both attract certain sorts of people and develop that sense of inner direction to a much greater degree than would more hierarchical employment. Lane (1991: 246) writes:

> Prior work history is one of the most powerful predictors of recovery from schizophrenia, from drug addiction, and from alcoholism … At least statistically, if not in every case, capacity to work correlates highly with both mental health and capacity to love.

However, alienating work can only do so much. It can teach perseverance and a belief that one can overcome problems. For people to be stretched further, work needs both cognitive complexity, a sense of personal control, and some ability to make decisions at work. There is a close correlation between what Lane was writing in 1991, and where *The Work Foundation* is today.

This is also taken up by John Atherton (2008: 277) in his recent book *Transfiguring Capitalism.* Again he mentions the work–life balance; the importance of using taxation to promote shared public goods; and the idea of extending employee share ownership to increase cooperative working, with greater participation in economic decisions. Temple (1942: 97; Atherton 2008: 143) made a similar plea, calling for everyone to have ‘a voice in the conduct of business or industry which is carried on by means of his labour’.

Identity and faithfulness

The final part of this chapter will look at the particular theological contribution made by Vernon White (2002) in his book *Identity.* Partly because White is primarily a philosopher of religion, who writes on the nature of God, and on divine impassability, his book on human identity has not received as much attention from social ethicists as it deserves. White (2002: 43) argues carefully in his book

that the nature of divine identity is shown in covenant loyalty, or divine faithfulness through time and change. More theologically,

> When faced with sin and evil, faithfulness takes the shape of the divine acts(s) of grace, mercy and wrath, which constitute 'justification' within the overall process of salvation … it expresses the divine identity, therefore, as a purposive, dynamic, goal-seeking activity.

Divine faithfulness is related to divine power to achieve these purposes, and so divine omnipotence is given a moral framework which sets the context for the shape of human living.

Human beings have to express their identity through change and continuity by persisting with accountable actions and reactions. Despite radical change, the same person continues to be present, and for White this identity is best lived out in love and faithfulness. White (2002: 95) spends much time considering the biblical narratives as indicating what sort of faithfulness a Christian might be called to, but my interest is in his understanding of responsibility. It is not enough for an agent to express herself through particular actions. These actions must fulfil:

> [S]ocial roles by persons bound in the social practices of a community. The moral focus of human identity then becomes the character of people formed within and fitting such social practices and roles over time – and particular actions are only considered secondarily in so far as they flow from that character and its social formation.

White (2002: 95) recognizes the danger of this approach. It could lead – indeed, it has in the past most certainly led – to reducing 'the meaning of responsibility wholly to the performance of a social role within community beyond criticism'. He thinks of the trenchant criticism that was made by Bonhoeffer of the Lutheran idea of fixed orders of creation to which God's word calls individuals, and in which they lead their ordered lives. Such orders could certainly include work, but they were open to the misuse of power without it being challenged. So White sketches out a much more open understanding of how roles and responsibilities relate. There are limits to what we should do, especially if another person acts in a particular way. Roles can come to an end, and our responsibility with them, says White (2002: 95). It is sometimes causally impossible to exercise a role of commitment unilaterally if role circumstances have changed. In employment, one of the great dilemmas of the past 20 years has been the change in the nature of work in the public sector. There are many public servants who felt that the changes in role being carried out by employers – such as a far more explicit measurement of outcomes, emphasis on value for money and enforced flexibility – meant that the profession or career to which they had committed themselves no longer existed. That is certainly the burden of David Faulkner's fine study of the criminal justice system, *Crime, State and Citizens: A Field Full of Folk* (2001), where a distinguished civil servant at the Home Office expressed the

dis-ease felt by many professionals at the new regime that now defined roles in the prison service, probation service, and much else. It was now impossible to live out the commitment, or vocation, that had defined the character of many civil servants. Meaningful work went into reverse and human identity was affected, in this case for the worst.

It is time to relate this back to the main argument of this chapter. White (2002: 137) argues that the Christian theologian should be aware that contemporary society will often provide a semblance of participation, faithfulness and loyalty that is deceiving. At least the older world which William Temple wrote about in 1942 knew where the buck stopped. This world was bureaucratic, hierarchical, using instrumental reason, in a ruthless way. It separated out values at work, such as efficiency, specialization, division of labour and the like from wider moral values, such as personal identity, love and wellbeing. The new culture of work is seductive. It can, as White (2002: 137) says, generate the experience of intimacy, normally only found in human friendships and families. What matters is how this culture is evaluated. One of the key criteria for evaluating this new work culture is that of faithfulness. If there is a divine–human continuum of faithfulness, then it is surely the case that 'an overall presumption of faithfulness will push the company to provide an overall narrative of meaning at work, rather than discrete bundles of meaning'. There should be some sense of connection between individual work projects, not merely though the 'product' of the project, but through the knowledge, skills and personality of the worker. The older order was hierarchical, and often oppressive. Yet sometimes this organization, paternal though it was, could provide a stability and framework to people's lives. Working for the company was not entirely a myth sold by capitalists to the workers. The difficulty is how this order can be replicated in today's world? (White 2002: 145).

Perhaps this is to ask too much of a company. Perhaps this stability is found only by belonging to unions, guild affiliations and professional bodies. But if the concept of faithfulness has any meaning at all, then the religious (or at least Christian) contribution to Layard's writings on happiness will be to talk not only of happiness at work, not only of meaningful work which serves others, but of faithfulness in working identity. This working identity will of course evolve, but the exploration of how human identity is voiced through self-expression over time via 'social roles by persons bound in the social practices of a community' will continue to need the evaluation of the theologian. The dynamics of faithfulness are not exclusive of change, but there has to be continuity over time. Sedgwick (2007: 217) has explored how the vocation of the Christian in the world of work could be difficult to discern, and used the phrase 'polyphonic living'. Something of the same wrestling with continuity and change is also being hinted at here, but with much more emphasis on faithfulness and continuity. But what is clear is that Layard's emphasis on happiness through meaningful work will continue to challenge the social policy maker, as much as the theologian, in the years to come.

5 Happiness isn't working, but it should be

Malcolm Brown

In his famous essay on Charles Dickens, written in 1939, George Orwell described the kind of happy ending which Dickens, and his Victorian readership, cherished:

> The ideal to be striven after, then, appears to be something like this: a hundred thousand pounds, a quaint old house with plenty of ivy on it, a sweet womanly wife, a horde of children, and no work … nothing ever happens except the yearly childbirth. The curious thing is that it is a genuinely happy picture, or so Dickens is able to make it appear. The thought of that kind of existence is satisfying to him.… No modern man could combine such purposelessness with so much vitality.
>
> (Orwell 1970: 491)

But is Orwell's final judgement quite correct? The aspirations of early twenty-first-century English people are perhaps more easily and more accurately deduced from a close reading of advertisements than of novels and, naturally, some of the detail will differ. But with a few colour supplements by the chair, and the television on in the corner, a parallel account of a 'happy ending' today is quite easy to construct. Similarly described from the male protagonist's perspective, it might be something like this: a hundred thousand pounds a year, a large, modern house with a smart car in the drive, a sweet, womanly wife, two children – a boy and a slightly younger girl – and no work. Nothing ever happens apart from numerous holidays and leisure activities. This too is a genuinely happy picture, or so the advertising designers are able to make it appear. The thought of this kind of existence is satisfying to most of us. (Post?)modern man seems well able to combine such purposelessness with such obvious images of vitality.

Orwell's point was that Dickens both reflected and helped to mould mid-Victorian notions of happiness. Today's advertisers similarly claim to be reflecting, even as they help shape, the aspirations of contemporary society. Scoffers like me should not lightly dismiss the power of such images of happiness, even as our minds and hearts rebelliously inform us that such purposeless lives must surely be lacking something of significance.

One characteristic of the happiness proffered by Dickens and the advertisers alike is the absence of any hint of commitment to a cause greater than the self and the immediate family circle. Earlier in the essay, Orwell had noted how Dickens's often angry social commentary was not accompanied by the slightest notion of any political programme. It was once said that Orwell could not blow his nose without commenting on the oppressive conditions in the handkerchief industry, but his criticism of Dickens is not unfair. The question, for the Christian as much as for the political activist, is whether there are viable models of happiness which can sit alongside the notion of commitment to change.

Indeed, it is worth asking how Christians are supposed even to contemplate happiness this side of the eschaton. The Kingdom has come in Christ but remains uncompleted in a world still living with the persistence of sin. Even those convinced of their own salvation cannot ease up from the work of helping the Kingdom to come, and the contemplation of the gulf between how things are and how they might be in God's own dispensation. The Dickensian happy ending in which nothing of significance happens is hard to square with Christian discipleship. For anyone committed to some kind of eschatological vision of how things are meant to be (and not only for Christians) some very different notion of happiness seems called for.

If the world is understood as incomplete, fallen but redeemable, then to be happy with things as they are is to risk detaching oneself from God's project. And, insofar as the Kingdom comes in God's good time and not by our own efforts (although, without our efforts, its coming can be frustrated), a theological understanding of human happiness will need to embrace some notion of continual struggle rather than being posited on the completion of a discrete process of change. As Ronald Preston put it, the challenge of Christian living is 'how to maintain a *parousia* radicalism when a *parousia* is not expected' (Preston 1991: 170).

Being happy, then, within a Christian understanding of salvation history is likely to be discovered in the pursuit of happiness rather than in the illusion of its achievement. This is where the Dickensian, and the advertisers', images of happiness are so obviously deficient. It is as if human lives are conceived of in novelistic terms, whereby struggle, uncertainty and change resolve themselves into a present and future where it is normal for nothing further to change. An interesting contrast here is between the staple American cop-shows like *Ironside* or *Starsky and Hutch*, where despite violence, fear and numerous on-screen deaths, each episode invariably closed with the central characters bonding with each other in laughter, and the Sherlock Holmes stories of Arthur Conan Doyle. When there is no disruption of the everyday by some intriguing case, Holmes reaches for the cocaine bottle to stave off ennui. Normality for Holmes is when the veneer of order is constantly subverted by the bizarre and the deviant. Only when Doyle tried to bring the stories to closure by introducing the 'Napoleon of Crime' did he betray himself into an inconsistent worldview in which the final defeat of Moriarty through the sacrificial death of Holmes (who thus became a debased saviour figure, later – and reluctantly – resurrected) restores the certain-

ties of an unchanging and unchangeable social order. But this is far from the mental atmosphere of the early, or indeed the subsequent, stories where the normal state of things is understood to be a perplexing mix of good and bad motives, cupidity, rage, deception and abuse of power, as well as virtue, decency, truth and honour. The struggle for the better against the worse is continuous and an inevitable consequence of human nature. In contrast, American TV adventures have maintained a decades-long pattern of crude Manichaeism in which a static social order is preserved through innumerable skirmishes at its boundaries, each of which is brought to an explicitly happy ending (at least for the key characters) ready for a new battle to begin the following week. Struggle is, literally, episodic and abnormal: happiness is for the closing scene when a static normalcy has been restored. Strange that *Kojak* should be, in this respect, more Dickensian than Holmes.

The idea that happiness is to be found in the struggle for change, within a world of complexity, echoes an Aristotelian teleology in which a life properly lived is concerned with discovering and pursuing distinct ends, and the 'good life' is not just a desired end but is discovered in the pursuit of the *telos*.

Commitment to a teleology brings with it some sense of what it is to be virtuous. Virtues are those aspects of character which promote the good and give content to the idea of obligation and what we ought to do. Without some commitment to ends outside ourselves, the concept of virtue is vacuous. Being good matters because it is measured against some notion of 'the good' which is formed in relationship with others and against some canon of virtue: in contrast, being happy seems merely solipsistic.

But should it not be the case that being good makes one happy? To the extent that our lives fully integrate ideas, values, actions and reflections, perhaps goodness is indeed its own reward and the reward is happiness. But most people live in the middle of a complex battlefield of rival beliefs and differing accounts of the good life. Christian ethics has rarely escaped this mêlée. To the extent that the Christian faith is a holiness movement, it calls its adherents into a closed account of virtue and acknowledges happiness only in terms of the internal life of the people of faith insofar as their lives conform to the demands of faithful discipleship. Other accounts of happiness are snares and delusions. But insofar as Christianity is a missionary faith, its members are called to 'mix it' with the cultures around them and to make their own account of virtue intelligible to other stories about what it is to be good or happy. If this is done seriously, it cannot but give some consideration to whether happy atheists, humanists or, say, Muslims are in fact happy because, however dimly, they have already grasped an aspect of God's truth. It all depends on the extent to which one accepts the possibility of a natural theology accessible outside the revealed truths of scripture and tradition. The problems of resolving this tension underlie the great controversies in Christian ethics today, as the strongly communitarian strands epitomized by Stanley Hauerwas, Radical Orthodoxy or some forms of evangelicalism (currently in the ascendant) clash with the enduring liberal tradition of Reinhold Niebuhr and his present-day heirs such as Ian Markham who has

attempted the revitalization of natural theology (Markham 1998). And this unresolved tension is not only a feature of the academy but is introducing some paradoxical alignments in practical church polity. Anyone who has become used to classifying British evangelicals as part of a holiness culture within the church has to reckon with the unashamed collusion with consumer culture which underpins the arguments of the best-selling report *Mission-Shaped Church*. Acknowledging, of course, that evangelicalism is far from being a united or monolithic movement, the rekindling of the mission imperative in the Church of England, largely but not entirely an evangelical phenomenon, reopens the perennial problem of how far a missionary church must compromise with the fundamental ideology of the surrounding culture – and how far any such compromise damages the church's calling to holiness.

There is much more one could say about the shifting patterns of liberal and communitarian theology within the practical witness of today's church, not least about the correlations between right- and left-wing political agendas and theological stances on church life. But the key point is that the simple, fully integrated, Christian community, in which all values and virtues coalesce to make good people happy, is likely to be deficient in its outworking of the Christian vocation to mission. People form their notions of happiness from many sources and numerous competing narratives, and the extent to which these narratives overlap with the Christian tradition is strongly contested within that tradition itself. Being happy may, for most Christians, have a very strong component of being good, as goodness is understood in the churches. But one glance at the lifestyles of many churchgoers, and an ear cocked to their conversations over coffee after the service, suggests that their hopes and aspirations, values, and concepts of goodness, differ but little from those of the communities and cultures they inhabit most of the week. This is, emphatically, not an accusation of hypocrisy. Rather it is the inevitable consequence of living as a missionary church in a post-Christian world where the interweaving of Christian faith within the fabric of society is rapidly changing and extraordinarily hard to map. The implications for Christian understandings of happiness are interesting.

Take marriage.[1] After all, it is the bedrock of the family, in turn the central component of the Dickensian happy ending. Should the partners in an unhappy marriage separate? And, if they do, have they for ever drawn a line under the possibility of seeking happiness in matrimony ever again? The marriage service speaks of matrimony as reflecting the faithfulness of Christ to His Church and, thus, as a vehicle for living out the Christian virtue of fidelity. Similarly, Jesus' own teachings on marriage appear to focus on the virtue of faithfulness and say little of happiness as the object of marriage. But the Prayer Book also speaks of marriage as 'for the mutual society, help and comfort that the one ought to have of the other', and this end is hardly achievable in a relationship marked by misery. Indeed, the relative emphasis given to the different objects of marriage, as the Prayer Book crept towards its definitive form, was strongly contested (MacCulloch 1996: 421f.; Martin 2003: 4–15). No wonder, since the continual dilemma of so much practical theology – whether and when ethics should trump

compassion, and vice versa – is at stake in the Christian understanding of marriage as elsewhere. Adrian Thatcher hints that a deeply unhappy marriage should not be prolonged for what are essentially doctrinal reasons (Thatcher 2002). But that only raises the question of how unhappiness is to be evaluated socially – for the Christian, that is, in the context of the church which forms his or her notions of virtue, and simultaneously in the surrounding and inescapable society and culture. The church of Christendom could, perhaps, get away with conflating Christian virtue and good citizenship in a way which led to a broadly consistent picture of where the boundary of endurable unhappiness might lie. No such clarity is on offer for a missionary church in a complex, plural and essentially emotivist culture.

It remains that the church of today has colluded massively with a notion of happiness in marriage which, because ill-defined, draws promiscuously (as it were) on strands of culture within and beyond the church. The equation between Christian marriage and a 'happy' marriage has been promoted in the context of predominantly pastoral church life which mostly subordinates ethics to 'caring', with the result that the church has become pastorally incapable of preaching virtue with consistency. A Christian in a difficult marriage is perfectly entitled to ask whether he or she should strive to be faithful against whatever provocation, or should strive to be happy, since the concept of an unhappy Christian marriage seems to be beyond the church's pastoral vocabulary. The possible retort that fidelity and happiness are inseparable and that no one can be happy who breaks their marriage vows neglects the obvious point that all marriages (like all relationships) involve more than one moral agent, each having the power to subvert the happiness of the other, however hard they pursue the virtue of faithfulness. As the Church of England's compromises with remarriage following divorce show, the imperative of fidelity, despite its gospel warrant, has been almost completely eclipsed by pastoral concerns (although the continuing ban on remarried clergy becoming bishops demonstrates the token *moue* of distaste that so often accompanies necessary moral compromise). Nor has the trite rhetorical claim that Christian marriage and happy marriage are coterminous dropped out of the church's pastoral lexicon.

Both in the Dickensian and the contemporary context, the marriage ideal is one of cosy sameness and inaction. As John Milbank points out in another context, most sexual attraction in the modern West is essentially homoerotic because it is predicated on finding a partner sufficiently like us to reflect us back to our selves (Milbank 2002). What has been lost is an understanding of marriage as an encounter with an ultimately ineffable other. The insipid ideal 'happy marriage', with which the churches appear to collude with enthusiasm, cannot be the foundation of any viable social ethic or the breeding ground of virtues, despite the rhetoric of marriage as the bedrock of society, since it explicitly keeps the complexity of multiple 'othernesses' outside its purview. The moral focus on marriage has, indeed, become almost neurotic – perhaps because, by investing marriage with supreme moral significance, one is left free to act amorally in commercial, political and other spheres where otherness is truly inescapable. As

MacIntyre puts it, ‘ “immoral” ’ and “vice” become associated in the nineteenth century with whatever threatens the sanctity of the Victorian marriage – that last refuge of those who, outside the domestic sphere, were quite prepared to be scoundrels’ (MacIntyre 1985: 233).

There is much more that could be said about happiness and virtue in the context of marriage and family life. But having attempted to disturb one feature of the complacent Dickensian happy ending – the happy and fecund marriage – let us consider another aspect of the picture he paints and which today’s advertising imagery perpetuates. This time, it is not what is in the picture which needs upsetting, but what is explicitly absent from it which needs affirming – purposive work.

It is telling that, of all activities, work should be essentially absent from both the Dickensian and the contemporary ‘happy ending’. It would be foolish to deny that, for very many people in all strata of the labour market, the experience of work in its modern forms can be profoundly disintegrative and hard to connect with the virtues. But the consciousness of this is itself testimony to the enduring belief that work should be a very different sort of moral experience. Many voices today draw attention to the character-forming nature of human work and, at the same time, to the potential of economic structures to frustrate the formation of virtuous characteristics among workers. Richard Sennett makes just this point, arguing that an emphasis on competition, and a fixation on ‘winners’ and ‘losers’, has helped destroy the ability of workers to make their work meaningful (Sennett 1998). He cites the example of a janitor who developed a strong sense of what it meant to be a ‘good janitor’ – and the janitor’s son, a Wall Street broker, who lamented his inability to convey virtues such as truth-telling, loyalty and honesty to his own children because they could see how his working life undermined and belittled those values.

Sennett’s (true) story of the janitor who understood what it meant to be a *good* janitor to some extent takes us beyond MacIntyre’s rather arbitrary definitions of what kinds of work are, and are not, to be construed as practices. He says, in *After Virtue*, that:

> By a ‘practice’ I am going to mean any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that activity,… Bricklaying is not a practice; architecture is. Planting turnips is not a practice; farming is.
>
> (MacIntyre 1985: 187)

It seems that the bricklayer and the turnip planter are not destined to enjoy the happiness of being *good* bricklayers or turnip planters, since MacIntyre does not recognize the possibility of internal goods attaching to their work. Without denying the existence of much work that is mindless and purely mechanical, MacIntyre’s examples must be questioned, for if it is possible to conceive of *bad*

turnip planting or bricklaying (and it is),[2] then it must be possible to speak of the internal goods of these activities and, thus, to regard them as practices. MacIntyre goes on to characterize the internal and external goods of a practice through the example of teaching a reluctant child to play chess by offering the child sweets for every game the child wins. As long as only the external goods are in view, the child has no incentive not to cheat if he can get away with it. But the hope of the teacher is that, in time, the child will come to understand that chess, being in MacIntyre's sense a practice, has internal goods and that winning is not the sole characteristic of a good chess player or of a game of chess well played (MacIntyre 1985: 188).

Work, then, if understood as a practice through which it is possible to pursue internal goods, becomes a likely vehicle for happiness because it is active, directed to external goals and yet, by being capable of being done well or badly, is also about virtue.

Another reason for looking to purposive work as a vehicle for the pursuit of happiness is that the location of most work within the marketplace means that it almost inevitably involves a negotiated encounter with others who may not share one's own moral structures. Like MacIntyre's definition of a practice, it is a cooperative human activity, but one in which cooperation must almost always cross the boundaries of discrete moral communities. In this, it is the opposite of the Dickensian cosiness of family and the epitome of what, according to Milbank, marriage should be but, in contemporary culture, is not. At work, the encounter with profound otherness and difference is almost inescapable.[3]

My point here is that, as I suggested earlier, understandings of being happy may be formed in a variety of moral contexts. Christians do not live out their whole lives among fellow believers – if they did, it would be a dereliction of their missionary calling. Participation in purposive work, organized within a market model which treats plurality as a given, is one very significant location where virtues, and ideas of happiness, may be shaped. Because work typically requires cooperative effort with people who have not been selected on the basis of a shared moral formation, a Christian account of virtuous work, and how work can become part of the pursuit of happiness, must be capable of dialogue with other versions of what it is to be good or happy. The relational aspect of most work, the fact that few labour markets allow Christians, or any other monochrome ethical group, to work in isolation from others, and the extent to which people still gain self-knowledge and self-worth from their working lives, make purposive work a natural location for exploring the meaning of happiness from different ethical perspectives. Inevitably, since happiness is hard to pursue when deeply at odds with those around one, Christian understandings of happiness can be moderated, modified or qualified in the shared endeavours of working life. On the other hand, happiness is, as we have seen, discovered in the pursuit of it, and the trajectory of the pursuit is informed by commitment to a vision for change. This is certainly the case for the Christian who, in the ethical melting-pot of working life, has to seek common understandings with others while maintaining integrity with the tradition of faith, and the community which embodies it.

Happiness, for the Christian, is, like so much of the life of discipleship, a matter of engaging with the worldviews of others while calibrating them against a theological yardstick. It is a dialogic process in which what it means to be 'happy' is understood as both of the world and beyond the world. This is to be expected within the Christian dispensation because we know ourselves to inhabit the theological interim in which the glory and grace of God is known through the Spirit, yet sin persists and the Kingdom, already inaugurated, is not yet fulfilled. And so we come back to the tension between holiness and mission.

It would be wrong to make too much of the gap between Christian and other notions of happiness. As Nigel Biggar has powerfully argued, what matters is not Christian distinctiveness so much as Christian authenticity (Biggar 2006: 9–19). Christians and others may occupy similar ground but get there from different premises and via differing chains of reasoning. So the pursuit of happiness for the faithful may lead them, for authentically theological reasons, to combine their efforts with those of others in some common cause that is not explicitly 'Christian' but is none the less perceived to further the aims of the Kingdom. Good work may very well come into this category. Nevertheless, precisely because the Christian's rationale for joining the collective project is specific to that faith tradition, the possibility of a parting of the ways remains always open. Limited agreement about how to be happy, rather than the complete assimilation of one tradition into some unspecific melting-pot of rationales, is what is meant here. But limited agreements need not be negligible.

Given the potential of purposive work to generate a context for the pursuit of happiness in which differing ethical traditions may cooperate together for limited ends, how might work be structured to make this aim both feasible and coherent within the Christian theological tradition? If we can offer some tentative answers to this question, we may be able to construct a model of work which, while explicitly theological, could still be recognized for its virtuous orientation by others who do not share the theological starting points. If work is highly significant in the formation of virtue and the pursuit of happiness, then a way of ordering and understanding work which simultaneously coheres with Christian belief is recognizably good even without its explicit theological framework, and which is thereby communicable beyond the household of faith, is not to be sniffed at. One possible outline of such a theology of work was proposed as long ago as 1941 by the novelist and theologian Dorothy L. Sayers.[4]

Revisiting Sayers' theology of work is not intended to suggest that this is, in some way, a definitive understanding or one on which a considerable edifice might be constructed. Rather, it is intended as an example of how an unashamedly theological approach to purposive work might not only satisfy the Christian desire for belief and practice to be integrated but may also be recognized as virtuous even when the specifically Christian content is omitted. In addition, this is not to imply that the theological element is a mere add-on or appendix. It is an example of Biggar's argument that Christians may authentically occupy the same territory as people of other faiths and none without retracting from their specifically theological rationale for being there. If purposive work is one arena

in which happiness is pursued, and if, as I have suggested, the possibility of engaging with others to pursue happiness collectively is important, then an approach such as Sayers' is an indication of how Christian ethics can help create a framework within which a profound and shared notion of happiness becomes possible.

Sayers developed a Trinitarian theology of work as she reflected upon her own craft as a writer, but her thinking is not confined to the work of artists as such. The creative worker, in whatever field, is driven by an Idea – a glimpse of the whole work that is to be made or performed. This can apply as much to service industries, engineering, homemaking, childcare or leading worship as it does to the craft of the writer. The Idea is realized through the application of Energy; mental, physical or spiritual. When the work is done and the Idea is embodied in the activity, or Energy, it creates a reaction in the creator and in those who receive the work – this response demonstrates the Power of the work and confirms the importance of relationships in making work good, whether the recipient is the customer, the client, the public or the colleague. Idea–Energy–Power: Sayers sees these as analogous to Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In other words, the reflective worker is participating in the activity of the Trinity and mirroring to the world the way in which God, as Trinity, engages with the created order.[5]

When Sayers published *The Mind of the Maker*, it was suggested by critics that she had discovered a Trinitarian pattern in human work because, in effect, her own faith had planted the idea within her argument. In other words, her understanding of Christian doctrine shaped her conception of work, rather than her analysis of work shedding light on the nature of God. Sayers accepted the likelihood of this but, rightly in my view, argued that it made little difference. It is a perfectly legitimate exercise to argue deductively that, because God is like *this*, our understanding of the world should be like *that*. The point is that Sayers offers us an analysis of good human work which makes sense to the Christian because the pattern of the life of the Godhead may be discerned within it. But a non-Christian or a non-theist can, in principle, recognize the progression from the Idea to the Energy to the Power, and attach to it as much or as little wider significance as they wish. It remains, perceived from almost any angle, a worthwhile account of how good work might be distinguished from bad, since it simultaneously emphasizes the integrity of activity and conception, the expenditure of the worker's personal efforts, and the fundamentally relational nature of work which, even if it is performed in solitude, impacts upon a wide constituency of others. In that work of this nature harnesses personal commitment to the pursuit of meaningful change, it fulfils to a great extent the conditions for being a vehicle for happiness. In that work usually brings the ethical agent into contact, indeed into cooperative activity, with other agents who may not share the same ethic, it brings the pursuit of happiness out of the ethical ghetto (Christian or otherwise) and allows a teleology of happiness to be negotiated rather than imposed. In all of this, the Christian worker is reinforced in discipleship by the knowledge that, insofar as work can be ordered to allow energy to be applied to

ideas for the purpose of power, the image of the Triune God can be identified, behind the scenes, as it were, and the possibility of the work being considered as participation in the divine action is kept open.

To reiterate, I am not claiming that Sayers' Trinitarian theology of work is definitive, or a model for all to follow. I use it as an example of how a theological perspective on a facet of human activity can, first, allow the Christian to share territory with others without compromising an authentically theological worldview and, second, to show how happiness can be pursued, with others beyond the community of faith, in ways which are, none the less, coherent with a profoundly theological understanding of how the world works. In other words, it is not necessary to Christian versions of happiness to be cloistered with like minds and doctrinal uniformity, nor is it necessary to abandon the authentically Christian commitment to divinity and transcendence in order to pursue happiness in a plural world. The missionary and the holiness strands in the life of the church can be reconciled without making it impossible for Christians to pursue happiness in a wide range of social relationships.

To bring this argument to a close, it is worth noting that, during a parish course on 'Theology in Film', the scenes from well-known movies which were consistently regarded as the most appealing were those that depicted purposive work by groups of people. The barn-raising sequence with the Amish community in the Peter Weir film *Witness*, starring Harrison Ford, is a good example. So is the creation of the Jesuit mission community in Roland Joffe's *The Mission* with Robert de Niro and Jeremy Irons. In *Witness*, the work of barn-raising becomes, explicitly, the point at which the community ethic of the Amish and the 'outsider' ethic of the Harrison Ford character are reconciled in mutual labour. The example from *The Mission* is designed to illustrate the collaborative work of the Jesuits and the indigenous people and is, perhaps, a more obviously contrived image of happiness given the utter devastation of the community with which the film concludes. The moral ambiguity of the mission project is explored sensitively throughout the film, but the creation of the community is still one of the most optimistic and affirming images which most viewers seem to draw from it.[6]

These are the scenes which prompt ordinary Christian people to identify something attractive and uplifting in selected Hollywood movies. Not so much 'happy endings' as 'happy middles'. It is the getting there, not the arriving, that speaks most eloquently of happiness, and even more so when the work involved in getting there reconciles, even temporarily, conflicting outlooks. Happy endings of the Dickensian sort give us nowhere to go next. Construing happy endings in terms of marriage and family is too constricting, too insulated from the surprising, perplexing and sometimes disorienting plurality of a world full of other people. But if, instead of writing work out of the happiness script, it was taken as a rich and promise-filled place for pursuing happiness, the possibilities are manifold. Christian theology becomes a way of interpreting the world which enables work to cohere with faith without retreating into a closed, communitarian ethic. Dickens, as have so many who have come after him, has been looking in the wrong place for happiness, and has sold us all short in consequence.

Notes

1 Some of my argument here about marriage is similar in tone to much of what Stanley Hauerwas has to say on the subject (Hauerwas 1981). However, I go on to develop the argument in a significantly un-Hauerwasian direction in the context of purposive work and the encounter with others.
2 It was said that the National Vocational Qualification in bricklaying, when first introduced, was awarded for the ability to build straight walls but did not require students to build walls that turned corners, which is more difficult than it may sound. True or not, the story illustrates very clearly the possibility of there being good, and bad, bricklaying.
3 I do not mean by this that only activities taking place within an explicit market count as 'work'. Even on a very broad definition of 'work' which embraces activities such as childrearing, homemaking, volunteering and so on, there is, first, a quasi-market for that work, characterized by the notion of opportunity cost – the things that are not done so that the particular activity can take place – and, more importantly, a negotiated set of relationships with others whose moral formation cannot be assumed to cohere with that of the worker. The exception to this might be, precisely, that aspect of the Christian tradition which understands prayer and worship to be part of humanity's proper work, and if this is so, it is at this point that Christian ideas of work most explicitly challenge the market model of social relationships. But that point is not at the heart of my arguments here.
4 I am indebted to Dr Christine Fletcher for introducing me to Sayers' theology of work (Fletcher 2006). My use of Sayers' work here differs somewhat from Fletcher's approach.
5 Sayers (1941). It has been claimed that the same theological analogy appears clandestinely within the plot of Sayers' detective novel, *Murder Must Advertise* (Sayers 1933).
6 I am indebted to The Revd Carol Wardman for sharing her experience of running this course on Theology and Film.

6 Challenging inequality in a post-scarcity era

Christian contributions to egalitarian trends

John Atherton

Concern over inequalities within and between nations has been an important focus of attention within happiness and wider wellbeing literatures. In such a context, inequalities refer to income and wealth, but also to other major features of wellbeing recognized in the UN's Human Development Index (HDI) (which includes health and education), and in the New Economic Foundation's *National Accounts of Well-being* (2009) and, using Kennys' wider definition of wellbeing, which includes human dignity as political arrangements in terms of achieving basic human rights (Kenny and Kenny 2006). Although these issues remain central to adequate consideration of wellbeing in the contemporary context, I wish to move the focus of interest further, to locate it in an emerging new context of post-scarcity, a provocative but challenging concept, which features across a variety of literatures and disciplines, and includes reference to postmodern and post-industrial societies.[1] It is particularly linked with the happiness hypothesis as emblematic of new challenges to human wellbeing given dramatic breakthroughs relating to income and increasing life expectancy. This has also been associated with long-term trends to more egalitarian societies. I wish therefore to explore actual and potential connections between the happiness hypothesis's identification of inequality as damaging to wellbeing, and these new agendas associated with the post-scarcity thesis and its recognition of emerging egalitarian trends. I will then consider three Christian contributions to the inequality–equality debate, examining their connections to key features of the happiness hypothesis in a new post-scarcity era. The cumulative effects of such an exploration could form a religious contribution to engaging inequalities in order to promote greater human wellbeing, including its additionality and measurability potential.

The nature and function of inequality in the happiness hypothesis

I will briefly consider this in relation to the happiness and wellbeing literatures, acknowledging that the debate over the nature and role of inequality in contemporary societies is still contested, despite new evidence supporting the arguments against inequality (Wilkinson and Pickett 2009).

Inequality inevitably features prominently in happiness and wellbeing literatures given their use of continuums from happiness to unhappiness, wellbeing to illbeing, and life satisfaction to life dissatisfaction, and their recognition that the negative end of the spectrum is much more likely to include the poor and disadvantaged within and between nations and the positive end to include the more prosperous. Both ends are related to levels of income and wealth, education, health, life expectancy, and crime in a community. Poverty reduction within and between nations, including as measured through the wider HDI, is therefore a key strategy in the literatures. The significance of social comparison and habituation to increasing prosperity in the happiness hypothesis reinforces this socio-economic relationality dimension, and its involvement with the debate over inequality. For Layard, income inequality is therefore a factor both in diagnosing unhappiness and in his reformulating economic behaviour to generate greater human wellbeing. Thus, on the one hand, he notes that modern surveys confirm the belief that 'extra dollars make less difference if you are rich than if you're poor' (Layard 2005: 51). Extra income also makes more difference to happiness in poor than in in rich countries. This is confirmed by Kenny and Kenny, who argue the moral consequences of this in terms of modest redistribution from rich to poor countries:

> We know that the marginal impact of a dollar in terms of life, liberty or utility in wealthy countries is close to zero. We know that the impact of that dollar spent on delivering a measles vaccination or research into a vaccine for malaria may be considerably higher. It is difficult to understand the moral case against moving that dollar.
>
> (Kenny and Kenny 2006: 204)

On the other hand, Layard then proceeds to argue that addressing inequality is one of the 'five main features of human nature' that must be included in a 'new vision of how our wellbeing is generated' – recognizing that redistribution of income to the poor generates more happiness for them than for the rich, but also acknowledging that the extent of redistribution should not unduly blunt incentives to rich and poor (Layard 2005: 135f.).

It is these arguments which are supplemented and enriched by findings in other literatures, including epidemiology, psychology and sociology.

In epidemiology, Wilkinson argues convincingly that inequalities are related, including causally, to ill-health, including lower life expectancy (health is one of Layard's Big Seven constituents of happiness).As importantly, he also recognizes that this correlation between ill-health and inequality crosses the class spectrum, including the middle classes, and is not restricted to the ends of the spectrum, the richest and the poorest. He refers therefore to the study of 17,000 men in government offices in London which 'found that death rates from heart disease were four times as high among the most junior office workers as among the most senior administrators; intermediate levels in the office hierarchy had intermediate death rates'. These huge disparities occurred among office workers

calling themselves middle class. Inequality is therefore a society pervading phenomenon, even if more pronounced at the ends of a spectrum (Wilkinson 2005: 15–16).

In psychology, James links the increasing incidence of mental and emotional illbeing to the rise of more affluent societies and groups characterized by the disease of what he terms affluenza; it is therefore a feature of the happiness hypothesis as increasing prosperity but not happiness. Importantly, he connects this to socio-political-economic arrangements, what he calls the rise of selfish capitalism in the late twentieth century (James 2007: 11). He works with a spectrum from selfish to unselfish capitalism, and from more inegalitarian to egalitarian societies, the former epitomized by the profoundly unequal USA, but increasingly affecting the Far East and Russia, and the latter by the more egalitarian Denmark (as representative of Scandinavian societies).

In sociology, there is a significant overlap between features of social capital and the happiness hypothesis in the respective literatures. These illuminate the issue of inequalities and wellbeing in two particular areas. On the one hand, inequalities in societies are identified by Halpern, and by Putnam, as related to lower social capital and vice versa (Putnam 2000: 294; Halpern 2005: 194). On the other hand, the erosion of social capital from the 1960s to 2000 is associated with factors which strongly overlap with features on the happiness–unhappiness continuum, including family breakdown, declining trust, volunteering and churchgoing, and rising crime and mental ill-health. There is an interesting conversation to be had between Fukuyama's description of this breakdown in social capital as the Great Disruption (Fukuyama 2000), and the description of the rupture between the most prosperous and most deprived nations in the twentieth century, by economic historians such as Pomeranz and Clark, as the Great Divergence (Pomeranz 2000; Clark 2007: 12–15). Both reflect growing unease over the complementarity of increasing prosperity, disadvantage and social breakdown as classic marks of inequality. Measures to correct these imbalances are intrinsic to the promotion of greater human wellbeing and focus on poverty reduction strategies, including policies for more egalitarian societies, and strategies to encourage the renewal of social capital in nations, communities and personal relationships (Putnam *et al.* 2003; Halpern 2005). Interestingly, the contribution of faith-based organizations to the decline and then refurbishment of social capital is clearly recognized, acknowledging that they contain the potential for reconstruction, but also the ability to erode social capital and equality. Here note Putnam's observations on Italy's regions and US states, that more hierarchical and authoritarian understandings of faith and religious organizations were associated with lower social capital (Halpern 2005: 178–179, 270; Putnam 1993).

Contextualizing the debate in arguments for an emerging post-scarcity era, and the trend to more egalitarian societies

There is growing recognition of the transition from the absolute scarcity associated with the Malthusian trap (that 'short-term gains in income through techno-

logical advances were inevitably lost through population growth') (Clark 2007: 1) to a post-scarcity era initiated by industrialization in the mid-nineteenth century, and increasingly confirmed by trends in industrial (Clark) or postmodern (Fogel) societies. It is a development with profound implications for understandings of human wellbeing, political economy and culture, including religion. Much of this material is developed in new research in a variety of disciplines.

I first encountered the concept of post-scarcity in Wilkinson's *The Impact of Inequality: How to Make Sick Societies Healthier* (Wilkinson 2005: 248). This may be linked to economic historian Offer's basic human needs transition, that when 'basic deprivations are remedied and basic needs are satisfied' then other challenges emerge for human wellbeing relating centrally to the happiness hypothesis (Offer 2006: 36). This was then confirmed by Gregory Clark's *A Farewell to Alms. A Brief Economic History of the World* (2007), and his reference to the increasing wealth of post-Malthusian trap industrial societies, but particularly by the work of the Nobel Economic Laureate Robert Fogel and his *The Escape from Hunger and Premature Death, 1700–2100. Europe, America and the Third World* (2004), and *The Fourth Great Awakening and the Future of Egalitarianism* (2000), focusing on post-scarcity through technophysio evolution. Their argument, empirically based, is that given all human history as encounter with scarcity, only in the past 150 years has this Malthusian trap been broken for an increasing number of people, as a historic post-scarcity era begins to emerge. It is recognition that rapid growth of income per person, when associated with the demographic transition to smaller families, ensured that the efficiency advances of the Industrial Revolution were not translated into endless supplies of impoverished people, but into the rise of income per person and dramatically increased life expectancy, education and health care. It is what Fogel calls 'the escape from hunger and premature death', and Clark 'A farewell to alms'. Implications of these historic trends need to be firmly located on the agendas of the happiness hypothesis and Christian social ethics.

For example, a central element in this movement to post-scarcity is observed by Wilkinson, Fogel and Clark as a trend from more inegalitarian to more egalitarian societies. For Wilkinson, this marks the movement from 'dominance' sociopolitical arrangements associated with the powerful commanding the allocation of scarce resources, to a more cooperative or affiliative strategy (Wilkinson 2005: 169–214). This modern transition is linked to his observation that the absolute scarcity characteristic of the long history of the Malthusian trap (at least from 13,000 years ago) was deeply associated with profoundly inegalitarian societies:

> [T]he most fundamental rationale for inequality is always scarcity. Ranking systems among animals and humans alike are systems by which the strong gain prior access to resources, and the only point of competing for access to resources is the threat of scarcity. What marks a fundamental change constituted by the emergence of post-scarcity is that you do not need to compete for resources that are freely available and abundant.
>
> (Wilkinson 2005: 244)

(I am reminded here of Marx's vision of a needs–satisfied communist utopia). Despite the contested nature of Wilkinson's latter judgement, it is a transition with implications for religious thought and practice given the historic significance of religious hierarchies and social control systems, and the impact of scarcity on theological understandings of God and Christ.

Wilkinson then fills out further the consequences of this transition to a post-scarcity world by noting the corresponding emergence of more egalitarian societies in the past 150 years with reference to political economy, leisure, relationships and culture. This is particularly elaborated in the economic history of Fogel. He observes that the movement from the Malthusian trap to industrial and now post-industrial economies has been associated with increasing gains in income, health and life expectancy, particularly for unskilled workers – confirmed by Clark – that is, that benefits of increasing wealth and wellbeing fall particularly to 'the unskilled workers' (the redistribution of income towards unskilled labour from owners of land and capital) (Clark 2007: 11). In Fogel's work:

> In every measure that we have bearing on the standard of living … the gains of the lower classes have been far greater than those experienced by the population as a whole … that increasing equality in real consumption mirrors 'a dramatic narrowing of other inequalities between rich and poor, such as inequalities in height, life expectancy and leisure. Normal measures of economic wellbeing often miss such major changes in life condition.
>
> (*The Economist* 2007: 122)

This judgement is confirmed and elaborated by Fogel's *The Fourth Great Awakening and the Future of Egalitarianism*, with particular relevance for this chapter and research project, because he links this technophysio evolution (as the interaction of technological change and health improvements) in the USA to cycles of political realignments and to four religious Great Awakenings. He identifies the last, the fourth such Great Awakening, as an emerging phenomenon in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

Linked to this judgement is Fogel's observation that this transition to a more post-scarcity-oriented era is also associated with the changing ethics and culture of society, to a major focus on health and health care and its financing, but also to a movement from the more materially focused living of the immediate post Malthusian trap era to a rediscovery or re-emphasizing of a lifestyle that places greater emphasis on such values as family life, shared time, spiritual values and good health (Fogel 2000: 13–14, 2004: 77–78). This greater prominence of the values and ethical dimension of human living becomes central to wellbeing development, as the happiness hypothesis has confirmed. It is to this agenda that religion has a particular contribution to make.

Christian contributions to the inequality–equality agenda

The task now is to examine three Christian perspectives on the inequality–equality debate and its formative contribution to the happiness-wellbeing hypothesis but now in the light of the emerging post-scarcity era. All the religious contributions – from Forrester, Hicks and Tawney – precede the happiness–post-scarcity debates, yet they have played important roles in the formation of contemporary Christian tradition, particularly as the theory and practice of the discipline of Christian social ethics.

The three contributors have produced substantial and influential works on inequality–equality. What can we learn from them which could engage constructively with the happiness–post-scarcity literatures? This is particularly with reference to the literatures' recognition, on the one hand, of the obstacles presented to wellbeing by grave inequalities, and, on the other hand, of the potential for greater wellbeing suggested by more egalitarian societies. Such an exercise reflects the value of a correspondence methodology, as used by the theologian Tanner's *Economy of Grace*, the sociologist Bourdieu's *The Structures of the Social Economy*, and by the theologian Mudge's parallel hermeneutics in *Beyond Idealism. A Way Ahead for Ecumenical Social Ethics* (Atherton 2008: 95–96, 233, 271). This involves setting alongside each other accounts, from different traditions or disciplines, of an agreed problem – say, the market economy or mechanism, but in our case inequality–equality. The actual and potential correspondences between them may then be identified and elaborated. Because the happiness and post-scarcity literatures have emerged principally since 2000, and the three contributions preceded them, I will use key findings from the happiness–post-scarcity literatures on inequality and equality, and identify and elaborate resonances in these earlier Christian sources. The objective will be to test the feasibility of constructing religious features of a view of inequality–equality, which could include adding value to secular findings. That additionality will be confirmed by the ability of the religious contributions to be located in the Christian narratives of creation, redemption and eschatology. As Browning observes,

> Neither Finnis nor Nussbaum [for whom he has a high regard], devoid as they are of narratives of the cross and forgiveness, say anything about how just love for the good of the other and self is to be sustained and renewed in the light of sin and brokenness.
>
> (Browning 2006: 316)

Given the psychologist Haidt's *The Happiness Hypothesis: Putting Ancient Wisdom to the Test of Modern Science* (Haidt 2006), and its secular elaboration of the classic religious themes of the divided self, changing one's mind, the faults of others, uses of adversity, the felicity of virtue and a philosophy of life, Browning's case for 'the ways that the Christian narrative informs and searches the more directly ethical dimension of human existence' should be taken seriously (Browning 2006: 316).

The selection of religious contributions is made in the light of my knowledge of theological tradition in Christian social ethics. They have been chosen because they have produced important works on the themes of inequality–equality. They include, first, Duncan Forrester, the most experienced and accomplished Christian social ethicist in Britain, and representing the Scottish and Reformed traditions, and his *On Human Worth* (2001). His work resonates with de Gruchy's South African reformulation of Reformed tradition as the promotion of justice and reconciliation in a post-apartheid South Africa. Second, Douglas Hicks from the US, through his *Inequality and Christian Ethics* (2000), represents a powerful engagement with Amartya Sen's capability theory and practice, including in dialogue with the UN's HDI and economic measurement systems, but also through his reflections on the nature of the universality of God's love, including therefore as a bias to the marginalized, and therefore as a contribution to egalitarianism. Finally, R.H. Tawney was an English Anglican, economic historian and social philosopher. His *Equality* (1931) was republished in 1964 with a new Introduction by Richard Titmuss, major theorist and policy influence on the Welfare State, including his seminal study, *The Gift Relationship* (Titmuss 1973), of the British blood donation system as demonstrating the efficiency of altruism. Tawney's work on equality as a way of life, restructured social relationships and fraternity again offers strong opportunities for a constructive dialogue with the happiness and post-scarcity hypotheses (Tawney 1964; Forrester 2000; Hicks 2000; Sen 2001; de Gruchy 2002).

