

# Socialised medicine – does it work and what should Christians think?

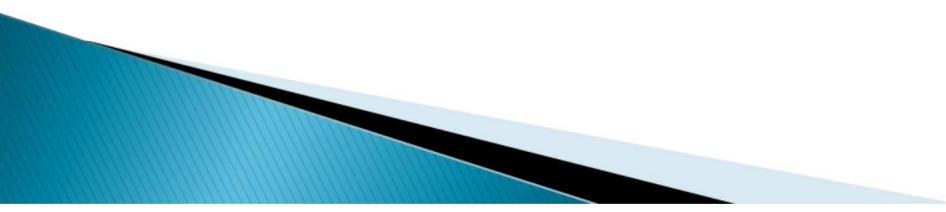
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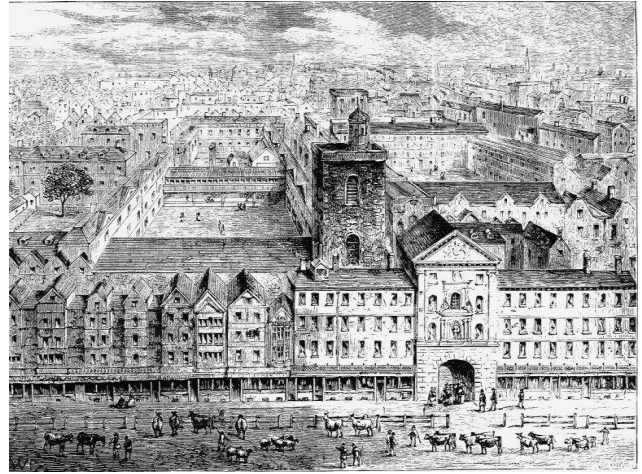
# Different views on socialised medicine in Britain

- ▶ “Slaves were freed, Factory Acts passed, and the NHS and social care established through Christ-liberated courage” – Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury
  - ▶ The founders of the NHS were atheist though there were Christian supporters
  - ▶ At the time, the Catholic Church objected, arguing: “it will be a sad day for England when charity becomes the affair of the state”
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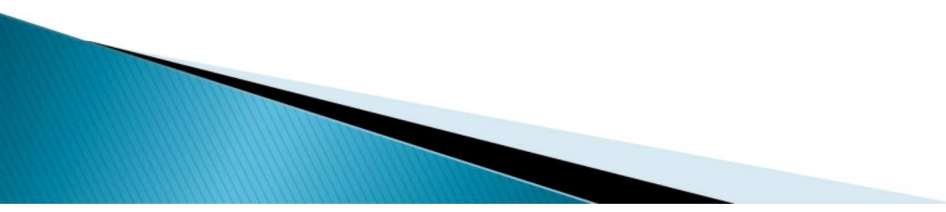
# Traditional Christian role in healthcare

- ▶ To provide healthcare: not to campaign for the state to provide healthcare
- ▶ Pivotal historical record in healthcare





# Protestant denominations post-reformation

- ▶ Jenner, Pasteur, Lister
  - ▶ John Wesley took a course in medicine so that he could help those who had no regular physician
  - ▶ 18<sup>th</sup> century Presbyterian Edinburgh was a great centre of medical progress
  - ▶ Hospitals established by Christian foundations across Europe and the United States
  - ▶ Methodist and other Christian denominations established large numbers of hospitals in nineteenth century US, many of which still exist
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# Christians and healthcare in less developed countries

- ▶ Catholic Church – manages 26 per cent of world's healthcare facilities (world's largest provider)
- ▶ Christian denominations often the major provider of healthcare



