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Special Issue on Economics Education

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Editor's Introduction: Christian Economics Instruction

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Most articles that have appeared in *Faith & Economics* over the years have focused on integrative work that combines Christian theology or ethics and economic thinking. Our intended audience is usually professional economists, and the goal is to hone and develop the way that we, as Christians, think about economic questions. Many of our readers, however, are also academics who find much of their vocation in teaching economics. Too often, teaching can be an isolated exercise in which we collaborate too little and receive too little feedback about what we do. This can particularly be true for those trying to think about how to integrate Christian thinking into their economics classes. It can be difficult to do this integration well—in a way that really pushes students to think deeply—because the models we have for that kind of curriculum are hard to find in the standard resources. Sadly, those who have been teaching extraordinary classes at the intersection of economics and Christian theology rarely have an easy way to share their accumulated wisdom with their peers.

Moreover, given the centrality of teaching to the work of so many academic economists, it is notable that many economists spend very little time thinking formally and deeply about how to be more effective, and more faithful, teachers. This is not unique to economists, however. Smith (2018) offers some reasons for this lack of attention throughout the academy, noting that the reward structures set up in academic institutions offer fewer rewards for scholars of teaching than for those who do more traditional research. Moreover, most of us have not been trained to think about teaching in a systematic or philosophical manner, most of us have not studied the scholarly literature on effective teaching methods, and many of us may assume that our own time in the classroom offer enough experience to be a competent teacher. I know that all these things are true of me. Thinking explicitly about a Christian curriculum or pedagogy faces additional barriers, particularly for those in secular institutions or those seeking publication in secular outlets.

As a remedy, this issue of *Faith & Economics* is an attempt to start to build up more resources for those teaching about Christianity and economics, and to collect accounts of how accomplished teachers have thought about their teaching in secular classrooms. The instigator behind this special issue was Paul Oslington, economist, theologian, editorial board member, and a member of the faculty at Alphacrucis College in Australia. He helped encourage and read submissions and he has also contributed a case study describing of one of his classes.

Two Kinds of Christian Economics Teaching

In order to spur thinking, and to introduce the collection we offer in this issue, I think it is helpful to think of two different ways of integrating Christian faith with teaching. These two approaches are not in conflict, and they are not comprehensive. Both approaches are illustrated in this issue. For organizational purposes, we can think of a Christian economics instructor doing two different things: first, they can teach Christian content, and second, they can live and teach in the academy in a Christian way.

The first approach often gets the most attention. The idea is that Christian theology and biblical texts can shed some insight into how we think about economics and what kinds of moral commitments should inform economic behavior and policy. In particular, this literature is the impetus behind books that offer a Christian perspective on economic issues. An instructor might have students read and write about biblical themes relating to economics, or dive into historic Christian debates about debt and usury. Other professors might take a Christian approach to some big ethical questions that economists run into in their work. Given the long history of Christian reflection about economics, there is a lot of great material out there available for instructors to draw upon. The difficulty lies in the fact that it can take a lot of work to tie it into a standard economics curriculum, and economists will often need to do considerable preparation to be able to teach this material well. In our collection in this issue, this approach shows up a little in each of the case studies, but particularly in the case studies by Tatum, Oslington, and Cooper.

In my own teaching, I find it easiest to integrate biblical themes, theology, and big ethical questions in our history of economic thought course, not unlike some of what Schaefer and Tatum describe in this issue. In a class such as this it is natural to examine economic thought in the ancient world, including what we find in the Bible, and then trace major themes through the Roman period and the thinking of the Scholastics. By reaching into this longer history, we are also able to think about different ways of thinking about the morality of economic life. Then, when we start studying contemporary economics, it feels natural to examine Catholic social thought alongside different heterodox schools of economic thought in addition to the standard curriculum. By the end of the semester we have studied economics in the context of big theological and moral questions. As a result, we spend less time on the traditional history of economic thought material but students are much better equipped to think about the way the Church has examined economic questions over time.

The second approach focuses less on the content of classes and, instead, asks: "What does faithfulness look like for a Christian academic?" Particularly for scholars who are not working at a religious institution, the first strategy might be impossible since the institution might rule out explicitly religious course content. Elzinga notes this in the interview included in this issue. Faculty at secular institutions can still think and act in deeply Christian ways, of course, and exhibit a faithful Christian presence both in the classroom and the broader university. It is too easy to develop the impression that academic life has little to do with faith, and that students need not use their minds fully when at Church, nor their hearts when they are studying. It can be life-changing to have a mentor who models the life of a Christian academic, even if the material they teach is not religious in nature at all.

I have only begun to reflect on the way that I teach, or the kind of academic life that I model for my students. I have the conviction, however, that one thing I can offer students is a model of charitable engagement. As my own mentors did for me, I work hard to show students that a wide variety of ideas and people are worth our attention and respect. I do this with our larger political culture in mind, where we usually see people using their intellect to "defeat" an opponent. Without ever ignoring the great mistakes and evils in history, I strive to have students learn why each thinker developed the ideas they did, even if those ideas have little purchase in our understanding of economics today. The area that I hope to invest in is to think more carefully about my pedagogy, and the kind of messages and relationships that are implied by the way that I teach (Smith, 2014).

I should note, finally, that Wilson's contribution to this issue is an interesting case that really fits into both approaches. He advocates innovative course design around themes that will fit into a secular curriculum but which are also deeply motivated by Christian thinking. He provides a number of examples with links to information about his own courses, which should be helpful to those trying to walk that path.

We hope that you will find this issue to be helpful and stimulating, particularly for those readers who find themselves in a position to think deeply about their own teaching.

References

Smith, D. I. (2018). *On Christian Teaching: Practicing Faith in the Classroom*. Eerdmans. ■

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Leading a Senior Capstone Course

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Framing

Framing a senior capstone course forces you to face some basic epistemological and metaphysical questions. Most colleges and universities with such a course seem to use it as a research seminar, a chance to buff students' econometric skills. Though I'm an econometrician, I lead my senior capstone as a history of economic thought seminar.

This makes it a capstone built on a subfield that has virtually died within my own professional lifetime. Even as a graduate student at Michigan—forty years ago!—when I requested a second field in history of thought they had to requisition Wolfgang Stolper from retirement to (personally, individually) teach me, Cambridge-tutorial style. (I was such a child that I had no idea what a privilege this was! I will never forget the joyful kindness (and frequency) with which he said, "Well, no, that's not quite it….")

Why is this field dying? It makes perfect sense if you think of economics as a cumulative science. Chemistry majors don't take a capstone course in alchemy, so why would budding economists study their field's history of ideas? Economics has finally "arrived." Why look around or back?

On the other hand, also during my lifetime, we have learned some of "our" best ideas from colleagues in other fields, especially when our settled consensus needed a challenge. Think of Ostrom, Kahneman, and Tversky, for example. Why is this happening, if we really have little to learn from ideas that are distant from the place we've arrived?

It is partly because doing economics always, fundamentally, means giving an interpretation of human culture. Humans and their cultures are different from, say, chemicals. Christian economists, of all people, should appreciate this. Interpreting culture can benefit from careful organization of a lot of information, so scientific approaches can be very powerful… but we study a reality that is always changing and, when stable, is still mystifying. Humans are charitable yet selfish, rational yet prone to addictions and cults, good at planning yet terrible at evaluating risk, spiritual yet obsessed by sensuality, capable of both great efficiencies and great indulgence, entrepreneurial and curious yet relieved to inhabit tired, counter-productive heuristics. This is all true of all humans, including those who happen to also be economists, so we would be professionally consistent and wise to maintain a healthy self-doubt and openness about any professional consensus at which we have temporarily arrived. Furthermore, we economists are always imperfectly abstracting from this messy, complex, dynamic reality. This combination of fraught abstraction with unstable subject matter can send us down theoretical and empirical rabbit trails that seemed smart at the time but become dead ends from which it is not easy to back out.

If only there were some way to gain a sense of perspective, to recognize when theory is no longer lining up with reality, to develop instincts about finding your way out of that dead end…But there is. If you learn history of economic thought, you have a broader sense of the historically varied tools at your disposal as an economist, a streetwise disposition that economic understanding has not ever progressed in a straight line from ignorance to enlightenment, and a perspective attuned to noticing where, why, and how there is a creative new theoretical/empirical alternative to be explored. In other words, without history of thought your capacity for research is somewhat stunted; a history of thought course is, ironically, an excellent way to buff your econometric skills. (Stolper and Samuelson's famous collaboration seems to have been a lovely instance of the consonance between historical *Virtuosität* and technical *savoir faire*.)

So let the economics major have two or three years of theory, and several years of calculus and stats and econometrics, and a good dose of empirically and theoretically rich modern field courses. But, please, also let the major have one term for gaining some perspective on (and creative distance from) all that presentism in the rest of the major. And let this perspectival semester come as a seminar. By the senior year of college, a student has spent a lot of time developing the mind. They now should also develop their voice, their own voice, their singular and prophetic voice, the voice that will be their gift back to the world. They should be allowed to develop it communally, where it can be formed under the care of others and subject to mutual accountability.

Constructing

In my class (usually about fifteen of us) we sit at a rectangular frame of movable tables, facing each other. We have fixed and mobile whiteboards and laptops. We use a standard history of thought text but supplement it generously (as you shall see). Each student is responsible for organizing and leading several of the term's class sessions. About half the class topics are obligatory—*somebody* will definitely lead us through Mercantilism, Smith, Marx, Marshall, Hayek, and so on. But about half the class topics are developed by the students in consultation with me, choosing areas they would really like to master before leaving college. In this way we have explored together medieval African contributions to economic thought; early and contemporary Islamic economic ideas; Luther's responses to mercantilism; Confucian economics and the Chinese Communist Party; modern feminist economists; the enduring effects of colonial-era Latin American mercantilism; Calvin's advice about usury; Marxism after Marx; Austrian ideas in post-Soviet eastern Europe; contemporary Roman Catholic social teaching…Well, you get the idea.

I lead the first few classes, as students settle in for a new way of doing things. I use those days to explore some Greek/Roman traditions of economic thought, particularly Aristotle's ideas and Alexander's culture war to spread them; we consider some of the ways the Hebrew prophetic tradition (including Jesus) responded to those ideas; we follow this dissonance onward in time—Constantine, the Scholastics, the Reformation, the Black American church, White American Evangelicalism. Teaching at a Christian institution, I can be particularly frank in these conversations but there is no reason that these same topics would not be appropriate and of interest at any academic institution.

After this, the course topics proceed, in the main, chronologically. We have an in-class midterm and final. For each exam, I typically distribute in advance a fairly long list of essay questions, based on our classroom conversations, so students can form their ideas with some forethought; then I choose about six questions for the exam, and they write on three of those. There is also a 2,500-word term-paper assignment that emphasizes historically contextual thinking. Students are also graded on their leadership of/participation in the seminar.