The three contributions offer opportunities for dialogue with the happiness literatures. They emphasize the importance of interdisciplinary work as theory, and of partnerships in practice, including in policy formation. Significantly, they recognize the importance of beginning with inequality, with the problem itself, and only then with developing alternative, more egalitarian understandings and practices. For American feminist Christian ethicist Karen Lebacqz it is to accept that 'in order to understand the meaning of justice we need to listen to the experiences of those who are suffering injustice' (Jarl 2003: 89). This approach resonates strongly with that adopted by Sen in his *The Idea of Justice* (2009).

Importantly, I have chosen to move from Forrester's explicitly theological reflections on the body of Christ as model for egalitarian inclusion, through Hicks on measuring inequality and promoting a bias for inclusion through an understanding of the nature of God, to Tawney's more ethically rooted understanding of equality as a way of life through the formation of character and virtue, as the egalitarian reconstitution of socio-political arrangements, and as fraternity. It would be equally valid to move from ethical to religious, from Tawney to Forrester, given the basic continuum of ethical to religious, as a cascade of grace.

Duncan Forrester

Out of his practical encounter with the marginalized, Forrester develops a powerful interpretation of church as the body of Christ which he uses as a paradigm of

the equality of relationships and of the worth of contributions. At first sight, the seminal image of church as the body of Christ appears to make the rather commonplace assertion that an effectively functioning whole relies on the contributions of its different parts. Yet, as Forrester observes, St Paul may be seen to take 'an idea common in the culture of his day and [reshape] it radically to make it serve a new purpose', despite his retention of other contemporary cultural biases and his writing for an internal church audience. For the image was commonly used 'to suggest that some parts are superior to others, that some were made to rule and others to obey'. The ancient Greek understanding of political cohesion excluded women, slaves and migrants, and was profoundly hierarchical. Yet for Paul, as for members of the body of Christ, 'Diversity of gifts and functions does not lead to diversity of worth, esteem or status' (Forrester 2001: 99). (Compare the key problem of interpersonal comparison eroding contemporary happiness for Wilkinson, Offer and Layard.) He rather affirms difference in terms of individual gifts and needs, including capabilities, but all are equally and fully members of one body. It is a model of the Church 'as sacrament, sign and instrument of equality' also found in the Roman Catholic tradition. So the Second Vatican Council declared, 'By her relationship with Christ, the Church is a kind of sacrament or sign of intimate union with God, and of the unity of all mankind. She is also an instrument for the achievement of such union and unity.' For Forrester these careful words are none the less:

> unambiguous in suggesting that the church is, or is called to be, an exemplification of a kind of egalitarian community which is intended to encompass all mankind, and of which the church is also to be an instrument, helping to bring such an inclusive community into existence as well as providing a preliminary manifestation of it.
>
> (Forrester 2001: 195)

Douglas Hicks

Hicks' work should be interpreted as developing further Forrester's thesis on a religious corporate model for more egalitarian social orders through particular focus on an interpretation of the nature of God's universal love as inclusive of a bias to the marginalized. This is a strategic development for expanding the understanding of the body of Christ as engineered to engage inequalities with reference to the most marginalized. He particularly substantiates this with a technical measurement system of inequality as a key factor in its more effective engagement, and as thus indispensable for developing a more egalitarian society and world. It therefore reinforces the performative character of Christian social ethics as public theology.

First, Hicks' reflections on the theologies of Gutierrez's liberationism, so seminal for engaging national and global inequalities, and Richard Niebuhr's foundational Western social ethics, generate 'the regulative idea of human equality (which) bears *directly* and *dynamically* on political and socioeconomic

relations – in individual actions as well as wider social structures' (Hicks 2000: 115). He develops an understanding of the nature of God's equal love for each person as therefore requiring a particular love for the most marginalized and vulnerable – essentially what I have described as a bias for inclusivity (as reconciling universal and particular) (Atherton 2003: 117–122). It is, importantly, a particular development of Forrester's body of Christ paradigm. It indicates that Paul's commitment to each part of the body, as all fully and equally members of one body, means that the vulnerable are therefore particularly acknowledged, because 'those parts of the body that seem weaker are indispensable' (1 Cor.12.23). As bias for inclusivity, it therefore underlines the contemporary importance of the UN Development Programme's commitment to the bias of pro-poor economic growth policies for national and international poverty reduction as essential for overcoming profound inequalities and generating more egalitarian societies. Its 1996 study indicated that

> since 1960, no country has been able to follow a course of lopsided development – where economic growth is not matched by human development or vice versa – for more than a decade without falling into crisis. During the past three decades, every country that was able to combine and sustain rapid growth did so by investing, first in schools, skills and health while keeping the income gap from growing too wide.
>
> (Hicks 2000: 62)

For Hicks, using Skocpol, it is 'targeting within universalism' (Hicks 2000: 237). It is such poverty reduction strategies that are confirmed by wellbeing–happiness literatures with reference to the work of economists Layard, Kenny and Collier. The latter focuses on targeting *The Bottom Billion* as against the routine focus on the other four billion in developing economies (Collier 2007).

Second, Hicks' contribution incorporates a sophisticated inequality measurement system which bends the national aggregative information of the UN's HDI to include 'distributional measures as well', using the economists' Gini coefficient tool to identify inequality of performance *within* and therefore between nations, including with reference to racial and gender-based groups (Atherton 2003: 165). He particularly links this to Sen's work on human capabilities (profoundly related to the development of the UN's HDI). This goes beyond Rawls' equal distribution of primary goods, to include a differential principle relating to the individual's needs and capabilities. It is a crucial recognition of the need to hold together difference and universality, in terms, for example, of Iris Young's differentiated solidarity as a necessary reworking of the common good (Young 2000: 9). This acknowledgement, too, of the importance of measurement systems in more effectively engaging the inequality–equality problematic relates equally to the importance of measuring the added value of the contribution of faith-based organizations to greater social cohesion. It also thereby suggests the value of enlarging the bias-for-inclusivity argument beyond pro-poor economic growth to also incorporate tools for measuring pro-happiness economic growth (deploying

Diener's work, for example) (Diener and Biswas-Diener 2008: 234–243), and, in terms of the ethical dimension, as pro-moral wellbeing policies. Here, I refer to the historian Himmelfarb's examination of late Victorian British values, where she observes how social policies addressing the poverty question linked the delivery of material and moral wellbeing (Himmelfarb 1995: 164). Ways of assessing this moral impact of policies should therefore have a high priority in the promotion of happiness. The economic impact assessment of faiths' contribution to society by the government's NWRDA now needs to be complemented by a moral impact assessment of government's contributions to society (Northwest Regional Development Agency 2005). This links directly into the literature's recognition of the centrality of the ethical dimension in a multidimensional wellbeing, for example, in the work of Layard, Kenny, Offer, Haidt and Fogel.

R.H. Tawney

Tawney's highly influential tract for the times, *Equality* (1964, first published 1931), is an essential follow-up to his critique of inequality, again in another important tract for the times, *The Acquisitive Society* (Tawney 1920). Three particular features of his work connect strongly with the happiness and wellbeing literatures in a post-scarcity era. These relate to ethics, a way of life and socio-political arrangements.

First, Tawney is significantly a moralist, including in conversation with a religious dimension. He is therefore a reminder of the importance of an ethical–religious continuum, and the value of engaging each end of the spectrum. This is particularly relevant to the wellbeing and post-scarcity literatures, as noted in Hicks, and in the works of Layard, Haidt, the Kennys, James and Fogel. All recognize the growing importance of the ethical dimension in promoting greater wellbeing, particularly in a post-scarcity era. For Tawney, it also includes engagement with the spiritual dimension, in its personal but also social format (as we will note in his work on socio-political arrangements, say, in his *The Acquisitive Society*, and its strong resonances with James' *Selfish Capitalist* today). The tradition of ethical socialism as expounded by Halsey includes a useful section on Tawney (Dennis and Halsey 1988). My own Ph.D. also addressed Tawney as a social moralist (Atherton 1979).

Second, Tawney's commitment to democracy and socialism was embedded in socio-political arrangements but equally in a way of living. The two were inextricably bound together. The latter resonates with the happiness literatures' recognition of a philosophy of life as central to wellbeing (Layard, Kenny and Haidt), but also with the increasing and related significance of traditioning communities and the formation of character, and thereby of virtues. Haidt certainly notes this, but it is also seriously present in the work of Offer, Layard and Himmelfarb. In this connection, Tawney was particularly engaged in such civil society bodies as trade unions, universities and churches, and would have identified with their recognition in social capital literatures as central to promoting wellbeing. Equally, his emphasis on fraternity or fellowship was a recognition

that closeness of relationships was either facilitated or diminished by the extent of equality or inequality. Adam Smith reached a similar conclusion in relation to encouraging human sympathy or empathy, particularly in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) as a crucial balance to the self-interest of his *Wealth of Nations* (1776). For Tawney, in his *Equality*, 'Clever men, it has been remarked, are impressed by their difference from their fellows; wise men are conscious of their resemblance to them' (Tawney 1964: 83). Preston interprets this as pointing to a profoundly Christian humanism, which again is embodied also in appropriate (and more egalitarian) social relationships and structures. Personalist ethics as moral anthropology or view of the human and its dignity are inextricably complemented by a common good. So equality is not advocated 'merely in order that everyone should be free to "get on" according to his abilities [the disease of affluenza for James today], but that they should be free to share in the "good life" in solidarity with their fellows'. For Preston, 'We cannot regard men as brothers unless in some sense we share their lives' (Preston 1979: 99).

Third, it is that sharing ethic (as sharing in and with others) which so powerfully resonates with the reciprocity and other-regarding ethic of the happiness and social capital literatures. This, for Tawney, has to be embedded in socio-political arrangements. It is therefore expressed as a comprehensive critique of the acquisitive society, epitomized today by James' selfish capitalism, and by seeking to operationalize different ways of developing more common good societies – what James calls unselfish capitalism. The first is epitomized by the USA, the second by Denmark and the Scandinavian economies. The latter also links with the current wellbeing literatures, for example, with Offer's economy of regard, and Wilkinson's extending employee share ownership into cooperatives (Wilkinson 2005: 304; Offer 2006: 75–99). Tawney was strongly involved in early experiments in the latter, including through his involvement in Christian socialist societies in the first decades of the twentieth century and their promotion of guild socialism and cooperatives. Importantly, both Tawney and current literatures recognize that more egalitarian social arrangements necessarily involve high levels of participation – central for Wilkinson, and for Layard's Big Seven, and a key measure of high social capital for Putnam. Dunn's work on democracy similarly recognizes the obstacles to participatory, as against representative democracy, as fundamentally an economic problem, of what he calls the order of egoism (Dunn 2005: 126–127). Tawney would have welcomed this linking of a way of life and socio-economic arrangements, including as expressed by James' suggestion that the ratio between highest and average level incomes should be no more than 5:1 (James 2007: 330). The unwillingness of New Labour to address both ends of the spectrum, through its concentration on raising up the lowest, avoids the hard questions generated by increasing inequalities between richest and poorest in and between societies. For Tawney, 'what thoughtful rich people call the problem of poverty, thoughtful poor people call with equal justice the problem of riches' (Tawney 1979: 112).

Conclusion

The value of these Christian contributions to the current happiness–wellbeing literatures in a post-scarcity era lies significantly in their individual context. They clearly and usefully resonate with key factors of such wellbeing in such a context. That conversation is worth furthering. Yet it is also their cumulative impact, whether moving from Forrester's theological work to Tawney's more ethical-inclined contribution, or vice versa, that is of equal value for current debates. Essentially, it constitutes a coherent, balanced and elegant philosophy of life, tested over centuries, and drawing on rationality and emotional and imaginative reason. And it is here, as much as in individual contributions, that the additionality and measurability value of religious contributions may be found, a judgement reinforced when located in and richly confirmed by Christian narratives.

Note

1 Post-scarcity relates to economies breaking through the Malthusian trap of absolute poverty into growing abundance for increasing numbers of the world's population. Relative scarcity of course continues to remain, but increasing prosperity brings major changes in behaviour and problems, including the happiness hypothesis and the paradox of prosperity.

7 Fair Trade and human wellbeing

Michael Northcott

> For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee.
>
> (Psalm 128.2)

At the heart of most classical and modern debates on the nature of ethical life is the claim that humans desire happiness and wellbeing above all things. From Epicurus to John Stewart Mill individuals are said to act rationally when they use things and relate to others in such a way as to promote their own sense of wellbeing. They may not always choose actions that actually have the effect of promoting their own wellbeing, but this is not because they do not seek it. It is rather because they misconstrue the kinds of actions that will promote it (Spaemann 2000: 30).

The eudaimonistic claim of the philosopher finds analogy in what modern economists call rational choice theory according to which individual consumers and firms act rationally when they put their own interests – in purchasing a good for the lowest price or in procuring and marketing a good in such a way as to maximize profits – above consideration for the interests of others involved in the transaction. Self-interested choices of this kind may involve externalities or costs to others that diminish their wellbeing. Such costs might take the form of a low wage that does not compensate the producer of a particular product sufficient that he or she can decently clothe, educate, feed and house his or her family. Or they might take the form of environmental pollution from an industrial process which, due to lack of government regulation or proper enforcement, is permitted to toxify the environment of residents or workers in the vicinity of a production facility or of those who are affected by polluted air, land or water. Such diminishments of others' welfare consequent upon the rational choices of individual consumers or firms are said by some advocates of rational choice theory to be illustrative of the intrinsic conflict and competition between rational choosers that, since Thomas Malthus and Charles Darwin, economists have argued is 'natural' to the evolution of life and the progress of human society.

The uncivil economy

Not all practitioners of the dismal science of economics present things quite so darkly. Adam Smith argued that the butcher and the baker do better in their capacity to provide for their family, and for others, when they act not from benevolence but from self-interest in maximizing their profit from their respective butchering, brewing and baking activities. As Smith puts it in a well-known passage:

> It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages.
>
> (Smith 1776: I. 2.2)

When they devote themselves to their own business, the principle of the division of labour, operating in tandem with the market, ensures that butcher, brewer and baker provide a better-quality product to others, and enhance their own family's wealth and wellbeing and that of others. But crucial to this enhancement of wellbeing is the existence of a shared and civil place for exchange and a shared moral realm in which each exchanges goods in a way that has the outcome of recognizing the appropriate value of the raw materials and skill utilized by the other.

Once removed from the confines of a particular city the operation of the market can be anything but civil. In a global economy where supply chains can extend from Edinburgh to Ecuador it is possible for exchanges of labour and land through the medium of money to be unfair and unjust. Comparative advantage between nations is a principle first clearly enunciated in classical economics by David Ricardo. Ricardo argued that free trade advances the collective sum of economic welfare because it allows regions and towns within nation-states to specialize in things they are good at or climatically best situated to produce (Ricardo 1817). They trade these things at a comparative advantage with the things they are less suited to make and which others can make more cheaply. But the classical dogma of comparative advantage was conceived on the model of trade between traders and local communities within one political entity or between European nations and their colonies. The doctrine is reductionist since it assumes that a simple procedural rule – free movement of goods – can promote wellbeing more widely regardless of the institutions or practices of those who engage in trade. Ricardo neglects the role of good laws, of customs and institutions in promoting and sustaining virtues such as trust and honour without which business exchanges outside what Spaemann calls the 'boundaries of the normal' run the risk of being debased into expropriation and theft, and of promoting ecological destruction or slavery (Spaemann 2000: 55).

At this point it will be helpful to consider another objection to the classical, and neoliberal, economic proposition that growth in trade, by increasing wealth, increases human wellbeing. In a tradition of moral reflection going back to

Christ and Saint Paul in the Christian tradition, and to the Stoics and Plotinus in the classical, the case is made that far from enhancing human happiness wealth may act as an obstacle to the realization of the blessed or happy life. Christ instructs his disciples:

> And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.
>
> (Luke 12.27–31)

To make wealth the goal of life is the cause and nature of the wordliness of nations but not a goal that Christians should adopt, for two reasons. To do so would manifest a distrust in the providential provision of God, and to do so would not serve that particular vision of beatitude and wellbeing associated with the pursuit of the Kingdom of God.

On the happy life

In the first extended reflection on the blessed or happy life in the Christian tradition Augustine may be said to take his cue from Christ, albeit with a neoplatonic twist, when he argues that the condition of blessedness is not constituted by material goods or worldly power and success but is rather a quality of the soul: 'As the soul is the life of the body, so God is man's life of happiness, of whom it is written: "Happy is the people whose God is the Lord" ' Psalm 143. 15 (Augustine: xix, 26). In similar vein Thomas Aquinas, in an essay on happiness in the *Summa*, argues that people do not seek money or power as ends in themselves but rather because they believe that possessing them will make them happy. Therefore happiness 'does not consist in external goods or in goods of the body' but rather 'in goods of the soul' (Aquinas: 1.2, Q2, A7). In the most extensive Christian treatment of the theme of happiness, Boethius suggests that suffering and not success is the surest means for the soul to be enlightened to the true wisdom which is the source of a happy life: 'for of all suffering from Fortune, the unhappiest misfortune is to have known a happy fortune' (Boethius 1902: 34). For Boethius suffering imposed by the wicked on the just has the potential in the providence of God to provoke the soul to a more virtuous life:

> Wherefore high Providence has thus often shewn her strange wonder, namely, that bad men should make other bad men good. For some find themselves suffering injustice at the hands of evil men, and, burning with hatred of those who have injured them, they have returned to cultivate the fruits of virtue, because their aim is to be unlike those whom they hate. To divine power, and to that alone, are evil things good, when it uses them suitably so as to draw good results therefrom.
>
> (Boethius 1902: 134)

In this vein the suffering imposed on poor farmers or factory workers in developing countries as a consequence of unfair terms of trade may actually be beneficial for their ultimate happiness. At any rate it might be said that relief of such suffering in the form of terms of trade that enhance the wealth of the poorest may not necessarily result in an increase in the blessed life since wealth and not bodily privation is the more likely cause of temptation and distraction from the love and worship of God which is the source of true happiness and virtue.

There is a growing body of empirical research which seems to confirm some aspects of the theological claim that happiness and wealth are not intrinsically related. This research shows that increases in wealth beyond modest levels in developed societies do not necessarily increase wellbeing and may in fact reduce it (Diener and Biswas-Diener 2002). Rising incomes since the 1970s have not correlated with higher reported states of happiness (Easterlin 1974), and they are at the same time associated with rising levels of divorce and other forms of social breakdown and stress (Clydesdale 1997). Part of the reason for this may be that in high-income societies people mistake the source of happiness for increases in wealth whereas those who place greater emphasis on loving relationships report higher states of life satisfaction (Diener and Oishi 2000). At the same time other research clearly shows that reported wellbeing is higher in rich developed countries than in poor developing ones (Diener and Diener: 1995).

Clearly the relationship between wealth and wellbeing is complex and contested. In this chapter we might hope to clarify just one aspect of this relationship and this is in relation to the attempts by people in wealthy countries to ameliorate poverty in developing countries through the medium of fair trade. Do these attempts result in greater human wellbeing? If so, is it an increase in wellbeing that is confined to the developing countries or do we find increases in wellbeing among fair trade consumers as well?

The righteous kingdom

Christ's instruction to his disciples not to place concern for material welfare at the forefront of their intentions does not suggest that he believes that material wellbeing is not a necessary condition of a good life: 'seek ye first the kingdom of God and *all these things will be added unto you*' (Matthew 6. 33). It is not that Christ objects to his disciples being well clothed and fed. On the contrary, Christ observes that he is criticized by his opponents for the quality of food and wine that he and his disciples enjoy when they sit down to dinner: 'The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children' (Matthew 11. 19). The instruction not to worry about food and drink does not mean that the disciples are actively to seek hunger or privation, as Boethius seems to suggest might be appropriate for the begetter of wisdom. The life of wisdom is neither to have more *nor* less of such things but instead primarily to seek the Kingdom of God. Providence will add those things that are needful to

those who seek after the Kingdom, though they do not set getting them as their primary goal.

It is often said that Christ came preaching the Kingdom of God and that the disciples founded the Church instead. But when we examine the teaching of Jesus about the social and political character of the Kingdom of God, and the social and political practices of the early Christians, we do in fact find remarkable continuity. Christ's teaching about the Kingdom begins with him reading a messianic vision of wellbeing in the synagogue at Capernaum taken from Isaiah: 'he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord' (Luke 4. 18–19). The acceptable year of the Lord is a reference to the Jubilee year in which every 50 years according to Leviticus intergenerational debts of land and money were to be redeemed and those in debt bondage. Christ's announcement of the Kingdom is clearly economic and political in its implications and a radical challenge to the Roman authorities, and their Jewish collaborators who collected taxes that were driving Israelites into debt and landlessness in the time of Christ. Hence in another saying Christ tells his disciples 'except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven' (Matthew 5. 20). Now, by righteousness, Christ does not mean ritual purity but right relationships with other people, and in particular relationships characterized by justice. Justice emerges from the earliest sermons of Christ – particularly in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke – as a central consequence of the pursuit of the Kingdom as the ultimate goal.

It should not surprise us therefore that the first economic action of the first Church in Jerusalem is to enact economic justice among the people of God. Disciples sell lands and houses, and give all the proceeds to the Church to be distributed to any who have need and it is said that 'no one counted their possessions as their own' and 'they had all things in common' (Acts 4. 32). Clearly there is continuity here between the teaching of the Kingdom and the first social performances of the Church. The Gentile churches do not seem to have taken up this same approach with such alacrity, and indeed Saint Paul has to chide and encourage them to give of their wealth to those who are in need, and in particular to his own needs and the needs of other preachers among them, and to the suffering Christians in Judea (2 Corinthians 8). However, the early churches, both Jewish and Gentile, soon developed practices of almsgiving, and of care for the poor and homeless. And in later centuries a distinctive set of economic practices emerged which in the Middle Ages included communal deliberation on just wages and just prices. Such deliberation is in strong contrast to the presumption of Smith and his heirs that wellbeing will be best advanced when, instead of collective deliberation, aggregates of market decisions by consumers and producers are left to maximize the wealth of nations.

The efficiency of market relationships

There are two crucial claims in Smith's *Wealth of Nations* that we need to notice. The first, and most widely acknowledged, is that he sets market aggregation through the laws of supply and demand above collective deliberation on just wages and prices. The second is that much of the comparative increase in the wealth of nations such as Britain on which he reflects was based not on market aggregation but on coercive mercantilism, backed by military power, on the lawless frontier of empire. To this day, many forms of market engagement in developing countries are still subject to what Albion Barrera calls economic compulsion; they are not conducted in the manner of exchanges between butchers and bakers in the civil sphere of eighteenth-century Glasgow. While individual producers – small farmers in Tanzania or Kenya, textile workers in free trade zones in Mexico or Vietnam – may volunteer to participate in market exchanges, such as the sale of a cash crop for a low price grown with their labour, their volunteering may not be entirely voluntary (Barrera 2005). They may through force of circumstance be compelled to participate in market exchanges for the goods that they grow or make which offer inadequate recompense because they have no other choices available to them. Either they sell their labour or the product of their land at an unjust wage or price or they and their families go hungry, or more hungry. It is this element of compulsion that Christ clearly refers to in his first sermon in Capernaum. Liberty from oppressive compulsion, redemption from bondage to debt, are the marks of the Kingdom of God and the 'acceptable year of the Lord'. The Kingdom produces wellbeing because it sets justice and liberty above production and wealth. And by implication where there is compulsion and injustice, even in societies where wealth is increasing, wellbeing is diminished.

The pathology of inequality

Against the now widely held economic proposition that 'a rising tide lifts all boats' empirical evidence reveals the harmful effects of economic compulsion and the reduction in wellbeing produced by the compulsion and injustice associated with extremes of inequality. Medical epidemiologist Richard Wilkinson's research shows that even in rich societies where inequality is great, social solidarity between rich and poor is significantly undermined, and all parties suffer from this loss, both rich and poor. Hence the rich have poorer mortality outcomes in highly unequal societies, and the poor of course have outcomes that are even worse (Wilkinson 1997). According to Wilkinson the reason is the increased personal and social stress that results from the decline in social solidarity and trust in highly unequal societies, and the rising tide of the pathologies of extreme inequality which include not only ill-health – which is ultimately a cost to society as a whole – but crime, drug addiction and violence. These are behaviours from which the rich must find ever more complex forms of protection (Wilkinson 1996). In addition to Wilkinson's psychosocial theory of health

inequality we might also add that another reason for the lower outcomes in terms of wellbeing for the rich in highly unequal societies is the psycho-spiritual stress arising from the refusal to acknowledge that they have any moral responsibility for the pathologies of the poor in their own society. According to Saint Paul in Romans where guilt is real, and denied, it affects the inner life and sense of well-being of the one who incurs it.

In the light of Wilkinson's findings Christ's teaching about the nature of the good life may be rephrased as follows: 'deepening compassionate connections' with others is crucial to a life that turns out well (Dalai Lama and Cutler 1998: 68–71). Hence, in Christ's parable of the Last Judgment in Matthew 25, what separates the sheep from the goats and determines the worth of a life is the manner in which the individual manages such connections. The sheep are those who have compassionately acknowledged their connection with the sick, the prisoner, the hungry and ill-clothed act in such a way as to alleviate their suffering. In so doing they have, according to this parable, not only found connection with those who suffer but connection with ultimate reality – with God in Christ who is present among the suffering. The negotiation of inner desires and outward actions by the individual on this view is constrained by the reality of the world in a metaphysics of compassion that cannot be reduced to the inner life. Compassion is the bridge between the inner and outer worlds – between the psycho-spiritual life of the individual and the outer realms of the social and the divine.

The Epicurean view of this inner–outer negotiation, as reformulated by modern advocates of rational choice theory, is that each individual is a perfect whole and behaves rationally when she puts the satisfaction of her inner desires before the interests of others in the outer world (Spaemann 2000: 54). To the extent that individual choices are affected by external reality it is suggested that this inner–outer interaction, which is conceived of as successive but unconnected interactions between individuals, is best governed by impersonal forces – market forces, supply and demand, and anonymous exchanges. By this means social forces function to maximize the preference satisfaction of market actors – both individuals and firms – and thus achieve a degree of efficiency greater than that presented by collective deliberation over such interactions in trading relationships where parties are fully known to each other. If as a consequence of the spread of such kinds of anonymous exchanges individuals increasingly come to distrust other individuals, and friendship between different social groups and classes diminishes, this does not provide grounds for falsification of the modern Epicurean theory on its terms. Wellbeing in this approach is about the inner state of the individual and, provided that individuals are maximizing their preferences, it may be said that the practice of this theory grows wellbeing.

As Robert Spaemann argues, this focus on the felt experience of the atomistic individual neglects many features of what most reasonable people would recognize as a life worth living, including friendship and love, and the shared customs and procedures, institutions and laws that sustain peaceable and rich social interactions between individuals. It also neglects the sense in which a life may be said to 'come out well' (Spaemann 2000). The coming out well of life cannot be

assessed purely on the basis of reported states at particular moments, not least because the coming out well of life is related to the fit between the life of the individual and the larger structure of truth that constitutes reality. This is why Christ suggests in the parable of the sheep and the goats that the worth of a life can only be assessed after death, and that that assessment will include an estimate of how the life lived deepened, or refused, the claims of compassion on those among whom the individual lived. The truth of being subsists in the created connections between people. Reality has a given moral structure and only when a person's inner life finds some accord with this can it be said that it is a good life. As Augustine puts it, the one who 'wants to become blessed here on earth through themselves' manifests 'an astonishing blindness', for:

> what kind of friend would a person be, if they were indifferent about the betrayal or faithfulness of friends? And indifferent about the troubles of the city, the civil war, the injustice and distress which comes from it, about the scourge of humanity, war, unjust as well as just? Whoever tolerates these or thinks about them without a troubled soul, if they consider themselves happy, is actually all the more miserable since they have lost their human sensibility.
>
> (Augustine: XIX, 8)

Many today in European and North American cities have no direct firsthand experience of civil unrest or war, and are inured to the kinds of injustices that cause real hunger in other parts of the world. But materially they are connected to such injustices and wars when they buy tropical agricultural goods such as tea, coffee and bananas, tropical hardwood products such as mahogany or rosewood household or garden furniture, and when they buy oil and gas from troubled regions of the world such as the Caucasus, Iraq and Nigeria. The individual who is able to remain content in her own pursuit of happiness when materially connected and sustained by goods sourced from regions of the world afflicted by injustice and war is, in Augustine's terms, endangering her own humanity. For Augustine, friendship is the practice that prevents selfish isolation from the needs of others, and it was in global friendships that the practices of Fair Trade originated.

The inefficiency of friendship

In the UK, two Christian students at St John's College Durham who had volunteered in South Asia set out to help the farmers and rural labourers who had become their friends through trade from their college rooms. They began to source craft products from producer groups in South Asia and to sell them from a loft in the college, and then, as the work expanded, through local congregations after worship on Sundays. After graduating they took their emergent fair trade cooperative to a vicarage in Houghton-le-Spring and from that vicarage sprang first one and then two of Britain's first Fair Trade organizations,

Traidcraft and Tearcraft. Traidcraft is now a PLC as well as a trust and a charitable foundation, and this threefold organization guarantees that the original identity of Traidcraft as a 'Christian response to poverty' could not be undermined in the unlikely event of a takeover (Traidcraft 2008: 2). Many of the producer groups with whom Traidcraft works are from a faith background, and more than 80 per cent of Traidcraft's volunteer Fair Traders, who sell Fair Trade goods in church and village halls, in small high street cooperatives or from their homes or car boots, are regular churchgoers.

In the Netherlands one of the most successful Fair Trade projects came from the initiative of the Dutch liberation theologian Fransico van der Hoff Boersma. Frans had lived for much of his life among coffee farmers in Oaxaca, Mexico, and he saw how the farmers were being made destitute by the falling price of coffee on world markets in the 1980s (Lamb 2008: 123). On a visit to the Netherlands in 1987 he met with the director of Solidaridad, the Dutch Christian development organization, and proposed a new approach to trading coffee in which 'the power of the strongest does not determine the rules of the game'. As a result of his visit to the Netherlands Solidaridad worked with other church organizations, charities and the Max Havellar Foundation, one of the earliest Fair Trade organizations, to launch a new Fair Trade coffee label in Holland that captured 1.7 per cent of the Dutch coffee market within a year of its launch in 1988, selling coffee sourced on the Fair Trade model from Mexico (Lamb 2008: 124–125).

Boersma argues that fair trade does not necessarily have to disrupt the normal workings of economic markets:

> It doesn't create artificial commercial conditions, but rather new ones based on justice. To pay the producer the real price for producing a product is not only economically rational but is grounded in the most elementary of ethical principles.
>
> (Boersma 2006)

His friends are Mexican farmers whose lives have been made miserable by unfair and distorted terms of trade between rich developed and poor developing countries. Through Fair Trade, sales and supply chains are established across thousands of miles which honour that friendship by ensuring that every link in the chain is guaranteed as fair and just, and the farmers receive a proper recompense for their product. Because of this recompense they are able to afford to pay teachers to teach their children, to provide drinking water and electricity to their homes and to improve their cramped living conditions.

Wellbeing from Fair Trade

Five million people in more than 50 developing countries now benefit from Fair Trade terms (Becchetti 2006). A number of qualitative studies of the effects of Fair Trade on producer groups indicate that the measures of wellbeing identified

by these Fair Trade users are indeed enhanced by the increased income and the guaranteed price that Fair Trade offers. Parents are able to send their children to school and so enable their children to find a route out of poverty that was not available to them as parents. Householders are able to improve the quality of the roofing and drainage materials around their huts or homes. The steady income also enables some to invest in diversification so that they can supplement income from cash crops with crafts. There is evidence too that Fair Trade enhances community life, since involvement in Fair Trade requires participation in cooperative marketing practices. Fair Trade, because it encourages best environmental practices, also helps reduce the environmental impacts of farming and enhances farmer health as compared to plantation workers, who are required to use large quantities of pesticides and who frequently suffer health effects as a consequence. Because of the ongoing dismal prices for coffee in world markets, Fair Trade provides 'the difference between survival and bankruptcy' for many small farming communities (Reynolds *et al.* 2004). In addition, the economic security which long-term Fair Trade contracts provide enables participating farming communities to 'fortify the cultural, social and economic assets of their communities' (Reynolds *et al.* 2004: 1120). On the sense of wellbeing among Fair Trade farmers, a study of Kenyan farmers reveals a greater income satisfaction than that expressed by farmers not participating in Fair Trade networks but receiving similar income levels. This is likely because participation in Fair Trade cooperatives brings other non-monetary rewards including long-term security, technical assistance and improved dietary intake from cooperative food purchasing (Bechetti 2006: 23).

Benevolence and wellbeing

While there have been a number of academic papers and reports indicating an increase in farmer wellbeing as a consequence of Fair Trade practices, there are fewer studies on the impact of participation in Fair Trade among consumers in the North. But those that are available also point to wellbeing enhancement among Northern consumers. The discussants in a German focus group express a consciousness of guilt and historic responsibility for the exploitation of agricultural producers in the South and that being involved in Fair Trade makes possible an ethical responsibility for these farmers that was not possible before (Farnworth and Rabe 2004: 6). It should not surprise us in the light of the foregoing that we find this expressive effect among those engaged in the Fair Trade networks in the North as well as in the South. Many who visit modern supermarkets are aware of the burdens that discount selling imposes on farmers, in Europe as well as in the developing world. Indeed, there is evidence that consumers find the experience of visiting such supermarkets depressing, and this element of suppressed guilt could be implicated in that depression.

Harriet Lamb of the Fair Trade Foundation describes Fair Trade as a 'people to people' trade. It is a movement that has begun to challenge the 'the brutal logic of the global marketplace' through the power of thousands of people living across the globe who decide that they want to make a difference:

> for me, Fairtrade is a way of taking up Gandhi's challenge I absorbed working in India as a young woman – to 'be the change you wish to see in the world' … Everyone can so very easily buy and support Fairtrade – and so connect with farmers and workers across the world. With each purchase, we are helping build that living, more human alternative. And, at the end of the day, I am a mother who wants mothers the world over to realise the same dreams for their children as I do for mine.
>
> (Lamb 2008: 178)

Like Boersma and the founders of Traidcraft, Lamb has known farmers in the developing world as friends, and she finds that her actions in connecting with them through Fair Trade enhance the moral quality of her life as well as their material wellbeing. A focus group study of Fair Trade users in Germany revealed a similar link. The principal elements of Southern farmer wellbeing that the study revealed were of most interest were the ability of farmers to educate their children, improvement in the social status of women farmers, improvements in the local environment and in community life, and securing a guaranteed income for farmers from their produce (Farnworth and Rabe 2003: 15).

Fair Trade represents a mobilization of a range of actors in North and South and the evidence from other studies of wellbeing, such as the Swiss canton finding (Frey and Stutzer 2000), indicates that participation in such networks is a crucial element in reported quality of life. Through Fair Trade, consumers and producers alike are recovering an element of self-sufficiency and participation in their acts of production and consumption instead of leaving the coordination of these acts to the 'invisible hand'. This enhances individual moral agency and responsibility for the social and the natural world.

According to Augustine and Aquinas, wellbeing is not so much something to be experienced in this life as the outcome of a life well lived, the beatitude received by the saints after a life directed to the supreme good which is the love of God and the service of God's creatures. But in the practice of Fair Trade such service is not only a duty performed in the pursuit of the ultimate end but an experience that enhances a sense of personal wellbeing. Is there not something rather life-denying about the Augustinian vision of beatitude that Aquinas and Boethius also affirm? Aiming for the good is not about *feeling* good. Is this the import of Christ's teaching 'seek ye first the Kingdom of heaven'? Well, Fair Traders are putting the kingdom of justice ahead of cost in their own purchasing decisions. And they are finding that not only does this just act provide material sufficiency for those who formerly lacked it but the connections of friendship across the globe that the social networks of Fair Trade produce enhance their experience of coffee drinking or tropical fruit consumption. A pecuniary sacrifice – for most Fair Trade products do cost more than the conventionally traded alternative – produces a non-monetary but real reward. It is precisely this element of reward of which philosophers and theologians are often suspicious. The presumption shared by the Stoics, Augustine and more recently, Immanuel Kant is that if virtue finds reward in this life then it is 'mendacious', to use

Augustine's description, or not as excellent as it would be were no reward in the offing (Augustine: XIX, 4). Duty because it is duty is preferable to duty that offers any sense of reward. But if human happiness and active concern and care for others are intrinsically connected, then doing good does indeed promote doing well (Borgonovi 2008).

Festal fairness and Eucharistic eating

At the time of writing, the complex procedures that certify a product as fairly traded have only been undertaken for agricultural products which, apart from cotton, are for eating and drinking. While coffee and tea are sometimes utilized in individuated acts of imbibing, food and drink are more often taken in the company of others. In many cultures tea and coffee drinking are essential lubricants of social life, from meetings between scholars and traders to familial and workplace gatherings. Christ's most frequent enactment of the Kingdom of God took the form of feasting. He courted the accusation that he was a glutton and a wine bibber because the meal was the performance *par excellence* of the Kingdom whose coming he announced. But the meals of Christ gave offence not so much for what he ate as with whom he ate. He often dined with Jewish rabbis and theologians, as he himself was both of these, but he also dined with tax collectors and sinners, peasants and prostitutes. At one such dinner a woman of dubious reputation has the temerity to anoint his feet and his hair with perfume, and in permitting such an act of sensual devotion Christ gives offence even to the disciples.

For all that Christ instructs his disciples to 'take up the cross and follow me', he also enacts with his disciples a festal way of living which they are charged to carry on after his death. The command to take up the cross is a teleological condition of discipleship. The goal of the disciple is not eating and drinking but laying down one's life for one's friends. This preparedness arises not from duty but from love. Because they learned to love one another as Christ loved them – regardless of class, condition or race – the early Christians were said to have 'turned the world upside down', a world, that is, in which dinners were meant to be hierarchically ordered with slaves preparing the food, women standing by and the noblemen lying around the low table positioned according to rank.

Fair traders do not set as their primary goal to drink better-tasting coffee. Indeed, one of the criticisms of Fair Trade is that it rewards farmers with a higher price for a product that tastes no better – and in the early days of Fair Trade sometimes tasted worse – than ordinary coffee, though Fair Trade coffee marketing has focused much more on a taste premium in recent years (Linton *et al.* 2004). The purpose of Fair Trade is not eating and drinking but justice. When child mortality goes down among farmers belonging to democratically managed cooperatives supported by long-term contracts, advance payments and guaranteed fair prices the end of justice produces a real improvement in wellbeing in farming communities. But when the fair trader enjoys a cup of coffee with friends in a café knowing that it is Fair Trade coffee and that it has this effect, the experience of sharing in the coffee has a new festal element. This element

arises from the knowledge that this coffee has not been bought at the price of another's suffering in contrast to coffee that relies upon unfair and coerced exchanges between poor developing country farmers, the big four transnational coffee companies and New York coffee futures traders. That a coffee transaction involving moral discernment turns out well for the producer does not mean that it may not also enhance the sense of wellbeing for the consumer. For 2000 years Christians have known the power of festal and just eating and drinking. They experience this weekly in the Eucharistic feast in which the fruits of Christ's redemption are made known in the transformation of the constituent elements of daily food and drink – bread and wine. Eucharistic eating is the regular performance in the lives of Christians of their belief that the way of the world, and of the nations, can be changed and that in the performance of its changing there is hope of a better life of justice and love in the present as well as in a future beatitude (Northcott 2007). It therefore should not surprise us that in many places Fair Trade coffee was first drunk and sold after the Eucharist in churches.

Part II

Contributions to other social sciences

8 Religion and happiness

Perspectives from the psychology of religion, positive psychology and empirical theology

Leslie Francis

The intention of this chapter is to assess available empirical evidence concerned with the association between religion and happiness. The evidence is organized and the argument progressed in four stages. Stage one marshalls the historic literature accessed within the broad field of the psychology of religion, concentrating particularly on the second half of the twentieth century. The lack of clarity emerging from this literature is attributed in part to problems associated with conceptualizing and operationalizing the notion of happiness and in part to the problems associated with conceptualizing and operationalizing the notion of religion. Stage two clarifies the problems associated with conceptualizing and operationalizing happiness by drawing on the emerging field of positive psychology in general and the theories of Michael Argyle and his associates in particular in the development of the Oxford Happiness Inventory. Stage three clarifies the problems associated with conceptualizing and operationalizing religion by drawing on the emerging field of empirical theology in general and the theories of Leslie Francis and his associates in particular in the development of a family of measures concerned with the attitudinal dimension of religion. Stage four describes and discusses a series of empirical studies that have explored the association between scores recorded on the Oxford Happiness Inventory and the Francis Scale of Attitude towards Christianity, the Katz–Francis Scale of Attitude towards Judaism, and the Santosh–Francis Scale of Attitude towards Hinduism. The conclusion is drawn that, within the terms of reference proposed by positive psychology and by empirical theology, a clear and consistent positive association exists between religion and happiness.

Psychology of religion

Conflicting traditions within the theoretical approach to the psychology of religion have advanced very different views regarding the relationship between religion and psychological wellbeing in its broadest sense (Wulff 1991). While some strands see religion as promoting psychological wellbeing, other strands see religion as detracting from it.

Within the empirical approach to the psychology of religion, evidence on the observed association between religion and happiness has been impaired by the

lack of a reliable and valid index of happiness properly grounded in psychological theory. In the absence of adequate instrumentation to assess happiness, early empirical studies concerned with the relationship between religiosity and happiness followed five main routes. The following review of the literature sets out to provide a thorough map of studies concerned specifically with the relationship between religiosity and happiness conducted between the late 1950s and the mid-1990s. Studies concerned with constructs like wellbeing and life satisfaction, which may or may not be clearly related to happiness, are not included.

One strand of research has simply invited subjects to assess their level of happiness on a single continuum. For example, in an early study conducted among 108 men and 102 women over the age of 65 in America, O'Reilly (1957) assessed happiness on a three-point continuum (very happy, moderately happy and less happy) alongside reported church attendance. He found that 55 per cent of the very happy respondents were active in the practice of their religion, compared with 47 per cent of the moderately happy and 44 per cent of the less happy.

Wilson (1965) assessed happiness on a ten-point scale, from 1 (completely and utterly unhappy; terrible depression and gloom all of the time) to 10 (completely and supremely happy; tremendous joy and elation all of the time). He found a positive correlation of 0.33 between happiness and religious commitment when both were measured on ten-point scales. Reanalysing data from the 1974 and 1975 National Opinion Research Centre Survey, Cutler (1976) assessed the relationship between happiness measured on a three-point continuum (very happy, pretty happy and not too happy) and church affiliation. He found church affiliation to be a significant, but weak, predictor of happiness.

Reanalysing data from the Quality of American Life Survey (Campbell *et al*. 1976), McNamara and St George (1978) assessed happiness on a three-point scale (very happy, pretty happy and not too happy) alongside two measures of religiosity: frequency of church attendance and an attitudinal index combining three items concerned with self-assessment of religious-mindedness, importance of religious faith, and satisfaction derived from religion. From these data the authors concluded that religion and happiness are positively related among the more 'fortunate' sectors of society. They remain uncorrelated, however, among the more 'deprived' sectors of society, among whom are included the single, the widowed and the divorced.

Shaver and colleagues (1980), in a study among 2500 women in America between the ages of 15 and 91, assessed happiness on a seven-point scale (very happy, moderately happy, slightly happy, neither happy nor unhappy, slightly unhappy, moderately unhappy and very unhappy). One of the problems with this study was that only 8.7 per cent of the respondents selected one of the three unhappy responses. When religiosity was assessed on a five-point scale (very, moderately, slightly, not at all and anti-religious) a curvilinear relationship was found with happiness. The slightly religious respondents were less happy than either the very religious or the anti-religious respondents.

In a sample of 71 patients with advanced cancer, Yates and colleagues (1981) assessed happiness on a three-point scale (very happy, pretty happy and not too

happy), alongside a ten-item index of religious belief and four questions concerned with religious activity and connections. While no significant relationship was found between happiness and scores on the index of religious belief or importance ascribed to church, significant positive correlations were found between happiness and affiliation with a church, frequency of church attendance, and feeling 'especially close to God or nature in the past four weeks.'

In a telephone interview survey conducted among 560 adults in Akron, Poloma and Pendleton (1989) assessed happiness on a three-point scale (very happy, pretty happy and not too happy), alongside a range of questions concerned with frequency and style of prayer. Bivariate correlations showed no relationship between frequency of prayer and happiness. Multivariate correlations demonstrated a significant positive relationship between religious experiences in prayer and happiness. In further analyses of these data, Poloma and Pendleton (1990, 1991) found significant positive correlations between happiness and reported closeness to God, personal satisfaction with religion, church attendance, and personal satisfaction with church activities. No significant relationships were found between happiness and orthodoxy of religious belief or claiming the descriptor 'born again'.

Reanalysing data from the 1984 National Opinion Research Centre Survey, Reed (1991) explored the relationship between happiness and strength of religious affiliation among 1473 respondents. Religious affiliation was divided into two categories (strong and weak), while happiness was assessed in three categories (very happy, pretty happy and not too happy). The data demonstrated a significant positive relationship between self-reported strength of religious affiliation and happiness.

Reanalysing data from the National Opinion Research Centre Survey (Davis and Smith 1989), Ellison (1991) assessed happiness on a three-point continuum (not too happy, pretty happy and very happy) alongside a range of religious variables. He reported a significant positive relationship between firm religious beliefs and happiness.

A second strand of research has inferred happiness from scores recorded on indices of related psychological measures. For example, Graney (1975) modified the Affect Balance Scale (Bradburn 1969) to enhance its usefulness among older people and interpreted this instrument as a measure of happiness. In a four-year longitudinal study of 60 elderly women, he found a significant positive association between happiness and attending religious services.