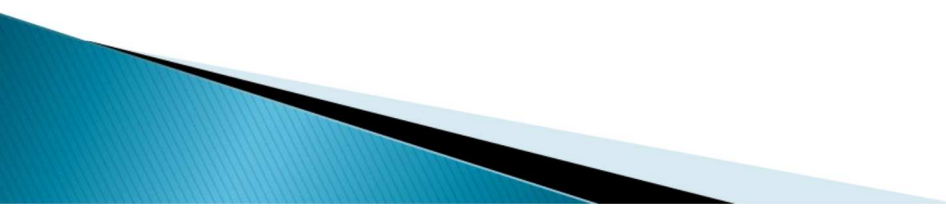


# Healthcare in the modern Western state

1. Totally nationalised (e.g. UK): religious hospitals nationalised and integrated into state-controlled, owned and financed system *or*
  2. Religious hospitals have freedom to operate. State controls the system architecture, but patients can choose religious insurers, hospitals, care homes etc. (e.g. Germany) *or*
  3. Religious institutions and hospitals autonomous, but state takes care of financing healthcare for the poor so the particular and special charitable role of Christian hospitals is displaced (e.g. US)
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# Pressure for socialised medicine in the US

- ▶ Jessi Bohon: “Christians shouldn’t be satisfied with health-care policy that leaves anyone out, especially those who need care most but can afford it least. Christians should support a universal, single-payer system”
  - ▶ Elizabeth Breunig: “I was on NHS [I assume when she studied in Cambridge], it ruled. my epilepsy medicine was free. In the USA, there's an entire network of charities devoted to nothing but helping poor people try to buy their life-saving seizure medicines month to month”
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# US Commonwealth Fund Study

## Health Care System Performance Rankings

	AUS	CAN	FRA	GER	NETH	NZ	NOR	SWE	SWIZ	UK	US
OVERALL RANKING	2	9	10	8	3	4	4	6	6	1	11
Care Process	2	6	9	8	4	3	10	11	7	1	5
Access	4	10	9	2	1	7	5	6	8	3	11
Administrative Efficiency	1	6	11	6	9	2	4	5	8	3	10
Equity	7	9	10	6	2	8	5	3	4	1	11
Health Care Outcomes	1	9	5	8	6	7	3	2	4	10	11

Source: Commonwealth Fund analysis.



The  
Commonwealth  
Fund

E. G. Schneider, D. O. Sarraf, D. Squires, A. Shah, and M. M. Doty, *Mirror, Mirror: How the U.S. Health Care System Compares Internationally at a Time of Radical Change*, The Commonwealth Fund, July 2017.

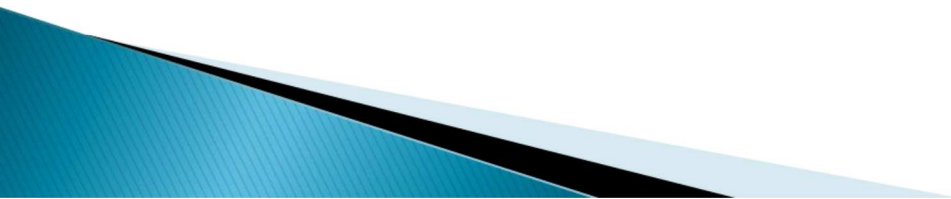


# The reality of socialised medicine (1)

- ▶ ‘The only serious black mark against the NHS was its poor record on keeping people alive’! *The Guardian*

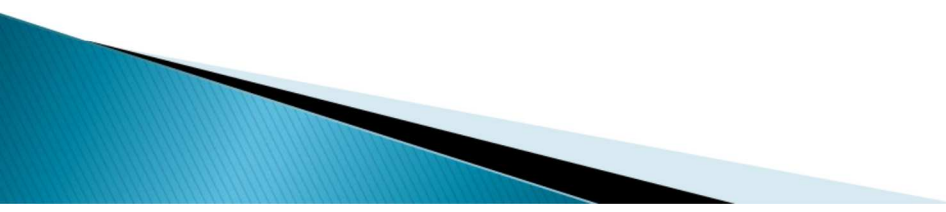
A bit like:

- ▶ ‘The only problem with the coffee machine is its inability to make good coffee’