Inhabiting

Each student is responsible for meeting with me at least a week before the class session they will lead. (After the class settles on an outline of course topics, I distribute a calendar of dates with student-leader names and topics included, and I put the names on my Outlook calendar with a one-week lead to remind me who should be setting up a meeting with me.) In our individual office conversations, we talk through the direction they are taking for their class and decide what readings should be assigned. We consider how the leader can craft the essay questions that will be a pre-class assignment to students, preparing them to participate in the conversation. We develop a pedagogy that will work well for their particular topic. I remind them that I am available to do as much teaching as they would like during their class; I usually end up teaching about 10 minutes of each class and participate as a peer in the rest of the conversation as well. As we plan, we aim for diversity of pedagogy: small group conversations and reports back to the whole, competitions, short films, real-time research projects and scavenger hunts, Jeopardy games. We aim for as little lecturing as possible; we've used whatever we can come up with that will challenge and teach, though mainly we want to have a good conversation together.

Because the course is by nature perspectival but improvisational, it is hard to predict how and when worldview issues will arise or how they should be addressed in the moment, but it is certain that they *will* arise. Much of the art of the course comes in addressing them thoughtfully, contextually, concisely, respectfully, and communally.

Because economics is fundamentally an interpretation of human culture, I think that schools of thought in economics bear some parallels with schools of art. For example, some artists do all their work out of a particular school, but it wouldn't make sense to ask a question like "Which is correct, impressionism or cubism?" There is space to appreciate what is good and true and insightful and beautiful and helpful wherever it can be found, and it may be found in different places for different circumstances. Therefore, it is best to listen carefully and sympathetically whenever you encounter a framework that is new to you. Metaphors like this artistic one are helpful for framing the course with students, so they don't endure the term under the burden of trying to identify "the correct option" and repel the others.

This can be a difficult lesson for Christian students (and professors!) to learn, primed as they may be to believe that their insights have come directly and indisputably to their ears from the mouth of God. But in fact the Christian and Hebrew Scriptures significantly underspecify the knowledge that would be necessary for most judgements in economic and political affairs. The Scriptures are not irrelevant; neither are they encyclopedic. And even if this were not the case, the Scriptures are distant culturally, geographically, linguistically, scientifically, temporally, and sometimes theologically, in ways that insert some significant and contingent personal judgements and habits between the words as revealed and our opinions as held. Beware the instinct to speak for God in haste.

I read and grade all the assigned essays—normally two 1-page essays per student per class—and usually return them to students at the class after they were due, with a marginal note or two included. About half these comments are about the content, and about half address writing well. I record these grades in a spreadsheet, sometimes with a brief note about how a particular student is developing through the term. For the first two weeks, I grade the essays but do not record the grades; students are occasionally surprised that they are not aiming high enough, and I want to give them some grace in adjusting their sense of horizons. I drop each student's lowest essay grade of the term, but do not allow any excused absences from essay assignments or late submissions—they are due at the beginning of the class, because they exist to prepare us for the class.

As in all teaching, some of my duty consists of pressing people to attend to the things they do not yet know. Some students come into the course "knowing" that Adam Smith favored steel tariffs and tax cuts at full employment; others know that nobody thought about macroeconomics before Keynes; others know that Marx was a twentieth-century Russian who liked big government. Sometimes I must gently, privately, return an ungraded essay with a "Let's try this one again," occasionally forced to follow up with "because you didn't address the question on the first try." Sometimes students are lax about having a conversation with me in advance of the session they will lead; I try to be firm, and I try to make the conversations valuable to them so they will want to come. Since they are graduating seniors, this often involves looking for ways I could help launch them into the next chapter of life.

They often want me to talk more in class than I do, especially about contemporary politics and economic policy. But I normally resist or redirect. "Well, what do you think Adam Smith and Joan Robinson would have to say about that one? And what do you have to say about it?" In a court, people need to know that the judge is on the side of fairness, being as impartial as possible; in a seminar about ideas, students need to know that I am everybody's professor, and that I desire a class in which students are not necessarily reciting my ideas on their exams. The innate power imbalance in a classroom requires us to behave differently than we might elsewhere, in the name of forestalling intellectual harassment. And the fact is that when a person asks for your opinion, it is often a signal that they would like to have their own opinion heard and taken seriously. It's an opportunity to be present as they form their voice, not necessarily a request that you exercise your own voice.

Since 2016 this approach has become both more important and more difficult. Some students—an increasing number—are less open to thinking and careful research than in the past, more smug, less skilled at conversation, more sure of questionable ideas, less respectful of others, more prone to enlist the power of the leader on their side.

I received a note from a student about a year ago, months after his graduation, by then already serving in a very substantial leadership position. In some ways he had exemplified the profile I just described. During the term he had received from me a returned-for-rewriting essay, after basing his work on a hasty review of his favorite, fevered websites. In his post-graduation note, he wrote: "Your course didn't tell us what to think. It showed us how to think." That's our job.

Appendix: Calvin College Department of Economics and Business Economics 395: Senior Economics Seminar

Professor Kurt C. Schaefer

<u>Course Description</u>

From the college catalog:

395 Economics Seminar (3). F. This seminar course, capstone in both the major and the core, considers the history of economic thought and method during the last two millennia. This involves a careful consideration of major historical schools of thought about economic culture, beginning with the classical civilizations and ending with contemporary approaches to economics. The role of Christian and other religious/philosophical frameworks in the history of economic thought and method is a central theme of the course. Prerequisites: Senior economics major status, biblical foundations I or theological foundations I, Developing a Christian Mind, and philosophical foundations.

From the instructor:

This course is the capstone for the economics major, and also serves as a capstone course in the college core curriculum. It is "the grand tour" of economic theory and method, in seminar format. We will read and consider the best thinking about economics, from the ancient Egyptians, Babylonians and Hebrews through the twenty-first century.

These are our course objectives:

1. An understanding of economic models and theories at a level exceeding current intermediate-level economic theory courses at our peer institutions
2. The ability to articulate key contemporary and historical views of economic institutions and policy, including the rationale for government interventions in markets and the outcomes of such interventions. These contemporary and historical views include the frameworks of mercantilism, classical liberalism, Marxism, Institutionalism, and Austrian economics.
3. The ability to articulate the main Christian perspectives on political economy from the major branches of the Christian tradition, including modern Roman Catholic Social Teaching and Kuyperian Reformed schools of thought.
4. The ability to articulate the ways in which allegiance to the Christian tradition may affect the work of information gathering, evaluation, analysis and policy making in economics.
5. The ability to understand published articles in the professional literature.
6. An enhanced ability to understand the importance of the virtues of charity, justice, vigilance, courage and stewardship to economic thought and analysis.
7. An improved ability to articulate the ways in which these virtues are understood in a variety of Christian traditions.
8. Progress in developing a personal philosophy of practicing the economics profession, and in the ability to express how that philosophy is related to or different from the major strands of the Christian tradition.
9. We also assess the quality of our major (and, to some extent, our success in all these goals) by administering the ETS Major Field

Test for Economics in this course, but this assessment does not affect the grade of students in the class.

As a capstone course in the college core curriculum, the course has additional core-related objectives:

a. Students will demonstrate knowledge of a Christian perspective in a particular area of inquiry, and will be able to articulate the implications of this Christian perspective in a specific arena of life practice.
b. Students will demonstrate the ability to critically analyze an area of life practice or inquiry, demonstrating depth and breadth of knowledge in the particular area and a sensitivity to worldview assumptions.
c. Students will demonstrate knowledge of their own abilities, values, and callings.
d. Students will be able to express themselves clearly and succinctly in writing.
e. Students will be able to express themselves clearly and succinctly orally.

The course has college prerequisites of *Biblical Foundations I* or *Theological Foundations I*, *Developing a Christian Mind*, and *Philosophical Foundations* courses, along with senior economics major status.

Topic Outline and Readings

The course textbooks are **A History of Economic Theory and Method** by Robert B. Ekelund, Jr and Robert F. Hebert (5th edition, 2007, or 6th edition, 2014, Waveland Press Inc.) and, from the library,

Reckoning With Markets: The Role of Moral Reflection in Economics by James Halteman and Edd Noell (2012, Oxford University Press, ISBN 9780199763702).

I will lead our conversations during the first week of class, as we consider ancient economic thought and institutions. (In addition to the textbook chapter, please view this video: https://youtu.be/nlf_ULB26cU) We will all take turns leading the remaining class sessions, according to the schedule we will set during the first week of the class. With an enrollment of 13 students and 39 class sessions (minus the two I lead and the midterm), this allows each student to have responsibility for about three class sessions, with a session or two for each chapter's topic, supplementing our discussions with items from each student's own research. Teams of students may choose to work together across several different class dates. In place of a textbook-chapter topic, readings on a non-textbook topic—with agreement from the instructor well in advance—may form the basis for a class session. In the past, such topics have included feminist economics, Roman Catholic Social Teaching, the economic thought of Calvin's Geneva, development economics, behavioral economics, and others.

The leader of each class session will discuss with the instructor their teaching plan **at least one week prior to the class** and will supply a class essay assignment **at the class meeting prior to the class they will lead**. Each assignment is due **at the beginning** of the class for which it was assigned. The essays should require that all assigned readings are completed, should require academic writing rather than simple personal reflection, and should raise a topic (or topics) that can successfully be addressed with some depth in 2 typewritten pages.

Grading: Exams, Problem Sets, Papers, and Projects

Your grade will measure your progress in meeting the course objectives. The grade will be determined according to this menu:

A midterm exam (Wednesday March 18) and final (Tuesday May 19, 9:00 a.m.) (especially relevant to objectives 1–4, 7, 8, a, b, d)	20% + 20%
Seminar presentations and participation in discussions (especially relevant to objectives 1–8, a–c, e)	20%
Portfolio of essays from daily assignments (especially relevant to objectives 1–4, 6–8, a–d)	20%
Term paper (especially relevant to objectives 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, a, b, d)	20%

The term paper is a 10-page/2,500-word research project, normally growing out of the topics raised in one of the classes led by the author. The paper

- discusses in depth one or more of the major ideas of that class session,

- places the ideas in their historical context by showing how they emerged from prior emphases and led to future trends, and
- compares/contrasts the ideas with those of at least two other schools of thought, at least one of them being some strand of the Christian tradition.

This project should include a clear thesis, a justification of that thesis that draws in part from published sources, and (where appropriate) an acknowledgment of lingering difficulties in the argument.

Papers should refer to and intelligently draw from at least six published sources.

I know that grading can seem arbitrary at times, so here's an indication of what I look for when assigning grades:

A Outstanding responses; sharply focused, insightful generalizations; able to get to the heart of the matter and demonstrate an excellent understanding of the texts; well supported with evidence that is germane to the use; demonstrating an awareness of some complexity to the issue

B Good, solid responses, with valid claims and good textual support; often these essays will be less expansive and less nuanced than the previous category; sometimes the level of discussion will be a bit uneven, with excellent insights interspersed with some fairly obvious commonplaces.