Blazer and Palmore (1976) employed the happiness subscale of the Chicago Inventory of Activities and Attitudes (Burgess *et al.* 1948) alongside the religion subscale from the same inventory. In a sample of 272 Americans aged between 60 and 94 they found a significant positive correlation between happiness and religious activities, but no significant correlation between happiness and religious attitudes.

McClure and Lodden (1982) argued that happiness can be inferred from scores on the depression scale of the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (Hathaway and McKinley 1967). In a study conducted among 233 subjects

in America, they found a positive relationship between 'happiness' and time spent in religious activities.

Bergin and colleagues (1987), following Alker and Gawin (1978), employed the sense of wellbeing scale of the California Psychological Inventory (Gough 1975) as a measure of happiness. In a study among 78 students in America, they found that happiness was positively associated with scores on the intrinsic dimension of the Religious Orientation Scale (Allport and Ross 1967).

Frankel and Hewitt (1994) inferred happiness from scores recorded on the Bradburn Affect Balance Scale (Bradburn 1969). In a study of 299 students in Canada, they compared the scores of students affiliated to on-campus Christian groups with the scores of students not affiliated to such groups. They found that the affiliated group recorded higher scores of positive affect and lower scores of negative affect. From these data they concluded that 'those affiliated with on-campus religious groups appear happier than their unaffiliated counterparts'.

In two separate studies, Lewis and colleagues (1997) inferred happiness from scores recorded on the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener *et al.* 1985) and the Purpose in Life Test (Crumbaugh 1968). Among a sample of 154 undergraduate students they found no relationship between scores on the Satisfaction with Life Scale and the Francis Scale of Attitude towards Christianity (Francis and Stubbs 1987). Among a sample of 67 undergraduate students they found no relationship between scores on the Purpose in Life Test and the same measure of attitude towards Christianity.

In a third strand of research the happiness of the respondent has been assessed by the interviewer. For example, in a study conducted among 225 elderly people in America, reported by Zuckerman *et al.* (1984), the interviewers assess the respondents on a five-point scale, which was subsequently collapsed into two categories (happy and not happy). This study reported a positive correlation between happiness and religiosity, assessed by summing three questions concerned with frequency of church attendance, self-assessed degree of religiousness, and degree of comfort derived from religion.

A fourth strand of research has attempted to develop rudimentary scales of happiness. For example, Balswick and Balkwell (1978) assessed happiness on a four-item scale. The items were in the form 'I feel happiness', 'I feel delight', 'I feel joy' and 'I feel elation', rated on a four-point scale: very often, often, seldom and never. Among a sample of 1244 high school students in America, they found a positive correlation between happiness and scores on their scale of religious orthodoxy.

A fifth strand of research provides no clues about how precisely happiness was assessed. For example, Tellis-Nayak (1982) reported on a study among 259 persons aged 60 or over in America, in which religiosity was assessed by combining scores on four items, one exploring each of the dimensions of religious ideology, ritual, experience and consequence. On the basis of this study the author concluded that happiness was neither 'meaningfully or significantly related to the religious factor'.

Heisel and Faulkner (1982) reported on a study among 122 black Americans between the ages of 51 and 90, in which religiosity was assessed by combining

an unspecified number of items concerned with the three dimensions of experiential, ritual and consequential religion. On the basis of this study the authors concluded that 'those who scored high on happiness also tended to score high on religiosity', in spite of the fact that the chi square test of association did not reach the 5 per cent level of significance.

Delbridge and colleagues (1994) equated happiness with life satisfaction and wellbeing. On the basis of 555 interviews they concluded that 'church attendance was not particularly important for well-being'. No clues are given, however, regarding how these constructs are assessed or how the relationship was tested.

Measuring happiness

During the late 1980s, within the broader streams of developing interest in positive psychology, major advances were made in the conceptualization and measurement of happiness by Michael Argyle and his associates in the development of the Oxford Happiness Inventory (Argyle *et al.* 1989). Argyle and Crossland (1987) suggested that happiness comprises three components: the frequency and degree of positive affect or joy; the average level of satisfaction over a period; and the absence of negative feelings, such as depression and anxiety. Working from this definition, they developed the Oxford Happiness Inventory by reversing the 21 items of the Beck Depression Inventory (Beck *et al.* 1961) and adding 11 further items to cover aspects of subjective wellbeing not so far included. Three items were subsequently dropped, leading to a 29-item scale.

Argyle and colleagues (1989) reported an internal reliability of 0.90 using alpha (Cronbach 1951), and a seven-week test-retest reliability of 0.78. The concurrent validity of 0.43 was established against happiness ratings by friends. Construct validity was established against recognized measures of the three hypothesized components of happiness showing correlations of +0.32 with the positive affect scale of the Bradburn Balanced Affect measure (Bradburn 1969), –0.52 with the Beck Depression Inventory, and +0.57 with Argyle's life satisfaction index.

A series of studies employing the Oxford Happiness Inventory in a range of different ways has confirmed the basic reliability and validity of the instrument and begun to map the correlates of this operational definition of happiness. For example, Argyle and Lu (1990a) found that social competence was a strong significant predictor of happiness among 63 adults. In a study among 114 adults, Lu and Argyle (1991) found that happiness was correlated positively with self-esteem, social skills, and cooperation. In a study conducted among 65 adults, Lu and Argyle (1992) found that happiness was predicted by satisfaction with relationships with people from whom support had been received. Rim (1993) found a significant relationship between happiness and coping styles among 88 undergraduates in Israel. In a study conducted among 36 adults between the ages of 17 and 61 over a period of six weeks, Valiant (1993) found that happiness was more stable than depression. While depressive mood was significantly related to negative events and to a negative evaluation of these events, happiness was independent of life events and of the cognitive evaluation of these events. Lu and Argyle

(1993) found an inverse relationship between happiness and the total time spent watching television among 114 adults. Noor (1993) found that locus of control was a strong significant predictor of happiness among 145 adult women. Lu and Argyle (1994) found that happiness was positively correlated with engagement in a serious leisure activity among 114 adults. Noor (1995, 1997) found a strong association between happiness and an index of general health among two samples of 231 and 145 adult women. Hills and Argyle (1998a) found that happiness was positively correlated with intensity of musical experience among 231 residents of South Oxfordshire. Hills and Argyle (1998b) found that happiness was positively correlated with participation in sports among 275 residents of Oxfordshire.

Chan and Joseph (2000) found that happiness was correlated positively with self-actualization, self-esteem, likelihood of affiliation, community feeling and self-acceptance. Neto (2001) found that happiness was correlated positively with satisfaction with life, self-esteem, sociability and self-rated attractiveness, and correlated negatively with embarrassability, loneliness, shyness and social anxiety. Hills and Argyle (2001a) found that happiness correlated positively with life regard, self-esteem, life orientation and affiliative tendency. Pannels and Claxton (2008) found that happiness was positively correlated with creative ideation in a sample of 171 university students.

The most securely established finding regarding the psychological correlates of happiness as operationalized by the Oxford Happiness Inventory concerns the location of this construct within the dimensional model of personality proposed by Hans Eysenck and his associates (Eysenck and Eysenck 1991). In an early study examining the relationship between Eysenck's dimensional model of personality and the Oxford Happiness Inventory, Argyle and Lu (1990b) found a significant positive correlation between happiness and extraversion among 131 undergraduates. Furnham and Brewin (1990) found that happiness was correlated positively with extraversion, correlated negatively with neuroticism and uncorrelated with either psychoticism or the lie scale among 101 students. These findings regarding the relationship between happiness and extraversion, neuroticism and psychoticism were confirmed by Lu and Argyle (1991) among 114 adults, by Brebner and colleagues (1995) among 95 student volunteers, by Francis and colleagues (1998) in a cross-cultural study among a total of 1076 students in the UK, USA, Canada and Australia, by Francis (1999) among 456 undergraduates in Wales, by Furnham and Cheng (1999) among 120 students in the UK, by Lu (1995) among 581 Chinese adults living in Taiwan, by Noor (1996) among 145 women from Oxford, by Furnham and Cheng (2000) among 233 English-speaking young people mainly recruited from the final year at school, by Chan and Joseph (2000) among 107 students in England, by Cheng and Furnham (2001) among two samples of 83 and 121 students in the UK, by Hills and Argyle (2001b) among 244 residents of Oxfordshire, and by Robbins and colleagues (in press) among 131 undergraduate students in Wales. Cheng and Furnham (2003) reported on a study conducted among 234 participants, ranging in age from 15 to 35 attending various schools and colleges, which

found that happiness was correlated positively with extraversion, correlated negatively with neuroticism, correlated negatively with psychoticism, and uncorrelated with lie scale scores.

Basic research employing the Oxford Happiness Inventory has been extended beyond the English-speaking community by a series of studies developing forms of the instrument in Arabic (Abdel-Khalek 2005), Chinese (Lu and Shih 1997; Lu *et al.* 1997, 2001; Lu and Lin 1998), Japanese (Furnham and Cheng 1999), Hebrew (Francis and Katz 2000), Persian (Bayani 2008; Liaghatdar *et al.* 2008), Portugese (Neto 2001) and German (Lewis *et al.* 2002).

As with all good psychometric instruments, the strengths of the Oxford Happiness Inventory reside in the clarity of the definition of the construct being operationalized, in the precision with which the individual items have been formulated, and in the evidence regarding the performance of the construct within a researched network of theoretically-grounded associations (construct validity). As with all good psychometric instruments, the Oxford Happiness Inventory remains vulnerable to the critique that there are multiple alternative definitions of happiness that remain uncaptured by the measure.

Measuring religion

The social scientific study of religion has long recognized that religiosity itself is a multidimensional concept and that specific aspects of this concept need to be operationalized separately to form the basis for empirical enquiry. Attempts to map the dimensionality of religiosity have resulted in a number of conflicting models and the development of a wide range of instruments, as clearly evidenced by the thorough review and critique offered by Hill and Hood (1999) and updated by Cutting and Walsh (2008). Francis (1978a, 1978b) advanced the view that the attitudinal dimension of religion offered a particularly fruitful basis for coordinating empirical enquiry into the correlates, antecedents and consequences of religiosity across the life span. The attitudinal dimension appears particularly attractive, for four reasons.

First, at a conceptual level, social psychologists have developed a sophisticated and well-established understanding of attitude as a deep-seated and relatively stable and enduring covert predisposition, in contrast with more volatile surface behaviours and opinions. To access attitude towards religion is to get close to the heart of religion in an individual's life.

Second, following the pioneering analysis of Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), Francis (1978a, 1978b) argued that attitudes are concerned primarily with accessing the affective dimension of religiosity. The affective dimension is distinguished from the cognitive dimension (concerned with beliefs) and from the behavioural dimension (concerned with practice). The affective dimension is able to transcend the divisions between denominational perspectives, while beliefs tend to polarize such divisions. In a Christian context, for example, Catholics may believe one thing about the nature of God and Protestants may believe another, but both Catholics and Protestants may agree on the assessment of the

extent to which their faith exercises a positive or negative influence on their lives. The affective dimension is less likely to be distorted by personal and contextual factors, while practice tends to be subject to all kinds of personal or social constraints. Whether an individual attends a place of worship may be influenced by personal factors (like state of health) or social factors (like pressure from parents), but negative and positive feelings about faith are much less likely to be contaminated by such factors.

Third, the affective dimension of religiosity may be accessed by instruments which can function in a comparatively stable manner over a wide age range. While the sophistication with which beliefs are formulated and tested clearly develops over the life span (Fowler 1981), attitudinal statements concerned with positive and negative affect can be formulated in ways that are equally acceptable during childhood, adolescence and adulthood (Francis and Stubbs 1987; Francis 1989).

Fourth, at an operational level, social psychologists have developed a range of sophisticated and well-established techniques for assessing and scaling attitudes, including the pioneering work of Thurstone (1928), Likert (1932), Guttman (1944), Edwards (1957) and Osgood *et al.* (1957). By testing the performance of these various methods among different age groups, Francis (1978a, 1978b) identified the Likert technique as providing the most reliable and consistent scaling properties from the age of 8 upwards through childhood and adolescence into adulthood.

As well as being multidimensional in the sense of embracing many dimensions (like belief, practice and attitude), religiosity is also multifaceted in the sense of embracing many traditions (e.g. Christianity, Islam and Hinduism). Francis (1978a, 1978b) argued that the attitudinal dimension of religion can best be accessed through the specific traditions by which it is expressed. Working within a Christian context, therefore, Francis proposed a scale of attitude towards Christianity which was found to function reliably and validly among children from the age of 8, among adolescents and among adults.

The 24-item Likert scale, originally published by Francis (1978a), contains both negative and positive items concerned with an affective response to five components of the Christian faith accessible to and recognized by both children and adults, namely God, Jesus, the Bible, prayer and church. Each item is assessed on a five-point scale (agree strongly, agree, not certain, disagree, disagree strongly), producing a range of scores from 24 to 120. The reliability and validity of the scale have been supported by studies among school pupils in England (Francis 1987, 1989; Lewis *et al.* 2006a, 2007), Kenya (Fulljames and Francis 1987), Nigeria (Francis and McCarron 1989), Northern Ireland (Francis and Greer 1990; Greer and Francis 1991) and Scotland (Gibson 1989; Gibson and Francis 1989). Another series of studies have supported the reliability and validity of the scale among adults in Australia and Canada (Francis 1995a), England (Francis and Stubbs 1987; Francis 1992a), the Republic of Ireland (Maltby 1994), Northern Ireland (Lewis and Maltby 1997), South Africa (Francis *et al.* 2005) and the USA (Lewis and Maltby 1995). In addition to the

full 24-item form of the Francis Scale of Attitude towards Christianity, a seven-item short form has been developed and tested among primary school pupils (Francis 1992b), secondary school pupils (Francis *et al.* 1991) and adults (Francis 1993; Francis *et al.* 1995b).

The Francis scale of Attitude towards Christianity has also been translated into other languages, recognizing that integration of cross-cultural quantitative studies in the psychology of religion has been hampered by the lack of common instrumentation. Examples are provided by editions in Arabic (Munayer 2000), Czech (Francis *et al.* in press), Chinese (Francis *et al.* 2002), Dutch (Francis and Hermans 2000), French (Lewis and Francis 2003), German (Francis and Kwiran 1999; Francis *et al.* 2002), Greek (Youtika *et al.* 1999), Norwegian (Francis and Enger 2002), Portugese (Ferreira and Neto 2002), Romanian (Francis *et al.* 2009), Slovenian (Flere *et al.* 2008), Spanish (Campo-Arias *et al.* 2006), Swedish (Eek 2001) and Welsh (Evans and Francis 1996; Francis and Thomas 2003).

By the mid-1990s over 100 independent studies had employed this scale to examine a wide range of correlates of religiosity during childhood, adolescence and adulthood (Kay and Francis 1996), and the wide range of issues explored has continued to expand.

In order to test whether the growing body of evidence regarding the correlates, antecedents and consequences of attitudes towards religion (established in a Christian context by means of the Francis Scale of Attitude towards Christianity) also held true in a Jewish context, Francis and Katz (2007) developed a comparable instrument, the Katz–Francis Scale of Attitude towards Judaism. In order to achieve a proper comparability between the two instruments the attempt was made to translate each of the original 24 items in a way appropriate for a Hebrew-speaking Jew living in Israel. The psychometric properties of the instrument were assessed on a sample of 618 Hebrew-speaking undergraduate students attending Bar-Ilan University.

The second development was the Sahin–Francis Scale of Attitude towards Islam (Sahin and Francis 2002). The items of the Francis Scale of Attitude towards Christianity were carefully scrutinized and debated by several Muslim scholars of Islam until agreement was reached on 23 Islam-related items which mapped closely on to the area assessed by the parent instrument. The psychometric properties of the instrument were assessed on 381 Muslim adolescents in England. Subsequently the instrument was tested among a sample of 1199 Muslim adolescents in Kuwait (Francis *et al.* 2006, 2008a).

The third development was the Santosh–Francis Scale of Attitude towards Hinduism (Francis *et al.* 2008b). Scholars familiar with the study of Hinduism debated the items presented in the Francis Scale of Attitude towards Christianity and suggested 19 equivalent translations into a Hindu context. The psychometric properties of the instrument were assessed on a sample of 330 individuals between the ages of 12 and 35 attending a Hindu youth festival in England. Subsequently the instrument was tested among a sample of 100 Hindu affiliates from the Bunt caste in the South India state of Karnataka (Tiliopoulos *et al.* 2010).

Religion and happiness revisited

In the first of a series of studies, Robbins and Francis (1996) examined the association between scores recorded on the Oxford Happiness Inventory and on the Francis Scale of Attitude towards Christianity, after taking into account individual differences in personality as measured by the short-form Revised Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (Eysenck *et al.* 1985). Data provided by a sample of 360 first-year undergraduate students in Wales demonstrated a significant positive correlation between attitude towards Christianity and happiness scores ($r = 0.26$, $p < 0.001$). This association remained positive after controlling for individual differences in sex, extraversion, neuroticism, psychoticism and scores recorded on the Eysenckian lie scale.

In a second study, Francis and Lester (1997) replicated the first study in a different cultural context. This time the Oxford Happiness Inventory, the Francis Scale of Attitude towards Christianity and the short-form Revised Eysenck Personality Questionnaire were completed by a sample of 212 undergraduate students in the USA. This time a very similar correlation was reported between attitude towards Christianity and happiness scores ($r = 0.28$, $p < 0.001$) and once again the association persisted after controlling for sex differences and for differences in personality.

Recognizing that the first two studies had been conducted among undergraduate students, the third study reported by Francis and Robbins (2000) drew on a sample of 295 individuals, ranging in age from late teens to late seventies, recruited from participants attending a variety of courses and workshops on the psychology of religion. The same three instruments were included in the study: the Francis Scale of Attitude towards Christianity, the Oxford Happiness Inventory and the short-form Revised Eysenck Personality Questionnaire. The association between attitude towards Christianity and happiness scores was positive ($r = 0.30$, $p < 0.001$) and remained after controlling for sex differences and for differences in personality.

The next three studies were drawn together and published in one paper by Francis *et al.* (2000). The three samples reported in this paper covered adolescence, young adulthood and later life. The adolescent sample comprised 994 secondary school pupils during the final year of compulsory schooling (15- to 16-year-olds). The young adult sample comprised 456 first-year undergraduate students in Wales. The third sample comprised 496 members of the University of the Third Age, a relatively informal educational network for senior citizens (10 per cent were in their fifties, 50 per cent in their sixties, 34 per cent in their seventies, and 6 per cent were aged 80 or over; 66 per cent were female and 34 per cent were male). All participants completed the Francis Scale of Attitude towards Christianity, the Oxford Happiness Inventory and the short-form Revised Eysenck Personality Questionnaire. The partial correlations between attitude towards Christianity and happiness scores, after controlling for sex and for personality, were as follows: adolescence, $r = 0.10$, $p < 0.01$; young adulthood, $r = 0.20$, $p < 0.001$; later life, $r = 0.16$, $p < 0.01$.

The next study reported by Francis and colleagues (2003) among 89 students in Wales did not include the personality measure. However, after controlling for age and for sex, there was a significant correlation between attitude towards Christianity and happiness scores ($r = 0.38$, $p < 0.001$).

Alongside these seven samples (N = 360, 212, 295, 995, 456, 496, 89) that all found a positive association between attitude towards Christianity and happiness scores, an eighth study found no association between the two variables. This eighth study was reported by Francis *et al.* (2003) among a sample of 331 students attending the University of Würzburg in Germany. Further research is needed to test whether this aberrant finding truly reflects a cultural difference.

In order to test whether the association between the attitudinal dimension of religion and happiness reported by the majority of the preceding studies was peculiar to the Christian tradition, further studies were established using the Katz–Francis Scale of Attitude towards Judaism, the Santosh–Francis Scale of Attitude towards Hinduism, and the Sahin–Francis Scale of Attitude towards Islam. In Phase one, Hebrew-speaking students in Israel completed Hebrew editions of the Katz–Francis Scale of Attitude towards Judaism, the Oxford Happiness Inventory and the short-form Revised Eysenck Personality Questionnaire. In the first study, Francis and Katz (2002) reported on a sample of 298 female students. In the second study, Francis *et al.* (2004) reported on a sample of 203 male students. Both studies found a positive association between attitude towards Judaism and happiness scores, after taking into account sex differences and differences in personality.

In Phase two, a sample of 100 Hindu affiliates from the Bunt Caste in the South India state of Karnataka completed the Santosh–Francis Scale of Attitude towards Hinduism and the Oxford Happiness Inventory. Once again a positive association was found between attitude towards Hinduism and happiness scores, after taking into account sex differences (Tiliopoulus *et al.* in press). Further studies are currently awaiting analysis using the Sahin–Francis Scale of Attitude towards Islam.

Conclusion

This chapter set out to examine the association between religion and happiness, drawing on perspectives, conceptualizations and methodologies proposed by the psychology of religion, positive psychology and empirical theology. The key conclusion that may be drawn is that a clear association exists between these two variables across a range of age groups and across a range of religious traditions. The empirical evidence demonstrates that overall religious people *are* happier.

This conclusion rests on three key assumptions. Assumption one is that the Oxford Happiness Inventory conceptualizes, captures and measures a viable understanding of happiness. Assumption two is that the attitudinal dimension of religiosity captures the core of what it means to be religious in the contemporary world and that the family of measures proposed by Francis and his associates provides appropriate operationalizations of this dimension. Assumption three is

that correlational studies (including appropriate control variables) are sufficient to test and establish the association between religion and happiness and that employing this technique in a series of replication studies provides an appropriate strategy for developing a sound basis of scientific knowledge. At the same time, it remains important not to overclaim what can be established by correlational studies: establishing association is not the same as demonstrating causal directionality.

Accepting the robustness of these assumptions, the research team welcomes opportunities to falsify these conclusions by pursuing the pattern of replication studies across novel situations and fresh contexts.

9 Ethnographic insights into happiness

Jonathan Miles-Watson

At the beginning of *Happiness* the economist Richard Layard (whose work is explored in detail elsewhere in this volume) lists the range of disciplines he will draw upon in his discussion. This list is impressively interdisciplinary and alongside economics he lists the disciplines of psychology, sociology and philosophy as being formative (Layard 2006: 4). It is notable, however, that anthropology is absent from Layard's list. In choosing not to engage with the work of anthropologists, Layard's book is fairly typical of the happiness literatures which have been far more rooted in the disciplines of economics (discussed in Chapters 1 and 2 of this volume), political philosophy (Chapter 7) and psychology (Chapter 8). In this chapter, following a brief discussion of key concepts and a short survey of relevant literature, I will show that anthropology can contribute to the debate by refocusing it on the importance of 'dwelling' (Ingold 2000: 5). The outcome of this refocusing is an understanding of happiness that is grounded in lived experience and allows for a nuanced understanding of sacred spatial capital.

Anthropological approaches to the study of happiness

It is not surprising that the work of anthropologists is largely absent from mainstream happiness literatures, since, until recently, anthropologists have tended to avoid explicitly engaging with the concepts of happiness and wellbeing. Thin has recently discussed a wide range of historical factors that he believes have come together to distance anthropologists from the happiness debate (2008: 135–150, 2009: 27–30). One of the key issues raised by Thin is the trend for anthropologists to use cultural relativism as a shield against ethnocentricism. A second is the tendency to fight the idealization of non-Western societies by focusing on pathologies. A third reason is added by Mathews and Izquierdo, who have suggested that anthropologists have avoided discussing happiness because of the way that a lack of interest at the ground level has combined with a widespread failure to distinguish between levels of data and analysis (2009a: 9). Despite the lack of anthropological discussion of happiness there is a growing realization that anthropologists have the ability to significantly add to the conceptualization of happiness, whether it is by confronting the abstract with the concrete (Lambek 2008: 130), by taking seriously alternatives to human

flourishing (Laidlaw 2008: 157), or through highlighting alternative conceptions of the good life (Mathews and Izquierdo 2009a: 1). In a sense this task is simply a question of reinterpreting the existing ethnographic record, since although anthropologists have tended to avoid explicit theorization of the abstract concept of happiness they have had a lot to say about aspects of happiness. The problem then is not so much that anthropologists have nothing to contribute to the discussion as that, for varying reasons, they have not significantly engaged with the construct of a universal, objective and abstract category of happiness.

This picture is in the process of dramatically changing as the discipline of anthropology undergoes a significant shift that has resulted in an explosion of interest in the topic of happiness. Indeed, after years of silence, two collected volumes of essays that deal explicitly with the anthropology of happiness/well-being have been published while this essay has been in development.[1] In these recent publications anthropologists have adopted differing strategies for engaging with the concept of happiness that fall along a spectrum. At one end of the spectrum are anthropologists who have placed their emphasis on generating an anthropology of happiness through engaging with insights from other disciplines (Colby 2009; Lambek 2008; Thin 2009). At the other end of the spectrum are those who place their emphasis on presenting ethnographic detail that deepens understanding of an aspect of happiness (Adelson 2009; Clark 2009; Laidlaw 2008). This chapter is more orientated towards the latter end of the spectrum and will add to the discussion of happiness by combining material drawn from the ethnographic record with insights from my own fieldwork in order to explore one aspect of the related concept of wellbeing.

In this chapter I follow Mathews and Izquierdo's suggestion that anthropologists can best explore happiness through a system of 'comparison … [involving] ethnographic portraits placed in juxtaposition' (2009b: 250). I also follow them in believing that this system of analysis would operate best as a collaborative project with different anthropologists, at different times, drawing on the ethnographic record to deepen our understanding of one of four experiential dimensions of wellbeing (2009b: 258–262). These are the physical (or bodily) dimension, the interpersonal dimension, the existential dimension and the institutional dimension (2009b: 261). This chapter will focus on deepening understanding of the interpersonal dimension of experiential wellbeing; however, through theorization of the concept of personhood, I develop the second dimension in rather a different way from their understanding.

Already in this chapter, a shift has steadily occurred from happiness to the related concept of wellbeing. Many of the chapters in this volume make such a movement, as does most of the recent anthropological discussion. In *Pursuits of Happiness* Mathews and Izquierdo explicitly lay out their reasoning for making such a movement, arguing that happiness is a composite of the wider concept of wellbeing (2009a: 3). Furthermore, they suggest that the latter term's more flexible and encompassing nature makes it more suitable for an exploration through the presentation of diverse ethnographic data (2009a: 3). Mathews and Izquierdo define wellbeing as

> an optimal state [which is] conceived and experienced in different human ways by different individuals and within the cultural contexts of different societies [yet] bears a degree of commonality due to our common humanity and interrelatedness over time and space.
>
> (2009a: 5)

This is a useful and workable definition of wellbeing for an ethnographic exploration of the topic that will be adopted for the purpose of this chapter.[2]

Understanding religion's role in happiness

Many of the contributors to this volume argue in explicit terms, using both quantitative and qualitative data, for the value of belonging to a religious community and/or subscribing to a set of beliefs. I intend to take rather a different approach and define religion in such a way that it is inevitably positioned at the heart of the set of processes that form our ability to reckon with the environment. I am not here interested in attempting to catalogue all definitions of religion; it is not a suitable place for such an attempt and the task is largely redundant, having been admirably attempted elsewhere (Kunin 2003; Kunin and Miles-Watson 2006; Thrower 1999). Instead, I intend to briefly define what the term *religion* will signify in the context of this chapter and outline the influential writings that have led to this definition.

Rather than drawing on an essentialist, or substantialist definition of religion, my understanding draws from functionalist and symbolic discourse (Kunin and Miles-Watson 2006: 4–8). In particular I find Geertz's suggestion, that religion is a symbolic system which both guides outward life and orders inward life, useful (Geertz 1968: 95). From this perspective it is possible to see religion operating as a kind of habitus (Bourdieu 1992: 53–54, 2005: 211), or a way of becoming enskilled in reckoning with the world and the relations we forge within it (Pálsson 1994). By this I do not mean to limit religion, rather I would suggest that it is possible within the world to forge relations of all kinds, with the seen and the unseen, the human and the non-human.

Despite the obvious similarities between Geertz and Berger, I find in Geertz's definition more room to manoeuvre. This is primarily because of Berger's stress on religion as a process of the objectification of internal structures (Berger 1969: 4). This means that in essence the cultural and religious world is a reflection of the internal world of man and therefore markedly different to the world of nature (Berger 1969: 6). It is possible to read Geertz in a similar way, but I also find in Geertz's suggestion of a two-way movement, from world to mind and back again, the seed of an ecological model of religion, by which I mean to suggest that the religious process is not so much one of world formation as world discovery. It provides us with a framework for engaging with that which flows from existence. Religion enskills us in ways of being attentive to certain aspects of life and has the ability to show how both man and grace are situated within nature. This enskilment is crucial for our ability to weave meaningful relationships, which are essential for our wellbeing.

The question of religion's role in wellbeing is therefore not one of oppositions between religious and secular, or superstition and religion; instead it is a question of the way in which different religious practices generate differing relationships of differing qualities. In order to explore this further, the remainder of this chapter will turn to demonstrate both how the previous argument arises from ethnographic data and how through ethnographic data we can come to know more about these differing relationships and their importance in human wellbeing. The ethnographic accounts chosen may be seen as traditionally anthropological, in that they deal largely with localized religions (or with locally distinct variations of global traditions) and are largely drawn from societies that have a comparatively low level of tool development. I do not however believe that anthropology is only valid as a study of these sorts of communities, or that the value of these accounts lies in their ability to act as colourful traveller's tales. Moreover, I am not suggesting that these accounts document practices that are somehow stuck in time, and I acknowledge that many of the insights this material offers have resonances with the theological insights found elsewhere in this volume. Yet, these accounts of specific communities, at specific times, contain within them insights of wider significance that are as valuable for the understanding of human wellbeing as other material. Furthermore, perhaps there is, as Ingold (2007) has argued, something in the way that tool use has developed in certain communities that erases the trace of our action in the world, hence making it harder to engage meaningfully with our environments.

The importance of non-human people

The happiness literatures consistently suggest that interpersonal relationships are a key factor in human wellbeing (Heil 2009; Lambek 2008; Layard 2006). This section will also highlight the importance of interpersonal relationships; however, it will develop the argument in two ways. First, it will show that religion has an important role to play in fostering and maintaining those relationships. Second, through an increased theorization of personhood, it will highlight the importance of developing relationships with non-human persons. This leads to recognition of the importance of the emerging concept of spatial capital as a key tool for urban planning.

In the evocatively titled 'Having your house and eating it', Gibson outlines the religious practices that he came to know in Ara (1995: 132–148). From his account emerges an understanding of the way in which the Muslim population of this region engage in a series of rituals designed to form relations, which solve a logical problem through allowing both unity and divergence (1995: 134–145). In order to understand the logic of this religious practice it is first necessary to know something of the way in which humanity and personhood are understood locally. Gibson recounts in detail key life cycle rituals that show how a human is understood to be the embodiment of several distinct forces (1995: 133–136). These forces are bound together (through the shared experience of embodiment) in the human person, but separate again after death (1995: 137–139). This means

that the life cycle may be viewed as a movement from diversity, to unity, to diversity. Yet, it is simultaneously possible to view the life cycle as a movement from the unity of pre-human life, to the diversity that is human life, before returning to unity again after the end of a human life (ibid.). This process is excellently highlighted by Gibson's account of how after death the self somewhat untangles, while some aspects drift away, like mist, others dwell on for a time (1995: 137–138). The *anja*, the element of personhood that may remain, will make demands of a peculiar kind for a period of time, such as offerings of its favourite food; however, over time, it returns to the collective unity of the ancestors, whose needs can be met through generalized offering and ritual (Gibson 1995: 138).

In Ara, the awareness of the need for diversity within unity not only operates diachronically but also operates spatially. An excellent example of the spatial reinforcing of the chronological play may be found in the domestic house. For the domestic house is itself a binding together of several persons into one meta-entity, or person. Gibson suggests that the people of Ara were attentive to the construction of their living space from the beginning (1995: 139–140). As is generally the case everywhere, this process is done in conjunction with a specialist; however, the specialist in Ara, called the *Oragi*, draws his authority from his ability to communicate with the trees in their raw state (ibid.). It is through these first communications that a meaningful relation is developed which continues throughout the life of the house. The spirits of the trees are said to communicate to the *Oragi* through the whorls in the grain which reveal to him how the individual elements should be brought together in the creation of a house (ibid.). It is necessary to blend male and female elements in the house and this is particularly noticeable in the vertical poles, which are arranged in male and female pairings (Gibson 1995: 141). Although there is some confusion over whether these are brother and sister, or man and wife, both of these conceptions develop complementary aspects of the same understanding (ibid.). For brother and sister are diverse genders drawn from the same source, whereas man and wife are diverse genders drawn together into unity through the sacrament of marriage. The house then is no mere backdrop but a living entity of which the humans also form a part. Through the development of various relationships, humans play a part in generating the meta-person of the house, which in turn plays a part in generating the various elements.

The awareness of being part of a series of interrelated things that the people of Ara demonstrate resonates with Gregory and Mary Bateson's notion of grace as an awareness of being part of a series of nested minds (Bateson and Bateson 1998). Yet, this awareness is far from universal and is particularly lacking in my own fieldwork site, an urban area of Himachal Pradesh, India. In contrast to Ara the focus here is all too often on dominating the landscape to rapidly create unsympathetic concrete structures. There is a pervasive oppositional model in which mankind is viewed as distinct from an environment that must be subjugated. The result of this is an environment in which scavengers (such as monkeys) flourish, yet humans suffer, due to poor health, sadness of spirit and

paucity of beauty. There is then perhaps something lacking in the dominant religious systems of this region, which perhaps relates to the way that colonialism, urbanization and mobility have conspired to obliterate the received tradition of the Puranas and elevate the more dislocated, partial, Vedanta literature (Mehta 2009). Of course this is not universally the case in this region and, even if they are not aware of it, people are building relationships with their environments, yet the quality of those relationships is often poor, as is the skill of people to reckon meaningfully with their environments.

Ingold has noted that the dislocation of the human from the environment is often connected with a view of the human as an organism plus (2000: 88). In contrast to the understanding of personhood developed by Gibson's ethnography, this view is predicated on the belief that the only fully developed people are humans. This leads to the suggestion that humans are the only things that can be meaningfully engaged with. Globally many are under the influence of a Cartesian model that does not do justice to the subtlety of Descartes' own thought (Derrida 2008: 70), which views the person as something trapped inside the body, where it functions as a processor of the chaotic sense data with which the world bombards the person (Ingold 2000: 159). This understanding of the person as something uniquely human and detached from its environment is in contrast to the complex notion of personhood that Gibson presents. For his ethnography suggests that personhood is a complex of different forces that are forged through engagement with other elements, or persons (human and non-human, living and dead), who together form the meta-person of the household. From this perspective it is only sensible to heed the arguments of the architect Farouk Y. Seif, who has suggested that homes should reflect identity and be constructed under the principles of patience and love, rather than desperation (2008).

Hallowell's famous account of Ojibwa ontology also adds an important dimension to our notion of personhood and this consequently leads to a nuancing of our understanding of happiness (1960). Hallowell noted that, in the myths of the Ojibwa, persons were not always human, nor were they humans in disguise, such as the animals of Western fables (1960: 30). What is more, there is no sense that the experiences taught through myth, or learnt through dreams, are any more real or useful than those of waking life (1960: 30–43). Therefore, there is no sense that non-human persons are somehow allegorical or unreal. Indeed, the Ojibwa are said to exist in a web of personal relations with both human and non-people (Hallowell 1960: 48). This is because personhood for the Ojibwa, in contrast to the Cartesian concept of the person, is an expression or action (Ingold 2000: 159). Therefore it is perfectly logical from the Ojibwa perspective that thunder can be a person, because it communicates its personhood through an identifiable action in the world (Hallowell 1960: 31–34). Ingold has stressed that a hidden narrative running throughout Hallowell's and other similar accounts, such as Nelson's account of the Koyukon (1983), is the need to be enskilled in interpreting a real phenomenon, in this case that of thunder, in a meaningful way (Ingold 2000: 159). As with the people of Ara in these other ethnographies we see humanity existing at the centre of a web of relations with the human and the

non-human; for these relations to promote human wellbeing it is necessary for humans to become enskilled in relating with these elements in meaningful ways.

This model fits with recent anthropological theorization on the importance of the landscape for our identity, happiness and wellbeing, in which it is argued that people are not separate from their landscapes, existing in a sort of taskscape, or world of action, which unfolds against the backdrop of the landscape (Ingold 2000: 198–208). Instead, it is argued that humans do not so much act on (or in) a landscape as move along with it (Bauer 2004; Ingold 2000, 2007; Tilley 1994). From this perspective the landscape becomes a polyrhythmic composition of processes, within which the divisions between the landscape and taskscape, the natural and the built environment, and the animate and the inanimate become dissolved (Ingold 2000: 201). This understanding of the landscape, which is becoming prevalent in the fields of cultural geography and socio/cultural anthropology, meshes well with the data I have drawn from the ethnographic record, and serves to highlight how different people profit from being more attentive to the relations they develop.

In a world of heightened mobility and economic migration, humans often struggle to develop quality relations with other human and non-human persons (Izquierdo 2009: 67–87). Without the time to become enskilled in interpersonal relations people often fall back upon the crux of domination, which stands in contrast to the harmonious relations of trust found in various places around the world (Ingold 1980). Layard argues that trust is essential to happiness (2005: 7) and the ethnographies I have drawn upon would support this suggestion; however, they call for a nuancing of Layard's insight expanding his idea to include non-human persons. For Gibson's account demonstrates how in Ara the household consists of what Milton has termed an ecology of relations (2005).[3]

In the household of Ara, as Gibson describes it, human and non-human persons engage reciprocally, generating a series of nested minds, an awareness of which is captured in the term *grace* (Bateson and Bateson 1998). The quality of these relations is based, in part, upon the skill of the human to engage meaningfully with other elements of the environment; a skill that is often gained through received religion, which is passed from a caregiver to a youth. Gibson's ethnography implicitly suggests that this received tradition teaches humans how to be attentive to elements of their environment so that they might engage with the world in a more meaningful way. Religion in large areas of Himachal Pradesh once operated in a very similar manner (Thakur 1997); however, the received tradition has recently declined and this may be tied to a dislocation of morality and religion from the environment, which has led to a widespread lack of ability to engage in a meaningful way with the environment. Here, as elsewhere, it is not that man has removed himself from his environment so much as that large numbers of the population are experiencing a dwindling ability to build relations with their environment that enhance their wellbeing.

Sacred space, capital and wellbeing

Basso's ethnographic accounts of the Apache (1990, 2001) presents an excellent example of both how meaningful relations with the environment can be constructed and how large-scale population movement can disrupt those relations, resulting in a spiritually and physically impoverished life.[4] He records how Apache mythology is tied to the landscape and how relations formed during an individual's life mesh with those formed both in the historical past and in mythic time (Basso 1990: 128).[5] As a human moves through the landscape they build relationships, therefore, when they encounter something in the landscape, (a place, a tree, a building) they encounter it in the context of past encounters, which means that the encounter evokes past memories, sounds, sights, smells and emotions (Ingold 2000: 237–40). Similarly, when they think of a place they do not think of the place as an abstract geographical point so much as the experiences they have had in that place (ibid.). Because humans exist in a long, ongoing conversation, when they think of the place they may also think of encounters others have had there and told them about, and when they encounter a place through others' encounters they become enskilled in interacting with it in certain ways. What is more, by interacting with the landscape they become part of the landscape, their presence in it both instantly and historically observable through signs of engagement (Tilley 1994).

The trace of human and non-human action in the world communicates meaning to the person who is enskilled enough to interpret it. It opens possibilities for meaningful engagement, provided that the person is skilled enough to respond sensitively. Basso records that when the Apache were moved to reservations, they found themselves in an alien landscape, which they lacked the skill of accumulated generations' wisdom to engage with (1990). The result was an increase in alcoholism, moral listlessness and a decrease in quality of life (ibid.). I have elsewhere suggested (Miles-Watson 2008) that population movement in itself is not necessarily harmful to happiness and that rooted religious systems of understanding can be robust enough to not only survive this transformation but to act as shock absorbers for the change, in much the same way that Lévi-Strauss suggests that the myths of South America operate (1969: 33).

Returning to the region of my own fieldwork it is possible to see that in Shimla, the capital of Himachal Pradesh, despite a dramatic post-colonial population shift, areas of the city are pregnant with meaning in the same way that Basso records the landscape was for the Apache. Central to the generation of this connection are the Christian religious institutions, which enskill people of all faiths to be attentive to signs of the past that can help forge understanding in the future. Upon approach to the centre of Shimla, dusty roads, lined with cement buildings, give way to wide, pedestrianized avenues lined with buildings that are deliberately designed to evoke certain mythic histories (Bhasin 2009: 83–95). The church buildings, especially Christ Church Cathedral, dominate this space and inside Christ Church (as in Ara) the signs of the ancestors of the place may be perceived. Such spaces transcend relations of blood and generate connections

with the ancestors of the space, the trace of whose action is easily observable. By doing so, the space becomes an important source of wellbeing for the humans that worship, visit and pass daily. What is more, because the space is constantly being generated, these various groups of people become part of the space itself through their worship, reverence and more general engagement.

The language of capitals has emerged powerfully in the discourse of the social sciences over the past decade. Alongside social capital, religious capital and human capital there is now an emerging concept of spatial (or landscape) capital, which is discussed in Chapter 19 of this volume. This chapter's exploration of the ethnographic record began with the objective of deepening understanding of the interpersonal realm of wellbeing. However, the ethnographic data have led towards an appreciation of spatial capital, through a certain collapsing of the person/environment dichotomy. If, as Ingold has recently suggested (2007), we require a greater level of skill than ever before to be aware of how we exist as part of a greater household, or system of nested minds, then the ability of religion and sacred spaces to generate that awareness is more important than ever. The grace that is the realization of the ecology of relations within which a person exists can come through living religious traditions, which teach us how to be attentive to our own actions and the relations they generate with others. This stands in contrast to Cartesian (and other similar) teachings that emphasize the separateness of man from his actions and the uniqueness of man in relation to personhood. The ethnographic record provides examples of ways of engaging with the world that reflect back upon our own lives, resulting in the realization that wellbeing everywhere is contingent upon interpersonal relations. These are forged within space and across time; they are relationships with human and non-human, animate and inanimate people.

Notes

1 The first of these, *Culture and Wellbeing*, edited by Jimnez, contains contributions from anthropologists working primarily with the British tradition. The second of these, *Pursuits of Happiness*, edited by Mathews and Izquierdo, has contributions from anthropologists working primarily within the American tradition.
2 This definition is not universally accepted and other anthropologists have recently developed different approaches to the topic of wellbeing. These include James (2008), highlighting the distinction between wellbeing and welfare, Jimnez's (2008) suggestion that studying wellbeing always involves awareness of the lack of something, and Thin's (2009) empirical approach to wellbeing.
3 I would not however deny that it is possible to conceive of skilful domination, or that, as James (2008) and Laidlaw (2008) have recently highlighted, alternative models to the ecological approach function in such a way as to successfully promote the wellbeing of some, even if it is at the expense of others.
4 Naomi Adelson has recently explored similar issues in relation to the Cree (2009: 109–126).
5 This process resonates strikingly with Bakhtin's notion of chronotopes (1981: 7).

10 Institutions, organizations and wellbeing

Anthony Berry

Introduction

Much has been made of the contribution of a variety of capitals to wellbeing and happiness. These capitals include human, social, knowledge and religious. I seek to argue that there has been too little attention paid to the role of institutions and organizations in the development of wellbeing and human happiness. Further, I seek to argue that institutions and organizations (public, private and third sector) are central to human wellbeing. In this sense the configuration of institutions and organizations, while mutable, does mean that there is a category of capitals, institutional and organizational.

While high levels of wealth do not necessarily lead to higher levels of happiness, moving away from poverty does. Much of the debate on the economic development of second and third world countries has focused upon the limitations imposed by a lack of developed institutions (central banks, open markets, regulatory capabilities, access to legal redress).

The common image of organizations (in the media) is of somewhat oppressive places which exploit persons, and in a naive market view seek to extract labour surplus; which of course some do. Further, organizations are often viewed as antithetical to that apparently most desired state – individual autonomy. Individuals report the negatives that institutions appear to provoke. As an example, an academic, when asked what your university does for you, replied, 'Nothing! And what is more it inhibits my work.' He went on to explain that he was largely judged by his individual research, so all other demands were irrelevant to his future expectations. Similarly a clergy person, incumbent in a Church of England parish, legally a member of a deanery synod, a primary element of church (synodical) government, said that he did not attend because it was boring and gave him nothing. Here we have an individual selectively disobedient to the law, with added optional contempt and disparagement of the institution. The deanery synod exists as a collaborative organization, while for this person the 'fantasy' of clerical autonomy within the institution and organizations of the Church was held in preference to the requirements of engaged collaboration.

This chapter is developed by a very brief review of institutional and organizational literature, some reports of research into the factors that lead to (un)happi-

ness in organizations, followed by some consideration of organizational fields as expressions of institutional conflicts where higher order values and beliefs may be of greater importance to happiness than the factors found in the research considered.

Institutions and organizations

Scott (1995) provides a lucid exposition of the development and use of institutional theory in economics, politics and sociology. He noted that economists were interested in richer explanations of human behaviour than the (dominant) individual rational choice models and attended to the context within which individuals acted. There were critiques in relation to uncertainty and the indeterminacy of decision outcomes, the significance of external factors, the need for behavioural realism and for an understanding of change. Van de Ven (1993) saw institutions 'as imperfect and pragmatic solutions to problems'. Scott argued that the institutional political theorists focused upon formal structures and legal systems providing many rich descriptions of governance. In social theory Durkheim and Weber in attending to institutions as symbolic systems of knowledge, belief and moral authority complemented formal structures with arguments for the significance of values and norms. Weber (1947) developed a famous threefold typology of modes of authority in institutions (and organizations); the traditional, the charismatic and the rational-legal as cultural systems that legitimate the exercise of authority (and perhaps power).