# The reality of socialised medicine (2)

- ▶ One of the highest rates of avoidable deaths in Western Europe (e.g. from cancer)
  - ▶ Top down planning and rationing – BBC headline from 5<sup>th</sup> July 2017: ‘NHS rationing leaves patients in pain’ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-40485724>
  - ▶ 100,000 operations a year cancelled last minute
  - ▶ 20 per cent of patients do not begin cancer treatment within two months of urgent referral
  - ▶ 3,000 people have been waiting for a year to see a consultant in the UK (non-urgent cases)
  - ▶ Only Poland has fewer doctors and nurses per head
  - ▶ There are substantial and increasing inequalities
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# Catholic–Christian view of healthcare

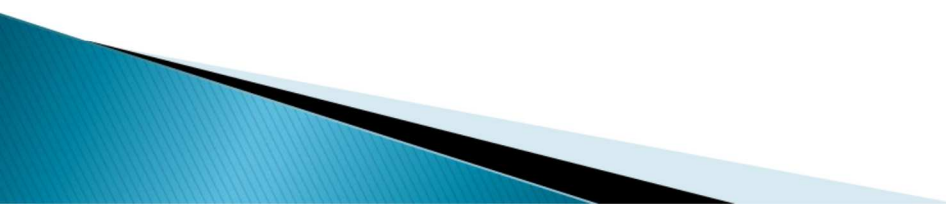
- ▶ Vatican II document

“The demands of the common good...are strictly connected to respect for and the integral promotion of the person and his fundamental rights...[These include] the provision of essential services to all, some of which are at the same time human rights: food, housing, work, education and access to culture, transportation, basic health care...”.

- ▶ Just because something is a human right does not mean that its provision should be the direct responsibility of the state
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# Principle of subsidiarity

- ▶ The state should not do those things that can be done by other organisations within society
  - ▶ Where the state intervenes, it should assist other institutions in society, not take over their functions
  - ▶ Charities, mutual organisations, friendly societies, unions, the family and churches should have the primary role in financing and providing healthcare
  - ▶ The state should assist these organisations
  - ▶ Other Christian theories of the state such as 'sphere sovereignty' would lead to similar conclusions
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# Healthcare and ethics



The  
New  
Bioethics

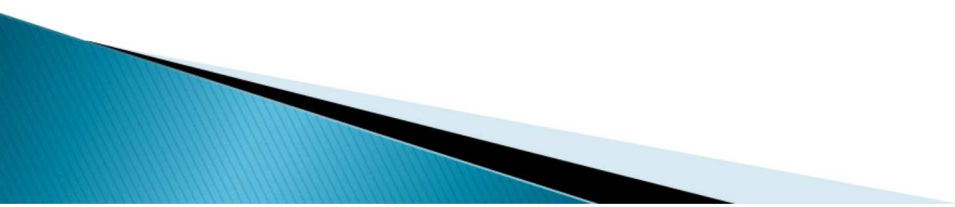


St Peter & St James Hospice  
*Hospice care in the heart of Sussex*



# Conclusion

- ▶ The state may play a role in healthcare – especially to ensure that all receive basic healthcare
- ▶ The state should not entirely provide or finance healthcare
- ▶ Healthcare is/should be intimately bound up with ethics and the practice of Christian charity
- ▶ Health comes from an old-English word meaning “wholeness” – healthcare is about the whole person
- ▶ The state should no more monopolise healthcare than education





# Further Reading

- ▶ Kristian Neimeitz (2016), *Universal Healthcare without the NHS*, Institute of Economic Affairs, London, UK. Can be downloaded free from: <https://iea.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Niemietz-NHS-Interactive.pdf>
  - ▶ James Bartholomew (2014), *The Welfare State We're In, Politics*, London, UK available from: <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Welfare-State-Were-James-Bartholomew/dp/1849544506>
  - ▶ On US healthcare (blog post): *The Pro-Worker Reforms That Could Fix Social Security and Health Care*, <https://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/pro-worker-reforms-could-fix-social-security-health-care>
  - ▶ Blog post *Christian objections to the NHS*: <https://www.conservativehome.com/platform/2013/03/philip-2.html>
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