C Adequate, if uneven, responses. These responses will address the topic of the question but will generally offer very broad generalizations and few supporting details. Often these essays will not go beyond the obvious, and may in fact convey a confused or slightly erroneous understanding of the texts.

D/F Inadequate responses, for a variety of reasons. Sometimes the essays simply don't address the question, or else the support is so vague as to indicate a lack of understanding of the material. ■

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A Newbie's Guide to Developing a Question-driven and Humanities-infused Course in Economics*

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Abstract: An economics course is developed that utilizes writings from major thinkers across the ages to explore the question: Can the good life be lived in both moral and material terms? The question-driven course brings economics, philosophy, religion, and classics into dialogue on matters of contemporary importance. This article illustrates how such a course can help students broaden their literacy, develop a wider skill set, as well as navigate moral questions and interdisciplinary issues. It also illustrates how such a course can better serve diverse students and provide a diversity of thoughts, worldviews, and epistemologies.

JEL codes: A12, A13, A22. Keywords: economics education, pedagogy, interdisciplinary studies and literacy

Modern mainstream economics portrays itself as an amoral, positive science. Yet, issues of morality cannot be separated from issues of material well-being and progress. In fact, the moral philosopher Adam Smith is widely understood to be the "father of economics" precisely because he explained how the virtue of rational self-interest could improve material well-being in a free-market economy. Sixty-two years before Smith wrote *The Wealth of Nations,* however, Bernard Mandeville depicted self-love in *The Fable of the Bees* not as a virtue but rather as a vice that nonetheless brings about material progress. This raises the question: Can the good life be lived in both moral and material terms?

This question has been asked through the ages. In Christian scriptures, the call to "Love your neighbor as yourself" is a call to balance

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self-interest with interest for others, and the admonition that one cannot serve both God and mammon speaks to the tension between morality and material progress. Also in contrast to modern mainstream economics' focus on self-interested utility maximizers, Aristotle portrays humans as pursuers of the broader good when he wrote in the first sentence of *Politics* that "everyone always acts in order to obtain that which they think is good." Jewish scripture encourages the pursuit of material well-being, but subject to the constraints of divine law. In this light, Jewish scripture can be seen as a middle path between the rule-based Stoical and the pleasure-focused Epicurean philosophies that came after it. Some later thinkers like John Stuart Mill and John Maynard Keynes recognize the contributions of vices to material progress but are nonetheless optimistic that economic scarcity will eventually give way to plenty and thus allow humanity the opportunity to focus on the good life in both moral and material terms. However, this optimism may be misplaced given the paradox of hedonism. Material progress may lead only to greater desires for goods and services, forever postponing the golden era Mill and Keynes predicted would come once economic needs were met.

The course described in this article is an upper-level economics elective titled "Morality and Material Progress." It was created and designed to help students explore the question as to whether the good life can be lived in both moral and material terms. Here, it is meant to illustrate how economics faculty can help prepare students for the big questions in life that we hope students will explore while in college. It is also meant to illustrate how a question-driven and humanities-infused course might be approached in economics and the value of such a course to the economics curriculum.

The Basis and Structure for the Course

Let me first provide a little background, mostly to show how any economist at almost any institution of higher education could do what I have done in developing this course. My undergraduate education and my present employer are both US liberal arts universities; the former is private, and the latter is public. My doctoral degree comes from a mainstream economics program without any history of economic thought courses of note. Post-tenure, however, I yearned for ways to expand the boundaries of economics in both my teaching and my research. In the process, I came across a call for grant proposals by the US government's National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) for awardees to develop a cross-disciplinary course on an enduring question, a question that has been asked across the ages and that has a plurality of possible answers. The grant also required that the resulting course draw on readings from major thinkers across the ages, stretch the grant recipient beyond previous expertise, and draw students from more than one discipline. These requirements may seem restrictive but they allowed me to envision a course I would not have envisioned without these guardrails in place. Thus, the grant proposal process and ultimately the grant itself, which I was awarded, meaningfully and positively shaped the course described below.

The course explores many of the ways in which Western tradition has answered the question: Can the good life be lived in both moral and material terms? Put another way, the course asks: What connections has Western tradition made between morality, material well-being or progress, and the good life? As Figure 1 suggests, the relationships between these three could be positive, negative, or non-existent. I often use this figure for illustration in the course as the class discusses and compares major thinkers from across the ages, to help students see the diversity of answers within Western tradition.

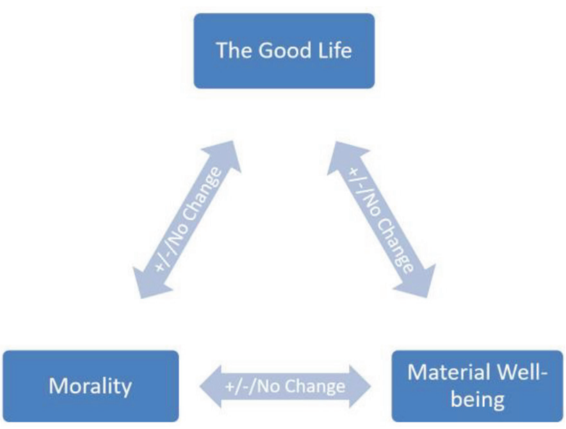

Figure 1: Potential Relationships between Morality, Material Well-being, and the Good Life

The texts chosen for students to read, analyze, and discuss included selections ranging from ancient Greek philosophy, Jewish and Christian scriptures, and Patristic writings to classical and modern schools of economic thought. The texts were all chosen because they reflected on how morality and material progress interact to influence human welfare from a variety of perspectives within the Western tradition. The course approached these texts chronologically and allowed the class to focus on the diversity of ideas even within a group of related thinkers. For example, in the Hebrew Bible or Christian Old Testament, we explored, among other issues, the payout-for-moral-living argument found in Deuteronomy 7:12–16 and 28:1–13 against the suggestions of randomness of earthly outcomes found in Ecclesiastes 8:14 and the Book of Job.

Students read some texts in their entirety but were only required to read selected chapters or passages in others. In short, students were asked to read enough from a source to have proper context but not so much that the focus of the course was lost. The course also utilizes a book that helps frame the course, specifically Tomáš Sedláček's *Economics of Good and Evil: The Quest for Economic Meaning from Gilgamesh to Wall Street* (2013), as well as a few commentaries to provide the students with further context.

The course has been taught four times thus far, all in a seminar format and with 17 students on average in each class. Student participation was actively assessed and constituted 25% of the course grade. For most readings, students were provided with questions beforehand to help guide their studies in preparation for class discussions. Approximately 170 questions were provided in total. Students reported finding these questions beneficial, and they appreciated that the questions varied from one set of readings to another. Based on this preparation, students had responsibilities in each class meeting for explaining and critically evaluating the assigned readings as well as for making connections to other readings in the course.

Student learning was facilitated and assessed not only through class discussion, but also through five essay assignments, each worth 15% of the course grade. Three of the essay assignments asked students to do the following:

(1) Identify the positions of some major thinkers from across the ages regarding the relationship between morality, material well-being, and the good life;

(2) Provide evidence of these positions directly from the writings of these thinkers; and

(3) Briefly reflect on how these writings affect how the students might live their lives.

For the fourth, interview-based essay, students were asked to converse with someone they deemed unlike themselves on the course's core question and to reflect on why and how their and their interviewee's answers differed, and which major thinker(s) each view best reflects. Then, for the fifth, policy-oriented essay, students were asked to utilize sources from this course and beyond to answer the following questions: Can society be structured differently to better facilitate the good life? If so, how might it be structured? If not, why not? These are scaffolded writing assignments in that the fourth and fifth essays build upon the first three, which in turn depended on the readings and discussions that preceded them. To facilitate students learning from each other beyond regular class discussions, not only did the students peer review first drafts of each other's essays but, also, they briefly summarized the points of their first four essays and formally presented their policy-oriented essays in the class meetings in which the essays were due.

In terms of learning objectives, the course seeks to help students do the following:

- Identify the positions of some major thinkers from across the ages regarding the relationship between morality, material well-being, and the good life as a *foundational-knowledge* goal.
- Effectively read historical texts for useful insights into matters of contemporary importance as an *application* goal.
- Bring philosophy, religion, classics, and economics into dialogue on matters of contemporary importance as an *integration* goal.
- Become aware of and/or develop one's own ethical positions regarding issues of material progress as the first *human-dimension* goal.
- Understand the ethical positions of others regarding issues of material progress as the second *human-dimension* goal.
- Value the usefulness of the humanities in general and the study of economics in particular as a *caring* goal.
- Better navigate the complexities of multidisciplinary problem-solving as a *learning-how-to-learn* goal.

I developed these learning objectives and the course assignments that map to them by following an integrated course design approach set forth in the second edition of L. Dee Fink's *Creating Significant Learning Experiences: An Integrated Approach to Designing College Courses* (2013). In fact, the learning objectives of this course cover Fink's full taxonomy of significant learning, as illustrated in Figure 2. The previously described prompts for the first four essays were designed to assess students' progress toward the taxonomy's significant learning goals related to *foundational knowledge*, *application*, and the *human dimension*. The prompt for the final essay, also as previously described, was designed to assess student progress toward the *application*, *integration*, and *learning-how-to-learn* goals provided in the above list of learning objectives.

The listed learning objectives are obviously specific to the course described here and would not be entirely appropriate for another course. However, Fink's approach to integrated course design certainly would be broadly applicable. A key to this process is not to let the creation of learning objectives be an afterthought in course design. The learning objectives should be a lens through which one thinks about the course design at every step of the process and will likely evolve through the course-design process. Moreover, these learning objectives should focus not only on content to cover but, also, on competencies to build, as the ones above illustrate.

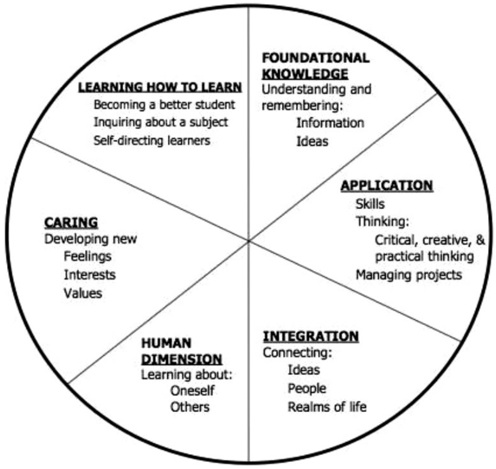

Figure 2: Taxonomy of Significant Learning
Source: Fink (2013), p.35.