In the explorations of organizations from the viewpoint of social institutional theory there was a move from a view of an organization as a kind of structure or machine to enact rational decisions to a view of organizations as adaptive, organic systems shaped by institutional states and processes. Merton (1957) pointed to the institutional explanations for the behaviour of officers and organizations that were supposed to be rational bureaucracies. Selznick 1957) noted that to institutionalize is to infuse with value beyond the technical requirements of the task. Simon (1957) approached these matters from a critique of rational action which concluded that man could only be boundedly rational, that is with a very constrained space, that individuals had limited search capabilities and patience, and were more likely to avoid uncertainty than engage with it. (This finds an echo in the current global financial crisis where it appears that assessment of risk was feeble.) Further, Simon noted that actions were infused with value systems, so organizations' frames (bounds), rules and routines were produced such that any individual was an institutionalized individual and not an autonomous rational actor. Indeed, the rational actor like the organization could no longer be seen as a stimulus-response process but had to include an interpretive (cognitive) process between stimulus and response. The new institutional theorists in economics were influenced by Coase (1937) and marked by Williamson's (1975, 1981) attention to transactions that could explain the differing forms of economic collaboration: via market, hierarchy or by emerging hybrid forms of alliances, joint ventures and networks.

Underneath this shift in conception of institutions and organizations lay a substantial debate about both ontology and epistemology. Early theorists were more rooted in realism and positive functionalism. There was also a difference of view as to the role of the theorist, to provide historical descriptions and trace development or to seek to build more general explanations. The new or, to use Scott's term, neo-institutionalists were to stress phenomenology (Silverman 1971) and the social construction of reality (Berger and Luckman 1967). 'Organisations were not simply the product of increasing technical sophistication but also the result of the increasing rationalisation of cultural rules' (Meyer and Rowan 1977; Scott 1995: 30).

Scott's own definition of institution (1995: 33) was as follows: 'Institutions consist of cognitive, normative and regulative structures and activities that provide stability and meaning to social behaviour. Institutions are transported by various carriers – cultures, structures and routines – and they operate at multiple levels of jurisdiction.' They are evident in the shaping and reshaping of organizations; also the actors in organizations are shaping and reshaping institutions. Here is stability of a kind but it is a fluid, contestable and contested stability. And of course some organizations will be infused with collective values while others will be more individualistic. (I shall return to what I term the institutions of autonomy via a discussion of a change in the Church of England.) Scott conceived of institutions as constructs or theories but not as observable or legal entities. He suggested that there were three pillars to his conception: values, cognitions and modes of regulation. Interestingly Scott argued that organizations, which are social and legal entities and are observable, are the places where institutional conceptions of values, cognitions and modes of order may be observed as shapers of organizational behaviour. But he also recognized that in organizations, values, cognitions and modes of order were not fixed, were contested and were changing. But Scott's conclusions are also of interest, since he claims that 'organisations are creatures of their institutional environments but most modern organisations are constituted as active players, not passive pawns' (1995: 132).

Organizations

Organizations (with varied legal forms) exist in the public, private and third sector of the society and economy. The boundaries of these organizations may also be within or transcend the borders of the states in which they have their legal home. Organizations take many forms, from bus companies to restaurants, from dance clubs to social services and from air forces to sailing clubs. Organizations have been much studied, largely around themes of efficiency of structures and operation in relation to task complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty, and social, cultural and economic contexts.

Organizations do differ in structural configuration. There is evidence that some organizational forms may be better suited to the tasks required in the context than others. We can note four kinds of organization. The machine

bureaucracy: excellent for routine work, the pursuit of efficiency, governed by hierarchy; these can be designed. The organism: good for turbulence and change; governed by internal/external dialogue; tend to emerge. Networks: good for handling high-complexity, multiple and shifting connections internally and externally (not the same as autonomous persons in voluntary social networks); tend to be a mixture of negotiated design and emergence. Alliances: good for collaboration and competition and for not reinventing wheels, for not incurring high costs of learning; need to be negotiated.

The relation of the idea of organization to the idea of institutions has been a central question. It was observed earlier that neo-institutionalists consider that organizations are infused with institutional issues, values, beliefs and cognitions and modes of order. For example, it has been persuasively argued that from a study of Western and Asian arrangements for economic functioning (mostly banks and commercial corporations) organizational forms created for economic activity are more shaped by their institutional context than by the quest for efficiency.

Amatai Etzioni (1964) added a characterization of organization around conceptions of authority, in some sense derived from Weber (1947) but with a different slant. His three ideal forms were: normative (authority comes from the 'shared' values; e.g. a church or charity; in some ways reminiscent of Weber's charisma); instrumental (authority comes from the inducements offered and contributions elicited, e.g. a car manufacturer, a retail shop, in some ways like Weber's rational-legal form); and coercive (where authority is imposed by power, e.g. armies, prisons, in some ways like Weber's traditional forms). Of course individuals can experience the same organization as being all three of these ideal types; there can be little more coercive experience than the 'blackmail' to follow the norms as one group might define them, little more normative than the indoctrination into common values and little more instrumental than being told that you must go along with organizational or company 'values'. In short all organizations are contestable and contested spaces. And all organizations are subject to external pressures and sometimes to external control. Public organizations are subject to Parliament and its agencies, so inevitably take on the form of rational bureaucracies, normative organizations such as churches and charities are subject to the requirements of law, and commercial organizations (instrumental) are subject to both law and to the behaviour of competitors.

Person and role in organization

One familiar concept which mediates the relationship between the person and the organization is that of role and, by extension, the coordination of roles which is sometimes referred to as organization structure and procedures. There are three (simple) conceptions of role: that which the organization via its organizing processes signals as the role to be performed (a job description); the role as interpreted by the individual appointed; and the role as other connected actors (both internally and externally) expect and come to expect the role to be performed. It

is apparent that in normative organizations individuals give greater preference to their own interpretation of role than they do to that of the organization or to that of others; in coercive organizations the organization preference dominates; in instrumental organizations there is a greater interplay of the three elements. But of course in all 'real' organizations there is space for small to substantial variation at least some of the time.

Now these three conceptions of role lie at the heart of a variety of problems that persons experience in organizations. Role conflict occurs when the three conceptions are substantively different or when a superior insists on a role performance which is at variance with the organizations' nominal definition. Of course such conflict is most marked around ethical issues. Role overload occurs when more is expected of a person than can normally be done in the expected time boundaries; underload is the opposite, leading to a sense of being undervalued; role complexity occurs during times of change and when other internal and external expectations multiply; role ambiguity occurs when the organizations' expectation is out of date with the actual flow of work, or when the three conceptions produce ambiguous guides to action; role uncertainty occurs when the superior is unclear about priorities. All these role issues may produce role stress. The match of personality to role may also be problematic, for should a person with high autonomy needs find herself in a tightly defined role or vice versa, then additional role stress occurs. However, this is not to assert that role stress necessarily contributes to illbeing; in fact persons have different capacities for coping with stress and some stress is beneficial in providing healthy stimulation for thought, understanding and action, but note that high levels of stress do exact consequences for wellbeing.

Some recent evidence of the contribution of organizations to happiness

There was a tradition in organizational studies of exploring how organizations might be both economically efficient and beneficial for human beings. This led to studies of explanations of reported job satisfaction and expanded into transnational research on the quality of working life, providing a further impetus to examining the effects of 'culture' and gender on human requirements for job satisfaction.

Before considering happiness in organizations, let me first note some findings from a recent study of individual happiness. The Slough Studies (2005) of personal happiness (in the south of England) reported ten steps which individuals can make or take to attain a good level of happiness: plant something and nurture it, count your blessings every day (and find five of them to count), take time to talk to a friend for an hour a week, phone a friend and arrange to meet, give yourself a new treat every day, have a good laugh, exercise for half an hour three times a week, smile at a stranger, cut TV viewing by half and spread some kindness. While these are outcomes from surveys they do include some aspects of basic needs and affiliation needs as well as the importance of reaching out in relationships. Of course, life events might well make these ideas appear some-

what Panglossian, and they make no contact with basic needs for food, shelter and so on; nor the higher level needs of identity, of useful work, personal or collective achievement and what Maslow (1968) called self-actualization. But the affiliation issues could be viewed as including some aspects of practical spirituality and placing others before and alongside oneself.

In contrast to the personal focus of the Slough project the Ciumenta study (2007) was about workplace happiness. This study reported that some 80 per cent of employees are either very happy (0.25) or fairly happy (0.56) at work with about 20 per cent unhappy or very unhappy. Almost three-quarters of respondents cited relationships with colleagues as being a key factor in happiness at work with lack of communication from the top as being the biggest cause of unhappiness. Senior staff were more likely to be happy than junior staff; public and third sector organizations had both the highest proportion of very happy people (0.26) and somewhat or very unhappy people (0.24). People in small organizations are slightly more likely to be happy than those in larger organizations (0.86 to 0.81); and the longer persons have been with an employer the less happy they become (by about 0.10); however, the younger (25 or less) and the older (55 or more) they were, the happier they were.

The top ten factors that 'made people happy at work' were friendly, supportive colleagues, enjoyable work, good line manager, varied work, belief that we are doing something worthwhile, and what we do makes a difference, being part of a successful team, recognition of our achievements and competitive salary. As the great majority of people are happy at work, we may assume that institutions and organizations provide work and work roles that are meaningful and valued in the context of meeting basic monetary, affiliation and identity needs. Conversely the top ten factors that 'make us unhappy at work' were found to be lack of communication from the top, uncompetitive salary, no recognition of achievements, poor line manager, little personal development, ideas being ignored, lack of opportunity for good performance, lack of benefits, work not enjoyable, not feeling that I make a difference. In short these are almost the reverse of the happiness factors; there was a lack of basic needs via money or recognition, a lack of affiliation needs and little sense of a valued identity. This creates a constructive agenda for development for both organizations and individuals.

However, it should be noted that 90 per cent of people agreed with the idea that happiness means being able to develop my full potential at work; and the same proportion agreed that happiness includes the sense that the organization values me and is committed to me as an employee. But in contrast to these affirming statements about organizations four-fifths of respondents agreed that they were happy at work as long as it does not intrude on personal life. Further, of the very happy people, some 80 per cent agreed that they needed to have a sense of autonomy in their job in order to be happy in it, a figure that rose to 90 per cent for the very unhappy. A picture emerges of respondents who were able to make a reasonably clear distinction between the person and the person in role in an organization, and presumably adjusted their expectations and psychological stance accordingly.

These observations fit with the idea that individuals place a value on work, working and the context of work which is of greater importance than the remuneration, provided it is seen as fair and equitable with others (Frey and Stutzer 2000), or that as income rises above that required for meeting needs it becomes of less importance. The absence of work when desired or the loss of employment is a considerable contributor to unhappiness, as is significant change in organizations which disturbs the familiar institutional patterns. Interestingly these findings have an echo in the Brown and Thornborrow (1996) studies of followers in organizations. From their study of three organizations they classified followers using a typology of different followers. These were:

1 *Effective and exemplary*: think for themselves, conduct work with energy, self-starters, problem solvers, rated highly by superiors.
2 *Survivors*: are organization fence sitters, go along with leaders and adapt to any new circumstance.
3 *'Yes' people*: are not enterprising and are a little servile.
4 *Sheep*: are passive and unengaged, lack initiative and a sense of responsibility, and just do what is asked of them.
5 *Alienated*: are independent in thinking but passive in their working, and perhaps become cynical and disgruntled.

From a questionnaire, Brown and Thornborrow were able to measure the followership stances of staff in three UK organizations in the sectors of finance, power and confectionery. Their findings surprisingly were similar in each organization: exemplary (0.15), alienated (0.15), the rest (0.70). In effect the critically intelligent split into the exemplary and the alienated, with 70 per cent covering the rest. Perhaps one in six of the staff at any one time is ready for promotion, but this was a static picture. It is possible that staff become conditioned to a follower role but then get frustrated and leave to seek a more congenial workplace. The researchers sought to examine the preferences of leaders and followers about the leadership styles in use. Their findings were that, almost uniformly, organizations seem to discourage the exemplary followers. This might explain the high numbers of the alienated.

Following a review of the rich literature on the work–health relationships, based upon considerations of the traits of healthy organizations, the characteristics of high-performing work, and the organizational marks that give low-stress and healthy environments, Wilson *et al.* (2004) developed and tested a model of healthy work organizations. They defined the healthy organization as follows:

> a healthy organization is one characterised by intentional, systematic and collaborative efforts to maximise employee well being and productivity by providing well designed and meaningful jobs, a supportive social-organizational environment and accessible and equitable opportunities for career and work-life enhancement.
>
> (2004: 567)

In this these authors pull together the results of many piecemeal studies. The model links organizational attributes, organizational climate, job design, job future, psychological work adjustment and characteristics of a healthy worker. (Research instruments were designed; psychological work adjustment were job satisfaction, organizational commitment, efficacy and job stress; the employee health and wellbeing indicators were perceived general health, psychological health, attendance, likelihood of leaving and engagement in health risk behaviours.) Data were collected from 1130 employees from nine stores in one US retail company. The analysis was rigorous, using structural equation modelling, and supported the model. While the authors acknowledge the limitations of employee perceptions as the basis of the data and of the cross-sectional and synchronic nature of the study it does suggest that wellbeing can be a product of appropriate organizational design, the creation of appropriate climate, job design and job futures. Wellbeing (job satisfaction and happiness) is not just a local characteristic of individuals and their unique adjustment to their work demands and context.

Most of these studies were conducted upon employees in general. The Chartered Management Institute in the UK has conducted annual surveys of managers' reported quality of working life from 1997 (Worral *et al.* 2008). The 2008 survey, including a direct comparison with Australian managers, showed some heightening of the reported concern with the detrimental effects of work pressure and longer hours. The survey included attention to leadership style (Australians were less authoritarian); positive job satisfaction (which declines with managerial level from 80 per cent to 52 per cent for UK managers (86–64 for the Australians); nature and effects of organizational change (where 9 per cent of UK and 20 per cent of Australian managers reported an improvement in wellbeing); workload (30 per cent worked longer than 48 hours per week) and its effects; experience of health symptoms; incidence of ill-health (about 30 per cent report stress, about 15 per cent report depression); sick leave and absenteeism (at four to five days per year which seems low compared to average UK figures of about ten days which appear in the UK press); organizational policies on health and wellbeing (where about 40 per cent of both samples reported good organizational coverage of these issues). As there was, understandably, no comparison with population data it is difficult to conclude that these observations are different from the population and therefore solely related to managerial work, and they must be influenced by other life experiences. However, the substantial proportion reporting the existence of organizational policies on wellbeing does suggest either a widespread concern with health and wellbeing and/or a widespread desire to have organizations that sustain a good quality of working life with a good work/life balance for the managers.

These four studies are rooted in positive realism and appear to produce social facts but without exploring how such social facts are constructed, either socially or personally. Nor do they pay much attention to the sometimes quite dreadful sorrows that we all experience from time to time. They are also apparently conducted on an average population and thus miss most of the stages-of-life issues,

but with these quite substantial criticisms it does appear that there is good evidence that life in organizations for most employees (but it is never clear about seniority) is conducive to (self-reported) happiness. However, it is true that the notion of happiness in these studies seems to be far removed from the conception that Plato ascribed to Socrates of happiness being a matter of contemplating the good or the sublime.

Darkness in the dynamics of organizations

Of course it would be a mistake to see the above studies as more than indicative of happiness in organizations, as organizations are open to considerable change, indeed usually must change in order to survive. And while these studies suggest many reasonably acceptable organizations, there are organizations where various tyrannies operate. Mischa Popper (2004) considered that it was important to try to understand extreme cases of dependence between leaders and followers such as the mass suicide of the followers of Jim Jones and the relations of a high moral quality such as Ghandi or Mandela provided. Mischa Popper suggested three kinds of leader-and-follower relationships: regressive relations, symbolic relations and developmental relations. To some extent Popper derived his three types of relationship from Weber's distinction between authorities.

Regressive relations are rooted in the psychological process of projection, an unconscious process. Here the leader is not a person but a construction of the followers' wishes and yearning, where the narcissistically deprived personality may seek compensation in the process of leadership and where the love and regard of the followers fills the otherwise unmet needs. Popper argues that as not everyone has the resources to lead, some people with narcissistic deprivation may become obsessive seekers of figures to 'admire', as 'ideal hungry' personalities. 'The meeting of mirror hungry personalities with ideal hungry personalities may create a dynamic in which desires and fantasies feed the needs, perhaps pathological, of both parties.' The argument of Mischa Popper is that regressive relations are not formed on ideas but are rooted in primary urges, anxieties and distress. This is not to claim that all charismatic relations are so pathological but that the concept of regressive relations does give an explanation of the interpenetration of followers and leaders (indeed deep collusion) that can lead to destructiveness. There are other examples of equally destructive deep collusions between leaders and followers where various defences interlock such as projection and introjection, mutual denial of reality and joint scapegoating of another group.

Duncan (2003) argued that if we can understand why people follow leaders of repressive social movements, we may be helped to find means of limiting their access to power and the damage they can do. The relations of leaders and followers in some cults can be intense and sometimes overpowering. This may arise from a need of the followers to have certainty, a need which the leader only too readily supplies (Brothers 2003), through such processes as the denial of difference, the inflammation of passion and faith-keeping fantasies. This is indeed the dark side of charisma.

Symbolic relations grow out of content-based meanings, messages, ideologies and values which a leader either represents or is expected to represent. These can be deeply significant figures such as Jesus, transitory figures such as pop stars or political figures such as the liberation leader, Nelson Mandela. Of course these figures are only too available for projections to make them more unreal than real, larger than life. People need self-expression to protect and promote their self-esteem and self-worth, to preserve and increase self-consistency. By identifying with a symbolic leader, followers have a means of enhancing their self-worth. Not only is the follower–leader relationship of importance and value but so is the wide array of follower relations who can now share a greater sense of belonging and communal identity. Such leaders can create symbols for identification, market them, and compete with other leaders for the social prizes of power, influence, adulation and wealth.

Developmental relations are an idea based in good parenting (Popper and Mayseless 2003) where the development stages of childhood to adulthood are understood and nurtured. This appears in versions of transformational leadership where individual attention and inspiration are designed to build up followers' capability, identity and autonomy. But developmental leaders also provide the space for followers to work by holding boundaries of meaning, of policy and of anxiety, thus giving sufficient security for the risky business of working. This is at both a conscious and an unconscious level. A developmental relationship may include the leader holding the projections of the followers (and those of others) without fighting them or colluding with them, but when and where appropriate inviting those others to take back their projections and move to a position of mature dependence.

There is some evidence that difficult situations where identity and meaning are under threat are the very conditions that see the emergence of 'strong' leaders as a product of regressive relations. Schein (1992) has argued that symbolic leaders are important actors in changes such as liberation or of national emergence where identity has to be established and nurtured. Churchill did this for the UK, and Lech Walensa did it for Poland after 1989. In both of these cases the 'secret' of their success was the relationship, not just their own leadership. The evidence for this is the abandonment of them by many followers when a new situation existed.

The regressive relationship, as well as being an aspect of an institution of dependence, may also be an aspect of an institution of autonomy, where autonomy is the preferred and sought state of individuals or the state into which they are institutionalized. But it is possible that institutions of autonomy may have organizations that can enable individuals to seek a more mature dependent culture. However, it is arguable that academic organizations which give stress to individual performance, like any organization that does the same, will not develop mature dependence but may become locked in a regressive state. This will impact upon an individual's happiness, probably becoming negative in relation to the organization and more positive in relation to member academic groups (i.e. a professional role) and personal worlds. In this way a somewhat

pathological work–life balance might be maintained. In the Church of England parish clergy are caught in an institutional tradition of autonomy, which many may resolve in a similar way, regressive and unhappy in organizational terms, happy in professional and personal terms.

Institutions and organizational fields

One of the key insights of the neo-institutionalists was the focus on the interconnection of organizations both in an institutional sense and in organizational fields. The following brief consideration of a change process in the Church of England, although developed elsewhere (Berry 2006), represents something of the puzzle of happiness issues when the issues at stake are those of deeply help values and beliefs. At the risk of appearing trite it is important to note that the Church of England is not one organization, rather it is an institution which has emerged over many hundreds of years as a result of considerable conflicts in values, beliefs and modes of order. Its primary organizations include the Archbishops of Canterbury and York with their staffs and jurisdictions, the 44 Dioceses with Bishops and staff with statutorily established governance structures, and 14,000 parishes with legal identity. In addition, there existed a Central Board of Finance, a Pensions Board, the Church Commissioners as holders of historic assets (one-third of the UK Cabinet were such commissioners) and the General Synod which governed the Church (with powers delegated from the Queen in Parliament) made up of Bishops, elected clergy and laity. The then Standing Committee of the General Synod might be viewed in a rough-and-ready way as the Church's cabinet. The General Synod staff at Westminster numbered over 100 people with expertise in various aspects of church life. All this also stood beside church schools, theological colleges, university departments of theology, monastic orders, and an enormous range of organized interest groups, as well as other Christian and faith bodies. This was a pluralist and polyarchic organizational field, reflecting the turbulent manner in which the three institutional strands of Anglo-catholicism, evangelicalism and central liberalism had, over the centuries, accommodated to each other. It was also the product of considerable tension between the traditional and charismatic modes of authority of episcopacy and the rational democratic form of participative governance; the formula to hold this was to claim that the Church was episcopally led and synodically governed.

In 1994 the two Archbishops commissioned a group, chaired by the then Bishop of Durham (Michael Turnbull), to consider the policy making and resource direction machinery of the national Church, a kind of fitness-for-purpose brief. The membership of the commission consisted mainly of very senior men from the commercial and financial world largely drawn from the kinds of financial institutions which had been active in the processes of the demutualization of UK building societies and insurance societies, and of privatizing UK utilities. They were also almost all from the evangelical wing of the Church, a wing that was steadily growing in power and influence in the institution. They described, with disparaging intent, the organizational field of the

Church's central bodies as *a cat's cradle of autonomous and semi-autonomous bodies* (in neo-institutional terms this was a rather good metaphor, as it suggested multiple layered connections, some unobserved and probably unobservable). The commission recommended in a report entitled *Working as One Body* (1995) a unitary solution where the central bodies be subsumed into a new legally separate body to be called the National Council, with the General Synod (described as merely reactive) continuing but with the removal of members' rights to introduce legislation for church governance. This new Council was to have a membership appointed by the Archbishops together with a small minority element elected from the three sections of the General Synod. It had an executive focus, rooted in a kind of strategic choice theory. Of greater surprise was the fact that the recommendations were almost entirely structural and did not explore how strategic choice or policy was made or how it was to be made. Here we observe the migration of corporate commercial models of authority for strategic choice resting with those at the top as though they were the legitimate agents of the passive shareholders, working as a self-perpetuating oligarchy. This may have reflected a mode of order desired by some bishops and the then Archbishop of Canterbury. There was little sense of 'democratic' involvement, or in church language of any conciliar processes.

The argument was offered that a new structure for policy and coherence would enable new vision. In one sense this was an insight into a new social construction of meaning. But it was also a truncation of the analytic processes because the external world was as much ignored as the internal world of the Church as institution or as a field of organizations. This regression was a familiar approach to turbulence and difficulty by pulling things together and hoping that integration would ensure effective adaptation or clearer pursuit of goals whatever the environment. The Turnbull Report ignored the way in which the institution, in subtle ways, created policy and strategy through its complex theologies, languages, ideas, values and beliefs acting in the organizational field.

There was an analysis of goals for the clients who were the Archbishops of Canterbury and York but it bypassed the issues of norms and values (the variety of theological stances in the institution). Via its conclusions about power and mistrust, it did not attend to the issues of how the extant organizations worked, the connection of the normative, affective and dynamic processes within the wider institution to those in the organizations, and did not examine, with adequate care, the issues of power and authority of the General Synod or of the gifts of the whole church, locating, as it did, leadership only in the ordained. It did consider the issue of accountability in the sense of a covenant or common fellowship which should be based upon trust, but it rather created an autonomous and hence unaccountable National Council and appealed for acceptance on the basis of an impatience for change. Finally it did not discuss or deal with the issues or problems of implementation. The Turnbull Report and process generated a very considerable degree of unhappiness in many people in the organizations, especially in the members of the General Synod, and also in those parts of the Church which were antithetical to the evangelical project.

After some years of debate in and around the General Synod a new body, now called the 'Archbishop's Council', was created, absorbing the Central Board of Finance, but with an elected majority and becoming effectively the successor to the Synod Standing Committee. The Church Commissioners remained independent, as Parliament would not turn back the reformation of the sixteenth century. The General Synod retained its powers. This substantial defeat of the project for evangelical control via an autonomous 'new head for the body' was because the managerialist model of organization and control being infused into the Church of England sought a new monarchical form of governance and a return to traditional forms of episcopal control which ignored the evolution of the Church from those models to the loosely coupled, multiple organizational field which had emerged to contain (included in mutually evolved spaces) competing theological (value and belief) stances. The defeat was possible largely because the organizations had constitutional status within the state and so could not be altered without due process in Parliament, a due process that included some strong backstage representations and some very substantial confrontation with the proponents.

Here the mode of order in the institutional and its organizational field had emerged as needing to be embedded in Acts of Parliament in order both to constrain power and the powerful and to maintain space for the differing values and beliefs. These constitutional modes of order were guarantees, not of happiness, but of an acknowledgement that it was acceptable to hold to different value positions and that there was institutional and organizational security. But it may be argued that a necessary and more constructive reconfiguring of the organizational field was hindered and evolution inhibited, issues went unexamined and problems were denied by the failure of a well-intended project which foundered through the search for power and control rather than a search for constructive processes of change. If that is correct then the general unhappiness may well increase, as the organizational field oscillates between regressive and symbolic relations. In its new state it does seem to be a neat example of Van de Ven's interpretation of Commons: 'institutions existing at a certain point in time represent nothing more than imperfect and pragmatic solutions to reconcile past conflicts' (Scott 1995: 3).

The material of this case does suggest that the capacity of multiple organizational fields to resist control being exercised from one point in them may have a wider application when considering the consequences of the shift from centralized to network forms of organization. Like Humpty-Dumpty they may never be put back together again, but in the field approach there is always the possibility of shifting to new and unpredictable forms. In the Church of England at the time of writing there is considerable conflict and unhappiness about issues of gender and sexuality. It is not clear how the new configuration will be or whether it will have an expanded organizational field as groups leave one and form others. What is the case is that happiness is disturbed by perceived threat and resolved by creating places of 'happiness' where happiness of the actors is a function of their ability to claim and have space for their values and beliefs.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have attempted to relate some of the burgeoning literature on happiness to the experience of individuals in institutions and organizations, noting some current research, mostly in the positive realist tradition, on happiness, the quality of working life and wellbeing in organizations. The focus moves, perhaps uneasily, between institutions and organizations, although I have followed the path of the neo-institutionalists as charted by Scott (1995). The exploration of the change process in the Church of England widened the scope to include institutions and organizational fields where happiness of the actors was a function of their ability to claim and have space for their values and beliefs and their preferred mode of order. It is the case that there needs to be more attention given to the role of institutions and organizations (public, private and third sector) in the development of wellbeing and human happiness. Further, as institutions and organizations are so central, it may not be a mistake to speak of institutional capital, acknowledging that such institutions are not stable and unchanging.

The implication of this argument is to turn some of our approach to wellbeing and happiness away from individuals and primary relationships towards a broader framing of institutions and organizations as places where humans engage in collaborative activity, common (enough) purposes that are socially useful and ethically good (and dubious), and where on the evidence so far most humans are happy with their work and its environment.

11 Religion, family form and the question of happiness

Adrian Thatcher

There is much empirical evidence to support the hypotheses that children are more likely to thrive when brought up by their biological parents; and that marriage produces greater happiness, not just for children, but for their parents, and for societies, than comparable family forms. In the first section, this evidence is analysed. In the second, the problematic character of happiness within Christian thought and practice is allowed to disrupt all appeals to it as a goal of human life. The third section identifies six prior issues which need to be resolved if the claim that Christian teaching about marriage and family form produces happiness is to be vindicated. The fourth section contributes theologically to the discussion about what families are. The argument concludes that a form of Christian teaching about families is to be embraced primarily because of its intrinsic *attractiveness*, and only secondarily because empirical study currently supports its felicific consequences.

Happy families?

When, between 2002 and 2006 I wrote *Theology and Families* (Thatcher 2007),[1] I was obliged to take seriously a report by 13 renowned family scholars, prepared for the Institute for American Values (IAV), *Why Marriage Matters: Twenty-One Conclusions from the Social Sciences* (IAV 2002: 1–28).[2] (It has a British counterpart, *Does Marriage Matter?*)[3] (CIVITAS n.d.). The report deals with four areas. With regard, first, to family relationships it concludes that 'Marriage increases the likelihood that fathers have good relationships with their children;' that 'Cohabitation is not the functional equivalent of marriage;'[4] and that 'Growing up outside an intact marriage increases the likelihood that children will themselves divorce or become unwed-parents.' 'Divorce is twice as likely among children whose parents have divorced' (IAV 2002: 7–9). Second, with regard to family economics, the team concludes that 'Divorce and unmarried childbearing increase poverty for both children and mothers' (IAV 2002: 9–11). Third, with regard to physical health, the team concludes that 'Children who live with their own two married parents enjoy better physical health, on average, than do children in other family forms' and that 'Parental marriage is associated with a sharply lower risk of infant mortality', around 50 per cent in the case of

children of unmarried mothers (IAV 2002: 11–14). Fourth, there are similar benefits with regard to the mental health and emotional wellbeing of members of intact families (IAV 2002: 15–16).[5]

The conclusion is that lifelong marriage has huge benefits for children, parents and societies. There is, therefore, a particular family form that is more happiness-producing than comparable family forms. The conclusion also provides a strong and positive account of what, in relation to families, happiness is. It isn't necessary to research the standard treatments of philosophical thought and language for an appropriate stipulative definition. The evidence is in every case *comparative.* Outcomes are measured against alternatives in all four areas, and happiness is the state that results from particular, prescribed family practices.

This conclusion, of course, confirms standard Christian teaching. John Witte calls this 'the health paradigm of marriage' which, he says, is 'both very new and very old' (2002: 86); new because it is validated by empirical secular research, old because 'the West has had a long and thick overlapping consensus that marriage is good, does good, and has goods both for the couple and for the children' (2002: 88). It is now being claimed, on empirical grounds, that marriage is more likely to be better than alternatives to marriage, both for spouses and for children. Marriage need no longer be favoured on grounds of social convention, religious teaching or ideological proclamation alone. It may be shown independently to provide positive benefits for couples, and especially for their children, irrespective of faith or political commitments. Our concern is not whether these findings are reliable (though I think they are).[6] Practical theologians must be attentive to the social scientists but have no wish to adjudicate their competing claims. (In any case, theologians have their own procedures for dealing with empirical reality (Graham *et al*: 2005), and for interacting with the social sciences (Gill 1996).) The question is, rather, assuming the truth of the report: What does that tell us about the contribution of religion to familial happiness? Conversely, is the neglect of religious teachings about marriage and families a source of misery?

Happiness as a problem for theological thought

Serious problems, axiological and aetiological, cloud any attempt to calculate the influence or impact of any set of beliefs upon actions or behaviour. But for religious people, not just Christians, the greater problem is how, or even whether, happiness finds its way into the practice of discipleship. Of course happiness is a human value, central to human flourishing. Cicero assumed *beati certe omnes esse volumus* ('Obviously everyone wants to be happy.').[7] But that is Roman thought. The Christian tradition, following Augustine, is deeply *wary* of happiness, requiring instead renunciation. Virtue and felicity, taught Augustine, are not credible deities in the Roman pantheon: rather, 'they are gifts of the true God', and their connectedness to each other and to God is demonstrated by Augustine's rhetorical question:

> Furthermore, where there is virtue and felicity, what need is there to seek anything else? If men are not satisfied with these, what will suffice them? For surely, virtue includes all that ought to be done, felicity all that ought to be desired.
>
> (1984: 159)

Augustine inveighed against the elevation of happiness over other values and its separation from 'true religion' (1984: 163). Rather, self-denial is a requirement of any Christian disciple.

There is little doubt that a similar polemic against the elevation of happiness, and its separation from virtue and from God in late modern societies, can derive much from Augustine's analyses. The word does not appear in the King James version of the Bible. Contemporary theologians are increasingly suspicious of what is variously called The Enlightenment, the enlightenment project, modernity, and so on. The pursuit of happiness is embedded in it. Happiness is, and has to be, measurable. The felicific calculus provided a means (Bentham 1789: ch. 4). When John Stuart Mill announced the Greatest Happiness Principle, he deliberately called it a 'creed', a 'theory of life' which renders superfluous without further argument any morality based on religious or theological principle (1861: ch. 2).

For Christians, happiness is emphatically not the goal of life; nor is their account of right and wrong determined by the fallible calculation of felicific consequences. The meaning of life is rather to be found in the love of God, of one's neighbour, of one's self, and even of one's enemy. Theology shares with many social critics a deep misgiving about the value accorded to happiness. Philip Rieff warned, in 1966, that whole capitalist societies were even then being organized as therapeutic cultures, that is, as places where 'a sense of well-being has become the end, rather than a by-product of striving after some superior communal end' (Rieff 1966: 261). Richard Stivers warns that 'when religion is associated with happiness it is reduced to the status of a *means* to the end of happiness' (1994: 64). He accuses liberal Protestantism of having achieved this transformation by 'inverting New Testament teachings about the suffering and rejection that a witness to Christ would necessarily encounter'. Alasdair MacIntyre famously and trenchantly showed why happiness 'is indeed a pseudo-concept available for a variety of ideological uses, but no more than that'. All contributors to this present project may need to heed his warning that 'the use of a conceptual fiction in a good cause does not make it any less of a fiction' (1981: 62). Terry Eagleton locates the pursuit of happiness within the movement away from objective morality to subjective preference, and presses the epistemological question how we know we are happy when we think we are, warning 'You can … be mistaken about whether you are flourishing, and someone else may be more wisely perceptive about the matter than you yourself. This is one important sense in which morality is objective' (2003: 129). And so on. One might wonder why, given the avalanche of literally hundreds of stolid criticisms of happiness such as these, it refuses to be buried.

So how does religion and theology cope with this dilemma? The 'happiness literature' is, of course, its own testimony to its usefulness. Happiness is now a 'new science' (Layard 2005). Layard believes that 'Many arguments have been brought against this philosophy, but none of them stand up' (2005: 225). Like Mill before him, there are no transcendent sources of happiness worth looking for. Religious instrumentalities may offer some possible help – 'there is a range of spiritual practices that help to bring peace of mind, from Buddhist meditation to positive psychology' (2005: 230). Are religious people supposed to connive with their own marginalization? All this is enough to alienate much of the theological constituency. Yet the new science of happiness is very family- and child-centred. Layard is also the co-author of *A Good Childhood*, a report in the United Kingdom for The Children's Society, a former Church of England charity. Children, the report says, most want and need love and respect (Layard and Dunn 2009: 151), while:

> The greatest responsibility is on parents. The most important act which two people ever perform is to bring another being into the world. This is an awesome responsibility and, when they have a child, the parents should have a *long-term commitment to each other* as well as to the welfare of the child.
> (2009: 155)

But now for a volte-face! While it might be argued that religious people have different religious values which may be preferred to happiness (just as they have different accounts of the human being which may be preferred to the language of human rights), there are several good reasons for not accentuating the differences between Christian and 'secular' ethics, the strongest of which has been magisterially put by Charles Taylor in *A Secular Age*: 'the general understanding of the human predicament before modernity placed us in an order where we were not at the top' (2007: 18). Nowadays 'secularity is a condition in which our experience of and search for fullness occurs'. Prior to secularization believers were 'called on … to detach themselves from their own flourishing'. Nowadays 'new conditions of belief' exist. Within them, Taylor believes, there remains 'the sense that there is some good higher than, beyond human flourishing'. Christians can still 'think of this as agape, the love which God has for us, and which we can partake of through his power' (Taylor 2007: 18–19).

These considerations are crucial to any religious or theological evaluation of family forms. The dilemma is this: Should Christians pursue what they take to be the will of God whether or not it leads to human flourishing? Or should they pursue human flourishing because they take it to be the will of God? The dilemma is noticeably similar to that stated by Plato in the dialogue *Euthyphro*.[8] In relation to family form, the first position takes God's will to be understood independently of any calculation of happiness. God makes God's will known in, for instance, the Bible and tradition, in divine commands, the teachings of the Church about marriage as a sacrament or holy ordinance; about the evils of pre-marital sex, cohabitation, homosexuality, adultery, divorce, and so on. Human lives must accommodate themselves to God's revealed will, whatever

the foreseen or unforeseen consequences. But the second position poses no necessary disjunction between God's will and human flourishing, since human flourishing is what God wills. But if that is what God wills, how independent can humans be in pursuing what they take their flourishing to be?

Whether empirical results validate religious truth claims

There is then a 'health paradigm' of marriage. Marriage is generally good for everyone; this remarkable result is empirically verified; the churches are entitled to feel pleased (and perhaps vindicated?) that their teachings about marriage and families have social-scientific confirmation. This is a seductive combination of religion and social science; but does it withstand scrutiny? Perhaps, but first it needs to survive several types of objection.

First, Christians have been slow to endorse the emerging style of companionate, personalistic, romantic and egalitarian marriage. This phenomenon embeds itself in the second half of the twentieth century. The Reformation may have given marriage a new respect, yet as historian Stephanie Coontz remarks (about the marriage vows in the 1662 Prayer Book Solemnization of Matrimony):

> The wife was legally required to worship her husband with her body. He could force sex upon her, beat her, and imprison her in the family home, while it was she who endowed him with all her worldly goods. The minute he placed that ring upon her finger he controlled any land she brought to the marriage and he owned outright all her movable property as well as any income she later earned. Prior to the late eighteenth century, few voices challenged these inequities.
>
> (2005: 142)

Marriage is undoubtedly a developing tradition in itself (the argument whether same-sex couples may benefit from it is obvious confirmation of its evolving nature). But any general endorsement of marriage requires attention to which particular temporal and cultural version of it is endorsed.

Second, appeals to *traditional* marriage, or to traditional teaching about it generally, pretend to ignorance regarding the marital dynamics of power and gender within that ancient institution. The New Testament *locus classicus* for marital theology is Ephesians 5: 21–33. Three times that author innovatively enjoins husbands to love their wives. The uxorial role however is not a mutual one. Three times wives are to submit themselves to their husbands (at v. 24 'in everything'). The doctrine of male 'headship'[9] (based in part on this passage) remains established in contemporary conservative evangelicalism and fundamentalism, where euphuistic talk of male 'servant leadership' of families may sometimes be an oxymoron disguising more overt assertions of dominance.

Third, the possibility of exit from marriage is almost a necessary precondition for marrying couples today. Who wants to remain married to a monster? This too is primarily an issue of power. While it is banally obvious that divorcing

couples provide evidence that some marriages are unhappy, it is less obvious (but still certain) that the provision of easy marital escape-routes has altered the institution of marriage fundamentally. Marriage is still 'till death us do part' except that it now isn't: spouses may part without attributing fault at all. The promissory character of the wedding vows has now become aspirational only. But the churches' teachings about these matters – separation, divorce, annulment, further marriage – have undergone evolution even while interchurch disagreements have remained sharp. Both 'indissolubilists' and 'dissolubilists' can appeal to a Happiness Principle (should they want to). The former can argue that a permanent union provides the best context for conflicts to be resolved;[10] the latter that an indissoluble marriage may function coercively and may threaten personal freedom and safety.

Fourth, there are internal inconsistencies in the religious commendation of marriage. Is it primarily a defence against fornication ('better to marry than to burn' – 1 Cor. 7:9), or can we do better? Is it a sacrament or not? Is celibacy better or not? Do the Gospels commend it or not?[11] Is procreation a requirement or not?[12] Do the churches smother alternatives to marriage by a gross overemphasis on it? Elizabeth Stuart speaks of a sad development within Western Christianity – 'the collapse of Christian discipleship into heterosexual marriage.… In public discourse on sexuality the Western churches currently give every impression of wanting to produce heterosexual desire rather than desire for God' (Stuart 2007: 70–71).

Fifth, the Church's beliefs about the permanence of marriage do not seem to be very effective in holding the marriages of Christian believers together. While it is true that rates of marital dissolution can be lower among couples where both attend church regularly (Wuthnow 2005: 88), it is also true that 'During the 1970s, when most observers believe the family was weakened by rising divorce rates, religious involvement in the United States held steady' (Wuthnow 2005: 89). A study of over 500 couples showed that 'increases in religious involvement only slightly decreased the probability of the couples considering divorce, and neither enhanced marital happiness nor decreased marital conflict' (Booth *et al.* 1995).[13] Since the influence of beliefs on behaviour is in any case problematic, little should perhaps be made of the evident lack of causality between religious beliefs in the permanence of marriage, and the actual durability of marriage among believers. Equally little can be gauged of the reconciling impact of religious belief on troubled couples.

And sixth, there is a *prima facie* case based squarely on the teaching of Jesus that the *Kingdom* or Reign of God is to be valued far beyond *kin*, so the Christian endorsement of *any* particular family form requires ingenuity. (The crucial passages in the Gospels are Mk. 3: 31–35; Lk. 8: 20–21, 11: 27–28 and 18: 28–30.)

> Jesus said to them, 'Truly I tell you: there is no one who has given up home, or wife, brothers, parents, or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not be repaid many times over in this age, and in the age to come eternal life'.
>
> (Lk. 18: 29–30)

It could hardly be clearer that Christian discipleship is at odds with comfortable family life: rather, renunciation of family ties is a requirement that brings its ample rewards both in this life and the next. Sacrifice, not fulfilment, is the expectation of the followers of Jesus. It is arguable that, by a combination of natural law and kin altruism, 'the Reign or Kingdom of God can be located within families as well as far beyond them' (Thatcher 2007: 66–71). But that takes argument. It is far from obvious that relations of kin are, or ought to be, means of happiness. Indeed, the Gospels assume the contrary.

A theological framework for families

Limited space here requires a selection of just two considerations from many that could be put forward. First, the flourishing of children is one of the clearest, unmistakable imperatives of the teaching of Jesus in the Gospels. (The key passages are Mt. 18: 1–6, 19: 13–15, 21: 14–16; Mk. 9: 36–37, 10: 13–16; Lk. 18: 15–17.)[14] Jesus Christ had an intense love of children. He identified completely with them, especially with their vulnerability, and held them as an example for adults to follow. An effective theological endorsement of particular family forms may be made by an appeal to the teaching of Jesus *about children* (and that is very different from any attempt to find nuclear families in early Genesis or in the Household Codes of the New Testament). But there are good reasons for believing that the evidence about the flourishing of children (see above, pp. 148–149) is compelling. What remains to be done is to link the teaching of Jesus about children with the 'health paradigm' of marriage. A simple theological argument is available which consists of two uncluttered premises and a simple conclusion. It goes like this:

Premise 1	Jesus Christ wills the flourishing of all children.
Premise 2	Children are more likely to flourish within marriage.
Therefore:	Jesus Christ wills marriage for bringing up children.

(Thatcher 2007: 127)

A second powerful consideration derives from what almost all Christians believe about God. God is a Trinity, a Network of Relations, or as Pope John Paul II taught, a Communion of Persons (1981: section 11; 1994: section 7; *Catechism* 1994: section 2205), or *communio personarum.* God is also love (1 Jn. 4: 8, 17), and *ubi caritas, deus ibi est.* Christian families are invited to see themselves also as communions of human persons, and the relations between members as partially analogous to the relations between the Persons who are God. Indeed, since human love within Christianity is always touched by divine love there is at least the possibility of an analogy of participation between human families and the divine Persons of the Trinity. (Such an analogy need not be confined, of course, to families.) Such analogies assume an ever-widening 'circle of love' which reaches out beyond their centres or nuclei.[15] Mystical traditions within Christianity speak unashamedly of participation in the life of God. This is no less true for

families than it is for monks or hermits. That promise for families is seductively attractive. It represents an irresistible summons, one in the face of which the calculation of consequences is rendered irrelevant.

Conclusion

In the first section the truth of the claim that children are more likely to thrive when brought up by their biological parents was assumed. The second section problematized the pursuit of happiness as a theological goal, while the third further problematized 'the health paradigm of marriage'. These problems, however, do not vitiate efficacious interaction between particular religious beliefs about marriage and families, and particular desirable outcomes for parents, children and society. If societies in which Christians are present choose to formulate desirable social outcomes, including outcomes for families by means of an overarching term that is a 'pseudo-concept' or a 'conceptual fiction', it does not follow that theology should be absent from the party. There is a Christian vision regarding the thriving of children in the reign of God, and a vision for families in the life of God. These may be embraced because they are *attractive*. They constitute in part what Christian traditions teach about God and God's reign. We should not be surprised, of course, if what God wills turns out to have happiness-producing consequences, since our happiness (insofar as we can agree what we are talking about) *is* what God wills. And that of course is to resolve the Euthyphro dilemma in a particular way. In fact it does not resolve it but rather, as Wittgenstein might have said, it '*dis*solves' it. Yes, our happiness is what God wills. However, in seeking to discern what the will of God might be, any complacent identification of human flourishing with God's will, or accommodation of the divine purpose to purely human and potentially selfish ends, is avoided. Rather, the promotion of the wellbeing of children, and so of the familial and social support they require, is a priority, and evidence, of God's reign. God's invitation to share in the divine love is extended also to families. The response to that invitation is able to be based on its sheer attractiveness, and not because someone authoritative can pronounce it to be a matter of prudent social policy.

Notes

1 See also Almond (2006).
2 Its authors are a team of eight male and five female American family scholars, chaired by Norval Glenn. There is a voluminous supporting literature detailing the research which must be consulted through the copious endnotes provided. It covers much of the ground already traversed in Waite and Gallagher (2000).
3 Rebecca O'Neill, who prepared the text, acknowledges that the work is 'inspired' by *Why Marriage Matters*, and which has been used as a 'model' for its production. In fact long sections of text of the American version appear without further acknowledgement in the British work.
4 For a lengthy review of evidence about cohabitation see Thatcher (2002).
5 Children of divorce have higher rates of psychological distress and mental illness, and

suicide. Divorce can contribute to crime and domestic violence: 'Boys raised in single-parent homes are about twice as likely (and boys raised in stepfamilies are three times as likely) to have committed a crime that leads to incarceration by the time they reach their early thirties.' They also associate marriage with 'reduced rates of alcohol and substance abuse for both adults and teens', and with 'better health and lower rates of injury, illness, and disability for both men and women'. Married people live longer than single people. Families where parents stay married provide a safer environment for men, women and children. Adults are less likely to be 'either perpetrators or victims of crime', and 'Married women appear to have a lower risk of experiencing domestic violence than do cohabiting or dating women'. 'A child who is not living with his or her own two married parents is at greater risk of child abuse' (IAV 2002: 16–17).

