

Alternatives to the Welfare State

II Thessalonians 3:10: For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.

In my [last article](#), I discussed how the U.S. is a welfare state, what that means, and how it violates the principles of Freedom and Responsibility. However, one might ask how those currently on welfare would survive without the welfare state. It's a valid question. There are many people who cannot live without either their current welfare benefits or some kind of replacement. If those benefits disappeared, what is to stop them from dying? Today we'll discuss the various alternatives to the welfare state that could or would appear in a more free world.

Work

Ephesians 4:28: Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

Many people on welfare benefits don't really need the benefits. I won't say they're lazy, necessarily, because they are just making rational economic decisions given the market distortions of the welfare state. That is, they can get more money by not working, than by working. Or, more by a part time job than a full time job. If the welfare benefits disappeared, these people would likely find gainful employment promptly.

Family

I Timothy 5:8: But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

This is part of the biblical model. People who have family who legitimately can't work should take care of them.

I note that family members are far more qualified than a career bureaucrat to identify genuine need as compared to indolence.

Church

1 John 3:17: But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

The church should be able to cover anyone else who is legitimately in need, and who doesn't have a family to care for them.

Miscellaneous charity

There's no reason you can't help someone out outside your church who isn't related to you. I think this would be much more widespread if taxes were lower and the welfare state didn't exist. I know if I had 30% more of my income, I'd be quicker to help people.

Starvation

Back to the original verse... if you don't work, you don't eat.

As you see, if the government weren't stealing our money to give it to other people who may or may not legitimately need it, some welfare recipients would work for themselves, some would be helped by family or religious or nonreligious organizations, and some just might starve to death from their own laziness. I suspect the last category wouldn't happen at all.

Can you think of any other alternatives to the welfare state?

P.S. I've received requests for action items — things you can do to make a difference, such as ways to contact officials directly. The best place I know of for that is DownsizeDC.org. [Here](#) and [here](#) are forms related to the welfare state that allow you to directly contact your Congressman on particular issues.