Allgood and Bayer (2016, 2017) provide more recommendations and examples of learning objectives for economics courses. The later paper also highlights how slow economics instructors have been to adopt best practices in the creation of learning objectives. In their 2015–16 sample of introductory courses, Allgood and Bayer find that only 64.3% of economics syllabi mention "outcomes" or "objectives," compared to 92.9% in biology. Just as disconcerting, 35.7% of the economics sample had "well-written" learning objectives, compared to 85.7% for biology. Economics syllabi were more likely to describe courses with topic lists or to offer vague advice compared to their counterparts in biology (2017, p. 661). It might be too easy to proceed on autopilot, to not really think deeply about our course learning objectives or their connections to the course content and assignment, in standard textbook-based courses. If my experience is any indicator, though, developing a question-driven course from scratch like the one described here could help instructors hone their skills in developing learning objectives not only for the course being developed but also for their wider portfolio of courses.

The Place and Value of the Course in the Curriculum

The course described here is a junior-level elective in economics. For the first two of its four iterations, it was also cross-listed with philosophy and served as an elective course in religious studies. Students were drawn to the course from a wide range of majors, including anthropology, history, environmental studies, international studies, management, mathematics, sociology, and statistics. Such a mix of students contributed well to the depth and breadth of the class discussions and gave economics students wider context and understanding. Given the nature of the course, it would serve particularly well as an alternative to a standard history of economic thought course or as part of a philosophy, politics, and economics (PPE) program, as can be found in more than 50 universities in the United States and in more than 150 universities worldwide ("Philosophy, Politics, and Economics," 2021).

The history of economic thought has been de-emphasized in the economics curriculum in the United States and United Kingdom in the last few decades (Blaug, 2001, p. 145). Yet, such courses are often "where students typically encounter ethical dialogue behind current mainstream economics" (Stapleford, 2000, p. 79). A course like the one described here can provide not only history of thought and an understanding of the ethical underpinnings of the discipline, but also much needed interdisciplinarity, diversity, and emphasis on discussion and writing to the curriculum.

Standard courses in economics may not be conducive to the breadth of knowledge and skills we want students to learn. Wight (2013) argues that the way economics is often portrayed in the classroom—"as engineering, with non-controversial goals and methods that yield the 'right' answers to allocation questions"—is "antithetical to critical thinking" (pp. 201–202). In the same volume, Goldsmith and Casey (2013) point to research that shows "interdisciplinary instruction [to be] an effective way to engage students and to help them develop knowledge, insights, problem-solving skills, self-confidence, self-efficacy, and a passion for learning" (p. 235).

While Goldsmith and Casey (2013) note that "the delivery of interdisciplinary learning can be *discipline neutral or hierarchical*," they contend that "given the importance of formal modeling to economic thinking, a hierarchical approach, with economics as the jumping off point, is likely ideal for most economics educators" (p. 236). Although that may be the case for educators, it may not be the case for students. Certainly, for all the benefits of models and their applications to economics pedagogy, models can also be constraining, both in terms of content and students served. A relatively discipline-neutral course such as the one described here can provide a fairly blank canvas and freedom to focus on material in new, less model-driven ways. Perhaps, to help students appreciate what economics offers and what economists value and why, a more pluralistic, discipline-neutral approach may be needed?

A blank canvas can seem daunting, however. By finding and focusing on one core question, a sketch for the course may more readily take shape. In this particular course, the chosen question focused the class on the relationship between morality, material well-being/progress, and the good life. The plurality of plausible answers to the core question of the course supports open inquiry and the development of critical thinking and moral reasoning skills. Students can connect the positive to the normative and even explore the big questions of life that we hope students will wrestle with while at university.

The standard economics curriculum rarely considers the normative explicitly with the positive, often misses opportunities to be truly interdisciplinary, and provides students too few opportunities to build moral reasoning skills. As an example of the latter, Jones *et al.* (2009) finds that economics majors perceive their major to be less effective in building moral reasoning skills than other liberal arts skills. In particular, 22% of economics majors report their major to be highly successful in building moral reasoning skills, compared to 61% for critical thinking skills (p. 203). In the case of this course, however, an anonymous student evaluator writes the following, consistent with other students' feedback:

> The course helped me recognize that economics has been and still is very embedded in ideas of morality and that these ideas should be presented and discussed. I was very aware that economics likes to be more concerned with what is rather than what should be. However, I honestly did not recognize that the "what should be" nonetheless lies behind modern economic thinking and pronouncements, but now it lies often unacknowledged and unassessed. Economics students would gain a more comprehensive perspective from (earlier) exposure to the value-based characteristics of economics discussed in this course.

Although the readings covered in this course fall completely within the Western tradition, the course is nonetheless inclusive of a diversity of students, thoughts, worldviews, and epistemologies. By its very design, a question-driven and humanities-infused economics course emphasizes a diversity of answers and diverse ways of knowing answers to questions from the course. While the course is ordered chronologically, the various thinkers within it are given equal footing in intertextual engagement. The economics that students encounter in their other coursework is not represented as a categorical departure from other historical thought. It is not closer to the truth by virtue of its contemporary positioning and methodology, at least for questions of normative and moral concern. Instead, the stature of modern economics, as the singular eventuality of this line of inquiry, is called into question. In its place is an acknowledgement that these 'thinkers', historical and modern, are part of a unified pursuit towards the truth of the matter: all making their own authentic attempts and contributions to answering the big questions that have stayed with humanity over the millennia.

Students are encouraged to contemplate their own paths towards the answers to these questions, and to look for inspiration wherever it may be drawn. Even with familiar topics such as a student's own political economy and religion, careful historical and interdisciplinary analysis can highlight differences between their own preconceived understandings and the fuller picture that originates from a rigorous textual reading. One might argue that students would benefit from exposure in the course to a wider set of traditions. However, this risks the course being too much of a survey to have any meaningful depth. A well-designed course should nonetheless prepare students through the methodologies it introduces to explore and answer questions in whatever tradition they choose.

In part to help serve a diverse set of students, the course employs "active learning" practices and modes of assessment that complement those found in the typical economics curriculum, including structured discussions and scaffolded writing assignments. Unfortunately, "chalk and talk" is still the dominant teaching method and "writing assignments remain relatively rare" in undergraduate economics courses (Watts & Schaur, 2011, pp. 297, 304).

Of course, not all writing assignments are equal. Some add more to student understanding and skill building than others do. Students find writing projects to be meaningful when they

> are invited to: tap into the power of personal connection, immerse themselves in what they are thinking, writing, and researching, experience what they are writing as applicable and relevant to the real world, and imagine their future selves. . . . Faculty who gave writing assignments that students found meaningful often deliberately built these qualities into their teaching and curriculum. (Eodice *et al.*, 2017)

A question-driven and humanities-infused economics course more readily lends itself to meaningful writing assignments than the typical economics course does, while providing economic content and complementing the existing curriculum.

The best way to complement the knowledge and skills that students are building in the economics curriculum may not be to alter standard courses but, instead, to step outside the box and develop a question-driven course from scratch. Such a course might also better meet the American Economic Association's best practices for working with students (Bayer *et al.*, 2019).

Stretching versus Overstretching

Benefits of a question-driven and humanities-infused course accrue not only to the students but also to the instructor. As John Stuart Mill writes: "a person is not likely to be a good political economist, who is nothing else" (1979, p. 306). However, comparative advantage is not being ignored here. Rather, a well-determined core question for the course can help the instructor find and explore synergies between teaching and scholarship. Instructors can examine different perspectives on questions central to their scholarship in ways that a more disciplinary survey course might not.

Despite possible synergies, however, an investment in professional development will likely be needed. True interdisciplinarity can be difficult as we are primarily trained disciplinarily. A generous book budget may be essential for supplementing disciplinary knowledge with interdisciplinary understanding. Also, it is worth identifying faculty at one's university who have some expertise in the discipline one expects to cross, in order to ask them questions and solicit their feedback as needed.

Identification of a suitable framing book for the course is a crucial early step in building a question-driven and humanities-infused course, especially when the instructor's expertise is being stretched beyond an initial comfort zone. For the course described here, Tomáš Sedláček's *Economics of Good and Evil: The Quest for Economic Meaning from Gilgamesh to Wall Street* was found to be an excellent framing book. Though the book does not seek to answer the core question of the course, it provided the instructor with valuable leads on primary and other sources and the students with important context and connections between the historic texts they are asked to read. Since Sedlaček is an economist and is also well-versed in classics, religion, and philosophy, his book can be viewed as a means of translating the ideas of one discipline to another. At any rate, the book helped narrow down the vast and somewhat overwhelming set of possible sources to examine for inclusion in such a course to something more manageable.

Pressure to overstretch may come not only from the potential interdisciplinary nature of the course but also from an internal or external sense of what a course ought to include or from your university who might see you now as a natural candidate to teach more general education courses. It is important to know one's limits, though. In the case of this particular course, I found myself to be capable with some targeted professional development to lead students in an exploration of the course's core question in the context of the Western tradition, but unprepared to substantially expand it to other traditions. By limiting the scope of the course, students can make connections to familiar areas and learn methodologies that would be useful for a host of questions and traditions. Additionally, the course allows students to see the plurality of plausible answers to big questions within the Western tradition, including those answers that may be at odds with the answers provided by modern economics.

Stretching, but not overstretching, can allow for greater synergies between teaching and research. Courses like the one described here are appropriate and useful not only for those who have fields of expertise in the history of economic thought but also for those of us without such expertise who want to think about our own fields and scholarship from different angles. It is a balancing act: stretching out from one's expertise can ignite creativity and the development of new ideas, while overstretching might frustrate or complicate that process.

The stretching, particularly when it arises from the move from seemingly settled disciplinary matters to more unsettled interdisciplinary ones, benefits students as well. When students actively participate in topics where no consensus exists or where the consensus is still forming, they tackle the issues for themselves, and their own curiosities, passions and agency may expand. It should be no surprise, then, that a majority of my student research assistants in recent years has come through their taking this course, finding the material worthwhile, and demonstrating their interests and capabilities in this area of scholarship.

The Literature through Economists' Eyes

Although many students at my university and elsewhere have previously been exposed to the historic thinkers included in the course readings, most have not experienced the material through the lens of economics or under the tutelage of an economist. This, together with the course's focus on a core question, yields something unique not only in the economics curriculum but also in the wider university curriculum. Accordingly, it is worth highlighting some of the ways in which economics can be explored in major historical works, as exemplified in this course on morality and material progress and the associated reading list found in the Appendix.

The course proceeds chronologically through the writings of some major historical thinkers in the Western tradition, beginning with the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, the oldest known piece of fictional literature. Through selected passages of *Gilgamesh*, the course explores humans and nature as more than just inputs of labor and land, respectively, as well as the business and policy implications thereof. Additionally, *Gilgamesh* allows students to explore whether efforts toward economic progress can get in the way of other human desires and needs and vice versa.