6 On the problems of political correctness, and of 'optimistic' and 'pessimistic' interpretations of the data, see Thatcher (2007: 130–132).

7 A sentence from Cicero's lost *Hortensius* which stirred Augustine to philosophical endeavours. See O'Donovan (2008: 5).

8 See *Euthyphro*, 10a, where Socrates asks: 'The point which I should first wish to understand is whether the pious or holy is beloved by the gods because it is holy, or holy because it is beloved of the gods.'

9 See the arguments in e.g. Blankenhorn *et al.* (2004).

10 See Rowan Williams' perceptive comment (2002: 315) about marital fidelity: 'sexual faithfulness is not an avoidance of risk, but the creation of a context in which grace can abound because there is a commitment not to run away from the perception of another.'

11 Not according to Lk. 20: 34–36, strangely absent from most theological treatises on marriage!

12 For an analysis of the growing phenomenon of 'chosen childlessness' within marriage, see Thatcher (2007: 217–230).

13 Summarized by Wuthnow (2005: 89).

14 For a fine exegesis of these sayings see Gundry-Volf (2001: 29–60). See also Thatcher (2007: 57–63).

15 An emphasis of David Matzko McCarthy (2001).

12 Mental health, spirituality and religion

Peter Gilbert

Introduction

We might expect that 'the ascent of humankind' would include rising material prosperity in most parts of the globe and a move away from mere survival everywhere. Along with this would surely go a greater sense of mental wellbeing and self-actualization, as we move up Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow 1968). In fact, however, rates of mental illness have risen in the 'developed' world at a significant rate, and perhaps the most worrying aspects are the declining mental health and wellbeing of children (Alexander 2007; Layard and Dunn 2009), and the effect of growing levels of inequality (Friedli 2009).

In workshops run for service users and staff under the National Institute for Mental Health in England's (NIMHE) Spirituality and Mental Health Project, conversations tend to return again and again to questions about what makes life worth living. Sometimes these are within a religious framework: 'My spirituality, my whole life is Islam' (participant in a Bradford Care Trust workshop, autumn 2007). At other times they may come from a religious or secular culture and a deeply personal spirituality: 'My loss (the sudden death of her husband early in their marriage) has made me stronger, and this inner strength is my spirit and my whole way of being' (Hulme in Gilbert 2008; Hay 2006).

Governments have a duty to provide a framework for the security and development of their citizens, but this will always be tempered by philosophical ideas (e.g. utilitarianism; threats from war or terrorism; and economic considerations). At the time of the Boer War the poor performance of city-dwelling troops in the South African countryside led to calls for greater attention to the physical capability of British citizens. Today it is the intellectual capacity and mental strength and wellbeing of citizens in a competitive global knowledge economy that is crucial.

The World Health Organization (WHO) puts it thus:

> Mental-Health and mental well-being are fundamental to the quality of life and productivity of individuals, families, communities and nations, in enabling people to experience life in a meaningful way and to be creative and active citizens.
>
> (WHO Declaration 2005, in Friedli and Parsonage 2007: 1)

We know that mental illness, or extreme sadness following trauma, can cause a marked withdrawal from society and a loss of societal and economic activity. At one end of the scale, Dr Lewis Wolpert, in his searing *Malignant Sadness* writes, 'if we had a soul – and as a hardline materialist I do not believe we do – a useful metaphor for depression could be "soul loss" due to extreme sadness' (Wolpert 2006: 3).

In a complex national society, and at a time of extreme international economic competition, the need to retain a mentally healthy workforce is paramount.

Mental ill-health and spoiled identity

Identity is one of the big issues of the twenty-first century (Bauman 2004; Spalek 2007; Taylor 2007). In fact Zygmunt Bauman says that today ' "Identity" is the loudest talk in town' (Bauman 2004: 17) and 'our longing for identity comes from the desire for security, itself an ambiguous feeling' (29). It was Erving Goffman who wrote about stigma being a form of 'spoiled identity'. Goffman goes on to say that:

> an individual who might have been received easily in ordinary social intercourse possesses a trait that can obtrude itself upon attention and turn those of us whom he meets away from him, breaking the claim that his other attributes have on us. He possesses a stigma, an undecided differentness from what we had anticipated.
>
> (Goffman 1963/1990: 15; Thorneycroft 2006)

I can identify personally with this, having experienced a depressive illness in 2000/2001 which created a sense of disconnection with other people, the transcendent, society and myself (Gilbert *et al.* 2008); it certainly felt like Wolpert's description of 'soul loss'. In a very consumerist society, with identity being constructed on a constant basis (Bauman 2007) I felt that I was 'shop-soiled' goods, and would have difficulty reconnecting with a number of worlds, including that of employment. Fortunately I was able to fall back on some support systems, which in a technical sense might be described as a bio-psycho-social-spiritual model, and, in more prosaic terms, as an excellent GP, who prescribed the right medication at the right time; a place of spiritual asylum (the Benedictine Abbey of Worth); friendships; the support of my running club Black Pear Joggers, who provided me with a sense of community (Coyte *et al.* 2007: ch. 10); and colleagues who valued me enough to invite me to come and work for them. *Guardian* columnist and survivor, Clare Allan, neatly sets out the dilemmas of diagnosis and identity:

> I'm not suggesting for a second that mental illness is not a reality. Anyone who scratched all night in a corner, voices rebounding off walls around them … will attest to the reality of their experience. What I'm saying is that

> human experience – because that's what it is, nothing more, nothing less – can never be filed under neat diagnostic labels. And while diagnoses may serve some sort of purpose in helping doctors to group symptoms together and decide on a course of treatment, they can all too easily become a replacement for genuine understanding".
>
> (Allan 2006)

In terms of mental health, then, a move from modern to postmodern forms of identity has both advantages and disadvantages. For a number of people their identity can be remade, sometimes strengthened following an episode of mental illness or mental distress. They are able to remake their identity around their experience and their inner spirit, but as Allan makes clear, this is a complex matter where labelling can be both validating and demeaning. As Bracken and Thomas point out in their *Postpsychiatry* (2005), modernity often produced stifling metanarratives which drowned out the telling of a personal story. For many people, what Bauman calls *Liquid Modernity* leaves them as what he has described as 'the floating and drifting self' (Bauman 1997: 21).

Mental illness, madness, lunacy, however historical eras have described the phenomenon, has always been a sign of contradiction: from the medieval Christian monasteries and Muslim maristans; through the nineteenth-century asylums, which morphed into massive institutions; to the modern discourse about what kind of care and in what community (Gilbert 2003; NIMHE 2003; Rogers and Pilgrim 2005).

Recent mental health policy

The year 1998 saw the publication of a government White Paper, *Modernising Mental Health Services*, and the following year, in September 1999 witnessed the publication of the first government *National Service Framework*, that for mental health (DoH 1999).

During the past nine years, mental health has been classed as one of the government's three main health priorities: Professor Louis Appleby was appointed as the National Director for Mental Health; Professor Antony Sheehan set up the National Institute for Mental Health In England (NIMHE) in 2002; investment was increased by over £1.5 billion; and a new series of teams, to assist people in the community, were set up.

The NIMHE's role (NIMHE 2003) was to connect local implementation, regional strategy (including close links with local government and voluntary organizations) and national policy and strategy so as to create a unified developmental approach.

Work has been undertaken on a number of issues: the creation of new community teams to provide early intervention and support at home, especially in crisis situations (praised by the WHO in its 2008 overview of European Community services), social inclusion, workforce planning, stigma, acute care, user and carer initiatives, research, suicide, developing race equality and others.

With issues around spirituality and faith becoming ever more prevalent, a specific spirituality project was set up in September 2001.

The demography of mental health

Several works have recently brought together the demographics and the costs of mental ill-health. Some of the relevant texts are Rankin (2005), the Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health (2003), and the Mental Health Foundation (2007). In business there is usually an attempt to do a cost-benefit analysis of what are the pros and cons, the costs and the benefits of various business strategy options; in national policy, however, the picture is often opaque. It is perhaps significant that it is an economist, Lord Layard, who has questioned whether the country can afford to continue with rising levels of mental ill-health.

Saba Moussavi *et al*.'s major survey for the World Health Organization (Moussavi *et al.* 2007) found that after adjustment for socio-economic factors and health conditions, depression had the largest effect on worsening mean health scores compared with other chronic conditions. Consistently across countries and different demographic characteristics, respondents with depression, comorbid with one or more chronic diseases, had the worst health scores of all the disease states.

Depression produces the greatest decrement in health compared with the chronic diseases angina, arthritis, asthma and diabetes, and the comorbid state of depression incrementally worsens health compared with depression alone. The authors conclude that 'these results indicate the urgency of addressing depression as a public-health priority to reduce disease burden and disability, and to improve the overall health of populations'.

In 2002 it was estimated that around one-third of GPs' time was taken up by mental health problems. As many as 1.5 million people were caring for relatives with mental health problems. In 2003 the Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health set the annual cost of mental illness at £77.4 billion, while in 2006 over £600 million was spent on medication (£401 million on antidepressants and £209 million for psychosis and related disorders). It is estimated that about 10 per cent of children have mental health problems at any one time (Mental Health Foundation 2006). In the prison service 70 per cent of the prison population have two or more diagnosed mental illnesses (Edgar and Mickford 2009). The recent WHO Europe survey (Friedli 2009) argues that current levels of economic inequality are damaging to the mental health of the population. Inevitably more targeted research is required to consider the mental health of specific groups of people.

Drivers towards spiritual care in today's health and social care environment

There are a number of strong drivers towards embedding a strong ethos of spiritual care in today's health and social care services.

The first driver is a desire by service users and carers to, in the words of the Somerset Spirituality Project, 'be taken seriously' (Mental Health Foundation 2002) an impetus linked to the Recovery Movement; a dissatisfaction with a consumerist society, which we have seen in the first part of this chapter; and a greater complexity of belief systems in the UK. People who use services are making clear that they wish to be responded to as people. Interestingly, the National Census of In-Patients in Mental Health Hospitals, carried out by the Commission for Health Inspection, the NIMHE and the Mental Health Act Commission (CHAI 2005), found a surprisingly high percentage of religious affiliation, even if this does not equate with religious belief. Professor Kamlesh Patel, as Chair of the Mental Health Act Commission, in launching the results of the survey, stated that:

> If you don't know who I am, how are you going to provide a package of care for me to deliver something? When you do not know how important my religion is to me, what language I speak, where I am coming from, how are you going to help me cope with my mental illness? And that is what I am trying to get over to people; the first step is about *identity*. It is absolutely fundamental to the package of care we offer an individual.
>
> (Mulholland 2005: 5, emphasis added)

The second main driver is legislation and policy. The 1998 Human Rights Act (introduced in 2000) defined the right of the individual to religious observance as:

> Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practise and observance.
>
> (Article 9: Freedom of thought, conscience or religion)

Subsequent legislation around the Employment Equality (religion and belief) Regulations of 2003, and the Equality Act (2006), bring matters of religion and belief centre-stage in the legislative process, within the framework of a democratic, secular society.

National policy, both generally and within the specific remit of mental health, also brings spirituality, in its widest sense, into prominence. *The Patients Charter* assures us that our religious, spiritual and cultural needs will be attended to by NHS staff.

In a more general sense, the White Paper on health and social care, *Our Health, Our Care, Our Say*, set a new direction for community services (DoH 2006a); the 2007 *Commissioning Framework for Health and Well-Being* (DoH 2007), and the Commission on Integration and Cohesion's Report *Our Shared Future* (CIC 2007), all point in the direction of increased choice and control for people who use services within a socially cohesive society. These drivers are

reinforced by the approach to service reviews by the Healthcare Commission who place a strong emphasis on 'care appropriate to individual needs' (HC 2007: 5).

A third driver is around the diversity of ethnicity and belief systems now evident in the United Kingdom. We have a number of spheres of identity: our ethnicity; belief systems; immediate and extended family; communities of meaning; profession and employment; friendship networks, and so on. These usually enhance rather than undermine civil society.

Recent research carried out by the Mercia Group of researchers, based mainly at the University of Warwick (Beckford *et al.* 2006: 11) for the Department of Communities and Local Government, found that:

> Over the last 50 years, the discourse in Britain about 'racialised minorities' has mutated from 'colour' in the 1950's and 1960's … to 'race' in the 1960's, 70's and 80's … to 'ethnicity' in the 90's … and to 'religion' at the present time. This focus on religion has been driven both by major international events which have highlighted the political demands associated with religious movements, and by an increasing recognition by academics, policy-makers and service providers, of the importance of religion in defining identity, particularly among minority communities.

Another driver is that of identity in general. As commentators such as Bauman (2004) have pointed out, identity becomes much more important when the essence of belonging is no longer taken for granted.

It is possible that people of Asian ethnicity began to define their identity more by affiliation to a particular religious faith, rather than ethnicity, following the uproar over the publication of Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*. Certainly, this has become far more evident since the global trauma of 9/11.

Changes in professional approaches and understandings are another driver in force. Much of this is a strong moral approach from many practitioners to allow users as much choice and control of their lives as possible – putting people at the centre of services. This is all the more commendable, in that it is against the background of one of those pendulum swings in mental health, where public safety appears to be a major preoccupation in some sectors of government and media circles. The recent position paper on the recovery approach in mental health (CSIP/Royal College of Psychiatrists/SCIE 2007) stresses the 'core belief that adopting recovery as a guiding purpose for mental health services favours hope and creativity over disillusionment and defeat' (vi).

All the professions are moving in the same direction, partly assisted by the Department of Health/NIMHE's approach to *New Ways of Working*. The recent guidance by the Chief Nursing Officer in the Department of Health, on mental health nursing, *From Values to Action*, also recognizes the relevance of spirituality and/or religion in mental health care, and looks to nurses to recognize and respond to the spiritual and religious needs of service users (DoH 2006b).

The crisis over chaplaincy in acute hospitals has, ironically, in mental health and other more holistic services such as hospice care, highlighted the value of spiritual care in general and chaplaincy in particular (Swinton 2001; Eagger *et al.* 2009).

In a wider organizational context, there has been increasing concern about the state of organizational culture in the NHS. Management thinkers across the world have raised the concern that short-term, macho-management (delivered by men or women!) may deliver very short-term, target-driven results, but actually cuts the heart and guts out of an organization in terms of its long-term effectiveness (Aris and Gilbert 2007).

Should cost be made more of as a driver? If services were able and willing to engage more with where individuals, groups and communities are at, perhaps rates of recovery would be better and more enduring in nature. Professionals have to connect with people's deepest desires and motivations in a whole-persons and whole-systems approach, which is congruent with where the person is at, and where they wish to get to, in their pilgrimage.

Engaging the spirit: the NIMHE spirituality and mental health project

It was Professor Antony Sheehan, then Chief Executive of the nascent National Institute for Mental Health in England (NIMHE), who intuited the need for an approach to spirituality, as a response to the traumatic and iconic events of 9/11 in America and the widespread effects on a huge range of people, especially, of course, Muslims in Western countries. There was also a groundswell of opinion from service users, carers and survivors that their spirituality was of vital importance in their recovery.

The Project (from April 2008 under the auspices of the National Spirituality and Mental Health Forum) focuses on two main issues:

- Spirituality as an expression of an individual's essential humanity, and the wellsprings of how they live their lives and deal with the crises which can leave us drowning, rather than waving! It is, therefore, an essential element in assessment, support and recovery, for users and carers in a whole-person and whole-systems approach. It is also vital in the approach to staff, in order to create genuine person-centred organizations.
- The establishment of positive relations with the major religions, at a time when a harmonious relationship between statutory agencies and faith communities is essential; and when research studies are indicating the benefits to physical and mental health and longevity, for those who are members of inclusive and supportive faith communities.

This is aligned with the imperative for greater social cohesion and the positive role faith communities can play in family and community life (Cox *et al.* 2007).

The aims and objectives of the Project (NIMHE/Mental Health Foundation 2003) follow closely on the two main foci, in that the Project aims to:

- Chart what is known about the role of spirituality in mental health; the role of religion; and the role of faith communities.
- Identify areas of good practice.
- Build coalitions of individuals and groups.
- Develop and create linkages with other NIMHE programmes.
- Set up Pilot Sites (with a broad framework, to allow for local issues), linked to the regional development centres, which would learn from, test, develop and promote positive practice.
- Bring together the growing body of research evidence on the importance of spirituality in mental health and stimulate further research.
- Influence curriculum formation for all professional groups and strengthen staff development at a front-line level.
- Support the role of chaplains (from all faiths), as part of the multi-disciplinary team.

Over the years, the Project has built constructive links with religious groups and foundations. It has been important to liaise with national umbrella organizations, such as the Inter-Faith Network and the Three Faiths Forum. Maintaining effective links with the Church of England's Home Affairs Adviser has also been important, not least because of the national church's links with other faiths. Relationships have been patiently built with the nine major faiths with which the government liaises: Bahā'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Zoroastrian and also the Humanist Society. A multi-faith conference, *Nurturing Heart and Spirit*, was held at Staffordshire University in November 2006, which engaged all ten belief systems, with a strong user voice, to focus on the difficult issues around mental health and belief (e.g. suicide, possession); and also to consider the synergies between belief systems (Gilbert and Kalaga 2007). A second conference in January 2008, on end-of-life issues, *From the Cradle – To Beyond the Grave?*, was followed by a third in 2009 on *The Flourishing City: The Role of Spirituality in Regeneration.*

Considerable work has been done on individual spirituality and engaging in faiths, through the National Spirituality and Mental Health Forum, which had its provenance back with the health promotion charity Mentality, and became a registered charity in 2006.

The Project never forgets that many people will not be signed up to a specific belief system. They may, in fact, have a faith in The Divine, but no adherence to a particular religious system. Many people move in and out of belief and different communities. One of the products of a diverse cultural society is that people will move from one faith to another, or from one denomination of a faith to another; or from faith to no faith and back again – especially at times of crisis! Some of the most desolate stories are from those who say that they have lost their faith and desperately want to believe, but belief is no longer with them.

Work has been carried forward at government level in England, Scotland and Wales. In England work has been taken forward with the Department of Health

and the Department of Communities and Local Government; liaison is maintained with the Scottish Executive and the Welsh Assembly Government.

A growing number of university centres interested in spirituality are now joining together to form the British Association for the Study of Spirituality (BASS). Research from America (Swinton 2001, 2007) indicates considerable benefits in terms of mental and physical health and longevity from being a member of a faith community. Recent research from the UK (King *et al.* 2006) is more equivocal, and raises issues for further study; one being whether a heightened sense of spirituality, with no affiliation to a community, either faith-based or secular, leaves an individual prone to what Lewis Wolpert calls 'malignant sadness' (Wolpert 2006). The partnership work between NIMHE and the Mental Health Foundation produced a literature review in 2006 (Mental Health Foundation 2006).

Support has been provided to professional groups wishing to bring the spiritual dimension into their curricula. The Royal College of Psychiatrists is moving on this, and spirituality formed a part of the Chief Nursing Officer's review of mental health nursing in 2006 (DoH 2006b: par. 5.4.7, recommendation 10). Social work's more decentralized arrangement for education and training has led to some detailed work by Professor Bernard Moss from Staffordshire University, Professor Margaret Holloway from Hull University and others (Moss 2005). Guidance on spirituality is being produced for staff in acute mental health services in 2008, in a collaboration between NIMHE/CSIP and Staffordshire University (NIMHE 2008).

Spirituality, faith and mental wellbeing

Professor John Swinton, in many respects the doyen of commentators on spirituality and mental health, recently considered the differences in research perspectives between the USA and UK (Swinton in Coyte *et al.* 2007).

Swinton considers that research in these countries is, with some exceptions, marked by a 'structural behaviourist' model in the USA and a 'value guidance approach' in the UK. Even a cursory consideration of American society demonstrates a very high level of specifically religious (as opposed to a more general spiritual) commitment. But also American religious groupings are fairly homogeneous, with a clear, collective identity. In Britain the picture is often much more complicated than that. Black Pentecostal groups in urban areas are relatively cohesive, but patterns of change, migration, secularization and so on make the picture quite clouded. Kwame Mckenzie's work on African-Caribbean communities (McKenzie 2007) shows a marked decline in the mental health of later generations over the first wave of immigrants, as the former feel 'at home' neither in the West Indies nor in their adopted country.

The work by Koenig, Larson and others in the USA provides a clear demonstration of the health benefits of being religious in terms of:

- Extended life expectancy
- Reduced rates of blood pressure
- Lower rates of death from coronary heart disease

- Reduction in myocardial infarction
- Increased success in heart transplants
- Reduced serum cholesterol levels
- Reduced levels of pain in cancer sufferers
- Reduced mortality amongst those who attend church and worship services
- Increased longevity amongst elderly people
- Reduced mortality after cardiac surgery.

(Koenig *et al.* 2001, quoted in Swinton 2007)

The 2006 EMPIRIC National survey in England (King *et al.* 2006), however, provides results that show no difference in the incidence of common mental disorders (CMD) between people who are religious and those who are not. However, people who described themselves as spiritual, but without religious affiliation and practice, were more likely to have a common mental disorder.

One of the aspects which is most difficult to reach is whether belief in a transcendent deity or the cohesive group (social capital) aspects of religious affiliation and practice is the more efficacious, or whether it is a combination of the two elements. However, neuroscientists have identified that the recall of spiritual/religious experiences occurs in a different part of the frontal lobe than emotional experiences without a religious connotation (Beauregard and Paquette 2006). Some Christians who suffer severe mental distress say that they find it helpful to identify with Jesus' suffering on the cross. The feeling that God actually empathized with humankind, through direct experience, is a comfort to them (conversations with the author; Robinson 2008). In Islam, the concept of *Zikr*, remembrance of Allah, can be helpful:

> Those who believe and whose hearts find satisfaction in the remembrance of God, for without doubt in the remembrance of God do hearts find satisfaction.
>
> (*Qu'ran*: ch. 13, v 28, in Haroon-Iqbal *et al.* 2007)

David Hay in his *Something There* (Hay 2006) describes a variety of human beliefs in his research in Nottingham. A zoologist and Christian, Hay has enormous respect for those who have developed an individual spirituality, which does not necessarily provide the protective cover of organized religion.

It may well be that spirituality without the cohesion of a religious community produces a sensitivity and vulnerability to the pressures of the current socio-economic climate described above, without the solidarity and peer support to combat the winds of change. It may be that we need to research new groupings such as sporting groups who produce what I term 'communities of meaning' around a common purpose, meaning, identity and solidarity.

In terms of religious affiliation and practice Swinton (2007) postulates several protective and enhancing mechanisms:

- *Regulation of individual lifestyles and health behaviours.* Most religious systems have prohibitions on certain ways of behaving and living (e.g. the

prohibition on alcohol, smoking), all of which have health benefits for the participant.

- *Provisions of social resources* (e.g. social ties, formal and informal support). There is a recognized connection between mental health and wellbeing and effective social support structures. Social support can tie people into supportive relational networks which are both protective against mental illness and healing of it when it develops.
- *Promotion of positive self-perceptions.* Religion can promote self-esteem by incorporating people into secure relational networks that are affirming and accepting. It can also engender feelings of personal mastery in ways that can be supportive and health promoting.
- *Provision of specific coping resources* (i.e. particular cognitive or behavioural responses to stress). Adherence to a particular faith tradition realigns a person's thinking and can enable them to cope constructively with trauma and illness. The signs, symbols, rituals and narratives of faith communities provide the resources for individuals to re-form their life-worlds in significant ways.
- *Generation of other positive emotions* (e.g. love, forgiveness). The growing body of literature within the area of forgiveness research, for example, indicates that religion can generate particularly positive emotions which have the potential to be health-enhancing.
- *Additional hypothesized mechanisms, such as the existence of a healing bioenergy.* The growing literature within the area of prayer studies is indicative of the possibility that there may be supra-empirical dimensions to religion and spirituality that are currently not understood but which may have healing capacities (Swinton 2007).

Pargament (2002:178) provides a succinct overview of the 'bitter and sweet' fruits of religion, with 'the efficacy of religion' depending largely on 'the degree to which it (is) well integrated into people's lives'. The 'larger social context' is also a vital part of the possible benefits, which may go some way to explain the issue highlighted by the EMPIRIC research that people who have an individual spirituality may not have enough safeguards against the vicissitudes of life.

Questions and issues which require addressing might be:

- Is it faith in a divine entity or social solidarity which provides better mental health?
- What spiritual beliefs/practices keep people healthy and need retaining/nourishing on admission to services?
- Are there differences between different religious traditions in these respects?
- What about religious traditions which are more individual and rely on practices like meditation?
- Does a spiritual ethos in a person predispose to vulnerability to depression?
- Is Paul Keedwell (2008) right in suggesting that mental ill-health can make us stronger?

- What methods of assessment would be facilitative?
- What spiritual and religious practices might be helpful?
- What spiritual and religious practices/attitudes/relationships might be unhelpful?
- Research which links good spiritual care with service user satisfaction; shorter in-patient stays; longer remission times/reduced demands on services.
- Blocks to spiritual care among staff groups. Differentiation between staff groups.
- Faith communities' attitudes to mental wellbeing and mental illness.
- The role of spiritual and pastoral care teams/chaplains.

Future research needs to take the EMPIRIC research and drill down into specific groups.

Conclusion

Mental health services and religious and spiritual organizations need to work closely together to build on what true spirituality and faith can provide in terms of hope, inspiration, connection and a framework for living. Modern life, and the particular pressure created by mental ill health, make this problematic, however. Perhaps we are like Graham Greene's haunted and hunted Mexican priest:

> What an impossible fellow I am, he thought and how useless. I have done nothing for anybody. I might just as well have never lived.… He felt only an immense disappointment because he had to go to God empty-handed … he felt like someone who has missed happiness by seconds at an appointed place.…
>
> (Greene 1940/1962: 210)

13 The 'one in the morning' knock

Exploring the connections between faith, participation and wellbeing

Christopher Baker

Introduction

The illustration behind this cryptic title will hopefully become clear as this chapter unfolds. The broad aim of this contribution however is simple enough. It is to deepen and enhance some of the established rhetoric concerning the role of faith groups in relation to wellbeing and participation in public life.

The increasingly intense speculation within political and academic circles (partly fed by post 9/11 and 7/7 anxieties) about finding a meaningful public role for religion has, according to Richard Farnell, created an un-nuanced set of discourses concerning the relationship between faith groups and civil society (Farnell 2009). Some of these discourses uncritically overestimate the ability of faith groups to participate in civil society in respect of issues such as social cohesion or volunteering. Farnell labels this a *stakeholder/instrumental* discourse, because it stresses the delivery that faith groups enable as instruments for achieving the government's aims (Farnell 2009: 185).

Other discourses, on the other hand, can express a more negative tone, especially from those public officials tasked with working with the 'faith sector'. A 2006 Joseph Rowntree report suggested that:

> Among some professionals there is a scepticism concerning the motives of faith groups which reveals itself in the search for hidden agendas. For others there is the view that faith groups sometimes have unrealistic expectations, have undertaken insufficient investigation of their situation, and lack clarity about their basic aims.
>
> (Furbey *et al.* 2006: 36)

Farnell adds further elements to this litany of anxieties regarding the public profile of faiths: 'differing views on the nature of equal opportunities, worries about how the funding of faith groups will be used [i.e. for proselytizing purposes] and issues of accountability' (Farnell 2009: 185). There is also considerable evidence to suggest that the vertical structures of authority and control within some religious traditions prevent the proper participation into wider democratic and public processes of key groups, such as women and young

people (Farnell *et al.* 2003: 33–34). He points out however that some of the responsibility for this *sceptical* discourse lies at the feet of the public agencies themselves, who exhibit a lack of religious literacy and a failure to distinguish between ethnic and faith communities.

This sceptical discourse is also partly driven by an increasingly polarized critique of religion by secular apologists who are perturbed by what they see as the re-emergence of faith within public life, especially within the categories of education, science and political life. From this perspective, even mainstream faith traditions within the UK (including Christian ones) are either perceived as being on a par with fundamentalist religions (i.e. all religion is bad for your health) or seen as manqué humanist ideologies (see discussion of the work of Sam Harris and Christopher Hitchins in Furbey 2009: 22–27). Within this intellectual and policy-based landscape it is therefore quite difficult to reach a balanced view about the contributions and possibilities faiths create with respect to participation, and therefore by implication, human wellbeing.

This chapter therefore seeks answers to a set of key questions and offers some emerging typologies in support of a more 'realist' perspective on this key area of research. First, what do we mean by participation, and does it make one happier? Second, a new typology of faith-based participation will be proposed, which will be referenced by some emerging qualitative research for the Leverhulme Trust into the link between participation and the motivation derived from religious and theological beliefs (described in terms of religious and spiritual capital). Third, different perceptions of participation between men and women of faith will be explored, as well as differences and overlaps between a Muslim and a Christian faith community in respect of the relationship between spiritual capital, participation and wellbeing. The material used to address these three areas of inquiry, I argue by way of conclusion, point us to a more nuanced, holistic and 360-degree view concerning the role of faiths in participation, and thus their contribution to human wellbeing and happiness.

But what do we mean by participation, and does it make one happier?

Participation is one of Layard's Big Seven sources of happiness, and his influential list forms the structural backbone of this volume. Layard conceives of participation primarily in terms of the ability to have access to voting and other forms of public democratic participation. For example, he compares citizen happiness surveys based in former Soviet countries, such as Hungary, and those still under totalitarian rule, for example, Belarus (Layard 2005: 69–70). Key to happiness in this example, alongside obvious things like a rule of law, absence of corruption and the efficiency of regulatory systems, is the notion of having a voice which is not only heard, but is perceived to create accountability. Thus Layard includes the comparative case study of Swiss cantons which showed that in those regions where citizens have more rights to referenda by which to decide regional policy, their happiness was as great as if they had

double the income over those regions which hold fewer referenda (Frey and Stutzer 2000).

There are, of course, some strong connections between religion and political participation, especially from a US research perspective which Layard does not acknowledge. These include, for example, the increase in voting patterns from within church-based congregations, especially among black majority churches (Smidt 2003: 131), and the influential contribution made by faith groups to Saul Allinsky's Industrial Areas Foundations in the 1930s and 1940s and which continues to this day to resource broad-based organizing in both the US and the UK (Putnam and Feldstein 2003; Bretherton 2006).

However, a more broad and perhaps everyday area of participation which Layard doesn't choose to dwell on is that of *volunteering*. If we focus on volunteering as an integral dimension of participation, then a firm link becomes established between it and faith groups. A number of surveys correlating the linkages between membership of faith groups and formal volunteering appear to establish causality (Loveland *et al.* 2005; Schwadel 2005). However, a recent study by the Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion at the London School of Economics (LSE) of a 29,000 US-based dataset not only establishes a positive link between volunteering and membership of faith groups, but between these two variables and happiness (Borgonovi 2008). In other words, not only do higher frequencies of volunteering correlate with higher self-reported levels of wellbeing and happiness, but if these frequencies are compared within religious and secular settings, levels of reported happiness are significantly different. For example, those who volunteer for religious groups and organizations are 6 per cent more likely to be in excellent health and 13 per cent are more likely to report being very happy than people not volunteering who have similar socio-economic characteristics. This increase in health and happiness, although still significant for those who volunteer for secular organizations, drops to 4 per cent and 9 per cent respectively (Borgonovi 2008).

The LSE review also suggests an interesting new source of happiness connected to volunteering. Currently, there are two well-established sources of happiness associated with volunteering, namely *social role* (i.e. volunteering is an activity that is valued by society and therefore people engaging in volunteer labour feel useful) and *social networking* (i.e. volunteering increases the potential for social relationships which influences levels of happiness, depression, health status and mortality). A third source of happiness is now proposed. It is that unpaid work has intrinsic and non-monetary motives as its main reward through the stimulation of empathic emotions, rather than those of competition. By choosing to give away valuable resources such as time, we choose (so the theory goes) to change our normal perceptions and concerns over status. Instead of being unhappy with our relative wealth because we choose to identify ourselves with others who have more material success than us (i.e. with those higher up the socio-economic or celebrity chain), we reinforce satisfaction for what we already have by choosing to identify with those less fortunate (or lower down the chain) than ourselves. Borgonovi summarizes what is currently a tentative hypothesis:

> The process of volunteering itself … might reinforce satisfaction for what one has rather than dissatisfaction for what she lacks and shift the salient group upon which people evaluate their circumstances from those who are above them in the income distribution, to those who are lower than them.
>
> (Borgonovi 2008: 2330)

With this evidence in mind, we therefore need to expand our definition of participation if it is to be useful in deciding the contribution and impact of religious groups to individual and community wellbeing.

Faith groups and bonding, bridging and linking participation

There could be what we might call (after Putnam 2000; see also Woolcock 1988) three types of participation engaged in by faith groups: bonding, bridging and linking.

Bonding participation is that activity which is aimed primarily at ensuring the viability of the religious or faith group in question. This may have limited impact in wider civil society, but probably brings with it a large amount of happiness and wellbeing to those who find a sense of meaning, identity and purpose in undertaking these activities. I call this bonding *participation* because its main focus is the sustainability and wellbeing of the faith group (locally, nationally or globally) which might be at the expense of other sectors of community, but could equally produce more communitarian byproducts. For example, the confidence and skills learned within faith communities may be deployed at a later stage by the individual concerned within other spheres of community activity. Putnam, for example, refers to the potential for churches and other faith groups to be 'incubators' for social capital (Putnam 2000: 66).

Bridging participation is that activity generated by religious groups which makes a direct contribution to civil society and public life by means of a wide variety of activities available to the public at large, not only members of a particular faith community. For example, a survey for the Northwest Development Agency (NWDA) of faith-based contributions to civil society in 2003 identified the following areas of input: preschool provision, after-school care, youth clubs, families and parenting, counselling and bereavement services, care of the elderly, social activities, and working with excluded groups such as asylum seekers and refugees. A later report estimated the economic impact of this participation to the regional economy of England's Northwest at £90–94 million (NWDA 2005). I call this bridging *participation* because it consciously aimed at providing goods and services across religious, ethnic and cultural divides. This form of participation operates within a moral and political recognition of the existence of the common good. It also 'bridges' in the sense that these services can be provided in partnership with organizations different to oneself.

Linking participation I suggest is a rarer and more specialized form of faith-based participation that moves beyond service provision to a more sophisticated model of economic and political participation which develops new examples of

practice or analysis, or often acts as a reflective critique of mainstream policy. The purpose of this more 'rights-based' participation is to ensure a more structural and strategic redistribution of goods, knowledge and opportunity in favour of those most excluded within society. Religious participation of this kind functions either in the form of modelling good and innovative practice, or acting as trusted powerbrokers between powerful and disempowered actors within civil society.

Religious and spiritual capital – the dynamic connection between faith and participation?

Underpinning this subtle redrawing of the widely used bonding, bridging, linking typology is another typology which also borrows from existing social capital theory, but again recalibrates its meaning to attain a more contemporary fit to the context under discussion, namely religious and spiritual capital. Definitions of religious and spiritual capital are not new (Bourdieu 1983; Iannaccone and Klick 2003), but those devised by the William Temple Foundation in 2006 are becomingly increasingly cited.[1] These definitions emerged as a result of a three-year Church Urban Fund research project, reflecting on both the method and the language deployed by nine churches working alone or in partnership with other organizations in socially excluded areas of Manchester undergoing rapid regeneration. Thus *religious capital* is defined as 'the practical contribution to local and national life made by faith groups' (Baker and Skinner 2006: 9). *Spiritual capital*

> energises religious capital by providing a theological identity and worshipping tradition, but also a value system, moral vision and a basis of faith. Spiritual capital is often embedded locally within faith groups, but also expressed in the lives of individuals.
>
> (Baker and Skinner 2006: 9)

The advantage of these distinct but interlinked concepts is that they raise the possibility of the significance of spiritual capital for participation. In other words, is it possible to show a connection between what people say about the importance of their faith (including theological worldview and how that is shaped by the practice of communal sharing, prayer, worship, meditation and so on) and the three levels of participation identified above – namely bonding, bridging and linking participation? We believe that it is – at least at the level of self-reporting backed up by some of the social science research cited above.

What now follows is qualitative data from two case studies which will show some of the dynamic interaction between spiritual capital and participation and happiness. The first set of data emerges from focus groups conducted in an Islamic education centre in the Greater Manchester region. These data have been gathered for the Leverhulme Trust research project by the William Temple Foundation into religious and spiritual capital.[2] It shows the interaction of

spiritual capital with primarily bonding participation, but also with aspects that might be termed bridging participation. It also shows the interesting comparison between men's and women's understandings of how spiritual capital is expressed in participation.

The second set of data is based on a Christian youth project, the Message Trust, which runs a variety of different projects, also located in Greater Manchester. These data have also been gathered for the Leverhulme Trust. It shows the interaction of spiritual capital with primarily bridging and linking forms of participation.

The Islamic study circle

The Leverhulme research undertaken by the William Temple Foundation seeks to test out with different faith and spirituality groups the valency and relevance of the concepts of religious and spiritual capital (see definitions above). As part of this discernment process, focus groups are invited to spend a considerable amount of time reflecting on what members perceive to be benefits of belonging to their particular religious or spiritual community. They are then invited to reflect on how these benefits are shared beyond the boundaries of their group, within the wider community. Both focus groups of this particular Islamic education centre, one comprising men and one women, attended a midweek study circle, in which the Imam reflected on contemporary aspects of daily life in the UK from the perspective of the Qur'an and Sharia law, and invited questions and discussion on the issues raised.

The men tended to focus on the external sources of spiritual capital. The Qur'an was perceived as a transcendent source of authority (a direct word from God) which laid out clearly the duties and responsibilities towards the rest of society. Thus one member of the focus group reported, 'I feel Muslims generally see their pursuit of knowledge under the Islamic banner … understanding the Qur'an, understanding the life of the Prophet and how we should apply that to our daily lives.' Another commented, 'The Qur'an teaches us to implement everything in our lives … it runs through everything that we do; how to run our businesses, to how we run our families, to how we greet people in the street.' This clear adherence to the 'purity' of Islamic teaching (and its guidance on what was referred to as the 'straight' path) is closely bound up with a firm sense of global identity. One focus group member remarked, 'You can meet people from the other side of the world, we can communicate on the same level … it is through faith that you have with everybody, it is a brotherhood/sisterhood.' This strong sense of a universal identity is in turn linked with a strong sense of community, in which norms about how to live one's life are reinforced:

> Islam has a lot of things in it about community based living … you would break fast together, you would pray together, it's more of a blessing if you pray together … if you are on your own, you're more susceptible to going astray, so you keep each other in a stronger link.

There were a number of key words associated with this strong sense of direct guidance from the Qur'an and a clear understanding of identity within a global community of fellow Muslims. One was the idea of discipline, closely related to the five pillars of Islam, and in particular the discipline of prayer:

> We pray five times a day at certain times, so it teaches us discipline. It makes me carry the discipline into my life [and] if I have that same discipline in my work I am sure everyone will be happy with me and all [my] jobs will be done very well.

Another concept was that of obligation, related to areas of life such as personal good manners and the importance of setting a good example to others, 'so that everyone will take the message from you' but also because 'all our deeds are going to be recorded and we are all going to be judged as individuals'. This sense of obligation also extends to upbraiding a 'brother' who is not dealing with his neighbour properly, but there was a nuanced element to this concept of obligation as the discussion unfolded in the focus group. 'Sometimes it depends what the situation is, what the position that friend has put you in … it's not black and white – we have to make sure we do by example, otherwise it is a tense life.'

A third motif which continuously recurred was that of responsibility. One focus group member suggested two levels at which responsibility needed to be discharged. One was to put into practice the teaching from the study group:

> When I listen to a talk by the Ustath, and he says you should do this and you shouldn't do this, then it is my responsibility to apply the knowledge. The more knowledgeable I am, the more accountable I am.

A second level of responsibility (what he termed a 'higher level') is 'to pass on' this knowledge to others. He continues, 'If I have a treasure …why should I keep it to myself. If I give it to others, I am not losing anything. On the contrary … I will be rewarded.' These comments about 'passing on a treasure' appear to suggest a strong link between spiritual capital (the treasure comprising direct guidance and values for the Qur'an) and participation in some form (i.e. the direct living out of the principles and values understood to lie at the heart of Islam).

These levels of obligation and responsibility appeared to be differentiated, beginning with the Muslim community ('the Muslim ummah of the nation') before being extended to 'the non-believers and mankind in general'. In other words, there appears to be a strong priority on bonded participation with other Muslims (at the local level, via the mosque, and at the global level, via the sense of being a member of the universal ummah). This sense of bonding identity was reinforced by the extensive use of the word 'non-Muslim' to describe those beyond the scope and remit of Islamic teaching and law. Some of this bonded participation at the local level was clearly strengthened by a sense of mutual safety and 'sanctuary' in relation to a society that can feel unsympathetic, occasionally hostile, or simply bewildering. As one participant reflected:

> When we come to this place [mosque], it's like a way to escape, to keep you safe, to keep you guarding, then you can purify yourself and remember Allah again and then you feel safe … even when you leave and are in the middle of the dangerous area that is the city centre.

However, there were also indications of bridging forms of capital, most consistently in relation to Islamic teaching about being fair and neighbourly to those around you in one's local community and workplace. As one participant concluded:

> You know you have to help them. You know you have to have good links with them. You have colleagues at work and you remember that it was taught that they were also a kind of neighbour to you, so you are good to them.

In conclusion, we might want to suggest that the kind of understanding of spiritual capital as reflected in these remarks is a *vertical* model. It is vertical because this view of guidance coming directly from Allah via the Prophet could be termed figuratively as guidance 'from above'. There is also a clear hierarchy of authority expressed in the way that the teaching of the Qu'ran and the Imam is filtered down in order to be implemented in one's life – an implementation that is reinforced by a strong commitment to the discipline of daily prayer and the fulfilling of one's obligations to one's brothers and sisters and those beyond the Muslim faith. It is therefore a form of spiritual capital that relies to some extent on an externalized authority – namely the norms and sanctions applied by the community, and indeed recorded by Allah himself. There is also a strong sense within this understanding of spiritual capital of moralizing the self – of constantly 'submitting' one's will to 'the will of Allah' and following the straight path for one's life.

The cluster of images and ideas emerging from the women's focus group had a somewhat different emphasis. Asked what they got out of attending the Tuesday night study circle, the first member to answer said, 'Basically you learn a lot about your religion, but also it's more of a social thing, because I meet all my friends here.'Another member warms to the theme: 'It's Facebook, but face to face.' Another said, 'We make an effort to come along on a Tuesday night to see everybody, and even if we don't really know each other that well, we have a bond … It's like a big sisterhood.'

It also becomes evident that this emphasis on socializing, as well as the opportunity for 'general chat', has a significant supportive and pastoral role covering a wide range of issues; 'a space to chill and wind down', child-minding, counselling and support for those suffering 'depression', a space to reflect as part of the daily routine of childcare, shopping, visiting and so on. A significant word that the women used to describe the mosque was 'it's a place where you just feel at home'. 'Home' connotes a feeling of security and a space for family rites of passage which one focus group member amplifies in another striking image:

> I call it a big Muslim hippy thing because there are that many types of people. Whether they are ill, whether they have problems … you can just come down and celebrate as well. There are weddings, people coming into Islam, the birth of a baby – it's all going on here.

One significant element of spiritual capital that came across with more interior force than the men's focus group was the practice of prayer. The men described prayer simply as an important point of connection with God: 'It's like petrol in your car or topping up a mobile phone.' The women expand in more detail the experience and impact of prayer. One reflected:

> When you are praying you are thanking God for everything that you do have. You are thanking Him for living, for breathing, for other people around the world, who are suffering and you are asking Him to help you in your daily life – to be more patient, to be more nice to people.

Prayer is thus an activity that encompasses concern for personal wellbeing and moral behaviour, as well as empathic concern for the global suffering of others. Another woman focused more on the psycho-therapeutic dimension of prayer:

> It's [prayer] like my little moment with God and its more like counselling – you sit there and talk to Him and say everything that is going through life and in a way it's a relief. Because a lot of people are going through depression and stuff like that.

When compared to the men's focus group, we can see that the notions of spiritual capital are more horizontally-linked, and feelings of happiness and wellbeing are more located within a sense of interior feelings of peace and emotional solidarity, linked closely to practical support mechanisms such as childcare, advice, training and home visiting. Indeed, one of the forms of participation instigated by the women of this group was called the Serenity Project. This was described as a:

> mother and toddler group, just to give [them] some time out of the house and put the kids in an Islamic environment … the mother is also given time to connect with other mothers over the same issues. They may have come for advice, or just time out.

When asked what other forms of beneficial participation emerge from the Tuesday Study Circle, the list is impressively wide, ranging from personal benefits through to practical support of global projects. They include:

- 'You meet people you would not normally meet'.
- Hear news of events – e.g. news of announcements to help the wider Muslim community.

- Training in the use of computers and the Internet.
- Serenity Project (see above).
- A Bosnia project.
- Raising money for earthquake victims in Kashmir.
- Visits to Egypt to support an orphanage and other projects helping the visually impaired.
- Providing care support for an old lady who recently came out of hospital.
- A space for those who are 'shaky about Islam' or 'going through a bad time – a secure environment to sit and unload their head'.
- A safe place for women away from 'critical' or 'prying' eyes – 'that whole kind of nasty girl thing'.

Because the main thrust of this participation is focused on the Muslim community, it primarily constitutes what we are proposing to call *bonding participation*. However, it would be probably fair to assume that the sense of peace, safety and security generated by this study circle generally would support and empower these Muslim women to play a fuller part as neighbours within the wider community. Indeed, one woman remarked: 'My neighbours are non-Muslims, I don't see a difference really. They are all God's people, they are all from Adam, and that's how I see it.' In other words, the potential to create informal forms of bridging capital with neighbours and work colleagues is also formed by this sense of inner peace and wellbeing.

The Christian youth project

The following case study emerges from a Manchester-based Christian charity called the Message Trust, whose innovative community development work (called Eden projects) with disadvantaged young people has already been cited in William Temple Foundation-based research (Baker and Skinner 2005). In this research, we focused on the ability of faith-based groups such as the Message Trust to construct what I called 'Local Political Economies' (Baker 2007b) in neighbourhoods of chronic, but also acute, social and economic exclusion. By this concept, I refer to the ability of faith groups like the Message Trust to create alternative structures of economic and political participation that have a structural as well as a personal impact beyond ethnic or religious bonds.

Thus, for example, the Message Trust had developed two innovatory pieces of community development and social enterprise in North-east Manchester. The first, highlighted in an impact report commissioned from the University of Leicester (Centre for Citizenship Studies in Education 2005), was referred to as a *Matrix Mentoring* system. This provided a multiple number of mentoring points for young people seeking pastoral care or advice to complement the usual statutory opportunities provided at school or youth club outlets. These multiple points of contact were provided by a network of adults and projects which were available at all hours and at a number of other venues, e.g. Eden project community houses. Because of the commitment of the Eden projects' paid youth

workers and volunteers to live as a 'community-within-the community', they were able to provide a constant low-key presence which was open-access, informal and non-judgemental, but also well connected to statutory agencies who can provide further support and advice (for example, on issues such as dyslexia or self-harm).

The second innovative project is called the *Entry to Enterprise Programme.* It helps young people aged 14 to 19 who access Eden's mentoring schemes to develop enterprise skills to set up their own micro-enterprise ventures. This project includes mentoring and placement schemes with local businesses, and addresses related issues that can often impede employment opportunities, for example, CV writing, improving communication and presentation skills, and enhancing emotional intelligence. Through these initiatives, the Message Trust creates opportunities for young people to stay in North-east Manchester and invest their human capital at the local level. This is therefore an example of what I have defined earlier as *linking* participation; namely 'to ensure a more structural and strategic redistribution of goods, knowledge and opportunity in favour of those most excluded within society'.

In order to understand better some of the links between spiritual capital, participation and the happiness and wellbeing generated by these projects, I will briefly explore some of the reflections offered by young Message Trust volunteers who participated in WTF's Leverhulme research. These young people, aged between 18 and 24, have enrolled on an intensive gap-year programme to learn more about their Christian faith within the context of faith-based praxis. This allows them to be proactively involved in a number of Message Trust-run projects or those that are run by partner organizations; for example, detached youth work and drop-in centres for those involved in prostitution or sleeping rough on the streets. These volunteers live in special community houses, where much time is spent learning and sharing aspects of Christian discipleship and identity, and being mentored by older and more experienced Message Trust workers. Many of these gap-year students or volunteers continue to help in various youth projects once they leave the programme, or indeed go on to become trained youth workers. The volunteering work done while on this programme is also recognized for accreditation by secular and educational agencies.

Some members of the Message focus groups spoke about a sense of being directly guided or sent by God to participate in this programme. For example, one focus group participant recalled, 'I heard about this course because God told me about the course … God told me to email him [programme leader] and said I will help you.' Another simply said, 'I believe that God has a plan for everyone's life.' Another contributor, unsure about whether or not to come on the programme, was advised by a friend:

> We will pray for it, and if it is God's way, He will open the door … He just opened every door and when I went to my boss and told him what I wanted to do [i.e. take four months out to participate in the programme] he said, 'Sure, don't worry'.

Several members of the focus groups had a strong expectation that they were going to discover a truer form of identity or authentic personhood. 'Coming here has helped me to build who I am as a person' is a simple phrase that summed up the feelings of many.

From this strong sense of God-guided direction comes an expectation that personal transformation will occur, not only in themselves but in the lives of those whom they encounter in local projects and communities. Whereas within the Muslim focus groups there was a strong sense of the importance of obligation, responsibility and discipline (including five times' daily prayer, and charitable giving) as a way of obeying God's will, among these young Christian people there was perhaps more emphasis on the support and discipline of the community (what might be called a form of peer pressure, reinforced by mentoring from the programme leaders). There was also perhaps a more personalized sense of calling (or vocation) which required making key choices and decisions at significant moments of life. 'You want to live your own dream and be who you are.'

The combination of these decisive psycho-dynamic feelings generated many references to peace and wellbeing among the Message focus group members. Here are just four examples. 'Being surrounded by people and others who support you all the time is just fantastic.' 'It makes your life much better, not just living for going out at weekends … here you enjoy everyday … here just gives you more peace.'

> Being a Christian and seeing older people [i.e. programme directors/mentors] who have that [faith] … you see that they have that long term kind of satisfaction, that long-term peace … I think one thing that kids don't grasp is (until they get told) the short term yeah it might be good but it is short term whereas Christianity – this is everlasting and long term … a long-term peace which is better than anything short term.

'Sometimes when you are in hard situations it is really hard but sometimes you can just feel peaceful.'

The above references to securing a long-term peace at the expense of the short term show, for example, the happiness that can be secured from delayed gratification over and against the hedonic.

This sense of peace, fulfilment, support and happiness thus reinforces participation – especially with respect to role modelling the benefits of good behaviour and change. As one young focus group member said, 'The inspirational work kind of breaks your heart and makes you want to do more.' The importance of role modelling a more positive and value-driven lifestyle is a particularly insistent theme with this group of young people. One ex-drug user said, 'I want to be a good role model to other people – I am from what they are going through – I've seen that all my life.' Another pointed out the importance of constant contact and care, recognizing that for many of the youngsters Eden projects work with, the sense of constancy and trustworthiness is what can be missing most

from their family life. The comment, 'If you have constant contact with them that can stop [their destructive behaviour]' is a sincere expression in the expectation of personal change and transformation through engagement of this kind. This form of participation is deeply committed and potentially unboundaried, as represented by the 'one in the morning' knock at the door from young people seeking support or just company at the Eden community houses. It also transcends the tendency towards utilitarian analysis of faith-based contributions from within government and social policy literatures identified earlier in this chapter. The motivation for this type of participation lies more within the complex language of gift and immaterial benefit, rather than in the more simplistic level of choice and happiness.

The type of spiritual capital exemplified within this project might be characterized as both vertical and horizontal. Some of the sources of spiritual capital are quite externalized and hierarchical. For example, the Bible is perceived in not dissimilar ways to which the Qur'an was described within the Muslim focus groups. The Bible is seen as a practical and infallible guide to human behaviour, and reflects the strong theological belief that it is guidance from God that shapes the life path of the volunteer according to strict principles. This can often establish a satisfying sense of counter-cultural participation in the world. However, alongside this appeal to vertical sources of spiritual capital are strong dimensions of horizontal spiritual capital – mediated in strong support networks and community sharing and mentoring, perhaps best expressed in the concept of the family. The belief that replicating the experience of a supportive, loving family is one of the most effective ways of meeting the needs of marginalized and excluded young people is often expressed. The unconditional form of participation reflected in this concept of the family shows that while there is a desire to bring awareness and thus 'conversion' of young people to the Christian faith, this is a secondary desire in respect of the main motivation for Christian participation of this kind – namely to serve the needs of others out of a sense of happiness and gratitude for what these volunteers perceive as a life-changing transformation for themselves through an ongoing encounter with God.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have attempted to describe a more complex and nuanced relationship between faith, participation and wellbeing. Using the concepts of religious and spiritual capital (but primarily the latter), I have attempted to describe a close relationship between beliefs and other communal aspects of religious life (such as prayer, scripture study and communal living) and participation. I have also attempted to show different levels of participation using the typology of bonding, bridging and linking participation, and the different ways in which men and women from the same religious tradition and community (in this case Islam) participate as a result of their faith. The issue of how women of faith participate in UK settings is still relatively under-researched, although it is more researched in North American contexts (O'Neill 2009). Neither should it be forgotten that

several faith groups, especially those working within the most marginalized communities, often have resources only sufficient for their own survival with little else apparently to spare. There can also be a suspicion aimed at over-bureaucratic initiatives from central or local government that seek to professionalize or homogenize the very low-tech but culturally-specific ways in which several religious groups operate (Lukka *et al.* 2003).

What is clear, however, is that most narratives of how faith groups participate in civil society focus on external outputs and public activities such as leadership and community development. This by definition tends to reinforce an instrumental understanding of participation (see Farnell above) which perhaps finds it hard to appreciate and value that which is not highly visible or ordinary (in the best sense of the word).

Further research is needed into the extent to which patterns of participation by Muslim women in particular allow them to function as bridgers in the wider community, and what that bridging might look like. What is also required is the development of more qualitative measurement systems that might give a rounded and holistic understanding of the impact of faith-based engagement on the lives of both individuals and communities. These measurement systems need to engage with the immaterial as well as the material levels of happiness, and to take account of the strongly expressed sentiments expressed in both the Muslim and Christian focus groups: to practise delayed gratification (i.e. practise long-term peace over short-term satisfaction); to voluntarily give up some degree of personal autonomy to the discipline of either a community or external source of authority like the Bible or the Qur'an; to practise charity and/or commit unconditionally to both others of one's faith group and one's neighbours – all these values bring a significant degree of wellbeing that other disciplines are now beginning to recognize the value of.

Thus much of what has been expressed in these focus groups aligns closely to the third happiness factor associated with volunteering identified by the LSE research mentioned above and to which I want to aim my concluding remarks. If we recall, the first wellbeing factor was associated with meeting new people and extending social networks, namely the social networking hypothesis and what we might term loosely as 'community'. The second factor was associated with being recognized for what one does, namely the social role hypothesis or 'being valued'. The third wellbeing factor, it is suggested, is generated by deliberately choosing to give up something in order to identify empathically with others who are different from or less fortunate than yourself. This we might call the ethic of 'altruism', or 'unconditional regard', and, as already intimated, it lies at the heart of much religious motivation for participation. Could it be that this wellbeing factor, if researched carefully but more purposefully, might give us a more nuanced and holistic tool by which to understand the relationship between participation and wellbeing? And could it be that faith groups have a distinctive role in modelling and refining this tool for the benefit of society as a whole?

Notes

1 (2005) *Mapping the Public Policy Landscape: Faith-based Voluntary Action*, ESRC Seminar Series Report; (2006) *Faith in Rural Communities: Contributions of Social Capital to Community Vibrancy* (DEFRA *et al*.); (2007) *Keeping it Together* (Faith-based Regeneration Network: Fbrn); (2008) D. Finneron *et al.* Report for Communities and Local Government in connection with the CLG Framework for Interfaith Dialogue and Social Action London: Fbrn; (2008) A. Dinham and V. Lowndes 'Religions, resources and representation', *Urban Affairs Review*, 43: 817–884; (2009) 'Blurred encounters? Religious literacy, spiritual capital and language' in A. Dinham, R. Furbey and V. Lowndes (eds) *Faith in the Public Realm – Controversies, Policies and Practices*, Bristol: Policy Press; (2009) 'Social, religious and spiritual capitals: a psychological perspective?' in M. de Souza, L.J. Francis, J. O'Higgins-Norman and D. Scott (eds) *International Handbook of Education for Spirituality, Care and Wellbeing*, London: Springer; (2009) P. Cloke *et al. Faith-based Organizations and Social Exclusion in European Cities* (FACIT), Report for the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme.

2 *Faith and Traditional Capitals: Redefining the Public Scope of Religious Capital*, William Temple Foundation/Leverhulme Trust 2007–2010.

14 Crime, wellbeing and society

Reflections on social, 'antisocial' and 'restorative' capital

Christopher Jones

Crime in the affluent society

The literature on happiness and wellbeing airs the paradox of increased levels of material affluence in modern societies without a comparable increase in general happiness or wellbeing. The paradox may be explained by a more differentiated account of the goals that human beings pursue. Thus Robert Lane in his acclaimed study *The Loss of Happiness in Market Democracies* argues that happiness and income have a curvilinear relationship. In poor societies, he contends, there is a strong relationship between increases in income and individual happiness, but beyond a certain level of affluence diminishing returns set in and companionship is valued more highly than money (Lane 2000: chs 4 and 5). Similarly, Avner Offer in *The Challenge of Affluence* highlights the importance of 'the economy of regard' in which many forms of non-market exchange operate in the context of incentives influenced by personal relations (Offer 2006: ch. 5). For both authors, market economies not merely leave out of account, but actively undermine, major elements in human wellbeing.

The paradox may also be explained by positing that people are not necessarily accurate judges of the causes of their own wellbeing – as Lane goes on to argue – and that they make inconsistent choices over time as a result of what Offer terms 'myopic bias' towards short-term hedonic reward. Both Lane and Offer contend that market economies provide an institutional and cultural environment which tends to encourage mistaken beliefs about the sources of happiness and to reward self-defeating behaviour in pursuit of it. For Lane, this is seen in the choice of money over companionship, and for Offer, in the pervasive erosion of self-control and commitment to long-term objectives.

Both sets of observations might seem to offer some help in explaining the conjunction between the increase in affluence and the steady increase in crime in most economically developed societies between 1960 and the present. It can be suggested that a market economy, by prioritizing the pursuit of material gain at the expense of social cooperation, leaves those who are unable to compete effectively in the market with a sense of relative deprivation which can only be assuaged by illegal forms of acquisition and weakens the social inhibitions that would otherwise restrain them. This is effectively a restatement

of the theory of 'anomie' advanced decades ago by the sociologist Robert Merton (1938).

However, differing prescriptions may be derived from this scenario. It is frequently used to justify a conservative and individualistic policy whose aim is simply to induce the criminally inclined among the deprived to desist from crime through a combination of incapacitation and deterrence. Alternatively, an approach more sensitive to social inequality would advocate tackling the disadvantages which create the conditions for offending (Gorringe 2004). In recent years, the role of interlocking forms of deprivation in generating crime has been recognized by government, notably in the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) report *Reducing re-offending by ex-prisoners* (Social Exclusion Unit 2002). The economic, social and political mechanisms which produce affluence for the majority systematically disadvantage certain types of people, not only making them more liable to offend in the first place, but also making it more difficult for them to desist.

The SEU report showed in detail what practitioners in the criminal justice system have long known: that prisoners are much more likely than the general population to have been brought up in care or in highly dysfunctional families; that they tend to have experienced disruption to their education, leading to lower levels of skills and qualifications and high incidence of unemployment; that around 70 per cent of them suffer from two or more diagnosable mental disorders; that a high proportion of them are dependent on drugs or alcohol and their physical health is relatively poor; and that they tend to have a history of homelessness and debt. It states bluntly, 'The failure of mainstream agencies to deal with these aspects of social exclusion means that the Prison Service and Probation Service are being asked to put right a lifetime of service failure' (Social Exclusion Unit 2002: 18).

The relevance of social capital

Explanations of crime based on highly generalized factors, whether inclining towards right- or left-wing interpretations, achieve both too much and too little. On the one hand, not all people who are acquisitive and economically deprived, or those who are acquisitive and economically powerful, turn to crime; on the other, there are many aspects of crime, such as the use of violence, on which this sheds little light. The broad socio-cultural environment is influential in setting the context of criminal behaviour. However, any attempt to trace the social roots of crime must engage more closely with social structures and interactions at different levels, particularly in local communities where positive and negative forms of socialization bear upon individuals and groups. The analyses of Lane and Offer point in this direction. The outworking of choices between companionship and income and the operation of the 'economy of regard' takes place in families, organizations and communities subject to particular sets of opportunities and constraints. Companionship as a human good is understood by Lane to embrace families and friends, and to meet a variety of needs including the desire

for reciprocal help, intimacy and affiliation. The 'economy of regard', according to Offer, builds up relationships through gift exchanges which both establish an expectation of reciprocity and communicate approval.

These considerations may be set alongside the widespread view among criminologists that policy makers tend to overestimate the influence of the criminal justice system at the expense of the norms and sanctions of everyday life that underpin the operation of the law. While the criminal law tends to be reactive and adaptive – and in any case appears to deal with only about 3 per cent of actual offences committed – informal social controls are preventative and formative (Garland 2001).

Awareness of the significance for social policy of the associations and organizations of civil society has crystallized in recent years in the formulation and use of the concept of 'social capital'. This is defined by one of its leading British exponents, David Halpern, in terms of three elements: a *social network*, the cluster of *norms, values and expectations* shared by those who belong to it, and the *norms and sanctions* that help to maintain the network (Halpern 2005: 10). The concept highlights key features of human interaction that facilitate individual and collective action across many areas of social life. The terminology of 'capital' reflects the judgement that these features of interaction constitute resources that are accumulated and invested in purposeful activity over time, and may be augmented or depleted in the process.

'Social capital' is best seen as an organizing concept uniting a variety of phenomena at a high level of generality. In view of this, its critics question the possibility of producing a consistent and useable definition, not least on account of the difficulty of devising satisfactory methods of measurement. At best, they say, its insights rest on what we know by means of more specific and verifiable concepts, and at worst it may lead to flights of generalization which obscure the differences between particular historical and social situations (for a strong statement of this view, see Fine 2001). There is also a question of whether social capital is defined by its effects, leading to an impressive but uninformative tautology: social capital is what facilitates certain social outcomes; what facilitates those outcomes is social capital. If Halpern's definition is applied in a disciplined manner this circularity may be avoided, but the warning is salutary.

What follows is an exploration of the light thrown by social capital thinking on crime and society's attempts to deal with it. The contribution of religion to restoring social capital is discussed, and in the final section the challenge of broader social intervention to prevent offending is posed.

Deviance and social capital

Sociological approaches to crime have tended to proceed under the rubric of 'deviance', investigating how it is that offenders against the law, individually and collectively, come to manifest patterns of belief and behaviour at odds with dominant social values. One tradition, stemming from Durkheim, sees this as resulting from a failure of social regulation and integration, tending to cast

offenders as the casualties of weakened norms and other unintended consequences of social change. Other traditions have rejected the notion of societies as (more or less effective) self-regulating systems, emphasizing instead the processes whereby deviant identities and meanings are constructed and maintained, both by social institutions and by offenders themselves.

Within this second approach, subcultural explanations have sought to show how the deviant values and behaviour of particular groups can be traced to shared experiences, as in the so-called 'delinquent subculture' of adolescent men facing economic and other forms of deprivation (Cohen 1957). This restores some intelligibility and agency to deviant behaviour, and implies the possibility that in different situations, 'delinquents' might decide to change their attitudes and behaviour.

The relevance of these considerations to the subject of wellbeing is that subcultural influences on offending behaviour help make sense of the fact that offenders persist in a pattern of life that may seem to the outsider to be harmful to others and to themselves, but which appear to them legitimate and conducive to their wellbeing. Current anxiety about gang-related violence in cities in the UK risks failing to understand the role of gangs in creating and sustaining the identity of their members in the face of negative and threatening experiences, thereby producing a simplistic and ineffective response to violence among young people (Aldred *et al.* 2008; Alexander 2008). The impulse to condemn rather than to understand fails to deal with the anxiety behind the impulse, because accurate understanding is a condition of appropriate remedial action.

Subcultural perspectives also take us directly into the territory of social capital. The Chicago School of criminology, with its grounding in urban geography, advanced theories of 'differential association' linking professional criminals and impressionable young men living in particular urban areas through the transmission of shared 'traditions of delinquency' (Shaw and McKay 1942). This is confirmed by more recent studies: Hagan and McCarthy found that youths on the street in Toronto and Vancouver formed groups in which deviant knowledge and skills ('criminal capital') were passed on (Hagan and McCarthy 1997). This supplies the three elements in our definition of social capital (networks, norms and sanctions) but suggests that in some contexts the effects of social capital may be detrimental rather than beneficial. This insight is a recurrent theme in the literature of social capital, sometimes treated under the heading of 'the dark side' (Putnam 2000: ch. 22).

We therefore arrive at what may playfully be termed 'antisocial capital' (Rubio (1996) speaks of 'capital social perverso') which is a redescription of the phenomenon of deviancy from which this section began. The effects of particular examples of social capital need to be distinguished and evaluated. The example of juvenile crime suggests that these issues cannot be resolved within a purely functional framework, but require the application of determinative norms of personal and social good. We may note that Lane maintains that happiness cannot be the sole end of life, but that subjective wellbeing must be complemented by two other ultimate goods: human development, including virtue, and the quest for

justice (Lane 2000: 6). Christian belief generates moral norms based on a vision of human development tempered by knowledge of human fallibility, to which the quest for justice is central. In assessing the social values surrounding deviance and crime, discernment is needed to detect self-interested and ideologically motivated arguments on the part of both dominant and deviant groups.

Loss and restoration of social capital

The experience of young offenders demonstrates the effects of social capital, because the rate of offending peaks in this age range: between 15 and 18 in self-reported data, and between 17 and 21 in arrests (Farrington 1986; Smith 1995). Social capital contributes to a developmental explanation in highlighting both inadequate or negative endowments in childhood (e.g. absence of stable and consistent parenting, experience of abuse or violence, associated educational failure) and the loss in the transitions of adolescence of whatever positive connections there may have been. This is likely to produce an inability to form strong and cooperative intimate relationships and/or the tendency to associate with deviant peer groups, as already noted. Thus the early deficits in social capital increase the difficulty of adding to it at a later stage.

Lane talks of personality as itself a 'capital stock' (Lane 2000: 45–47), reminding us of the interaction between human and social capital or, as it might more traditionally be put, between psychological and environmental factors in development. This raises the methodological problem of distinguishing the direction of causality: do a person's psychological flaws bring about social exclusion, or vice versa? The only sensible answer would seem to be 'both', but the proportions elude precise determination.

This developmental account is supported by the clear finding that the majority of young offenders desist from crime in their early twenties, most of them after relatively few offences, while a small minority continue to offend repeatedly. A large part of this may be explained by the formation of new social bonds. In their study *Crime in the Making: Pathways and Turning Points Through Life*, Sampson and Laub re-examined the life history of 500 offenders and 500 non-delinquents from the late 1940s and 1950s, finding that job stability, commitment to education and marriage were strong predictors of desistance from offending (Sampson and Laub 1993).

Similarly, the survey of young people in Toronto and Vancouver which showed the effects of parental rejection, family disruption and educational failure in pushing them on to the streets also showed the benefits of employment in securing release from a criminal lifestyle and preventing a return to homelessness (Hagan and McCarthy 1997). There is strong evidence, both statistical and anecdotal, that 'social ties … create interdependent systems of obligation and restraint that impose significant costs for translating criminal propensities into action' (Sampson and Laub 1993: 141).

These findings are crucial to the efforts made by government and other agencies to promote the rehabilitation of offenders. Historically, commitment to reha-

bilitation in Britain came about through a mixture of religious and secular influence. The religious approach, pioneered by John Howard and Elizabeth Fry, sought the conversion of the individual in response to the divine offer of forgiveness. The secular, expounded in its purest form by Jeremy Bentham, held that the prospect of the infliction of pain would deter future offending. However, both approaches tended to overestimate the power of the individual will and to neglect the need for social support.

The twentieth century saw a conscious effort to balance punishment and welfare (Garland 1985) through officially supported resettlement of prisoners. In 1907 the Probation Service was formed, building on the activities of the police court missionaries and charged with the duty to 'assist, advise and befriend' discharged prisoners, with particular attention to avoiding drunkenness. Before long, the religious ethos of the Service was transmuted into social casework based on a therapeutic model of offenders' needs and motivation, and reinforced by attention to education and employment.

These attempts at rehabilitation, often more ambitious than evidence-based, were undermined by two developments. First, therapy-based rehabilitation was rejected by many practitioners and by government as ineffective and intrusive, because it subjected offenders to open-ended 'treatment' on a morally questionable basis. Second, the role of probation officers moved increasingly away from care towards control, enforcing the decisions of the courts and reporting breaches, until probation was seen as another form of punishment rather than an alternative to it. From the early 1970s to the mid-1990s this left a policy vacuum, which was filled successively by the depressing slogans 'Nothing Works', 'Humane Containment' and 'Prison Works'. Rehabilitation seemed to have lost its bearings.

The brave new world of 'offender management'

The past 15 years have seen a major shift in policy. First, international research appeared to show the effectiveness, in some circumstances, of offending behaviour programmes based on cognitive behavioural therapy, seeking to change negative patterns of thinking and action. Second, following the election of the Labour government in 1997, there was renewed awareness of the social needs of offenders and a commitment to more integrated forms of the resettlement of ex-offenders in the community.

Through the work of the Social Exclusion Unit and the interest of the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit (advised by David Halpern, among others), the challenge of rebuilding social capital began to assume new prominence in policy making. A leap forward came with the first Carter Report of 2003 (Carter 2003). This recommended the merger of the prison and probation services to promote continuity in care and management; a more sparing use of imprisonment with increased use of community sentences; and the provision of integrated services to offenders through prison and on discharge, commissioned from public, private and voluntary sector organizations.

Of these recommendations it may be said that the objectives were right but the means chosen to pursue them were flawed. The merger of prison and probation was not self-evidently the best or only method of promoting better coordination between them; and the competitive commissioning model has led to considerable difficulties and delays in implementation. It is probably true that traditional methods of probation work were over-individualistic. However, the great strength of the system, at its best, was the element of sympathetic personal interaction. The strategy now emerging under the label of 'offender management' attempts to combine a degree of personal supervision with the provision of services to build up – directly and indirectly – offenders' social capital in order to prevent their re-offending.

These measures are grouped under seven 'pathways to resettlement' (National Offender Management Service 2005: chs 4–10). The direct measures include support in education, training and employment, and strengthening relationships with families and children. The indirect measures increase the potential to build up offenders' social capital by augmenting their human capital. They include assistance with finding accommodation, treatment of physical and mental health problems including drug and alcohol dependence, and help with finance, debts and benefits. The seventh pathway is significant: 'attitudes, thinking and behaviour', recognizing that offenders themselves need to take responsibility for changing. The title reflects the current popularity of cognitive behavioural therapy. Unfortunately, there are doubts as to the appropriateness of such programmes, originally developed for use with white male offenders, for women (Shaw and Hannah-Moffatt 2004) and members of minority ethnic groups (Lewis *et al.* 2006b).

Although the resettlement strategy is welcome in its broad scope and positive aims, there are major concerns about its likely effectiveness in restoring or building up the social capital of offenders. First, the organizational problems in providing individual and integrated programmes (whether by statutory, voluntary or private bodies) are enormous, and it is not clear that the demarcation of pathways will help in that direction. Second, the prospect of adequate resourcing for these programmes, which was always doubtful, has been rendered highly improbable by the financial crisis. Third, there is little point in building up the social capital of ex-offenders if the resources for doing so are diverted from mainstream health, education and social services, as appears to have happened in the youth justice system since 1997 (Solomon and Garside 2008: ch. 2). Fourth, the very term 'offender management' betrays the preoccupation with risk aversion and control in modern criminal justice policy (Hudson 2003), which stands in tension with the growth of trust and reciprocity at the heart of social capital. Finally, the strategy depended on a significant reduction in the use of prison which has proved politically and operationally impossible to achieve.

Religion and restorative capital

The discussion so far has implicitly been informed by the Christian paradigm of creation, sin and redemption. Social capital has been understood as a feature of

the created order, part of God's good provision for human fulfilment but subject to corruption and misuse by human beings. Christian theology does not find the reality of 'antisocial' capital surprising: it exemplifies the pervasive ambiguity of human action and social interaction. The third element in the theological pattern, that of redemption, refers to the overcoming of what has gone wrong and the fulfilment of God's purposes for humanity and the created order. I have deliberately referred to the 'restoration' of social capital, as reflecting the divine purpose and echoing the concept of restorative justice, which is congruent with Christianity and many other religious and non-religious belief systems (for a general survey, see Tickell and Akester 2004).

It remains to ask what role the Christian churches, and other faith communities, might have in building up social capital in relation to crime and offenders. I suggest that this contribution naturally lies in the provision of what may be called 'restorative' social capital – that is, the repair of the networks, norms and sanctions, and the patterns of trust and reciprocity, that have been damaged by crime. This would properly include engagement with victims as well as offenders, but space precludes treatment of that topic.

The topics at the heart of this discussion resonate with the characteristic concerns of religion. The priority of companionship over material satisfaction, the indispensability of gift exchange, and the nurturing of trust and reciprocity would be affirmed by most religious traditions. The Christian religion has particular reason to engage with the criminal justice system, since its central narrative recounts the condemnation and execution of its acknowledged Saviour alongside criminals, as the climax of a public ministry marked by restoration of those who had transgressed moral and religious laws. Although Christianity has too frequently regressed to punitive attitudes and behaviour, its normative teachings, stories and paradigms witness that showing mercy, offering forgiveness and seeking restoration are divine acts which humans are called to emulate. Churches are committed to embodying and making available creative and restorative social capital, to offenders and victims of crime as to everyone else.

The recognition that churches are themselves social networks with distinctive norms and sanctions prompts the question whether there is anything distinctive about their mobilization of social capital. Economists and social scientists have occasionally used the term 'religious capital' as a subset of social capital, but the debate has been advanced by the work of the William Temple Foundation on regenerating communities. Their 2006 report *Faith in Action* distinguishes between 'spiritual capital' as the motivating and energizing basis of faith, belief and values that shapes the life of faith communities, and 'religious capital' as the practical contribution to the life of society made by faith communities (Baker and Skinner 2006: 4–5). In criminal justice work, the spiritual capital of the churches is the redemptive narrative and vision outlined above, while their religious capital is the outworking of that vision in restorative action and relationships.

Here we must also distinguish between ideal and reality. The ambiguity between social and 'antisocial' capital applies as much to churches and faith

communities as to any other social network. The literature routinely distinguishes three types, or uses, of social capital: 'bonding', which has the result of reinforcing similar identities (e.g. family, class, ethnicity or religion); 'bridging', by which relationships are forged with groups of different social, economic or cultural status; and 'linking', as a result of which individuals and groups are able to access other networks of power and resources. This means that spiritual and religious capital may be used by individuals and groups for their own wellbeing, or may be 'donated' to the wider community (Baker and Skinner 2006: 11).

Recent years have seen the setting up of (approaching) 20 community chaplaincies in England and Wales as support networks for prisoners resettling in the community. The emphasis is upon helping with practical needs, but also on personal support, advice and mentoring, usually by trained volunteers. Community chaplaincies are ecumenical, and in some places interfaith, and routinely involve partnership with statutory and secular agencies – bridging and linking. In this enterprise the restorative vision at the heart of Christianity, converging at points with the vision of other faiths, finds practical expression in reciprocal and empowering relationships.

It is clear both that the ethos of the New Testament and authentic Christianity is about costly self-giving in order to find life, and that churches often prefer to defend their own identity and security. The presence of ex-offenders in church congregations reveals how far their social capital is 'bonding' rather than 'bridging', as members find it difficult to sympathize with alien experiences and identities. It is also true that church members may engage in work with offenders from a position of non-reciprocity, seeking only to conform others to their own religious identity, teaching without learning and giving without receiving.

The point of drawing on spiritual capital is to become free to take risks and to meet failure with honesty, resilience and hope. It is commonly found that networks of Christians who do this find the ability to go out to people with disturbingly different life histories and embark on a journey of transformation. Typically this transformation affects not only those whom they seek to help, but themselves as they are challenged and blessed by the needs of strangers and by the moral and political implications that their encounters uncover.

From cure to prevention: crucial choices

Prominent among those moral and political implications is that close engagement with offenders points up the urgent need to build up social capital so as to prevent offending in the first place. Another way of making the point would be to ask whether the focus on restoring the social capital of individuals diverts attention from the systemic dynamics of social exclusion traced by the SEU report. Insofar as it fails to deal with the causes and consequences of this, the criminal justice system re-victimizes offenders with multiple needs and makes their situation still more intractable. Offenders easily become scapegoats for failings for which society, and the dominant groups within it, bear a broader responsibility.

From this perspective, official policy displays a profound incoherence resulting from failure to face the implications of what is known about the social roots of crime, and to learn from decades of relatively ineffective response. Governments have attempted to combine the rhetoric of punitive populism with a degree of informed commitment to rehabilitation and prevention. It is clear that in recent years the punitive agenda has won out and the possibility of adequately redirecting policy has been compromised (Tonry 2004).

Expanding prison capacity, which is the policy of both major political parties, exemplifies this incoherence. If offending results partly from a failure to connect with mainstream social networks, and desistance from offending is helped by connecting or reconnecting with them, prison tends to aggravate the loss of social capital (family, education, employment) and threatens to undermine the movement towards restoration. In addition, 'prison may reinforce the individual's connections to alternative or criminal forms of social capital' (Halpern 2005: 119). It is of course true that prison may also give potential for an increase in social capital through educational and other opportunities, such as drug treatment, but the detrimental effects seem likely to outweigh the possible gains.

The situation is now complicated by the involvement of the private sector in building and managing prisons. This began in the 1990s and is now planned to increase as a means of achieving the expansion in capacity which is deemed necessary to deal with prison overcrowding – a course memorably compared by a former Bishop to Prisons to the expedient of widening the M25 motorway as a means of relieving traffic congestion (Selby 2007: 321). Although there is a case for competition as a means of raising standards, there are many reasons for concern about the growth in private prisons, not least the creation of a commercial complex with a vested interest in incarceration. By removing financial and practical barriers to expansion, privatization may encourage governments to evade the pressure to search for a better way.

One way of conceptualizing the necessary reorientation of policy is the increasingly influential idea of 'justice reinvestment', recently commended by the Howard League's Commission on English Prisons Today (2009) and the subject of a forthcoming report from the House of Commons Justice Committee. The term was coined in the United States as a result of dawning recognition that the massive resources now devoted to criminal justice processes and an outlandish rate of imprisonment (1 per cent of the population) would be better devoted to remedial social, health and educational programmes. Justice reinvestment seeks to restore the social capital of local communities and not simply of individuals, and does so by devolving power to determine spending priorities from national to local level.

For example, from 2002 the State of Connecticut launched a programme halting prison building and setting up local resettlement projects backed by increased resources for probation supervision and treatment services. Although difficulties were encountered in community planning, the prison population was reduced substantially and crime rates declined (Allen and Stern 2007: 12–14). Similarly, New York State has cut the prison population and reduced crime by

coordinating investment in mental health and drug treatment, housing and social support, and by instituting specialist drug and community courts with an emphasis on problem solving and diversion from custody (Commission on English Prisons Today 2009: 24). In the United Kingdom a Justice Reinvestment pilot project has been pursued in the Metropolitan District of Gateshead (Allen and Stern 2007: ch. 2), and since 2004 an innovative Community Justice Court with multi-agency support has operated in North Liverpool (Fletcher 2007).

These straws in the wind raise formidable challenges, particularly in overcoming the public mood of punitiveness, finding the necessary resources in a harsh economic climate and tackling the dilemmas of local responsibility. However, they demonstrate promising alternatives to the costly and self-defeating spiral of imprisonment. They also suggest that once the spiral has been countered and broken, the benefits will become apparent and the assumption that the status quo constitutes hard-headed realism can be turned on its head. Whatever may ensue, the case for change is powerful, and increasingly urgent for our individual and communal wellbeing.

15 Supporting offenders

A faith-based initiative

Charlotte Lorimer

This is the story of how a new faith-based project, known as the Greater Manchester Community Chaplaincy (GMCC), was established in Greater Manchester. It was a response to a need highlighted by prison chaplains working in Manchester Prison. GMCC seeks to support offenders who choose to live crime-free lives. Volunteers are at the heart of what is offered and, like the offenders, may be people of faith or no faith.

This account also tells of the long and sometimes difficult journey from vision to reality. Significant to the development of this project was establishing partnerships with other agencies who work with offenders. The most significant partnership is with Greater Manchester Probation. The initiative was taken in 2000 by Christine Knott, then Chief Officer for Greater Manchester Probation, who had heard about the success of Community Chaplaincy in Canada, where it was started by the Mennonite Church. Christine invited representatives from Greater Manchester Churches Together to a meeting to discuss the possibility of working together to create a Community Chaplaincy for Greater Manchester. At this time I was a Prison Chaplain at Manchester Prison and Methodist Minister to the city centre of Manchester. My work in these two places involved pastoral care for offenders and their families while offenders were in prison and on release. I had heard the Revd Dr Pierre Allard, Assistant Commissioner Correctional Services of Canada, speak at a Prison Service Chaplains' conference in 1999 about the response made by the Mennonites to the needs of offenders, and I had already begun to talk to other chaplains, local churches and the Manchester Prison Fellowship about how feasible it would be to set up a support network based on the Canadian model. The timing was right to make the vision a reality.

The process from vision to reality has included the joy of working alongside and learning from other agencies, being amazed by the passion and commitment of volunteers, and disappointment over the often slow progress, sometimes the result of suspicion and fears on the part of the professionals towards people of faith. I write this empirical account as a practitioner who was instrumental in establishing and then coordinating GMCC until September 2007. I make little claim to being a theologian but having said that, my own understanding is that all people who believe in God should be prepared to give an account of what they believe and what they do in relation to their knowledge of the nature of God

(Graham *et al.* 2005). GMCC is based on a belief in the worth of each person who having been made in the image of God has the capacity to grow more into the likeness of God. In *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius* (Rickaby 1936) we are told that human desire and choice should be for what is 'more conducive to the end for which we are created', and to achieve this we should choose such things as will take us nearer to that end.

GMCC has recruited and trained a diverse group of people. The commitment, enthusiasm and richness of the skills our volunteers offer has contributed to making GMCC the success that it is. There are many people in our communities who have time to spare and are themselves feeling unfulfilled. Volunteer-based projects offer an opportunity for a rich seam of talent to be exposed and used. There is double benefit in that those in need of help receive it and those who need to give have an outlet for their care and compassion. This brings a real sense of reciprocity and one which is acknowledged by the GMCC volunteers. We are inclusive and try to find a place for everyone who volunteers. We had a man with learning disabilities who was not suitable to support offenders on a one-to-one basis, but who with supervision turned into a real asset in our Cafe Central (see below). It is right that volunteers get something out of volunteering as well as giving. People have various motives for volunteering: the need to experience contact with offenders prior to working with them in a professional capacity, either in probation or the prison service, as a response to crime in their area, their faith and/or the desire to show love and concern in a practical way. One volunteer who was in his last year at university came 'just for the experience, it will look good on my CV when I apply for jobs'. He was so moved by the life situations and especially the mental health issues of some of the offenders that instead of continuing in his chosen career he decided to train to become a psychiatric nurse. GMCC aims to contribute to the process of integration of offenders back into society and of supporting those who have made the decision not to re-offend; volunteers are crucial to this aim. Offenders often ask the question; 'Why would someone bother with people like us?', and are surprised by the answer: 'We care about you and want to help you improve your life.' The idea of people doing anything without expecting something in return can be a new and hard to understand concept for some offenders. GMCC believes that what we get is reduction in crime and positive growth in individuals, and is worth all the hard work.

It can be really difficult for any offender to begin a new life on release. Their old supports and social networks, friends and family may well involve criminal activity, and they can easily be drawn back into a life involving crime, or become isolated and lonely if they reject criminal activity. If what they once thought of as a good way of life is shown for what it really is, and even if they then reject it, there will be a void to be filled. Somehow each person has to come to realize for themselves what brings joy and happiness, but some people need to hear what alternatives are available. The opening scene from A.A. Milne's *Winnie-the-Pooh* has a picture of Edward Bear being dragged downstairs behind Christopher Robin, and his head is being bumped on each stair. 'It is, as far as he

knows, the only way of coming downstairs, but sometimes he feels that there really is another way, if only he could stop bumping for a moment and think of it' (Milne 1976: 1). People caught up in criminality are often so overwhelmed by their situation that they can't even begin to think of an alternative. Offering alternative lifestyles and challenging offending behaviour are part of what should happen to people in prison and among the ways of doing this is hearing the words of wisdom found in spiritual writings, and in particular but not exclusively the words of Jesus as found in the Christian tradition. Contact with prison chaplains will often help people to talk about how they live, identifying the selfishness and greed that drives their behaviour. Rowan Williams described one of the functions of a prison chaplain as 'the truth teller' (Williams 1994). In prison it is often in conversations with a chaplain that people become aware of the effect their behaviour has had on themselves and other people, and experience a real sense of regret and remorse for what they have done, creating a genuine desire not to re-offend. This may well last, or it may dissipate on release.

Each offender who is referred to the GMCC is assessed and must consent to the probation service passing on relevant information about his or her criminal activity and behaviour. This information helps in matching a suitable volunteer but also serves to see the person for who they really are and, as Jesus did, to see beyond to what that person could become. The GMCC aims to help individuals make choices that will enhance rather than diminish themselves and those around them. This is done by one-to-one support and through enabling people to become part of a community.

It should be obvious to the participants in and the observers of the GMCC what effect contact with the GMCC has on the individuals involved, but the GMCC does have the task of giving an account of the work it does, as description, explanation and evaluation. A quantitative evaluation of the work is often required to satisfy funders, although a subjective qualitative evaluation also has relevance to proving the value of our work. Yet the latter can be problematic insofar as it is more difficult to present to and/or be accepted by those who prefer to measure tangible outcomes. Any assessment or evaluation of happiness and wellbeing is also confronted with this quandary. If the GMCC has had a positive effect on a person then that person will not have re-offended, will be contributing to his or her community in a positive way, will be able to say that they are living a better quality of life, and that they feel more positive about themselves and their life situation than when they were involved in crime.

One volunteer had been visiting a man prior to release. While in prison this man had stopped being dependent on various non-prescription drugs and was attending a weekly Bible study group led by volunteers. He said he really wanted a different kind of life when he got out. The GMCC had made arrangements for accommodation and his volunteer was to meet him at the prison gate on the morning of his release. His volunteer was waiting for him as arranged, but as he was walking towards her he saw two men, stopped and looked both ways before he went off with his 'friends'. It was not long before he was back in prison and asked to speak to the chaplain. He was full of regrets and apologies for not going

with his GMCC volunteer, for using non-prescription drugs and stealing to fund his drug addiction. The volunteer began visiting him again and he attended the Bible study group. Arrangements were made for accommodation and his volunteer was at the main gate on the morning of his release, but so too were his 'friends'. He looked both ways and chose to go with them. When he was once again arrested and sent to prison he was visited by the chaplain. He was very surprised when the chaplain told him that his volunteer was willing to come and see him again and that the GMCC was still prepared to support him. He was a classic example of the recidivist offender who is in and out of prison, serving short sentences and never out of prison long enough to establish a settled lifestyle and who costs the taxpayer a lot of money. Prison is not an inexpensive option. This man is now a volunteer, but he had to make the decision of which way to go. He has been drug-free for over two years and his story is a real encouragement to others who think that they will never be able to change or that they have 'messed up' so many times that the GMCC will give up on them. GMCC volunteers show a great deal of patience and graciousness, accepting that the offenders with whom they are matched may well not turn up for appointments and that any progress may be slow and hard won. So when a matching is successful it brings great joy and makes the hard work worthwhile. Even if a person re-offends, for example, it can be rated as a kind of success if the period of time during which they have stayed crime-free has increased or if they commit a less serious offence.

'Dave' made slow progress at first. His self-confidence and sense of self-worth were both very low and he needed his volunteer to encourage him and help him find the inner strength just to begin what most of us do on a daily basis without much thought. His volunteer would call him on the telephone or send him a text message to remind him to get out of bed and keep an appointment, go with him to help in the communication process between him and the professionals with whom he needed to engage, or go shopping or for a coffee. Dave also had a real struggle with issues involving his sexuality and sense of identity. Behaviour that was not illegal and which in the past had seemed to bring happiness now seemed shallow and empty to him. The GMCC did not condemn his behaviour but encouraged him to find alternative activities that would increase rather than diminish his self-esteem and make him feel happy. One afternoon he was asked to help in Cafe Central. When the afternoon was over, he said that he felt really good, and that washing dishes and clearing tables had given him a buzz! A purposeful activity, being needed, working alongside other people, being thanked for what he had done gave him a sense of personal satisfaction, increased his self-worth and made him happy. A small but significant step on one man's journey from feeling worthless and thinking that he had nothing to contribute, to an increased confidence and a belief in his ability to learn new skills. He has also learned to love himself and believe that he can love and be loved.

I have permission from 'Danny' to tell his story and I include it not to excuse his criminal behaviour but to illustrate how his changed life situation contributed

to his behaviour, and how the GMCC was able to help when he was released from prison. Married with two children, a mortgage, two cars and a job, 'Danny' was living a fairly typical life of a man in his early thirties. He was shocked when his wife told him she had begun a relationship with another man and wanted a divorce. They discussed what would be best for the children and he agreed to move out of the family home and rent a flat. This arrangement worked until 'Danny' became increasingly lonely, missing the ordinary things that family life brings with it. His abuse of alcohol resulted in verbal and written warnings from work. His self-esteem was very low and he resented seeing his children enjoying themselves with their new family. He felt isolated, excluded, and as his alcohol abuse increased his physical and mental health deteriorated to such a degree that his ex-wife asked him not to visit the children because he was having an adverse effect on them. He lost his job and his flat. 'Danny' said the first night he slept on the streets of the city centre life became so much simpler, he didn't care what happened to him because no one else cared what happened to him, no one needed or wanted him any more. There is a way of existing in the city centre: people slip out of the system, and begging, casual work for cash, prostitution and crime provide the wherewithal to survive. 'Danny', while drunk, was involved in a fight with another man who was also drunk. The fight resulted in the other man falling to the ground, sustaining head injuries and dying. 'Danny' was arrested, charged and convicted of manslaughter. While in prison he didn't drink alcohol, learned a new trade, attended church, a Bible study group, learned to live with the bereavement of divorce and separation from his children and was optimistic about life after prison. A volunteer was matched with 'Danny' and visited him prior to release. When he was released from prison 'Danny' became depressed by the smallness of his life and after six months he found it hard to sustain his optimism. He had moved home twice, had only a few job interviews and no offers of employment. Contact with his children had been re-established but at quite a minimal level. The focus of his week was visiting Cafe Central. 'Danny' said that his GMCC volunteer was the rock that kept him grounded and gave him a sense of hope, and without her he would have 'gone under'. Eighteen months later 'Danny' feels good about his life and is beginning to feel happy. He is now in paid employment, his circle of activities is growing, he has increasing amounts of contact time with his children and he sees less of his GMCC volunteer.

'Danny's' story is an example of how the GMCC seeks to support offenders. If we are to be true to our aims and objectives as a faith-based activity, then part of the very nature of God should be evident in the activity. The daily routine and behaviour required by life in an institution such as prison can help people to survive but can inhibit social relatedness or personal autonomy. The GMCC is informed and motivated by an incarnational understanding of the nature of God and a Trinitarian dynamic of relatedness expressed in creating and sustaining a healthy community in which individuals can flourish. Social capital is increased when people take an active part in promoting good, and diminished when people absent themselves from social engagement. The Christian tradition is grounded

in the person of Jesus who came to live among people and by his words and actions enhance their lives. Jesus helped them to discover joy and happiness and challenged them to go and help others. Healthy community is about response and commitment to one another where there is creativity and social cohesion. Who we are is affected both positively and negatively by those with whom we have contact, which is important in the formation of identity and personhood. The GMCC can make a contribution to the rehabilitation of offenders by its praxis, and I suggest that the GMCC is both mission and ministry firmly based on the principles set out by Jesus and, therefore, a valid activity for the institutional church to support. The GMCC does not set out to convert or proselytize but as people of faith we have something important to offer in the affirmation of repentance, forgiveness, reconciliation and fullness of life as positive factors in the rehabilitation of offenders. Challenging offending behaviour, promoting ways of working for justice and peace, and creating inclusive and life-enhancing communities is what the criminal justice system is about, but it is also the Shalom or peace or wellbeing associated with the Kingdom of God. If people are accompanied and supported in their chosen crime-free life the negative effects on the victims of crime will decrease and ex-offenders will contribute in a positive way. A great advocate and supporter of the GMCC, Terrence Brain, Roman Catholic Bishop of Salford, says this about the GMCC:

> Everyone in prison comes from a community; on release everyone in prison returns to a community. Those communities can be an influence both good and bad on the people who live in them. If local communities can be a good influence, less will leave to go to prison. If local communities can welcome home former prisoners and influence them for good, there is a good chance they will not re-offend. This is what community chaplaincy is all about. It is worth a try!