The course then turns to the Hebrew Bible by examining the different emphases that Deuteronomy and Psalms have relative to the Book of Job regarding the relationship between morality and material progress. However, this is not the only issue the course considers regarding the Hebrew Bible. The book is rich in material relevant to economics generally and to this course specifically. Based on Genesis, for example, the course contemplates humans as innovators and stewards. Utilizing the Book of Job, it examines living in a world of imperfect information. From Leviticus, it identifies limits that may be placed on economic activity for the well-being of the community, as well as their rationale. With Psalms and other books of the Hebrew Bible, it considers whether Scripture provides a call to maximize utility subject to the constraints of the biblical law. Here, as is the case elsewhere in the course, students are encouraged to assess where there may be points of divergence between modern economic and historical thought, and they are able to approach important issues from a perspective in which economic priors are not taken as a given. In this particular case, utility maximization can be viewed as being subject not only to budget and resource constraints, as is typical in economics, but also to moral constraints, which is fairly atypical in economic analysis and discourse, though no less important.

Even the ancient Greeks contributed to class discussions on utility maximization. Aristotle was interpreted as advocating for the maximization of good, where utility might be a subset or by-product of the good one does. However, this was not the only contribution the ancient Greeks made to the course. One contribution makes explicit an underlying theme in this course regarding epistemologies, namely that there are diverse ways of knowing. Facilitated by chapters in Sedláček's book and Plato's *Republic*, the class explores: Who bears truth? Poets? Philosophers? Theologians? Scientists?

The coverage of the ancient Greeks culminates with Plato's *Gorgias*, which details an imagined debate between Plato's famous teacher Socrates and another character named Callicles. Among other issues, *Gorgias* explores how desires and one's response to them through self-restraint or self-indulgence influence the good life. This reading is the most direct in its discussions of morality, even emphasizing—to the benefit of this course—the value of moral education.

Modern mainstream economics focuses on the material aspects of our lives and the role that self-interest plays in material decisions. The course utilizes New Testament writings to allow students to explore these topics from a new perspective. Regarding the latter, Mark 12:31's call to "love your neighbor as yourself" leads students to debate the appropriate balance between self-interest and other-interest in achieving the good life. Regardless of their faith background, however, many of the students—quite interestingly—come to the course with a presumption that Christianity calls its followers to an ascetic life, to deny oneself now in order to have riches in heaven. Following a survey of the relevant scripture, however, students generally arrive at a more nuanced understanding: material goods can contribute to the good life, but the nature of one's relationship to those goods is what matters. This section of the course usually ends with a discussion of whether capitalism or socialism can find foundations in Christian scripture, a matter that has been the subject of significant historical debate.

Lesser known to most students, Patristic writers are introduced next in the course. Selections from the writings of Clement of Alexandria, Basil the Great, John Chrysostom, and Augustine of Hippo allow students to explore the role of economic inequality in limiting the good life and of charity as a possible solution to this problem. The vastly different interpretations of scriptures among these Patristic writers help students see multiple perspectives as to the causes and consequences of economic inequality. Helen Rhee's book, *Wealth and Poverty in Early Christianity*, provides an excellent introduction to and translations of these writers. Chapters from Barry Gordon's *The Economic Problem in Biblical and Patristic Thought* provide the students with additional context and analysis. Though the question Gordon explores is not the same as the question of this course, he does examine how various biblical and Patristic writers offer different solutions to the problem of economic scarcity, or having enough, in or through their moral frameworks.

The inclusion of the Patristic writers fills an important gap in this course and the economics curriculum more generally. Economic inequality receives little attention in many economics textbooks but is a topic in which students show interest and believe to be important. For instance, in a poll of more than 4,400 introductory economics students on their first day of class, inequality was the dominant answer to the question: "What is the most pressing problem economists should be addressing?" (Bowles & Carlin, 2020, p. 177). While many economics textbooks have failed to catch up with what the economic profession itself has learned about economic inequality in the last two decades, a question-driven and humanities-infused course can easily be designed to yield not only a contemporary economic understanding of inequality but also an exploration of various normative positions on inequality. The course described here emphasized the latter, but it would not be difficult to add content to supplement ethical considerations of inequality with contemporary economic insights.

Following the Patristics, students are provided with an "interlude illustrating cross-disciplinary scholarship in economics and theology." The purpose of this interlude is threefold. First, the assigned readings and associated class discussions were especially useful for resetting the course and for transitioning from our coverage of religious writings to Enlightenment thinkers, since one of the readings examines the separation of economics and theology in the Enlightenment era. Second, as articles of scholarship, such readings can help students see how economists are relating to other disciplines. This may be particularly important for recruiting and retaining students who have an interest in fields with affinities to economics or students who value diverse ways of knowing a subject. Third, and quite frankly, such readings can help the instructor contemplate and develop synergies between his or her own teaching and research. In fact, this should be a criterion for creating a question-driven course. Unconstrained by the norms of traditional courses, instructors can and should choose the overarching question and supporting materials that would generate abundant synergies between their teaching and research. As noted in the previous section, this benefits both the instructor and the students.

The remainder of the course turns to Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment thinkers such as Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill, John

Maynard Keynes, and Gary Becker. These thinkers are typically covered in traditional history of economic thought courses, but not in the same way or with the same emphases as will be described below. Bernard Mandeville's satirical poem *The Grumbling Hive: or Knaves Turn'd Honest* is introduced first so that students may contemplate whether or to what degree vice contributes to the general welfare as Mandeville's poem suggests, or self-interest as a virtue contributes to the general welfare as Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* contends. With Figure 1 in mind, students enjoy debating how morality might positively or negatively affect material progress and the good life that might come from an improvement in the general welfare. Through passages in Sedláček's book, students are also introduced to Smith's other major work, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. The students consequently grapple with the famous Adam Smith problem, where Smith seems to contradict himself in the two books regarding self-interest and sympathy. For example, students try to resolve this contradiction by exploring whether human motives might be different in one sector such as business than they are in another such as in politics or personal affairs.

The next thinker, Thomas Malthus, illustrates how a question-driven and humanities-infused economics course can be fairly versatile and responsive to the needs and context of the class. Malthus' writings were added in the fourth iteration of the course, primarily in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Chapters from the first edition of his *An Essay on the Principle of Population* lend themselves well to a discussion of economic suffering. Paul Oslington's 2019 article "God and the problem of economic suffering" provides the students with context for considering Malthus as well as Adam Smith on this matter. As Oslington notes: "how we think about economic suffering matters for our actions." Indeed, it is not hard to use these readings to lead students in a discussion of how one's views on, say, human perfectibility can influence one's thinking on and approach to economic policy. This may also be the first place in the course where students contemplate whether material stagnation or decline could nonetheless still contribute to the good life in as much as it spurs human activity, creativity, and moral development.

In some ways, the next two thinkers, John Stuart Mill and John Maynard Keynes, demonstrate the most complex relationship between morality, material progress, and the good life discussed in the course. Like their intellectual heirs in modern mainstream economics, both Mill and Keynes expected continued material progress and improvements in human well-being to follow. What students grapple with, though, particularly with Keynes, is the potential feedback loop of morality. Might greed and other vices yield the material progress that can facilitate the good life so that we can then turn our attention to our moral development and to other facets of our lives that we may value, like art and leisure? Students ponder whether we will ever reach that state of being if we are never satiated materially as Mill and Keynes presumed we would be once our absolute needs have been met.

Whatever role morality may play in the good life, modern mainstream economics has downplayed its importance by focusing on the role of utility maximization in decision making for economic and non-economic questions alike. Nobel-prize winning economist Gary Becker, who pioneered this approach in examining such matters as marriage, childbearing, crime, discrimination, and religion, is held up as a standard-bearer for this approach in the course as he is elsewhere. To show a bit of the diversity even with modern economics, however, Gary Becker is not the only modern economist included at this point in the course. Writings by Nobel-prize winning economist Amartya Sen were introduced to explore how material progress might contribute to the good life through the expansions of human capabilities, agency, and freedom. The course also utilizes a reading from arguably the most Humanities-influenced modern economist: Deirdre McCloskey. Whereas Sen's work helps students contemplate an entirely new channel through which material well-being and progress can affect the good life, McCloskey's work yields a new perspective for students as to how material progress can affect morality. Her full-throated case for capitalism aiding rather than hindering moral development suggests a direction and degree of causality that some students have not previously considered.

Even before the class reads from McCloskey (2006), students who were self-identified skeptics of markets and capitalism—often from the ranks of non-economics majors in the course—expressed more appreciation for them as the course unfolded. Likewise, students who initially were enthusiastic about free-market capitalism seemed to better recognize and appreciate the nuances, pitfalls, and complexities of it by the end of the course. I have not heard such expressions in more standard economics courses I teach, nor do I believe they would be heard in courses whose primary emphases herald either the triumphs or the pitfalls of capitalism. Students seem to appreciate coming to these conclusions themselves.

The course closes with a 2014 article by Dani Rodrik with the title "When ideas trump interests: Preferences, worldviews, and policy innovations." For students who may believe, out of their cynicism or economic training, that vested interests determine political outcomes, the article serves to highlight that ideas matter. Students seem more willing to accept his argument when their own ideas have been shaped by those of the major thinkers they have read in the course.

As the course readings described here illustrate, it is easier to assess which readings are relevant in a question-driven course than is likely to be the case in more survey-oriented general-education humanities or traditional history of economic thought courses. With a question-driven and humanities-infused course, it is also easier for students to make connections not just between the material of the course but also to their broader knowledge both within and outside economics.

The Contributions to and from Broader Literacy

Numerous arguments can be made for a question-driven and humanities-infused course in economics. As Goldsmith and Casey (2013) note, social learning theorists and education policy researchers find that interdisciplinary inquiry yields "significant learning" (p. 235). Also, by its very nature, a humanities-infused course allows students to gain literacy in such fields as classics, philosophy, and theology. The marginal benefit may be especially high when the students have either little knowledge or the complementary knowledge they do have was learned in more siloed disciplinary courses. In such cases, an abundant number of connections can be made between what students have learned in economics and the wider literature. They may even value the knowledge from these fields more as these connections are made. Furthermore, well-chosen texts from the humanities can aid in economic learning in ways that traditional economic approaches may not. In what follows in this section, the focus will be on what might be the most atypical set of writing found in the above-described course relative to other economic courses, namely religious texts.

Not only may religious texts be particularly well suited for inclusion in humanities-infused and question-driven economics courses: they may also present some pitfalls as well. Religious texts speak on a wide range of economic topics, ranging from production and distribution of goods, work and leisure, borrowing and lending, wealth and poverty, stewardship of resources, property rights and other institutional arrangements to relationships within and between groups. As Barrera (2003) notes for the religiously affiliated university:

> a course on Economics and Religious Thought has manifold benefits: it illustrates an interdisciplinary approach to economic education, it provides a venue for continuing and deepening further such scholarship and interest within these theological circles, and it preserves the unique contribution of these religious traditions to the pluralistic conversation in the public square. (2003, p. 52)

As Stapleford (2000) also suggests, such inclusion avoids compartmentalization, allowing the course to speak and teach to and about the whole person.