Cafe Central plays a significant part in the life of the GMCC. It is based in Methodist Central Hall, which is situated opposite the main bus station in the city centre and provides an easily accessible place where volunteers can meet the people whom they support. Cafe Central is open to the public, has a warm, friendly and welcoming atmosphere, and serves good food. Sitting in the café, it is never easy to work out who people are. It is not obvious who are ex-offenders, volunteers or indeed professional people having a meeting, or just regular customers. The pleasant surroundings create a good setting in which people can talk and be listened to. The relaxed atmosphere has a calming effect on people who perhaps have never sat down at a table and had someone listen to them or indeed talk to them in an interested and sensitive way. The people who staff the café are pleasant, efficient, caring, and take a real interest in the people whom they serve. A 26-year-old man cried on his birthday when he was given a cake; he had never had a birthday cake before. It is also a place where convicted offenders who are not serving a custodial sentence can be placed by the Greater Manchester Probation to work, in order to complete the hours needed to comply with a Commun-

ity Service Order (CSO). This is a scheme aimed to give the offender the opportunity to gain skills and make a positive contribution to the community. In Cafe Central people can learn how to prepare snacks, serve customers, handle money and cook simple dishes. One young woman was so grateful for being taught how to make scones that now when she visits the café, having completed her CSO, she brings her own homemade scones as a gift for the person who taught her.

When Community Chaplaincy was initiated over 25 years ago in Canada, it provided a professional model that enabled faith communities to engage in the support of offenders and their families. In Britain there has been a long history of involvement by people of faith with offenders, both in prison and on release. The excellent work begun in the nineteenth century by penal reformers including Elizabeth Fry, a Quaker, is being continued by Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW). In 1999 Helen Drewery, Assistant General Secretary QPSW, read an article written by a Quaker in Canada who had volunteered for Community Chaplaincy and in particular something called Circles of Support and Accountability (COSA). Through QPSW, 'Circles' were introduced into Britain. In Manchester the Methodist Church in the city centre has a long association with offenders. There is a picture, taken in 1897, showing The Sisters of the People who worked from Methodist Central Hall, waiting outside the main gate of Strangeways Prison, just up the road, to meet the men and women on their release from gaol and offer them practical help. Today GMCC volunteers offer a similar service. Prison Chaplaincy also has a well-deserved and often hard-won reputation for the valuable work it undertakes on behalf of the faith communities inside Her Majesty's Prisons. The Prison Service expects chaplains to work to a high standard, to deliver statutory requirements and appropriate activities, and to achieve set targets. In order to work in this professional way, chaplains need to be part of and accountable to the institutional structures.

It would be wrong if I did not also mention that there is a certain level of suspicion and mistrust of people of faith who work with offenders. One probation officer initially dismissed GMCC as sandal-wearing, lentil-eating do-gooders, until he met the volunteers and attended a training day run by the Thames Valley Circles of Support and Accountability (TVCOSA) team headed up by Chris Wilson and Dominic Williams. (The GMCC is indebted to and extremely grateful for the help and support given to us by TVCOSA.) The main cause of concern is that well-meaning, possibly naive people will not work in an informed, professional way and will either breach security, or even be the cause of harm to the offenders who themselves may be vulnerable people. Community Chaplaincy (CC) seeks to offer a recognizable and accountable structure that sets down standards of good practice and promotes codes of conduct which enable the expertise offered by CC to stand alongside other agencies in the support of offenders and their families. We also have a responsibility for the safety of the volunteers and this we believe is achieved by our policies, procedures and the quality of the training we give. Over the past 10 years CC projects have been established across England, Wales and Scotland, and the high standards to which

they work give them credibility with the statutory providers for the resettlement of offenders. The GMCC has shared knowledge, policies and procedures with, and encouraged, other projects as they have established themselves. Common to every project is the belief that local people can play a part in reducing crime, enhancing the safety of their community and rehabilitating offenders. A scheme that trains, supports and supervises volunteers is a good way of doing this.

It is difficult enough for 'ordinary' offenders to resettle into society. Finding somewhere to live and a job can be really hard. This is especially problematic for people who have been convicted of sexual offences against children. The offender's family may be so shocked or ashamed by the behaviour that they are unable to offer the offender a home. If the abuse was within the family it will not be possible for the offender to return home even if the family want him or her back. 'Circles' was the response the Canadians made to this particular situation. In 1994 a notorious and prolific offender was due for release into the community after having served a long sentence for serious sexual offences against children. He was to be housed in Ontario and there was an outcry among local people. The school published posters showing a picture of the man. Teachers handed out the posters to the children with a warning about how dangerous the man was and told them to tell an adult whom they knew and trusted if they saw him. One boy put his hand up and said that he had met the man when he came to their house for dinner. The boy was the son of the Mennonite pastor Harry Neigh who had started Community Chaplaincy. When Pastor Neigh heard about the release of this particular man he wanted to offer support to him but realized that it would involve something more than the ordinary one-to-one volunteer support that Community Chaplaincy offered. He put in place a group of people who would share the care and support one another in the difficult task of caring for this man. The man was called Charlie and the group were nicknamed 'Charlie's Angels'; Circles of Support and Accountability was born. Pastor Neigh believed that with good supervision and support even someone like Charlie could on release from prison live as a member of a community.

In Manchester one woman had been so shocked by the behaviour of a hostile, angry mob of neighbours towards a released sex offender that she wanted to do something positive to help the offender and protect the children in the area. She attended a GMCC Road Show, where she heard about 'Circles' and applied to be a volunteer. The daughter of a convicted sex offender expressed her gratitude for the help the 'Circle' volunteers were giving her father. She was the victim of his sexual abuse and cannot forgive him, but she said, 'he is still my father and I am grateful that someone is supporting him'.

'Circles' aim to do three things: to support the offender to not re-offend, thereby to reduce the number of people adversely affected by crime, and to protect the offender from angry members of the community. Not all GMCC volunteers will want, or be suitable, to work with sex offenders. Most GMCC volunteers give one-to-one support to 'ordinary' offenders and those who become 'Circle' volunteers receive additional training to help them understand the complex issues, behaviour and attitudes associated with those who abuse chil-

dren. 'Circles' are intended for people who have been assessed by the public protection agencies and classified as high risk of re-offending and in high need of social and emotional support. A 'Circle' is in addition to any statutory provision and is effective because there is shared knowledge and responsibility for the offender who is known as the core member. When a 'Circle' is set up the core member gives consent to probation so that information can be given to the volunteers. The core member knows that information will also be passed back to the professionals. The success of Thames Valley Circles of Support and Accountability is that not one of the core members they supported has re-offended. In particular incidences core members have disclosed to their 'Circle' details of thoughts which could have led to actual behaviour and those core members were recalled to prison before an offence was committed. *HTV Circles: Six Years of Safer Communities* (Quaker Peace and Social Witness 2008) gives statistics and anecdotal evidence of the success of their work.

Two people who have influenced the thinking that underpins GMCC are Edwina Gateley and Jean Vanier.

> We can all walk together in hope. Celebrating that we are loved in our brokenness, helping each other, growing in trust, living in thanksgiving, learning to forgive. Opening up to each other welcoming them and striving to bring peace and hope to our world.
>
> (Vanier 1997)

It is in this spirit of mutuality that GMCC encourages all people who are involved in the project to contribute and receive, recognizing that all have needs and something to offer. The GMCC endeavours to nurture both volunteers and offenders carefully, allowing them to grow and develop and find fulfilment in the giving of their skills and talents. The opportunity to be useful has contributed to increasing their sense of personal happiness, wellbeing and self-worth, and enhances those with whom they have contact. I think this might be what is called a 'win-win situation'.

Part III

Reflections on foundations

16 Human happiness as a common good

Clarifying the issues

Patrick Riordan

Richard Layard suggests that happiness can provide a clear concept of the common good that all can accept and work towards (Layard 2005: 108). Happiness can be the social good, the 'one ultimate goal that enables us to judge other goals by how they contribute to it' (Layard 2005: 113). Is he correct? Is happiness the common good?

It will depend on what is meant by happiness. Is it to be explained in terms of 'left-brain activity', or in terms of moral excellence? There are different styles of rhetoric available for talking about human happiness. One typical style says of something that it is 'nothing other than…'. Some *y* is said to be nothing other than some *x* in another form. So, for instance, Marx says that natural rights to property are nothing other than the property interests of the bourgeoisie asserted in a language which deceives the victims of those interests. Ludwig Feuerbach says that God is nothing other than human nature projected out of itself into another who appears to dominate humanity. This rhetorical style doesn't have to be reductionist, but it lends itself to such use. It is linked to reductionism in contemporary human sciences, as when, for example, human community and cooperation are explained exclusively in terms of the survival and reproduction of the genes. Is happiness nothing other than activity in the left side of the brain?

There is another style of rhetoric associated with Aristotle, which attempts to explain something by saying it is always more than something else. So, for instance, in comparing constitutions, he claims that the best constitution articulates an accurate account of human good, the good life, and the deficient cases reflect a limitation in their grasp of this good. Aristotle's discussion is a classic case of the rhetorical style of 'always more than'. The best constitution is *more than* a non-aggression pact, and *more than* a mutual guarantee of rights, and *more than* the contract for the exchange of goods and services. What is it then? Aristotle's further reflections cannot get away completely from this way of thinking about that which is sought, which is always *more than* what is already known.

Which of these rhetorical styles is appropriate for discussing human wellbeing and happiness? Are we considering some reality which can be accounted for as 'nothing other than…' or are we exploring a reality which is 'always more than…' what we have already managed to articulate?

How we identify the notion of happiness will condition what may be said about it. It is important that the language and categories we use do not exclude in advance one of the relevant perspectives which might contribute essential insights. There is always a danger that avenues of exploration are closed off by means of a linguistic regulation specifying which terms may or may not be used. For instance, if the political is only to be understood in purely secularist terms, then it can follow that only secularist language may be relied upon in determining the role of religion in public life. John Rawls recognized this problem in his later writings, and admitted that secularism is as much a comprehensive doctrine as a religion and fails to ensure neutrality of the public space (Rawls 1999: 148). Instead of confining faith-based arguments to the private domain Rawls accepted that religious reason had a place in the public forum, on the condition that faith-based arguments be supplemented with narrowly construed public reasons accessible to fellow citizens without faith (Riordan 2004: 183).

The exploration of human wellbeing requires a language which is capable of serving the distinctive methodological purposes of the relevant disciplines, from economics to theology, while at the same time being open to the considerations raised from other perspectives. Without a language which is capable of ranging across the spectrum of disciplines the discussion can only reveal a discontinuity of goods which have nothing in common. Consider the notion of desire. Relevant phenomena are identified and spoken of using this term in different disciplines, such as psychology, economics, philosophy, aesthetics, spirituality and theology. Since each discipline has its own concerns and theoretical interests, its 'formal object', it will invest the term 'desire' with its own relevant content. The expectation that the definition of the term generated in one field would have to be normative for the other disciplines would be an unwarranted imposition on those sciences. But if each science generates its own concept independently of the others, they would seem not to be talking about the same thing, 'the material object', even if using the same term. This would be a clear example of equivocation, when the same word is given two or more incompatible meanings. Discontinuity emerges. By contrast, continuity across the perspectives is made possible when the language of desire can cope with a range of meanings. The meanings in the range would have to be compatible, while different. A valuable example is provided by Leslie Francis' application of the Oxford Happiness Inventory and the Francis Scale of Attitude towards Christianity (Chapter 8, this volume). To be of use for quantitative studies these two instruments have to be reliable in consistent application generating measurements. This purpose specifies the function which the relevant conceptualizations of happiness and religion will have to fulfil. They do not have to exhaust the meaning of the concepts of happiness or religion, and as long as they are not incompatible with other more extensive and valid meanings, the information they make possible can be very useful.

When theology engages as a partner in interdisciplinary conversation, is there not a danger that its all-encompassing perspective would dominate other, more restricted positions? It is not unusual for this anxiety to be expressed in relation to the Catholic Church. Does the Church acknowledge the autonomy of the polit-

ical realm? A significant breakthrough in the Catholic theological tradition was achieved in the Second Vatican Council's Pastoral Constitution on the Church Today, *Gaudium et spes* (1965). In this document the complexity of the relationship between the Church and the political community is acknowledged. Not only are the differences recognized, but their mutual independence and autonomy are proclaimed (GS §76). Given their differences and independence of each other, the possibility of cooperation appears limited. But a real possibility of cooperation is located in the fact that both are concerned with facilitating people in achieving their personal and social fulfilment. 'Man is not confined to the temporal order: living in human history he keeps his eternal vocation intact' (GS §76).

Following this example of perspectives which both distinguish and integrate, it may be seen how an adequate discussion of political economy, religion and wellbeing would have to fulfil several requirements. There would have to be a recognition of the distinctive perspectives of the economic and the religious, without collapsing one into the other. At the same time, the different visions as appropriate to these two perspectives must be capable of being related to one another, so that the same human reality is considered in each. It will be necessary to outline a notion of human wellbeing which is capable of both a political (economic) and a theological reading. The twin dangers of reducing the transcendent and subsuming the political in a theological project must be avoided. The language available for speaking of human wellbeing will have to allow for this kind of flexibility.

There are five dimensions of the topic in which the basic tension may be encountered. First, any discussion of human wellbeing will presuppose some account of human nature and the positions taken will reflect the spectrum between 'nothing other than…' and 'always more than…'. Second, wellbeing will entail an account of community, or relationship, along with an account of the common goods of cooperation. Third, the discussion of wellbeing will require an account of morality and the explanation of obligation to and for others. Fourth, the concepts of happiness, human flourishing or wellbeing will require elaboration. Finally, the role of the state and public authorities in relation to human happiness and wellbeing is controversial, and will have to be addressed. It is not possible to deal with these questions independently of each other. A discussion of happiness entails issues of human nature, human relationships and morality.

Following Aristotle's suggestions

Aristotle remarks that *eudaimonia* is what all ultimately seek in their action. *Eudaimonia* is usually translated as 'happiness', but more recently, following the suggestion of Elizabeth Anscombe, it is commonly rendered as 'flourishing' (Anscombe 1958: 1). John Cooper contributes a fresh reading of Aristotle following this suggestion. He understands Aristotle to identify human flourishing, *eudaimonia*, 'with a lifetime of morally virtuous action' (Cooper 1975: 88). In a

similar vein the German philosopher, Robert Spaemann offers a new account of *eudaimonia* as the end of a good life. His translator J. Alberg renders the German original *das Gelingen des Lebens* as 'a life which turns out well' (Spaemann 2000: 7). In both cases, it is the lifetime, the living of the life as a whole narrative that is stressed, not some end-product.

Spaemann is one of several recent authors whose work restores the good life, the life which turns out well, as the main object of ethical reflection. Some of these claim the tradition of 'natural law' reflection. For instance, John Finnis and those working with him have coined the phrase 'integral human fulfilment' in order to render an account of *eudaimonia* as the highest goal of life (Finnis 1984: 23). In the discussion of this account their critics have accused them of incoherence, since although they maintain that fundamental values (such as life, knowledge, friendship) are incommensurable, they seem to require that moral agents choose between values in their pursuit of integral human fulfilment. Such choice, it is argued, requires the commensurability of values. Finnis *et al.* have defended their position against this challenge and have clarified the sense in which they hold values to be incommensurable. In doing so, they have emphasized the creative role of human freedom. When obliged to choose between alternative projects (do I marry or remain celibate, do I study medicine or philosophy, do I give priority to my research or to my teaching), the human agent can seldom rely on some calculus of costs and benefits: the exercise of freedom selects one from a set of morally possible options and so is both creative of history and constitutive of the human subject. Spaemann seems to have a similar understanding of the end of life when he writes: 'To be sure, the turning out well of a life is not a particular goal, in relation to which other contents of volition are degraded to mere means' (Spaemann 2000: 14). We are left wondering about life's goals, which are not to be degraded to mere means but can be evaluated none the less as contributing to the comprehensive goal (Spaemann 2000: 19). Even for those who wish to speak of a life as a whole as the principal focus of ethical reflection there is a real difficulty in finding the appropriate way to integrate the elements into that whole.

In advocating the greatest happiness as the highest goal, both of individual decision making and public policy, Layard skates over such debates as have challenged the Aristotelian tradition (Layard 2005: 115). The problems of commensurability are not so easily dismissed once one recognizes the complexity of the human good and the creative function of human freedom in determining which goods will be realized. The issue of freedom arises also in the reflection on the state's role in pursuing wellbeing. This is the critical point in Nozick's use of the hypothetical 'experience machine' which Layard interestingly glosses as the 'happiness machine' (Layard 2005: 114). Nozick uses this ploy to discuss the importance of freedom in life, and the extent to which the exercise of one's own freedom in setting goals and pursuing them is integral to any satisfaction which may arise from success (Nozick 1974: 42–45). In other words, it is not primarily a state of affairs (call it 'happiness') however it may be attained, which people want, but they want to be active in the living of their lives. This same

insight is integral to Amartya Sen's argument about the centrality of freedom in development (Sen 1999: 24–27). The policy conclusions he derives from this are that governments and development agencies should aim at facilitating freedoms, so that people can get on with the business of pursuing their life goals, rather than directly attempting to provide the desired goals of people's lives. Martha Nussbaum's reworking of the notion of human nature in terms of human capacities for good functioning is related to this project (Nussbaum 2000: 87).

The field of ethics is controverted. Familiar positions are labelled deontology, consequentialism and virtue ethics. Each offers an approach which gives priority to one aspect, and allows the other aspects to be considered from the chosen perspective. One strand begins with the problems of determining which rules to guide action are to qualify as moral rules, with the binding force of the moral law (typically Kant). Another considers the consequences of action as crucial and discusses how action might be directed such that the optimal outcomes are achieved (typically Bentham). John Rawls has sided with the former against the latter, wanting to give priority to the right over the good. The sterility of the stand-off between proponents of right action and good consequences has provoked many moral philosophers to revisit the classical emphasis on the character of the moral agent in recovering virtue ethics. Considering ethics in terms of a life which turns out well avoids the exclusive concentration on rules to guide action, or on the outcome of action, or on the characteristics of agents that condition action. It can provide an integrating context in which the traditional discussions of rules or outcomes or virtues can continue without the ideological commitment to a position which sidelines other important discussions.

However valuable the perspective of the good life, the life which turns out well, may prove to be, it is questionable whether this perspective is attainable in practice through philosophical reflection alone. Since no moral agent ever comes to regard her completed life as a whole, our primary experience for this perspective is given through our membership of some community in which we learn to consider and evaluate the completed lives of others. This learning is mediated by the community and especially by those who are parents and teachers. But biographers, artists, dramatists and novelists play their part in enabling us to consider life as a whole. Because of this shared cultural wealth, individual actors can enter imaginatively into a consideration of their own lives as wholes. Faith communities which rely on a sacred narrative for their consideration of human life are particularly important in this regard.

Our society does not share a single account of a life which turns out well. There are several accounts among the various cultures which make up the fabric of society. The standard liberal reaction to this plurality in visions of the good life is to resort to some minimum to be expected of all. Mill's 'prevention of harm to others', or Rawls' two principles prescribing liberty and specifying the conditions under which inequality may be tolerated, or the set of basic human rights, are variously proposed to meet the need for a common ground in the context of potential conflict. The minimization of harm or securing of the minimum conditions is at the other end of the spectrum from the goal of human

flourishing. The minimum conditions facilitate the pursuit of that wellbeing, but are not to be identified with it.

Kant has posed a challenge to any teleological ethics including a eudaimonistic one. Put simply, that is the doubt that anyone who acts for the good of others (benevolence) out of hope of reward (happiness) does not truly act morally, since what she really seeks is not the good of the other but her own interest. This is one version of the problem of altruism. If the questions of ethics are burdened with individualistic assumptions, then there is always a difficulty in moving from the assumed interests of the agent (self-interest) to the good of others who are beneficiaries. J.S. Mill encountered his own version of this difficulty: Why would the happiness of others be significant for someone who pursues his own happiness? This is a relevant challenge for the topic of wellbeing, and it can best be handled through the notion of common good.

Common good as the wellbeing of a community

Aristotle's discussion moves from the small-scale familiar forms of cooperation to the large-scale systems of social order which we are constantly constructing. Just as any cooperation between persons presupposes some good which the partners attempt to achieve, so acting together in a political community has a good in common. Aristotle goes further and asserts that the highest form of cooperation has the highest good of all. It is clear: people doing business, playing sport, engaging in projects, share some goods as conditions, or means, or goals of their action, or some combination of these. But does the political community have a good in common? And is the common good of a political community the highest common good, as Aristotle asserted?

Christians found this philosophical language congenial because the common good provided a set of terms open to an infusion of theological meaning. Augustine could speak of the vision of God as the beatitude of the community united in love of God. The Christian perspective on the common good of humankind is not widely accepted – some Christians would balk at this use of philosophical language to mediate a biblical vision – so that on its own it cannot communicate a content which might be a shared ground of public deliberation. It is not easy to pin down a philosophical usage of the common good of political cooperation, beyond the 'always more than…' style of rhetoric. I suggest that we can recover a usable conception in terms of heuristic concepts (Riordan 2008: 27). That is, we need terms which allow us to speak about realities we do not yet know, but are in the process of exploring and discovering. We already know enough about what would satisfy our questions so that we have some operative criteria which allow us to factor out the false candidates and flawed answers. So, the common good could be understood to name that which we in our political conversations are attempting to identify as warranting the willing cooperation of all. It will be always more than mere security, or satisfaction of basic needs, or purely formal liberty without effective freedoms, or legal equality.

What could be the common good of the UK or the EU, since they are pluralist in religious affiliation, in ethnic background, in political allegiance, in morali-

ties, in interests, in professions and skills, in prosperity, in experience, in hopes and aspirations? If there is such a common good, how is it to be achieved? Can it be the business of legislators to bring about this good? Does happiness constitute the common good of our society as Layard proposes? (Layard 2005: 124–125). The insistence on liberty and on people's freedoms to determine their own good makes many suspicious of any talk of a good which is properly theirs, but which they have not chosen. I have suggested above that a care for liberty and the role of freedom in the construction of a life as a whole entails that public policy is best directed at facilitating freedom and its responsible exercise rather than in attempting to bring about a state of affairs. There is another line of challenge which queries the competency of the public authorities in relation to human wellbeing.

Aquinas distinguishes between the divine and the human lawgiver. Only the divine lawgiver can require and monitor a change of heart. The human lawgiver must be content with outward conformity to the requirements of the law (Finnis 1998: 177). Punishment provides a motivation for those who are not spontaneously inclined to conform in their behaviour towards the law. But such coercive instruments are inconsistent with the free response which the divine command invites. Of course, Aquinas concedes that those who at first conform out of fear of punishment can be habituated to love the good and so come to do willingly what formerly had been done only reluctantly. The point is that the difference is not always observable, and so is not relevant to the human lawmaker.

There is a limit to what social policy can achieve. For instance, in family policy, we can put arrangements in place that allow people to form families and raise children. But that they will be happy, and will flourish in their relationships is not accessible to intervention. The most that can be done is that the conditions which tend to foster wellbeing can be maintained. But of themselves they do not guarantee the outcome. This reflects a distinction between the common good which is unrestricted and open-ended, and a more restricted category of common good. The latter is that which can be measured and observed and which functions in an instrumental role for the achievement of the unrestricted common good of fulfilment or flourishing. So, for instance, the Vatican Council's *Gaudium et spes* speaks of 'the common good as the set of conditions which will allow humans as individuals and as groups to achieve their fulfilment' (§ 26). The tension between the conditions for fulfilment and the fulfilment which is ambitioned is relevant to the task of generating an appropriate language for speaking of wellbeing. The concentration in politics on providing the agreed conditions for human flourishing brings with it the danger of losing sight of the ultimate fulfilment, which we may only be able to speak of in heuristic terms (Riordan 2006: 36–37). When means and conditions are no longer relativized to some further purpose, the danger arises that they are promoted into the category of ends.

This reflection provokes the following questions. What limits are there to the effectiveness of public agencies in working for people's wellbeing? What are the boundaries which public authorities should not overstep in caring for wellbeing?

Reducing crime, maintaining public security and absence of anxiety merely establish the conditions for living a decent human life. What a decent human life is to consist of and how it might be realized and shared cannot be the business of the public authorities. It is a matter for the freedom of each one and each group. But this is not to relegate the question to a supposedly private sphere. It is very definitely a matter of public concern, and what is required for its pursuit are public spaces in which the questions of the human good and the common goods of our social cooperation may be aired and explored, without the fear that some body or group will be able to hijack the power of the state so as to impose its preferred answer on others.

J.S. Mill desired experimentation in human living so as to clarify what might contribute to flourishing. The more examples there are available to people, as models of human living, the more likely they are to find their own way. But it is not a matter of having a range of products on a supermarket shelf from which to choose. The ability to recognize the value of something, to appreciate the good at stake, requires a prior history of socialization. Some tastes are acquired tastes., and capacities to appreciate some human goods must also be developed. Alasdair MacIntyre makes this point very strongly in comparing the needs of young dolphins and young humans who require a prolonged period of socialization so as to be capable of entering into the life of the species (MacIntyre 1999). In the case of human children this includes acquiring the skills which enable them to enter into the conversation in which the human good is explored. This conviction that some tastes are not simply given but must be acquired is often dismissed as elitist. The point is anything but elitist, and is well established in our ordinary experience. For instance, aggressive young males have to learn to value the skills of negotiation and conciliation; it doesn't come automatically to them. Similarly, the goodness of fidelity, a sustained love over a lifetime despite hardships, is normally not apparent to an observer who does not share the relevant values. Accordingly, education is not only about becoming aware of the range of one's possibilities and options, but about becoming a person capable of commitment to what is truly worthwhile and conducive to wellbeing.

Aristotle had noted the complexity in the notion of friendship and in the corresponding visions of political community. He was aware of constitutions which were based on non-aggression pacts and on the mutual guarantee of rights. He understood also the notion of a bargain to ensure the exchange of goods and services. These forms of constitution are meaningful because they do correspond to aspects of the human good. The aspiration to guarantee security to ensure that rights are respected is rooted in an awareness of human fragility. Regulating relationships between people so that the threat of violence is minimized and the possibility of vindicating one's rights ensured makes sense to people who are all too aware of their vulnerability (Riordan 2007: 40). However, this way of conceiving political community reinforces the view of the other as a threat, and as a limit to one's own possibilities. This had been the core of Marx's criticisms of the liberal achievement in creating bourgeois society. It institutionalized selfish,

self-centred man, concerned about the fences to secure his freedom and his property from the neighbour (Marx 1977: 53–57).

Aristotle had anticipated Marx's rejection of the narrow view of political relationships, for the similar reason that it constrained the breadth of the human good. Political relationships for Aristotle are forms of friendship. Friendship is always a partnership in the pursuit and enjoyment of some good. Constitutions which take the form of non-aggression pacts and mutual guarantee of rights are based on a kind of friendship which can recognize a shared vulnerability. The good which is pursued and achieved in those constitutions is a basic aspect of human wellbeing, in securing survival in an objective sense and a sense of security in a subjective sense. Aristotle objects if this basic aspect is taken to represent the whole of human wellbeing. That people are secure from attack, that their survival is secured, does not mean that they do well. For Aristotle much more is at stake, which he would classify as the achievement of excellence in the performance of characteristically human activities. The kind of political constitution which would incorporate this more expansive account of the human good would correlate with a form of friendship in which each would be concerned about the wellbeing of the other for their own sake.

For Aristotle the distinctive factor of political community is that citizens are bonded by genuine concern for the quality of the life they share which enables each one to flourish (Aristotle 1972: 119). This is friendship in a full sense, beyond what is useful and what is pleasant. Beyond mutual material benefit and pleasure there can be concern for the other as living well, precisely for their own sake. The bonds of friendship would not simply be by-products of their involvement in the tasks of ruling and being ruled, but would be the essential dynamic of their citizenship. The friendship of good people for one another, wanting each other and all together to enjoy a good life, and taking the steps to achieve it as far as they can, is the core of Aristotle's conception of politics. If this *eudaimonia* is rendered as happiness, then it is always more than what is already grasped and understood, because it is always striving for a greater excellence. Such a rhetoric of happiness is open to theological perspectives. Theological narratives for a life which turns out well can allow for dimensions of friendship with the creator, with all of creation and with all of humankind, so that the happiness pursued in a corresponding pursuit of the good life is always more than what we can hope or imagine, based on previous experience. Then the common good transcends the instrumental goods which are conditions for fulfilment, and it does not rule out the unrestricted common good known by faith. If the appropriate rhetoric for happiness is that it is 'always more than…', then Layard's intuition is correct that happiness in this sense is our common good.

17 Being well in creation

John Rodwell

The closing vision in the biblical book of Job (Job 38, 1–42, 6) suggests that the proper context for pondering the human predicament is the realm of other creatures and the cosmos beyond: alongside Leviathan and the hippopotamus, where winds are born and snow is stored, among the circling planets. I want to explore here the notion that this creation provides more than a scenic backdrop for the kinds of questions about the human condition that have been raised by Haidt (2006) – 'Why are we here?', 'What kind of life should we lead?' and 'What paths lead to happiness?' – to review the part that the environment and nature play in definitions and understanding of both human wellbeing and religious capital; and to show that a wider perspective might give us a more radical vision of the difference religious belief can make to our humanity and whether or not we might be happy.

The wellbeing of the environment

With increasing urgency these days, the future wellbeing of humankind is seen as threatened by a deteriorating environment. Its own wellbeing, the 'state of the environment' as it is often called, is expressed by a welter of measures of quality applied to what are very diverse sectors – air, water, biodiversity and so on. The structure of any index of wellbeing, how its various constituents are organized and combined, strongly influences its usefulness and measurement of its performance (Prescott-Allen 2001). With the environment, the condition and quality of the different sectors vary in their susceptibility to quantification, and the measures devised for one sector are rarely equivalent to those proposed for others. Moreover, different environmental interests – state agencies, non-governmental organizations, businesses and so on – rarely share a common metric for such measurements, or for reckoning overall environmental costs, benefits and quality.

Environmental quality indices (EQIs) make a more balanced attempt to provide algorithms for calculating combined scores in a variety of environmental measures (Inhaber (1974) in Canada, Hope and Parker (1995) in France, Italy and the UK, Puolamaa *et al.* (1996) in The Netherlands, Sang *et al.* (2002) in Korea). In the UK, for example, the South-West Observatory EQI for govern-

ment and local stakeholders in that region of the country includes measures of pollution, derelict land, flood risk, river quality, green space, street cleanliness, poor housing, fly-tipping and biodiversity (South West Observatory 2007). Such an EQI has been designed explicitly to measure improvements in the quality of life for a community of customers and allows them to weight the various contributions themselves, according to their own needs and preferences. An EQI devised for measuring environmental wellbeing in industrial areas in Greece also attempted to integrate such public perceptions of the comparative seriousness of environmental problems in their area, though the methodology worked from a long list of just six rather obvious factors and gave environmental 'experts' the task of ultimately vetting and totalling the scores (Vatalis and Kaliampakos 2006).

In practice, the generation of official statistics on the state of the environment is much driven by the need for comparable information to facilitate free trade at a variety of scales (El-Shaarawi and Piegorsch 2002) and initiatives to develop common standards often aim at a currency-based metric to enable environmental accounting to measure the attainment of performance and environmental trends (Markandya and Constanza 1993). More generally, although it has become commonplace in the policy and practice of sustainability to include environmental capital along with economic and social capital as one of three pillars for 'securing the future' (the present government's byline for sustainable development: Defra 2005), it is widely recognized that social and economic goals take precedence in the sustainability process. A robust non-anthropocentric ethic is evident among the staff of environmental agencies and wildlife charities, and a duty-based commitment is sometimes explicit in the public statements of these organizations (RSPB 2007), but many players have an obviously instrumental environmental ethic and use a fundamentally utilitarian calculus in weighing environmental benefits against social and economic ones (Rodwell 2008a). Thus the wellbeing of birds, butterflies, habitats and landscapes is promoted because they can, for example, raise property values, promote tourism and generate jobs and business. Effectively, the sustainability agenda lends credibility to a whole variety of goals through a kind of pragmatic convergence (Sterba 1994; Norton 1997).

Human wellbeing in the environment

As the sustainability process finds expression in the regeneration of regions and their communities, there is an overwhelming stress on demonstrating performance and a need for measurable targets and indicators that makes the notion of non-material goals, aspirations and benefits deeply problematic. Even recent modifications of Gross Domestic Product such as the Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare (Daly and Cobb 1989) or the headline UN indicator, the Human Poverty Index, do not incorporate subjective measures of how people feel about the quality of their lives. One attempt to integrate environmental wellbeing in this stricter sense with estimates of life satisfaction is the Happy Planet Index

(Marks *et al.* 2006), which aims to avoid more strictly economic measures of quality of life and to use environmental mediators to show that certain forms of economic development are detrimental to human wellbeing. The HPI aims to do this by multiplying such an index of Life Satisfaction by Life Expectancy to calculate Happy Life Years (in the sense of Veenhoven 1996) and then it divides this sum by the Ecological Footprint, the area of land required to sustain a given population at current levels of consumption, technological development and resource efficiency, expressed in global-average hectares.

In the UK, the 'Quality of Life' agenda and particularly the notion of 'well-being' which is a relatively recent addition to the government's list of keynote indicators, admit the possibility of acknowledging those less obvious aspects of personal or community life that might matter for securing the future alongside socio-economic sustainability. In a study of the regenerating post-industrial landscape of the Dearne Valley in Yorkshire, Rodwell (2008a) found that 'wellbeing' meant such ill-defined things as a 'feel-good factor' or an unqualified 'being happy' but, for other interviewees, there were more palpable environmental benefits which touched the human condition. Such experiences of delight sometimes focused on encounters with particular animals or plants or on contact with habitats such as heath or woodland, sometimes on situations where, for example, at a memorable coincidence of time and place, huge flocks of golden plover twisted and turned over a marshland in winter sunshine. For many who work in the environmental realm, such experiences clearly play a crucial role in their personal life histories and career trajectories, and in forming perceptions of what human wellbeing is more generally. This then can make a crucial connection between the wellbeing of individuals and communities, and the wellbeing of the environment in which they live and work or which they visit for one reason or another.

Wonder, of course, the term we might use to describe such responses, is not a Christian prerogative, nor a more generally religious one, though those among Rodwell's (2008a) interviewees who, unprompted, declared some commitment to belief gave wonder a religious resonance, saying, for example, that it informed their worship. Fisher (1998; see also Gomez and Fisher 2003; Francis and Robbins 2005) sees such experiences as part of an environmental strand in spiritual wellbeing. Moreover, such moments of wonder – unbidden, trusting, disinterested, unpossessed – are one quiet protest against what Robin Grove-White has called the 'mean and inadequate conceptualisations of ourselves' (Grove-White 1992: 11) which have become embedded in the frameworks of social and economic discourse and the sustainability process. Such orthodoxies are, for him, an inadequate reflection of the full range of felt experience, of the open-endedness and ambiguity of the human condition and of our experience of nature. Naive attempts to consider them simply as a form of capital, religious or otherwise, might be thought to be likewise impoverished.

Religious capital and its place in creation

The term 'religious capital' has been defined in its broader sense as the distinctive contribution which faith communities can make to the sustainable social and economic fabric, especially within the regeneration of communities and the urban renaissance (Baker and Skinner 2005; Reader 2005b), yet the particularity of this contribution is all too readily subverted by the sustainability process whose pragmatic discourse is essentially instrumental and utilitarian, and devoted to the delivery of material targets that are externally determined. Faith communities have been generally regarded as clients or partners in delivering a sustainable future (Rodwell 2008a), a role they have often conspired in by their own successes in the welfare and education programmes that are all too necessary in many regeneration initiatives (Community Environment Associates 2004; WWF-UK and Sustainable Development Commission 2005).

In particular, it is commonplace for two of the contributions recognized in the Home Office report on faith group involvement in civic renewal (Lowndes and Chapman 2005) – the physical and human resources of faith communities and their leadership and networking roles – to be understood primarily as practical contributions to regeneration that can be delivered through tangible assets that are put at the disposal of the wider community. Few Christians would deny that such service was an essential part of their apostolate, though they might mourn the way in which the prevailing discourse can transform a church mother and toddler group into an 'enclave of interim intimacy' (Reader 2005b: 45). Lukka *et al.* (2003) also found that much of the volunteering of faith group skills was actually so informal and localized as to have little purchase on the performance-based targets demanded by government funding.

Using the term 'spiritual capital' to describe the core identity and values of faith communities and their celebration in worship (the normative rationale of Lowndes and Chapman 2005) has been proposed as a way of safeguarding those less tangible and irreducible aspects of religious belief and practice so that they might exert some critical freedom in relation to social and economic development and the political process (Baker and Skinner 2005). Thus they might foster stories which gain no recognition or respect in the official discourse: 'letting people tell their own story' was one of the ways in which Rodwell (2008a: 279) found that less material benefits might be explored in the sustainability process. Yet these are readily discounted in regeneration initiatives as being anecdotal or they can accumulate when unheard into obstructive resentments among communities (Reader 2005b). That such voices might sometimes gather confidence so as to discern and challenge false meanings within the regeneration rhetoric was one of the causes for celebration which Robinson (2005) detected in his study of Newcastle initiatives.

For Reader, such engagement would necessarily have to risk compromise with the prevailing culture, making life in the faith communities an uncomfortable and ambiguous affair, the dissonance between religious values and visions and the reductionist language of the secular agencies always being under threat.

This is what would give it the capacity to release the 'subversive other' (Reader 2005b: 45). And, in fact, it is not as if mainstream Judaeo-Christian belief is meanly equipped to challenge some of the more fundamental elements of the sustainability process (Rodwell 2008a, 2008b). For example, in the conventional regeneration discourse, land is usually treated as a tradable commodity, yet for these faith communities it is an inalienable inheritance, intended to be managed not as if by owners of property, but by people seeing themselves as tenants and heirs to gift. For Brueggemann (2002), land is a central theme of the biblical heritage, a reassertion of the importance of place as well as history in the sense of identity and the salvation of God's people. In such a view, land is freighted with symbolic meaning derived from shared spiritual experience but it is also undeniably real, the actual earthly turf where people have lived and worked and have now to find themselves amid a rapidly changing scene. Land is thus neither a deserved inheritance, nor an anticipated reward, nor the result of prudent planning. It would be hard to find a more devastating and ready criticism of regeneration, yet, lacking confidence or opportunity, this prophetic voice may not be found among the faith communities, or, if voiced, never heard.

For Brueggemann (2002), the emphasis on land is a reassertion of the importance of place and the geography of salvation and an expression of disillusionment with the power of anonymity and mobility to save, so prominent in, for example, the early vision of Harvey Cox (1965) and still so much a guiding principle in the regenerated landscapes of today (Rodwell 2008a, 2008b). A renewed interest in the theology of place (Sheldrake 2001; Gorringe 2002; Inge 2003) is taking us away from narrower preoccupations of sacred space to a wider engagement with how people of faith belong in the world and negotiate mutual entanglements of necessity and freedom in place (Scott 2003, 2008; Rodwell 2008a). Meanwhile, in the more specifically medical realm, a return to an early definition of human health as including physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely an absence of disease or infirmity (WHO 1946) has for some focused on the shift from ill-defined space or particular locations for the delivery of health care and wellbeing to notions of healing in place (Kearns 1993; Kearns and Gesler 1998; Gesler and Kearns 2002). For such practitioners, place is 'the centre of social activity and nexus of personal and shared meaning' (Kearns and Gesler 1998: 10), and wellbeing is a process of interactive negotiation. The observation of these workers that, nevertheless, place seems to matter little to political decision-making in the delivery of health care is paralleled by the very partial and impoverished understandings of place that are to be seen in the sustainability process (Rodwell 2008a, 2008b). In planning guidelines it is difficult to incorporate multifunctional notions of place that integrate social and economic concerns with environment, let alone more elusive feelings of belonging (Handley 2003; Ling *et al.* 2007). For the Canadian planner Leonine Sandercock (1998, 2006), the planning process she learned as a professional failed to match the local desires and needs of those people in communities she worked with to appropriate space and create place. Despite the now frequent use of slogans such as 'pride of place', 'doing justice to place', making somewhere or other 'a great

place' in regeneration programmes, richer understandings of the relationships between society on the one hand and environment on the other are noticeably scarce.

Social capital and the gift of creation

The freedom for such deeper engagement challenges the whole notion that the language of 'capital', even religious and spiritual capital, is at all adequate to describe the quality of life built entirely on divine gift. For Christians, the end of religious belief and practice is not simply to build social capital, rather it is to foster the Kingdom of God and to discern and mend the difference between this and the societies and cultures in which we find ourselves. Certainly, we would not wish to subscribe to the stability of the *habitus* that Bourdieu (1992) sees as reinforcing hierarchies and the status quo, but neither to commit ourselves simply to promoting the common good and associational life among humankind (Smidt 2003). Religion should function as something more than a social system in the world, engaging with civil society and public life (Baker and Miles-Watson 2008), rather as a radical challenge to enable us to find ourselves at home in creation. 'Belonging' as a religious question is about much more than the relationships of individual believers to institutions (Davie 2000, 2001), and a religious understanding of how we belong in creation can make a crucial contribution to our wellbeing – as individuals, in community and as a species. Seeing beyond our own situation in the immediate environment thus reveals that our primary loyalty is not to the *polis* at all but to a wider realm, wherein may be seen the entirety of God's gift of life and being. Made as humans in his image, fleshly but rational, we are the only one of his creatures able to discern and articulate this shared dependency of all that is upon his creative desire (Rodwell 1999).

A fundamental shift from the elitism of Bourdieu would thus extend Coleman's (1990) concern for the marginalized to include those non-human creatures that are generally treated as instrumental to our own socio-economic benefits. It would also foster the networks and relationships not just outwith the narrow realm of the family but quite beyond our own societies to the *oikos* or household of nature on which we all ultimately depend. These other creatures would then also be seen as actors, and between us and them we would recognize expectations and obligations that would build up the trustworthiness of stewardship. That secure self-identity which Coleman (1988) saw as essential to maturity would thus be acquired by negotiation with an altogether bigger and richer realm.

In fact, in creation we humankind have bowled alone, as Putman (2000) puts it, for centuries, favouring a hierarchical model of autocratic dominion over our fellow creatures rather than the horizontal partnerships which he saw as the proper basis of relationship between individuals and among communities and societies. It may seem fanciful to consider what he called 'bonding' – that dense layering of trusts within homogeneous groups – and 'bridging' – developing

links between different groups – as extending beyond our immediate human relationships, but these processes do have equivalents within ecological understandings of species-dependencies, food chains and predator–prey relationships. And the kind of 'linking' which for Woolcock (2001) addressed damaging power differentials is reflected in the altruistic care that many people want to express towards wildlife and habitats through a commitment to nature conservation. In short, such a critical perspective helps us see that human societies do not work out their economic and political life and the accumulation of capital against the backdrop of an instrumental environment. Rather they discover themselves blessed along with other creatures as part of the whole of creation.

Becoming well in creation

It has been suggested that the Happiness Hypothesis (Haidt 2006) might provide a new and more profitable entry into the complex debate between religion and capitalism because, while incomes and economic growth have been shown incapable of themselves of generating increased happiness, belief and the practice of religion may promise humanity more (Atherton 2007b). However, the Big Seven factors which Layard (2005) considered must be addressed for economic growth and incomes to generate happiness – the financial situation, work and fulfilment, family relationships, community and friends, health, personal freedom and personal values and the philosophy of life – these do not explicitly involve the sorts of interdependencies between society, economics and the environment that we have considered above. Nor does Layard's argument suggest ways in which human self-understanding might be enriched – and maybe the prospect of greater happiness revealed – by seeing ourselves as part of a wider realm of nature that surrounds us. From among the 'Other Big Seven' which are considered in the argument on the implications of Layard's and Haidt's work that has been pursued by Atherton (2007b), the influence on our religious belief of this richer perspective on the origin and context of human life is barely visible.

While we might concede Layard's complaint that 'happiness' is altogether too vague a concept, yet the kinds of quantification offered – 'not perfect, yet … in many ways as good as the measures economists use' (Diener 2006) – do not exactly reassure us that we are in the hands of rich and creative minds. Certainly, an equation for happiness like that of Seligman (2004) which reduces the complexities of our human nature to a genetical set point (worth about 50 per cent) and our situation in life to 'circumstances' (amounting to 8 to 15 per cent) cheats us of the understanding that might accrue from deeper reflection on our predicament.

In fact, where such reflection finds expression within the Judaeo-Christian tradition, notions of happiness of this kind do not provide the currency to express what it is to 'enjoy God for ever' (as the 1647 Westminster Catechism puts it: Williamson 2003: 1). Such enjoyment is contingent upon an appreciation of the cost of God's creating all that there is – which Job is challenged to acknowledge in the vision with which we began – and the cost of making all things new in

Jesus Christ. Such revelations of divine love throw into sharp relief the ways in which our humility and responsiveness fall short of God's own desire and show that only this acknowledgement can be the starting point for our ultimate wellbeing. Yet, reflecting on ecstatic revelations received 20 years earlier in 1373, Julian, a woman of Norwich, refuted the heresy that our human condition is due to our being prey to some independent force of evil, but rather because we suffer from a privation of goodness. Julian's concern is not to emphasize our wilfulness but to stress the comfort that comes from realizing that our unhappy predicament is for the purpose of learning. Sin is 'behovely', she says, that is, sin is unavoidable, a necessary part of what it is to be human, and its purpose is not to induce guilt but to challenge us to learn (Colledge and Walsh 1978; Baker 1994). Being well is thus a process of being drawn on by the promise that 'All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well' (Julian of Norwich, trans. Wolters 1966: 103). Such an assurance of her own ultimate being well is made to Julian by the sight of all creation shrunk to the size of a hazelnut on the palm of her hand – everything that there is and she a part of it, made and sustained there, she was told, through the love of God alone.