The benefits of the use of religious texts in economics courses extend beyond religiously affiliated universities to secular universities like mine. In discussions and papers, some students in the course self-identify their religious beliefs, even though none is asked to do so. Based on the students' engagement and feedback, both formally and informally, the following has been observed: Students with beliefs in the faith tradition being discussed have found the course beneficial not only to their intellectual development but also to their spiritual development. Students who self-identify as agnostic, atheist, or of other faith traditions or who do not self-identify also appreciated and valued the religious texts as tools in intellectual inquiry. They grow in their appreciation, understanding, and empathy for the role of religion in other people's lives and in society more generally as the course progresses.

Stephen Prothero's 2008 book, *Religious Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know—And Doesn't*, finds that most Americans are illiterate regarding basic facts of religion, even their own. Though my students are bright and well read, their religious literacy was not strong coming into the course either. Over the course of the semester, they did learn some basic facts such as what types of books make up the Hebrew Bible, who the Apostle Paul was, and how the Bible is structured by chapter and verse. However, the course focus was on deeper understanding, and the lack of basic religious literacy did not hamper that.

Whatever students' backgrounds, they were asked to engage with what the text said through deep reading, through dialogue with their peers and instructor, and through their assignments. Directly and with supplementary readings, I provided minimally sufficient context, and I would answer whatever questions they had. From all indications, however, it was the question-driven structure of the course that facilitated the students going deeper with the material, despite their limited initial knowledge. The focus on inquiry and discovery also helped avoid the divisiveness one might have expected in discussions of religions where beliefs can be strongly held and passions can be stirred.

An obvious danger of a course requiring deep, but limited reading of scripture, especially for those with low levels of religious literacy, is a misreading of what the scripture, missing what scripture would suggests if read in a wider context, as well as a risk of discounting the sacredness and ultimate value of the scripture to the religion. I mitigate this in part by making sure I draw from a variety of biblical books and by being thorough with some. For instance, almost the entirety of the Book of Job is included in the course, but this reading is enriched by additional passages from Deuteronomy, Psalms, and Ecclesiastes so that students will not succumb to pat answers regarding the story described in Job. The same is done with New Testament scripture. This is part of an interesting balancing act I face throughout the course, where I want students to discover, use, and value a variety of major texts to help them think about important life questions without them falling into a nihilist paralysis from the plurality of possibilities that no answers can be found for them in their lives. My concern may nonetheless either be misplaced or manifest itself constructively. Though some students come into the course with fairly nihilistic perspectives, student responses showed no evidence of them becoming more nihilist as the course progressed. In fact, some students report feeling better grounded in their beliefs, whether they changed or not over the course of the semester.

I do sometimes worry, without evidence thus far, that non-religious students will be offended by the use of scripture, or religious students by the particular ways that scriptures are used. However, the risk seems low relative to the benefits of exposing students to new perspectives and novel approaches. Perhaps an additional bonus for religious students is in discovering applications of their own faith on issues of contemporary concern for them and in finding space for themselves within the university. In this way, the course teaches to the whole student without being prescriptive or doctrinal. Religious or not, they leave the course with better tools for continued discovery on their own.

Student Reception

If the course described here is any indication, student reception to question-driven and humanities-infused courses has been quite positive. Based on my university's official and anonymous course evaluation forms, students rated the course and instructor higher in every category evaluated than the department, division, and university averages for three of the four iterations of the course. For the other iteration, specifically the third one, the ratings were in line with averages for the department, division, and university. These results are not simply due to my general proclivities as a teacher: student ratings were also higher in every category in comparison with the averages of all the courses I have taught over a range of relevant years.

I also provided students in the second and third iterations of the course with supplementary course feedback forms they could complete anonymously. Descriptive statistics for the numerical results are provided in Table 1. According to these results, students perceived they were achieving the course learning objectives, with averages of at least 4.19 on a scale of 1 to 5 for each objective. In particular, a majority of the students indicated 5 on the scale for achieving such objectives as identifying the positions of major thinkers; bringing philosophy, religion, classics, and economics into dialogue on matters of contemporary importance; becoming aware of and/or developing one's own ethical positions; and valuing the usefulness of the humanities in general and in the study of economics in particular.

Consistent with other feedback, one student wrote: "I worked harder in this class (and achieved the most satisfaction) than any other this semester." The course is "an excellent example of [the university's] cross-disciplinary approach. One of my favorite classes to date. Fun and [exciting] cross between (seemingly) divergent areas of study (history, philosophy, religion, politics, economics). Course required that we ground our arguments from well-positioned and defined stances. Provided a spectrum of different views on the class's core question . . . and leaves me feeling more grounded in my view of the world at large."

Table 1: Supplementary Student Feedback Results (Second and Third Iterations of the Course)

To what degree are the following learning objectives being achieved on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being weakly and 5 being strongly?					
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**avg.**
Identify the positions of some major thinkers from across the ages regarding the relationship between morality, material well-being, and the good life					
0	0	1	3	23	4.81
Effectively read historical texts for useful insights into matters of contemporary importance					
0	0	1	14	12	4.41
Bring philosophy, religion, classics, and economics into dialogue on matters of contemporary importance					
0	0	1	12	14	4.50
Become aware of and/or develop one's own ethical positions regarding issues of material progress					
0	0	1	9	17	4.59
Understand the ethical positions of others regarding issues of material progress					
0	1	6	7	13	4.19
Value the usefulness of the humanities in general and in the study of economics in particular					
0	0	3	10	14	4.41
Better navigate the complexities of multidisciplinary problem-solving					
0	0	4	13	10	4.22

Note: n=27.

Most, if not all, students who have taken the course understand a primary purpose of the course is the exploration of diversity within the Western tradition. Several students did say that it would be interesting to explore the core question through non-Western texts. While this could be construed as a complaint, it is a credit to the course that students have been sufficiently excited by what they have done with the given texts that they want to expand their inquiry into the core question through to other philosophical traditions. Some students also commented that there was either too little or too much inclusion of religious texts in the course, but none bristled at the use of such texts. They accepted them for what they were intended to be in the course: valuable tools for intellectual inquiry.

Concluding Remarks

Complaints abound regarding the state of the curriculum in higher education generally and in economics specifically. For example, some argue that societies need more broadly literate citizens to function well. Employers are asking for a more widely skilled and knowledgeable labor force than they perceive universities are producing (American Association of Colleges and Universities, 2006). Also, students' morals are being shaped by the curriculum, but not always in ways that are perceived as beneficial. See, for example, the classic study by Frank, Gilovich, and Regan (1993): "Does Studying Economics Inhibit Cooperation?" Moreover, major issues facing society such as climate change, inequality, and the fragility of democratic institutions can only be tackled with multidisciplinary understanding and solutions. Yet, higher education remains siloed by disciplines, and it graduates students who may be quite siloed in their thinking. As faculty, we are appropriately asked to serve a diversity of students and to expose them to a diversity of thoughts, worldviews, and epistemologies. However, many economics classes still emphasize "chalk and talk" and exams, and they draw from textbooks that don't vary much, particularly in core courses. We are asked to address these concerns, all while the demands for quality teaching and scholarship seem to be ratcheting up.

More question-driven and humanities-infused courses in the economics curriculum can move the needle in addressing these concerns. By the very nature of these courses, students will have opportunities to broaden their literacy, to develop a wider skill set, and to face moral questions and societal issues head on. Faculty will be able to facilitate this in ways that serve diverse students with a plurality of perspectives. And, if the core question of the course is well-chosen, faculty will be able to generate synergies between their teaching and their scholarship.

The course described in this article is not a template, only an illustration of what can be done. Even if one chooses the same core question as I use in this course, the focuses and supporting materials will likely differ based on the instructor's interests and expertise, the students' backgrounds and needs, and the department and university's existing curriculum and constraints. In my assessment, it is really the question-driven and humanities-infused nature of the course that underpins all the other decisions and outcomes for the course. The start-up costs are high but the returns to instructor and students alike are also high. What will your course's core question be?

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Appendix: Course Reading List

A. Sedláček, Introduction – The Story of Economics: From Poetry to Science

B. *The Epic of Gilgamesh*

Sedláček, Chapter 1 – The Epic of Gilgamesh: On Effectiveness, Immortality, and the Economics of Friendship, with numerous references to:

George, Andrew, trans. 1999. *The Epic of Gilgamesh*. London: Penguin.

C. Hebrew Bible

Sedláček, Chapter 2 – The Old Testament: Earthliness and Goodness

Deuteronomy 28:1–18, 1 Samuel 17, 2 Samuel 11–12:14, 1 Samuel 8, Genesis 1–2:2, Proverbs 8, Job 1–31 and 38–42, Psalm 119, Ecclesiastes 5:10–20, and Leviticus 25

D. Plato and Ancient Greeks

Sedláček, Chapter 3 – Ancient Greece, with references Plato's *The Republic* book 7 passages 514a to 520a and *Phaedo* passages 64d–64e and 65b–67a

Plato. 2008. *Gorgias*. Translated by Robin Waterfield. Oxford: Oxford UP.

E. New Testament

Sedláček's Chapter 4 – Christianity: Spirituality in the Material World

Mark 12:28–34, Philippians 2:1–8, Luke 10:25–37, Matthew 5–7:12 and 25:31–46, Mark 10:17–31, Luke 8:4–15, and James 5:1–12.

Gordon, Barry. 1989. *The Economic Problem in Biblical and Patristic Thought*. Leiden, the Netherlands: E.J. Brill. Chapters 5–6.

F. Patristic Writers

Rhee, Helen, ed. 2017. *Wealth and Poverty in Early Christianity*. Ad Fontes: Early Christian Sources. Minneapolis: Fortress Press. Selections from Clement of Alexandria, Basil the Great, John Chrysostom, and Augustine of Hippo.

Gordon, Barry. 1989. *The Economic Problem in Biblical and Patristic Thought*. Leiden, the Netherlands: E.J. Brill. Chapters 8–9.

G. Interlude Illustrating Cross-disciplinary Scholarship in Economics and Theology

Tatum, Robert C. 2017. "A Theology of Economic Reform." *Faith & Economics* 69 (Spring): 63–83.

Tatum, Robert C. 2017. "*Homo Economicus* as Fallen Man: The Need for Theological Economics." *Journal of Markets and Morality* 20, no. 1 (Spring): 127–40.

H. Bernard Mandeville

Sedlaček's Chapter 6 – Bernard Mandeville's Beehive of Vice

Mandeville, Bernard. "Grumbling Hive: or Knaves Turn'd Honest" from *The Fable of the Bees: or, Private Vices, Public Benefits*.

I. Adam Smith

Sedláček's Chapter 7 – Adam Smith, Blacksmith of Economics

J. Thomas Robert Malthus

Malthus, Thomas Robert. 2018. *An Essay on the Principle of Population*. 1798 edn. Edited by Joyce E. Chaplin, Norton Critical Edition, W.W. Norton. Preface, Chapters 1–2 and 18–19.

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K. John Stuart Mill

Sedláček's Chapter 8 – Need for Greed

Mill, John Stuart. "On the Stationary State" *Principles of Political Economy with Some of their Applications to Social Philosophy*. 7 ed.

L. John Maynard Keynes

Sedláček's Chapter 9 – Progress, New Adam, and Sabbath Economics

Keynes, John Maynard. 1930. "Economic Possibilities for Our Grandchildren."

Becker, Gary S. and Luis Rayo. 2010. "Why Keynes Underestimated Consumption and Overestimated Leisure for the Long Run." In *Revisiting Keynes: Economic Possibilities for Our Grandchildren*, Ed. Lorenzo Pecchi and Gustavo Piga. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

M. Contemporary Economists

Becker, Gary. 1976. *The Economics Approach to Human Behavior*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 1.

Sen, Amartya. 1999. *Development as Freedom*. New York: Knopf. Chapters 1 and 4.

McCloskey, Deirdre N. 2006. *The Bourgeois Virtues: Ethics for an Age of Commerce*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1–53.

N. Some Concluding Discussions

Sedláček's Chapter 10 – The Axis of Good and Evil and the Bibles of Economics; Chapter 11 – The History of the Invisible Hand of the Market and Homo Oeconomicus; and Chapter 12 – The History of Animal Spirits: the Dream Never Sleeps

Rodrik, Dani. 2014. "When Ideas Trump Interests: Preferences, Worldviews, and Policy Innovations." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 28, no. 1 (Winter): 189–208. ■

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Faith-informed Intrapreneurship in the Secular Curriculum

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The Opportunity (Daniel 1–6)

"The faculty control the curriculum" or "The curriculum is the purview of the faculty" are commonly voiced statements by university administrators and faculty, particularly when internal or external forces challenge to change the content of the course catalog. We can debate the strength of this academic pillar across all secular campuses but, generally, economics faculty determine what is taught and how it is taught at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Department, college, and university curriculum committees normally only serve as quality control and compatibility checking entities.

University intrapreneurship focuses on innovation within the structure and culture of the organization. Curricular intrapreneurship specifically adds value for students, faculty, and the university administration via learning innovations. Faculty regularly develop new courses, adopt new delivery methods, create new minors and majors, and modify degree requirements to more fully utilize the talents of new or existing faculty, fill a subject matter gap not covered by their department or other academic units, or take advantage of changing educational needs in society. The degree of curricular intrapreneurship in an economics department can range from near dormancy to borderline frenetic activity, depending on the level of faculty engagement and the external incentives/disincentives offered for innovation by university administrators, from the department chair to the president and governing board.

Christ-following economists working in the secular academic environment have opportunities for introducing complementary faith concepts in their teaching. Fear of hostile peer reaction may discourage faith-inspired curricular innovation but even in these challenging work environments small, relevant changes in class content can honor the Christian worldview in the marketplace of ideas whereas significant Bible-motivated innovations in the curriculum (modified or new course content) are wisely left to those faculty with tenure and to those who have earned a reputation for scholarly excellence in their departments. The following case study captures my faith-informed, but surely flawed, curricular innovation experiences at the undergraduate level in a secular university over a period of 30 years.

Threads

Teachers can weave reoccurring and valuable faith-inspired themes throughout their courses. Threads appear from time to time in the fabric of the class, enriching the technical subject matter and giving a human touch to increasingly theoretical and quantitative subject matter. Instructors may spend from 30 seconds to 5 minutes on a relevant, but never loose or frayed, thread then move on in their presentation or discussion. Threads "pop up" regularly throughout the course giving a unique color to the overall course material throughout the semester.

Agency (2 Samuel 11–12). Teach economics as if humans matter. Too often we emphasize mechanical, deterministic models inhabited by soulless automatons. Individuals in their callings as children, parents, employees, employers, consumers, and policy makers make decisions that impact other people, for good or ill, all the time. Too much emphasis on economic structure (e.g., politics, race, gender, economic and social status) can mask individual responsibility.

Common Good (Philippians 2:4). Frequent opportunities emerge to illustrate human interdependency in the economic areas of household economics, benefit/cost analysis, efficiency vs. equity debates, externalities, and conflict resolution to name a few topic areas. Sub-optimal prisoners' dilemmas abound in decision making and social interactions. Collaboration and looking out for the interests of others, as well as your own interests, facilitates a more abundant life for all.

Evidence (Acts 17:10–12). Consistently test public policy issues surrounding free trade, minimum wage, foreign aid, a balanced federal budget, and right-to-work laws against empirical research, both pro and con. Throughout the semester, even at the undergraduate level, weave the evidentiary questions of "Well done?" and "So what?" into class discussions as well as an evaluation of the reliability of statistical evidence supporting both positive and normative economic analyses.

History (2 Kings 22:8–11). Snippets of the history of economic thought and of economic development create context for students' understanding of the discipline and their current economic environment. Attention grabbers include briefly taking students back to the economic teaching of Moses, Micah, Plato, Aristotle, Jesus of Nazareth to more recent, but still historical figures such as Marx, Ricardo, Walras, and Marshall. Historical threads that include feudalism, slavery, technological revolutions, and great migrations or immigrations enrich students' historical understanding. Microeconomics, macroeconomics, econometrics, industrial organization, and environmental economics all have a rich history that deserves thread-like treatment throughout, not just in the first lecture.

Storytelling (Acts 22). Students remember personal stories that illustrate economic principles, often better than lectures or what they read in their textbooks. Instructors' good and bad economic experiences as a consumer, producer, researcher, public policy advocate, and community volunteer, sprinkled in discussions throughout the semester, make the "dismal science" come alive. Encourage students to think about and, when appropriate, to share their own economic stories.

System Thinking (Proverbs 19:2). Systematically thinking through economic decisions and policies, particularly in macroeconomics, is paramount for capturing the consequences to all concerned. Answer with your students the questions of "So what?" and "Who cares?" System thinking is like taking a total differential of the economic system—realistically impossible but a valuable rhetorical exercise, nevertheless.

Uncertainty (Job 38–42). Economists, professing a saving faith in Jesus Christ, should exhibit a noticeable degree of disciplinary humility. Humble confidence in our theories and empirical work recognizes the potential variability in our results with a relaxation of assumptions, a reformulation of our models, or a new data set. Periodically bringing this fact of social science to the attention of students reinforces the uncertainties associated with human agency in a fallen world and the inability of humans to fine tune or control the economy, however hard we try.

Modules

Intrapreneurial modules in the secular curriculum are stand-alone subject matter that complements the general course material. A module generally takes from one to three lectures at the undergraduate level but sometimes an entire course can be designed around a series of modules. The following are potential candidates for the shorter version.

Capital (Acts 2:42–47). Too often we gloss over the types of capital in the economy. Assets are tangible or intangible and produce value through their generation of goods and services. Easily measured physical assets take precedence in our courses over capital associated with attitudes, relationships, and reputations that are difficult to value in explicit monetary terms. Students understand the everyday importance of social, institutional, and spiritual capital; selected outside-of-class readings spark their curiosity even more.

Decision Rules (Exodus 20:1–17). The ethical considerations surrounding mainstream economic decision making can serve as an early-in-the-semester module. A discussion that contrasts the implications of utilitarianism with deontological ethics is useful. Lexicographic preferences open young minds to a hierarchy of choices. Safety-first decision rules capture risk preferences and optimal decisions in an uncertain environment. Bounded rationality and prospect theory illustrate real human limitations in decision making. A decision rule module sets the tone for how you will manage the temptation of crude reductionism in our rational agent model.

Worldviews (Acts 17:16–34). Most students sitting in our undergraduate economics classrooms, in large secular universities, have not been introduced to existing lifeviews that impact on the allocation of scarce resources. Rarely can a discussion of worldviews serve as a major section of a course; and in many courses this discussion may be inappropriate (e.g., econometrics). However, any course centered on public policy, economic development, and natural resource management benefits from a worldview module. Decisions impacting work, time, investment, agency, equity, and conservation are founded on a set of conscious or unconscious beliefs.

Colloquia

Most curricula have 1-unit elective or, in some rare cases, required colloquia or seminars that focus on a specific topic of special interest to students, faculty, and/or the department. These courses emphasize discussion, reading, writing, but not exams. Generally, undergraduate colloquia are offered to incoming freshmen and new majors, and to graduating seniors. Colloquia range from an introduction to the economics discipline to finding a job with an economics degree or applying to graduate school. Most often, senior faculty members volunteer, or are asked by the department head, to teach colloquia that are above and beyond their contracted instructional responsibilities.

Preparing for Career and Life Success, http://bit.ly/397Wilson (Proverbs 6:20–23). This colloquium evolved over 20 years from an introduction to the discipline of applied economics to a "launching pad" for juniors and seniors in the major. University and college administrators encouraged this evolutionary process with their increasing emphasis on capstone experiences and initial career success for the university's graduates. What distinguished this colloquium from other career courses was the semester project to read and write a term paper on *New York Times* columnist David Brook's book, *The Road to Character* (2015). Students, for the first time for many participants, were required to analyze the role of anger, love, forgiveness, honesty, responsibility, sin, and courage in the lives of important people, with an eye towards how these and other character traits impact a career and a life, including their own.

Worldviews, Culture, and Institutions: Implications for Human Flourishing http://bit.ly/195bWilson (Matthew 22:34–40). The Honors College appealed to Honors faculty to develop and lead a colloquium in their field of interest for Honors freshmen. All incoming Honors students were required to enroll in a colloquium in both semesters of their freshman year. Students selected from a list of offered colloquia, with class size limited to 20. Most declared majors in my colloquium were in the social sciences or pre-med. The social and economic impact of values and beliefs on human flourishing in a cross-section of nations led to interesting and challenging discussions among, and with, academically motivated young people.

Courses

Economics, Ethics, and Environmental Management, http://bit.ly/350 Wilson (Genesis 13). In 1986, our college's dean approached my department about teaching an agricultural ethics course for the college's students. I volunteered as an assistant professor and taught the course for twenty years. From the beginning, a section of the course contained readings and discussion about moral philosophies and ethics. The early emphasis featured the ethical analysis of topics such as family farms, animal rights, genetically modified crops, water quality, land preservation, and corporate agriculture. After six years and disappointing enrollments from students outside our major, the course gradually evolved into an environmental management course. Ethical theories still remained a 4-week section of the class and economic principles remained paramount, but a major new emphasis was on conflict resolution surrounding the stewardship of natural and environmental resources. Attendance grew gradually to 200 students, representing a wide variety of academic majors across campus. Some non-economics majors (e.g., environmental sciences) required the course for their undergraduates.