The woundedness of the human condition, which Julian prayed to know more fully in her revelations, the contrition for what we are, our compassion for the others who share this state, our longing to be made whole with the rest of creation – these themselves offer the prospect of healing of our unhappiness. God certainly desires that humankind should be happy, so the cultivation of delight in his longing is indeed a proper religious pursuit (Jantzen 1987). Our deliverance from incompleteness is thus more fulfilling even than the happiness of some kind of original innocence or that which comes from capitalizing on any naive worldly dream.

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18 The 'virtuous circle'

Religion and the practices of happiness[1]

Elaine Graham

Growing prosperity since 1945 in developed economies is now being shared increasingly by developing economies. Yet experience and research widely recognize that above certain income levels, greater prosperity is not matched by greater happiness, but is accompanied instead by greater social and individual distress, manifested, for example, in increasing crime and ill-health, such as depression. Much evidence now also suggests that such trends are exacerbated by high levels of inequality in society. This so-called 'Happiness Hypothesis' is explored across a range of disciplines in a field of 'overlapping literatures' from the 1990s onwards (Atherton, 2008). They all confirm that increasing economic prosperity in Western economies is not matched by greater levels of recorded happiness. These literatures serve as a multidisciplinary 'entry-point' for the excavation of further layers of debate about the relationship between global economic change, social capital, human behaviour and political institutions, as well as their ethical and religious aspects. It is notable that the various literatures on wellbeing are mindful of these latter dimensions, and increasingly are focusing on the importance of values and beliefs in human satisfaction or quality of life.

Alongside these developments has been the re-emergence of religion globally, including into public life, and more recently matched by the growing interest, especially in the West, in the religious contribution to 'social capital', or the capacity to build social networks within and across various parts of civil society. It is the potential link between this latter development and the growing concern over the paradox of prosperity and human wellbeing that forms the basis of this chapter, which will focus on interacting this so-called 'happiness hypothesis' with a consideration of the potential role and contribution of religious values and organizations. It has further resonances with emerging interest in faith-based economics and ethical aspects of development, debt relief and poverty reduction: with the morality of the market, if you will, and the question of values, not just in terms of informing the 'moral compass' (Brown 2007; see also Davis *et al.* 2008: 13) of individuals as they chart their course through life, but raising questions about the very purposes and ends to which political economy as a whole should be directed.

If the question of happiness and wellbeing (especially in relation to economic prosperity) is multidisciplinary and multidimensional, then the question of reli-

gion emerges as one, not insignificant element of that. Given that such a broad-based debate raises questions of meaning and value, this opens new doors for theological input, and there are significant overlaps between philosophical thinking about the good life, particularly around virtue ethics, and moral theology. My intention here is to trace these convergences and offer some ways forward.

Religion and the pursuit of happiness

What the literature on wellbeing acknowledges time after time is the significance for individuals of what Richard Layard terms a strong philosophy of life. This is not identical with organized religion, even though Layard at one point does indeed declare that 'people who believe in God are happier' (Layard 2005: 72). Nevertheless, some kind of correlation does seem to be evident. For example, the Center for Spirituality, Theology and Health at Duke University publishes digests of research in this area, and reports on a series of clinical studies which suggest, among other things, that rates of recovery of cancer patients may be better among those who report involvement in faith communities, as well as better longevity among those who attend synagogue, slower rates of cognitive decline in those experiencing the onset of dementia, and some, marginal, impact on aspects of coping strategies in relation to recovery from serious illness (Center for Spirituality, Theology and Health 2007). The evidence is varied but rich, therefore, although clearly such research raises important questions of method and interpretation. For example, is the incidence of better mental health among religious people due to divine influence or human solidarity? Do different religious traditions deliver different degrees of wellbeing? What about religious traditions that stress individual practices, such as meditation, in comparison to more corporate ones? What is the relationship between 'religion' and 'spirituality' – organizational, formal dimensions of observance, say, as opposed to a more subtle appreciation of existential or transcendent dimensions to life?

In terms of explaining the correlation between religion and wellbeing, the consensus seems to be that there is powerful 'added value' in religion (Coyte *et al.* 2007; Eckersley 2007). It appears to be down to a combination of factors, among which social support and membership of a faith community is pre-eminent, but which extends to other forms of religious practice, such as prayer, reading one's sacred Scriptures, a sense of meaning and existential belief system and a well-articulated moral code. While other (secular) activities might provide some of these elements, commentators such as Richard Eckersley argue that religion 'packages' these components effectively and accessibly (Eckersley 2007).

More specifically, John Swinton (2001: 64–92) postulates various tangible mechanisms by which religious affiliation might contribute to greater mental and emotional wellbeing:

- Regulation of lifestyle and behaviour – such as restriction of intake of alcohol.
- Provision of resources, such as social support and networks.

- Promotion of positive self-esteem.
- Acquisition of specific life skills and coping resources – such as a framework of understanding illness, stress or loss.
- Generation of positive emotions – cultivation of disposition towards forgiveness, hope, transformation.

All in all, wellbeing comes from being connected and engaged, from being suspended in a web of relationships and interests. This gives meaning to people's lives (Eckersley 2007: S54).

Social capital, religion and wellbeing

What is interesting is how much of the social capital literature intersects with the literature on happiness, in terms of offering insights into the devices by which individuals are able to feel a greater connection to the wider community – in other words, the very kinds of networks which seem to engender a better quality of life. So, one policy document identifies some of the positive benefits of strong social capital: high GDP; higher educational attainment; lower levels of crime (as a result of strong social norms and levels of trust); better health; and more effective institutions of democratic participation in terms of linking citizens with government. If we look at those alongside Layard's Big Seven, considered elsewhere in this volume, we see an interesting degree of correlation.

But a further dimension to this is the significance of religion for engendering forms of social capital. Robert Putnam has probably led the way in charting how religious values and organizations serve as rich sources of social capital which foster precisely those networks and relationships that seem to contribute most decisively to healthy social networks, and thus to our quality of life. As Putnam reports, churchgoers were 'substantially more likely to be involved in secular organizations, to vote and participate politically in other ways and to have deeper informal social connections' (Putnam 2000: 6). The distinctiveness of churchgoers' values and attitudes – the theological wellspring of their motivations – has variously been described as 'faithful' or 'spiritual' capital (Commission on Urban Life and Faith 2006).[2] The Commission on Urban Life and Faith used this term to describe the effect of churches on the life of their neighbourhoods: quantitative but also qualitative. It is intended to link the sense of strong values that guided and informed the activism – and that the two are indivisible.

If religion is one of the most potent sources of strong values and principles that appear to make the difference as people steer their way through the world, then this is precisely because it represents a powerful synthesis of beliefs and action. We might term this 'performative' faithful capital: where belief and practice are indivisible, something also encapsulated well in understandings of *praxis*, as value-driven, value-directed action, or of *phronesis*, or practical wisdom. This only serves, however, to highlight the question of the relationship between values and practices: the literature on religious/social capital, or faithful capital, is increasingly converging on the impossibility of separating the two. It

resists, therefore, a straightforwardly functionalist reading of the contribution of religion to wider society, that faith merely 'delivers' social goods and should be evaluated on its efficiency or effectiveness in so doing, as any other organization.

'Virtuous capital'

As John Atherton argues, this establishes a strong continuity between ethics and religion, or between market economics and welfare economics (Atherton 2008: 131). It also resonates powerfully with other literatures on the foundations of healthy social capital, and especially the role of religion in nurturing bonding, bridging and linking the social relationships and networks that appear to be so crucial in fostering wellbeing. This then takes us further still into the territory of virtue ethics and teleology, because they form part of the realization within the happiness and wellbeing literature of the centrality of people's goals and values. It is about being able to establish some basic criteria of human flourishing – of what actually constitutes a life well lived – in order to be able to make some judgements about what is good for us. Insofar as virtue ethics represents different accounts of the 'good life' and especially in theologically derived virtue ethics, the idea that the good is related to the ends for which humans are believed to have been created, it occupies a prominent position.

In Aristotle's thought, the good life was defined in terms of the pursuit of happiness, or *eudaimonia*. This entailed the achievement of one's ultimate goal, or *telos*, which was essentially about shaping one's life according to the virtues of excellence, learning and pleasure. Christian theologians such as Augustine and Aquinas put that in a Christian framework, in which virtue was about conforming to God's purposes, a goal that could only be fully fulfilled in the afterlife. This became adapted in later medieval times to a conformity to the precepts of natural law. So there is an ontological as well as a moral dimension to the normative basis of happiness and wellbeing: we are most fulfilled when becoming and attaining our highest calling and our most authentic being, which in traditional Christian theology is to become what God has created us to be, by practising the virtues of faith, hope, love and charity with the assistance of divine grace.

Eudaimonia is traditionally translated as happiness, although the philosopher Elizabeth Anscombe has preferred the term 'flourishing', a concept that has also recently re-entered moral discourse with the work of Grace Jantzen, who explicitly contrasts it and the worldview it embodies with the language and terminology of 'salvation' (Jantzen 1996). The aim of the 'good life' in virtue terms for Jantzen is not to seek rescue from a fallen and corrupt world, but to promote the values of new life, creativity and justice in ways that propel us towards 'becoming divine' (Jantzen 1998). Other philosophers and theologians have emphasized the importance of moral agency and choice: the good is something that has to be chosen, there has to be an element of freedom, it is not about simply following a predestined life-course, or following prescribed rules. Arguably, what makes any

action moral is the necessity of choosing between conflicting goods, or even lesser evils. In that respect we return to a useful strand in virtue ethics, which is about how one cultivates the gifts of moral discernment: seeking and attaining the good and our own wellbeing and that of the planet is not only about following a path, but acquiring the map-reading skills by which one 'navigates' one's course through life.

The life which cultivates virtue is preferable for many to alternative traditions of moral reasoning, such as Kantian ethics (rule-governed), or utilitarianism or consequentialism. The alternative of 'right action' versus 'good consequences' may be resolved by an emphasis on the qualities of the moral agent – but we cannot escape the question of what nurtures and sustains the practical wisdom of that moral individual; nor the need to consider whether in fact it is not about individual virtue but an ecology of virtue in which the individual's participation in a community's shared ethos is what cultivates the practical wisdom of discernment.

The revival of virtue ethics in theology could usefully connect with this literature on wellbeing therefore, since it offers a way of reconciling the potential conflict between law and grace, while indicating such a framework in the public domain: a 'more dialogic approach to Christian ethics [which] attempts to maintain the integrity of religious traditions, while drawing out the potential for mutual understanding between them – both within Christianity and between Christianity and other faith or non-faith-based groups' (Garnett *et al.* 2006: 201). This takes us into debate about how questions of value and how notions of the good can be negotiated in pluralist societies, and what role is afforded to any religious traditions. Can religion be taken seriously as a wellspring of public values, or is it to be seen purely as a sectional, fiduciary language only for the faithful?

The point is that religious people do have a long history of thinking about values, many of which they share across traditions and many of which have actually informed the cultural worldviews in which secular people find themselves. So it is that dialectic, that sense that Christian identity, like that of other religious and cultural traditions, has always developed in particular contexts and through constant processes of change and revision, interacting with other worldviews, religious and secular, that needs to be affirmed: a convergence of theologically-grounded notions of virtue with those of others.

Yet equally, it may be asked whether Christians should be more wary of having anything to do with a concept as banal and self-seeking as 'happiness'. The strong counter-cultural and eschatological nature of early Christianity would suggest that new life in Christ and the task of entering the Kingdom have little or nothing to do with living happily ever after, with contentment with one's lot or settling for social conformity. The Church's memory of Jesus is of one who preached no cheap grace, but rather warned of the hatred, persecution and abuse they would encounter (Matt 10: 24–39). If this is the corporate memory of a persecuted community, then it also reflects the shared conviction that Christian discipleship is a process of constant struggle towards the *parousia* that speaks of

God's radical intervention in human affairs, rather than the ameliorative gradualism of history, as the ultimate goal to which the faithful should aspire.

This idea is that happiness is to be found in a struggle within a world which is governed by the dynamics of tragedy rather than comedy, of suffering in the face of overwhelming moral complexity rather than the restoration of order and stability. It is also present in the Aristotelian teleology in which a life virtuously lived is constantly tested against notions of the good and excellent which involve ends and values that transcend mere self-interest or subsistence. Yet 'being good' is not necessarily synonymous with 'being happy': admittedly, the Aristotelian tradition, later taken up by natural law theory, teaches that virtue and goodness are all about orientating ourselves towards that which will authentically fulfil our true natures. Surely, then, we should be happy if we are becoming truly ourselves; but Christian theology would also teach that if we live in a fallen world in which the limitations and flaws of sin are an ever-present reality, then we can never be complacent about simply following our own desires.

It also propels us towards some of the more communitarian traditions, represented by theologians such as Stanley Hauerwas, in which the emphasis is on inhabiting the *habitus* of a community which tells the stories by which the good life is to be guided: this again is about cultivating habits of discernment in the context of particular practices of virtue (Hauerwas 1981). It is through *participation* in community that we learn to consider and evaluate the lives of others; in communities of faith, there is the (perhaps unique) opportunity to connect with the lives of those in other cultures (by virtue of the global nature of many faiths) as well as across many generations and historical epochs. This constitutes a unique brand of 'cultural capital'. We need communities as schools of virtue, as the places that nurture us. This is not only characteristic of Hauerwas and other forms of post-liberal Christian ethics, but is reminiscent of Alasdair Macintyre's famous evocation of 'practice' as inherent to moral action (Macintyre 1985). Practices and virtue are mutually reinforcing, in that seeking the good may only be attained by participating in the specific practices that enable us to achieve excellence or virtue in that very pursuit. If certain traditions or communities are the bearers of standards of excellence or virtue, then cultivation of the goods which they embody may only be reached by means of *participation*:

> After all, if being trained in virtue is like learning the skills for practising a craft, or for making and appreciating good music or art, or becoming aware of how to eat healthily, then Christianity can provide teaching, practices and disciplines, mentors and communities in which to be so trained.
>
> (Harris 2006: 210)

This makes the link between this tradition of virtue and communitarian ethics, since it is essentially arguing that people cannot be schooled in virtue in abstract. These values have to be embodied and located, because essentially virtue, goodness and wellbeing are what might be called 'performative' values. It is therefore the respect to which virtue ethics is not only about a *vision* of the good, but about

the *practice* – cultivating and embodying – of particular *ways of life* by which the good may be realized. In that respect, it does not need to be heavily prescriptive or abstract but quite concrete. It is about how practices shape our moral selves and build lives well lived, whether that is framed in terms of a *telos* or life goal. Yet it also suggests that this needs to be quite a reflective task, in which the twin elements of the vision of the good and the enactment of the life well lived need to be brought into active correlation. It suggests that virtue and cultivation of virtue also rest on the cultivation of what we might call 'practical wisdom' – as a form of theological reflection, or moral discernment.

Towards practical wisdom

'Practical wisdom', or practical reasoning, has tended to be regarded as inferior to more lofty forms of knowledge, which perhaps reflects a split in the Western intellectual tradition between 'theory' and 'practice'. If the former is about generalizable, universalizable knowledge, which models an ideal type or representation of the world, then the latter is the field of action which may certainly be used to test out theories or hypotheses, or develop them, or find exceptions, or even disseminate knowledge; but it is rarely seen as the place which prompts research or generates theory. There is a sense that practice is the place of 'application' of theoretical constructs formulated elsewhere; it is secondary, inert. However, this division or configuration of 'theory' and 'practice' itself has a history (Gumbrecht 2004).

So there has been a return to Aristotle's definitions in the *Nicomachean Ethics* in which he places *phronesis* (or practical wisdom) alongside Sophia (wisdom). If Sophia is the ability to speculate on universal truths, then *phronesis* is more strategic, as the form of knowledge geared towards achieving specific goods. But this is, for Aristotle, a reflective and deliberative skill, and not just simple technique. More recently, with the revival of ideas of practical wisdom, not least in the training of many professionals, this is strongly linked with notions of virtue and the good, insofar as practical wisdom is concerned with producing right action, 'bringing about a good end for humans in general and for each unique individual' (Lauder 1994: 93). As some voices in professional education have argued, such practical wisdom may not necessarily involve rule-based or Kantian behaviour, but a complex interrelation of thinking and doing – or even being – by which implicit values guide discernment in relation to specific contexts, networks or relationships. 'The goal is not some pre-determined end but is instead a result of affirming oneself in spite of the events and circumstances which might prevent an individual achieving their potential or finding some meaning in life-health experience' (Lauder 1994: 95).

As Harriet Harris argues, virtue theory always has to transform itself into practice, since it is concerned not with virtue in abstract but with particular virtues (Harris 2006: 212). Similarly, paralleling the literature on happiness and wellbeing, it is in the context of relationships, ways of life and institutions – in the corporate traditions we inhabit and help to form, reflexively, as they are shaping us – that the virtues are forged and demonstrated:

> Virtuous living is learned by being practised. It is nurtured … in the communities and institutions that shape our lives, especially families, schools, churches, and other religious institutions, colleges, places of work, community groups, and political and charitable organizations.
>
> (Harris 2006: 210)

The concept of theology as 'practical wisdom' has achieved prominence in recent years, especially in liberation (Gutierrez 1973) practical (Graham 1996) and systematic theology (Charry 1997). In their various ways, such sources claim that theology has what Ellen Charry terms an 'aretegenic' function, as discourse aimed towards the formation of Christian character or identity. Knowledge of, or talk about, God is intended to cultivate virtue; but – echoing Macintyre's model of moral reasoning – it is more than *scientia*, or dispassionate knowledge, and is better characterized as *sapentia*, or the wisdom that comes from relationship. In more postmodern versions of practical theology (Graham 1996), practice itself is the primary medium of truth, but this is not simply to reduce the nature of God or God-talk to human action. Instead, it is to argue that by fixing their attention on the goodness of God, Christians shape their performances and 'practise what they preach' as words are enacted in faithful action. It is essentially a 'virtuous circle' from practice to theology to practice. From the practical, everyday dilemmas of faith comes the need to articulate guiding principles, stories, images and values which can constitute the practical wisdom – the grammar – of discipleship. In turn, practical activities of healing, nurturing, sustaining and transforming are normatively shaped by the tradition. Amidst the necessarily unsystematic character of human action and relationships, Christians uphold the essentially *theological* nature of human practical wisdom, informing faithful and transformative practice. The primary language of theology is articulated in the practical wisdom of human care; only as a second stage does it find expression in systematic doctrinal propositions. This is not to reduce all theology-in/as-practice to human pastoral care, however. Without the horizon of divine wisdom, such practice becomes self-referential or reducible to ethics. This understanding of theology as practised, however, refuses such a division between theory and practice, and insists that God is both immanent and transcendent: apprehended in, but never reducible to, human experience.

This is not unfamiliar within public theology. Heinrich Bedford-Strohm (2007) speaks of 'bilingualism', capable of giving an account of its own roots and sources, but capable of addressing a wider audience too.[3] Yet my point is that such dialogue is not propositional but performative. This notion of the contribution of theology is essentially a form of wisdom that is enacted and communicated in the life of its practitioners, yet is accessible to a wider public not by virtue of its ability to understand the finer points of doctrine but by its ability to 'read' and witness the lived reality of that community: 'By their fruits shall ye know them.' Such a performative theology, enacted in the practical wisdom of the community, is weighty in terms of its value-ladenness, but tangible in the public nature of its demonstration.

I have been asking to what extent should Christians be called to a self-contained life of virtue that rests exclusively on the narratives of faith and mores of the internal community, and to what extent can their inherited values overlap with those of other worldviews? Would we agree with ethicists such as Hauerwas that 'Christian social insights cannot be shared with others except with those who participate in the faith from which they come' (Atherton 2008: 7)? This is to some extent what underlies a principal fault-line in contemporary public theology today, namely between the communitarian or holiness traditions represented by thinkers such as Stanley Hauerwas or John Milbank, versus the liberal perspectives of Reinhold Niebuhr, Duncan Forrester or Charles Taylor. The reality is that people draw their concepts of the good life from a variety of sources, Christians being no exception; the point of contention is what aspects of such influences – Scripture, the corporate narrative of tradition, secular reason, experience – should prove ultimately binding. Understandings of happiness are lived out and formed in a variety of settings – and the complexity of modern life is such that any mature adult will inevitably encounter a plethora of such messages in the course of a single day, just by watching a television soap opera, passing advertising billboards, reading a bedtime story to their children, listening to politicians, let alone reading the sacred texts of their tradition (which are not in themselves monolithic in their visions). These are the raw materials out of which practical wisdom is negotiated; but 'Christ' and 'culture' are to be held in tension, and neither collapsed nor assimilated in the process.

William Cavanaugh provides a helpful metaphor for this when he returns to Augustine's idea of the 'city of God' to examine how Christians are to manage the balance between religious faith and public reason, the tensions of discipleship and citizenship. He describes the two realms not as separate self-contained worlds, as almost virtual spaces, overlapping each other; but they are primarily performative spaces, in which different narratives (in our case of wellbeing and human fulfilment) are lived out:

> Envisioning the two cities as performances helps us to avoid some serious problems with the way the church is imagined. The church as God sees it – the Body of Christ – is not a human institution with well-defined boundaries, clearly distinguishable from the secular body politic. The church is not a *polis*, but a set of practices or performances that participate in the history of salvation that God is unfolding on earth … The church is not a separate enclave, but … it joins with others to *perform* the city of God.
>
> (Cavanaugh 2006: 318, emphasis added)

The Church is not preaching to the world or delivering generic moral principles; it is, primarily, demonstrating its distinctive ethic within the world, creating a shared space in which some views of the good life are mutually discovered and celebrated, but also able to create an alternative *oikumene*, or household or political economy, in which different models of human flourishing and unconditional regard – an economy of grace rather than reward – may also be practised. But

prompted by Cavanaugh's terminology of space, performance and boundaries, I am inclined to characterize public theology as a liminal discipline, which locates itself at the threshold, which encourages traffic from the sanctuary into the street, fostering the secular vocation of those who need to be articulate in the vernaculars of production, consumption and citizenship as well as the dramas of grace, redemption and sacrifice.

To conclude: the happiness literature stresses the importance of values and plentiful, rich social capital such as networks of friends, intimacy, meaningful and rewarding (in all sense of the word) pursuits. It is also pointing to evidence which suggests that religion and participation in organized religion is effective at fostering that kind of social capital. While I have been arguing, however, that Christianity may have some distinctive insights to offer in terms of a particular practical wisdom of human flourishing, this still needs to be accountable and accessible to a wider world. The Christian theological contribution is drawn to some kind of bilingualism, or mediation between the many sources and visions of happiness and goodness on offer. It is a balance of faith and reason, engagement in the world and immersion in tradition, but then, as Kathryn Tanner says, theology has always been dependent on 'borrowed materials' (Tanner 1997: 61–92). A high theology of creation and incarnation requires that it is within this world, and in the vernacular of human affairs, that effective discipleship is undertaken. There is a tension, but no ultimate contradiction, between the imperatives of 'citizenship' and 'discipleship'. In the words of the Sri Lankan theologian Wesley Ariarajah, 'At the global level, there is an increasing recognition that the world's problems are not Christian problems requiring Christian answers, but human problems that must be addressed together by all human beings' (Ariarajah 1998: 327).

Similarly, it is a question of 'happiness' being both of this world and beyond this world, which is a perfectly theologically orthodox perspective, given the Christian dispensation which acknowledges both the promise of the Kingdom in the light of the resurrection and the gifts of the Spirit at the same time as knowing that such promises remain to be fully inaugurated this side of the eschaton. This reflects a perennial tradition of living at the threshold between sacred and secular; the 'now' and the 'not yet', and between the Gospel of 'common grace' and *metanoia*. This may permit us to conceive of overlap, if not convergence, of many worldviews and value commitments, in order that Christians can occupy the same space as others without compromising a theologically robust vision. If Christian faith and practice has anything to teach the world about happiness and the life well lived, such wealth and wisdom must be offered in the name of a common humanity and a shared concern for its ultimate flourishing.

Notes

1 This chapter is a revised version of an article (Graham 2009a) which first appeared in a special edition of the *International Journal of Public Theology* entitled 'Faith, Welfare and Well-being: New Directions', edited by Francis Davis and Andrew Bradstock.

2 I would defend the term 'faithful capital' against its critics because of its ability to hold together in synthesis the dimensions of religious (as in practice-based outcomes) and spiritual (as in values or beliefs). 'Faithful' is performative, praxis-oriented, in terms of values enacted and embodied in their outworking, where the actions themselves point toward their point of transcendent origin.
3 Elsewhere, I have spoken of this process as one of 'mediation' (Graham 2009b: 146).

19 Wellbeing or resilience?

Blurred encounters between theory and practice

John Reader

Theories of wellbeing and the Happiness Hypothesis to be found in the recent work of Richard Layard and represented in the theological world through the work of John Atherton suggest that the application of purely economic criteria to various, if not all aspects of human society, has severe limitations. Beyond a certain level of financial remuneration, for instance, people look for satisfaction and motivation from other, non-financial factors. One question for those of faith is how the values that underpin a faith commitment contribute to a 'thicker' or deeper understanding of human social action than that found in theories of happiness and wellbeing. The particular argument addressed in this chapter is that those who are engaged in both scientific research and community development activity may be seen, in some cases, to use these alternative ideas as the basis for a critique of contemporary culture as and when it relies upon purely financial considerations. I will focus on a number of examples in order to support the view that not only do non-economic factors play a crucial role for some within this field of action, but the dominance of economic criteria in how scientific research is translated into practice can be damaging to human wellbeing. Beneath these practical considerations lie some more theoretical questions about the nature of truth in both religion and science, and the need to develop a more open understanding of how truth processes work – one that allows questions of value and commitment to be taken into account. This takes the argument in a more theoretical direction that can only be hinted at. I will state at the outset that I do not believe that happiness and wellbeing can or should be direct outcomes of the life of faith, although I do believe that there are occasions when they are indirect consequences of following this vocation. The limitations of the concept of wellbeing in providing a critique of activity based exclusively upon economic considerations may be supplemented by the notion of resilience as used now in the environmental movements.

My first example comes from the work of a colleague who was Professor of Materials Engineering and Engineering Education at Queens University, Kingston, Ontario, Dr Caroline Baillie, who has given me permission to use the website account of this project. During the second half of 2007 she and some colleagues spent six months in Argentina working with a number of local groups and cooperatives, helping them to set up for themselves a recycling enterprise

using waste materials. The title of the project is waste-for-life (http://waste-for-life.org). Without going into the full details, the essential task was to develop means of processing and recycling waste material, particularly plastic, in order to produce something that can be resold and reused. The scientific and technological expertise of the academic team was to be put to practical use for the benefit of people in the poorer parts of the country in ways that would be both environmentally friendly and income-generating. The project contained a number of different elements including adult education and community development. A quotation from the website will offer a better sense of this:

> The cooperative is the epitome of do-it-yourselfism. It was very evident that the members of the cooperative had an extensive knowledge of the types of materials that they were working with, but this is knowledge attained through trial and error and collectivizing the knowledge learned from successes and failures. They've managed to build a few major and complicated machines to process – cut into small bits, wash, and dry – the recycled plastic that they collect. This is important because the more capacity the cooperatives have to process recycled materials, the less they are at the mercy of intermediaries and the more value they can extract from the material.

What emerged from the engagement between the incoming scientists and the cooperatives was that more efficient and effective means of processing the materials would be of considerable benefit to the local projects. As a result of this the researchers began to develop a hotpress. At the time of writing and after a number of technical teething problems, this is close to being put into operation. Of equal significance for the argument of this chapter is the comment from members of the team on what they believed themselves to be doing:

> We have spent most of our time in Buenos Aires working with cartonero recycling cooperatives. They have the structures in place to successfully incorporate a small manufacturing channel to their mostly collection, sorting, processing and distribution operations. But equally important to us is a common political and social outlook that stresses equity and human interdependence, and we have been the privileged witnesses to these ideas in motion, particularly their commitment to wage equality, non-hierarchical participatory decision making practices, and to 'socializing' their knowledge.

Here is an example of professional scientists working alongside local cooperatives, both contributing their technical expertise to the recycling process, and also sharing in and learning from values that differ from and even conflict with the dominant economic model. Both parties, one might argue, gained in terms of their own wellbeing from this venture, but were also contributing to a critique of the surrounding culture through the actual project. Science and technology,

embedded in certain explicit social and political values, which, incidentally, those of faith might share, is making a real and practical difference in a difficult economic context.

Unfortunately however, there are many counter-examples of ways in which scientific developments are not put to the benefit of those who need them most. One of the starkest of these is the differences in the treatment of AIDS across the globe. A comment from the French philosopher Badiou points this out (Badiou 2007: 27–28):

> Today there are more or less 500,000 people infected with AIDS in Europe. With the implementation of tritherapy, mortality rates are decreasing rapidly. The great majority of these 500,000 will live, albeit paying the costs of a burdensome and chronic treatment. In Africa there are 22 million people infected with AIDS. Pharmaceuticals are practically absent. A staggering majority of these people will die; in some countries, this will mean one child in four, or even one in three.

Badiou's point is that there is the technical capacity to address the AIDS problems in Africa but clearly not the political will or interest to do so. This is because there is no economic motivation to act. The pharmaceutical companies, in the main, do not see Africa as a prime market for their products nor do the politicians see dealing with this massive internal problem as a priority in their attempts to assert or retain power. One could continue to argue the case, but the picture that Badiou presents is perfectly clear: how scientific and technological advances are put into practice depends all too often upon values that conflict with what is in the interests of the wellbeing of the majorities in developing countries. Where purely economic criteria in the narrow sense of a positivist economics are the determining factor, human wellbeing will come a poor second on the list of priorities.

What is not often brought out into the public domain is the influence and impact of the current regime of Intellectual Property Rights which operates across the globe and determines who has access to scientific developments and under what conditions. Here one sees political and economic factors shaping the way in which scientific advances are rolled out – or not – into the wider community. In 1994, the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) introduced a new era that extended the global reach of intellectual property regulation, based on concepts of protection and exclusion rather than dissemination and competition. Up until that date, nations had enjoyed considerable discretion in the adoption and implementation of domestic intellectual property regulation (Sell in Held and McGrew 2003: 170–188).

Unlike earlier agreements, the TRIPS agreement requires states to take positive action to protect intellectual property rights. Sell argues that this is a significant instance of global rule-making by a small handful of well-connected corporate players and their governments. This led to protests about the power being exercised and this has made the operating environment for large companies

somewhat more sensitive. Nevertheless, the basic argument stands, which is that the political and economic power of the few is allowed to determine how scientific advances are made available to those who might benefit from them.

As one might suspect, much of the impetus behind what became the TRIPS agreement came initially from US-based multinational companies aiming to protect their market share. The US has been the most aggressive country in terms of legal actions and challenges based on the new governance model. The most glaring examples of TRIPS in action, and the protests that have developed as a result, come from the worlds of agriculture and the pharmaceutical industries. So, for instance, grass-roots activists, farmers' groups, environmental groups, human rights and consumer groups have mobilized in recent years in order to oppose global biotechnological, pharmaceutical, agricultural chemical and seed industries and their aggressive approach to intellectual property. A major issue has been the rights of farmers themselves to save, reproduce and modify seeds. Biopiracy is the charge often mounted against the multinationals as they attempt to appropriate and protect their own control over both genetic resources and traditional knowledge. Although TRIPS permits the exclusion of plant and animals from patentability, Article 27.3(b) requires that members provide protection for plant varieties either by patents or by an effective *sui generis* system. The problem is that there is no consensus on what qualifies as such a system.

As we have already noted following Badiou's comments, the other glaringly obvious area for concern is that of the HIV/AIDS crisis in developing countries. Both South Africa and Thailand sought to employ compulsory licensing to manufacture AIDS drugs more cheaply in the late 1990s and this led to conflict with the US-based industry interests. In May 2000 the Clinton administration did take action to relieve this situation, which has led to some relaxation of the multinationals' stranglehold, but the scale of the problems remaining is still of global concern.

Making connections – what has faith engagement to learn from this?

The argument is that these particular engagements between scientific research and application and the general concept of wellbeing have lessons for possible encounters between faith and the developing wellbeing discourses. In order to understand this we need first to highlight the differences between the two approaches as evidenced so far.

In the first example the following themes emerged. Scientific methods and knowledge were of benefit to a particular local community and contributed to the wellbeing both of that community and to the scientists involved, but also to a form of political critique. These included: a commitment to adult education as a means of learning; a community development approach which based itself on local knowledge and needs; a willingness to progress through trial and error; and a cooperative endeavour founded on a democratic rather than hierarchical understanding of the collective process. These factors in turn were based on certain

values: the commitment to equity, human interdependence, and a non-hierarchical process of decision-making. It is clear that all of these factors constitute an explicit critique of the dominant models of both research and application. One might also want to point out that a particular notion of truth, and indeed integrity and human value, underpins all that happened in this project. One could also add that happiness and wellbeing, although possible indirect consequences of this activity, are not really the primary objectives.

This is in contrast to the other examples of how science is used – or misused – to promote and contribute to issues of human wellbeing. What emerges is that the determining and driving factors are essentially economic and political. Large multinational pharmaceutical companies are not prepared to invest ideas and resources into countries where there appear to be no obvious economic benefits from doing so. Rather than the sharing of resources and expertise characteristic of the first approach, the tenor of the second is one of protection and exclusion. Those who possess the knowledge prefer to keep it to themselves in order to retain their control through market share. If the local contributes in any way to knowledge and research then it is only likely to be appropriated and annexed by global business for its own internal benefit. The existing economic and political order is used as a means of excluding those whose wellbeing might improve but who do not form a lucrative market so that resources may be directed to areas where the greatest profit is to be made. Wellbeing then is subservient to the profit motive and scientific research is simply the handmaid of economic and politically motivated external forces.

One can argue therefore that any discussion of wellbeing must first unearth the values and understandings which underpin particular examples and be prepared to face up to the conflictual and contested nature of what will be discovered. Whose wellbeing is actually being served in specific instances and is there a danger that the term is being employed to disguise certain economic and political interests? Claims to neutrality made by those engaged in science and technology must be handled with care and a degree of scepticism, and similarly with those who might suggest that wellbeing is a neutral term that has no connection with issues of power. As I have suggested elsewhere (Reader 2008:http://wtf.org.uk), one of the dangers in the encounters between faith and public life is that of 'cheap grace' where the realities of distorted or imperialistic relationships are hidden beneath the rhetoric of an open and democratic relationship. Without a close analysis of particular situations and an awareness of how such relationships and encounters work in practice there is a risk that one side can too readily be drawn into engagement without realizing who is really in control. In terms of the examples shared earlier, where might those of faith stand on the question of a non-hierarchical approach to decision making, let alone on the democratization of knowledge which gives greater weight to the local rather than relying heavily on outside experts? Is truth the possession of those in positions of power and authority who then impose their interpretations on the rest, or is it more like a process of 'circulating references' as I have suggested elsewhere using the work of Bruno Latour (Reader 2009b:ch. 13)? Where then does the knowledge and

research carried out by academics (in any field) play a legitimate part in the search for human progress and greater wellbeing? These are profound questions that must be addressed in this debate.

The Cowley churchyard project

It is time to offer some practical examples of ways in which faith involvement can add value to individual and community wellbeing. The first example is the churchyard project at St Mary and St John church in Cowley which is on the outskirts of the City of Oxford (www.ssmjchurchyard.org.uk). The aim of the project is to transform a derelict two-acre Victorian cemetery into a welcoming, quiet, safe green space for the local community, as well as to create a pocket habitat to link with and enhance the various park and garden habitats across the city. So this is essentially an environmental project but with clear social and community benefits.

By the close of the 1990s this space had become overgrown and was a hide-out for those sleeping rough and wanting a safe place for drug trafficking. Concerns of both parishioners and police led to a group of soldiers being brought in to cut back the 'jungle' in 2000. This began a process of consultation with the local community which led to a partnership with East Oxford Action (Single Regeneration Budget funded), as a result of which old paths were resurfaced, entrances reopened and lighting installed. It was also agreed that the churchyard should be managed as a wildlife conservation area. Further funding was obtained from the Oxford Preservation Trust and the Conservation Foundation, enabling a tree survey to be carried out and a five-year management plan to be commissioned. Other local environmental groups and experts were drawn in, plus the involvement of local agencies keen to see the project become a focus for social and personal regeneration.

In 2003 the Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire designated the churchyard as a Jubilee Wildlife Space and the project also won the Green Church Awards in 2007.

Without going into further details, it is clear that the project provides an important example of how a local faith group, through the application of scientific insights emerging from environmental studies, can add to the wellbeing of an area. The critical factor is the number and variety of people who have so far been part of the volunteer workforce. This includes members of local ethnic minority groups and also people suffering from mental illness, and the homeless. Welfare agencies have recognized that engagement in this type of activity is of value for people with deep personal problems. Whether this means working by oneself out in the open air or being part of a team, there is no doubt that the experience of contributing to this enterprise has a therapeutic value. Being able to spend time in this large open space which is in the heart of a built-up area of East Oxford also has an attraction for those who live locally, and is a link both with the natural world and with the history of the community. Silence, space, time for reflection and a period of respite are some of the obvious benefits for those who walk through and take time out in this churchyard.

So in what ways does this project put into practice the methods identified earlier? Scientific knowledge and insights are being applied for the benefit of the local community in a very practical and down-to-earth manner. The site itself and the work it entails are seen as an educational process both in terms of personal and community development. The whole approach is one of partnership and full local engagement, so there is no hint of a 'top-down' or imposed plan of any sort. The project is open and therefore subject to risks and ambiguities. Much depends on the skill and commitment of key individuals, and their capacity to motivate and involve others in the work and the sharing of the vision. One might ask what has happened to those who used the space previously, as their problems may have been simply shifted elsewhere rather than directly addressed, but the project leaders are fully aware of this and continue to liaise with local agencies in trying to help those who cross the threshold of the churchyard. The values underpinning the work are those of commitment to the wellbeing of others and to that of the natural world, and the profit motive does not figure in the process. Like all such projects it is both of value in itself and sets an example of what can be done standing as a beacon within the area and further afield, given its growing national profile. Here is faith adding value to personal and community wellbeing using the community development approach similar to that in evidence in scientifically motivated projects. Yet to say that this is only about happiness and wellbeing is surely to miss the most important dimension of the project which can be more adequately captured under the heading of resilience. How can this locality adapt itself to the forces of change shaping its wider context while holding on to the values and beliefs which have shaped its history, let alone the hopes for a different future which emerge out of its environmental principles? Resilience is the capacity to hold this tension between theory and practice while engaging in a lived critique of the surrounding culture.

Wellbeing and landscape capital

It is perhaps not surprising that many of the practical projects one encounters which employ scientific insights and which aim to further greater human wellbeing are broadly environmental, as this is an obvious arena within which they contribute to a different and better future. I now want to describe another developing piece of work in which I am directly involved and which follows a similar pattern to the Cowley project. I am linking this to the concept of landscape capital which is one of the growing family of 'capitals' that are now familiar in the discourse – others being of course social capital, religious capital and spiritual capital. The idea behind this is that direct engagement with the landscape as a source of both refreshment and stimulation is a means whereby people can revive a sense of their relationship with the natural world and also achieve a new perspective on human identity. Once again it may well challenge the dominant discourse of a positivist economics where profit-driven motives are seen as the determining factor. Landscape does not exist purely as an asset to be exploited,

even as a tourist attraction, but in its own right and as an unfamiliar and untapped source of new experiences.

This particular project took place in autumn 2008 in the village of Chelford in Cheshire, just southwest of Manchester and close to the Peak District. It began with three people in the village wondering how they could encourage others to think about how and why the community has developed as it has. The local terrain and then the trails and communication networks, both road and rail, have determined where the village was built and how it has subsequently grown and developed. But in order to see that more clearly one needs to stand apart from the immediate locality by walking along the edge of the Peak District and looking back towards the area. Hence the idea was born that the project would encourage people to go up to the Peaks and walk all or part of the trail from which one can look down and still see Chelford.

A number of further ideas have grown from this original concept which turn this into a local community development project. It builds upon recent experience of the organizers that, amidst the busy lives people lead and their unwillingness to engage in any sustained community activity, one thing that many are prepared to do is to come out into the countryside and walk. As long as somebody else does the organizing and sets out the trail clearly, all that is required is a couple of hours' time and some good walking boots at best. The question then becomes whether it is possible to use this shared experience as a means of enabling people to engage not only with each other, but also with the landscape, in a different and challenging manner. The project therefore encourages people to take note of their varied experiences as they walk and to do such things as take photographs, record sounds, write poems or short comments, to draw or sculpt either at the time or subsequently. At the end of the project an exhibition of what emerged from this activity was held in the village school.

Events that were planned around the project included the community artists working on site up in the Peaks with a class from the local school, sculpting small figures that then become part of the trail – similar ideas have been successfully tried in other parts of the country such as the Anthony Gormley figures along the Merseyside coastline. A village picnic took place on one part of the trail at the end of August 2008 which included a gentle walk (in thick fog as it happens) to the top of one of the ridges. This was on a Sunday, so all church services were cancelled and the walk and picnic became 'it' for that day. Over 50 people of all ages took part. At the end of October there was a pilgrimage which began further up at the boundary of the County Palatine of Cheshire and Yorkshire but ended six days later at Chelford itself. Then the exhibition in the school took place in late November and drew events to a close.

All of this is highly experimental and may or may not work in the sense of engaging people in their local community, let alone helping them to experience the landscape in a different way. It is risky but may result in unexpected insights and reactions. It is not being run by experts, but by local people for local people who nevertheless share certain values and commitments. I would argue, as the local parish priest now heavily involved and a member of the planning team, that

there was a faith element to this, even though it was a community arts development project, a way of helping people work together in new ways, to create a greater sense of community and to engage with the world around them in a new and creative way. Thus it was very much about enhancing wellbeing but also increasing resilience, and adding value by engaging people beyond the everyday and mundane. One can never anticipate what will evolve as a result of such projects but they do tend to be a practical way of setting processes going and constructing new relationships and possibilities.

Spiritual resilience

In the final part of this chapter I will turn my attention to some of the theoretical issues and resources that are required in order to further this debate. In order to do this in a focused manner I will use the concept of spiritual resilience. As we have seen, the term 'resilience' has recently entered environmental discourse and refers to the capacity of individuals or systems to respond effectively to disturbance and change while still retaining its/their essential functions or values (Hopkins 2008: 54). It seems to possess a greater capacity to support activity and thought that challenges any financially or power-based structures within a wider culture. Happiness and wellbeing are not, in themselves, robust enough to provide a basis for political critique.

What I will argue is that a faith contribution to human wellbeing cannot remain within the confines of an economically constructed framework but must engage with issues of appropriate change and adaptation. As we have seen in the practical examples, there is more fluidity and uncertainty built into the processes that appear to yield a greater sense of wellbeing, and it is those that need to be developed and investigated further. There is both the resilience that is required by individuals in adapting to change through their own personal development, and that of a more collective dimension which is facilitated by community development work and adult education. The projects outlined earlier are essentially fragile and complex, and cannot be guaranteed to yield clear and coherent results. In the context of learning and personal development it has been suggested that a key component of this is to 'hang out in the fog' (Claxton 2001: 16). Outcomes are still unclear and uncertain. We have to be able to tolerate confusion, to dare to wait in a state of incomprehension as we deal with unknowns and the unpredictability of setting up a process that none of us have experienced before. Such is the cost – and the excitement – of creativity.

This refers back to the ideas about truth as circulating reference as identified by Bruno Latour and what he calls Science Studies (Reader 2009b: 199). What this talks about is the process by which new ideas and hypotheses circulate through a range and entanglement of human relationships and structures. Sooner or later much of this does come to rest in a particular location, and people reach the conclusion that such and such is the case and becomes the accepted interpretation – at least for the moment. But there are always dangers in this that truth is reduced to a particular position or set of propositions which then becomes

stabilized in a manner that undermines further critical investigation. Such a process can also be identified in matters of faith. Once one particular party begins to claim that they possess the truth, this becomes a means of exercising power over others and of preventing deeper questioning and research. I am also reminded of one of the requirements of intercultural communicative competence as developed by other colleagues from the educational world, one of which is the capacity to live with ambiguities. One might suggest that both real learning and spiritual resilience require an openness and flexibility to hang around in the fog and not to search for quick fixes and easy resolutions of issues.

The final idea that I find particularly powerful and revealing is that of liminality. 'Limen' is the Latin term which translates as threshold. At what point and in what context do 'blurred encounters' which may occur out in the fog become turning points or thresholds to a new understanding or insight? There are those from within spiritual traditions who perceive the liminal space to be the location for growth and change, the space betwixt and between where God is often leading but where we feel uncomfortable and insecure. The tried and tested has to be left behind and we have to be willing to live with the not knowing and not being in control – the desert is another symbol of this location within spiritual traditions. The temptation is always to return from this scary place too quickly, to retreat from this 'cloud of unknowing' and from the homely and familiar by resorting to quick-fix solutions and interpretations. Few of us know how to stay on the thresholds or to remain in the liminal spaces – though this could be part of the concept of spiritual resilience – the capacity to remain 'out in the fog'!

So here then are some hints and suggestions as to how a notion of spiritual resilience might be the real contribution of faith which take us beyond the sometimes limiting concepts of human wellbeing. This may not be the comfortable conclusion that many had anticipated but it might well provide a basis for critique of some of the more obvious ideas that are around at the moment. It does not reduce wellbeing to being financially or economically better off, or simply to a notion of mental or physical health which presupposes such levels of affluence or access to public care services. It raises questions about our self-understanding and thus about our relationships with each other and the natural world which tend to emerge through current environmental issues and the contribution of a critical scientific process to both areas. It does require a willingness to engage in deeper exploration that perhaps those attempting to secure the future of institutional Christianity may prefer to ignore, but perhaps our calling is to step out into the fog, to go out into the desert and to let go of much that we think we know and believe in order to be present in a place where truth may once again begin to emerge.

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