The Poverty and Development of Nations, http://bit.ly/360Wilson (Matthew 25:31–46). Our department failed to teach an undergraduate economic development course for 10 years, to the detriment of our majors and other prepared (i.e., completed a course in microeconomics) students with an interest in international affairs. I felt the Lord calling me to design and teach this class, thereby returning to my initial academic motivation for pursuing a PhD in applied economics. Drawing upon the valuable syllabi of Chris Barrett (Cornell), Paul Glewwe (Minnesota), Bruce Wydick (San Francisco), and Paul McNamara (Illinois), I designed a course that would teach the recognized core subject matter but allow for special lectures (i.e., modules) that would highlight relevant topics not contained in most economic development textbooks. Asset-based community development, worldviews, trust, participatory planning, and transformational development opened up the discussion further to the behavioral dimension of human flourishing.

Reflection (Joshua 1:9)

Opportunities for faith-shaped intrapreneurship vary by university, department, and the seniority of the individual. Faith-inspired threads and modules are under the control of the faculty member while the design of colloquia or new courses requires a higher level of departmental approval and oversight. From my experience, faith-driven intrapreneurship requires a willingness to accept a “heavier” teaching load. The professional tradeoff between more teaching and less research is real in the secular academy. Each scholar must count the perceived cost to their careers. I believe our Lord honors a greater teaching load by walking alongside the risk-taking faculty member throughout their career.

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Teaching Economics and Theology in Australia

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Background

To understand what this course is doing it is necessary to understand something of the Australian context. Australia's university system took shape in the 1840s at the height of the arguments in Britain about the respective roles of the established Anglican church, Protestant dissenters, and Roman Catholics in the university system. Australia's first university, the University of Sydney, was founded by mostly religious lay people as a secular university. It was felt that a secular university would best advance religion in the colony by excluding clerics and the resultant interdenominational conflicts. This meant a separation between Australia's university system and the church colleges which trained men for ministry in the different Christian denominations. An unintended but baleful consequence was the low quality of public theological engagement. By contrast with the United States, Australia minimised sectarian conflict, but religion became a largely private matter, with a large articulated influence on Australian culture but little visibility in elite intellectual circles. This background is discussed in Oslington (2014) and Chavura *et al*. (2019).

The first version of the course was taught at Macquarie Christian Studies Institute in the early 2000s. This institute attempted to bridge the gap between the university system and theological training by providing theological training at Macquarie University that could be credited towards any Macquarie degree. The Australian theologian Robert Banks was inaugural director and many Australian evangelicals, especially those with connection to Regent College in Vancouver, participated. It did not just offer theological training, but integrative courses in various disciplines, together with mentoring by Christian practitioners. I won a grant from the John Templeton Foundation to set up a course on economics at the institute and taught it to a very bright group of students. Sadly, the institute is now defunct, a victim of a mixture of Sydney church and university politics.

The next iteration of the course was at Alphacrucis College, the College of the Australian Pentecostal movement, which had a vision to become a Christian research university. Two Catholic universities had come into being in the late 1990s: Australian Catholic University, a public university driven by the desire of the then Australian Minister for Education to combine the various Catholic teaching and nursing colleges around the country into one institution, and the University of Notre Dame Australia, a much more confessionally Catholic private university based in Fremantle, Western Australia. At that stage I was Professor of Economics and Theology at the Australian Catholic University, and was invited by my friend Shane Clifton, then Dean of Theology at Alphacrucis, to teach a postgraduate unit on economics and theology as he believed it was a subject of great interest to young Australian Pentecostals. The deal was that I would teach the course and Shane would write the chapter on Pentecostals in economics for my *Oxford Handbook of Christianity and Economics*. Teaching the course to an extremely bright group of young Pentecostal leaders was part of me being drawn into the Alphacrucis vision of a Pentecostal research university for Australia. The following year I joined staff as inaugural Dean of Business, and then led the institution's newly accredited PhD program. Sadly, Shane became a quadriplegic after a tragic accident but he still delivered on his promise of writing the chapter on Pentecostals and economics, having regained enough use of one hand to be able to use a computer with the aid of Dragon voice recognition software. I have subsequently taught the course to Alphacrucis postgraduate students, and also offered it as a reading course to individual doctoral students.

Approach

Hopefully, the approach is transparent in the unit outline. My own view of the relationship between economics and Christian theology is that economics offers a powerful set of tools, but a set of tools that operates much better within a Christian theological framework. Some students enrol in the course looking for a simple one-paragraph solution to the problem of the relationship between economics and Christian theology but, so far, no student has asked for a refund on the course fee for my failure to deliver such a simple solution. Along the way, however, there has been intense debate.

Lessons

In teaching the course, I have the advantage that it is an optional unit usually taken by good students with an interest in the topic. It has sometimes been difficult having students with a strong background in either economics or theology but with very little exposure to the other. Theology students in my experience have difficulty learning economic ways of thinking—more difficulty than economics students have with coming to grips with theology. This may have something to do with the way theology is taught, or with the way economics is dealt with in our churches. Pentecostal students, however, find economic ways of thinking much more congenial, and I distinctly remember an afternoon spent discussing the economics of religion with the first group of Alphacrucis students I taught. The idea of a religious market, of positioning one's church in such a market, seemed unexceptional to them, even really helpful as they were sent out into such a market as graduates. There was no embarrassment about the financial aspects of churches for this group of students. Remember that Pentecostalism has grown rapidly to overtake the Anglicans to now be Australia's second largest religious group after the Catholics; as well as now having the highest rate of degree-holding of any religious group and being the most ethnically diverse religious group in Australia.

One thing I have learnt from teaching the course is that less is more. I tend to set too much reading because I love to read widely, and have cut this down each time I have taught the course. Having a few texts that everyone has read as a focus for discussion works much better. This is also true for topics and these have been pruned dramatically since the first offering of the course. The amount of time we spend on the history of the relationship between economics and theology has been really valuable, and I cannot imagine a sensible discussion of the relationship between the two without some exposure to the history. History is common ground between the disciplines and works very well in setting up a dialogue between students with a stronger background in theology and those with a stronger background in economics, to the extent that economics students these days have much exposure to the history of their discipline.

In terms of assessment the quiz in the first class on the pre-reading has caused unprepared students distress, but without it students will not come to the class with a good enough grasp of the history of economics for the section of the course on the history of the relationship between economics and theology to work well. There is an argument for setting some pre-reading also on the history of theology, but we seem to have got on reasonably well without this. A benefit of some reading in the history of economics is that it introduces theology students to some economic theory along the way. Students tend to enjoy writing the essay, and having them choose their own topic after some discussion with me works well. I have received some really excellent essays from students. The purpose of the exam is to force students to work at the parts of the course outside their chosen essay topic.

While my main focus has been institution building and research in recent years, I have very much enjoyed teaching the course and learn much from my students.

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Appendix: *THE550:* Theology and Economics Unit Outline

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This is a graduate level unit open to Master of Arts, Master of Theology, Master of Leadership, and Doctor of Philosophy students. For Masters students the unit THE401 Christian Worldview is a prerequisite, but no other background in either economics or theology is assumed. Master of Leadership students will find that the unit complements their capstone unit RES590 Integrative Research.

DESCRIPTION

This unit deals with the relationship between economics and Christian theology. The place of economics in contemporary culture makes a serious engagement with economics vital for Christian witness. At the successful completion of this unit, students will be able to:

a. Demonstrate an awareness of the issues involved in interdisciplinary scholarship.
b. Give an account of the history of the relationship between Christian theology and economics.
c. Bring economic and theological analysis to a range of important contemporary issues, demonstrating an understanding of the relationship between these two types of analysis.

SCHEDULE

We begin with some general questions about sources of authority, relationships between the disciplines of economics and theology, and practical difficulties of dealing with multiple disciplines. I have become convinced that understanding the history of the relationship between economics and theology is the most fruitful way into the subject, so we will spend some time coming to grips with how Christians in different times and places have related economics and theology.

With this background we then launch into a series of contemporary issues, considering what economists have to say about the topic, what theologians have to say about it, and how they might relate. This will hone our skills in interdisciplinary conversation, even if we cannot come up with a Christian approach to the issue. What if there is not a single Christian approach to such issues?

The final part of the unit draws together what we have learnt from engaging with the contemporary issues, and returns to the general questions we began with.

	Topic	Reading
1	Quiz on Pre-Reading Introduction How do we read the Scriptures on economics? Interdisciplinarity Practical and incentive issues in theology and economics	 Bauckham (2010) Williams (1996) Klein (2011) John Stackhouse (1996)
2	History of the relationship between economics and theology – Economics in the Scriptures – Formation of economics as a discipline in the 18th century, – Separation of economics from theology in the 19th century. – Economics as an autonomous discipline in the 20th century. – Catholic Social Teaching – Christian economics as a counter cultural movement. Comparisons with Islamic economics.	Oslington (2018 or 2005) Bateman and Kapstein (1999) Hauerwas and Bennett (2005) Oslington (2020) Kuran (2008)
3	The nature of a market economy. Efficiency and equity.	Becker (1993) Hahn (1982)
4	Discussion of Essay Environment	 Nelson (2010)
5	Poverty and International Development. Aid.	Dasgupta (2005) Sachs (2005 or 2007) Easterly (2006 or 2014)
6	Inequality and Unemployment in the West. Welfare. Contracting-out of welfare services to church organisations.	Hoffmann, Lee, Lemieux (2020) Mason (1987) Oslington (2002)
7	Finance Usury	Shiller (2012) or Gregg (2016) Mews and Abraham (2007)
8	What, then, is the relationship between economics and theology?	Heyne (1996)

ASSESSMENT

Assessment Task	Details	Due	Weighting
Quiz on Pre-Reading	The quiz will test your knowledge of the pre-reading in the history of economic thought: based on reading of Heilbroner, Backhouse, or one of the more advanced histories of economics.	Held on the first day of class.	10%
Essay (3,000 words)	During the unit we consider economic and theological analyses of a number of issues. Your essay task will be to choose a topic not covered directly in class, formulate a question and consider it using the tools of economics and theology. Marking criteria will be: – understanding demonstrated of the relevant economic theory and data, and appropriate application. – understanding demonstrated of theology through application to the issue. – strength and coherence of arguments – structure, logical consistency and clarity of presentation – correct referencing	Please discuss your intended topic with me during the week of the course to ensure it is suitable. Please upload your essay on Moodle in Word or pdf format. I will mark and return the essays before the exam.	50%
Open Book Exam (3 hours)	The exam will test skills and knowledge developed in the unit. It will be a mixture of short answer and essay questions.		40%

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Faith & Economics (Journal of the Association of Christian Economists USA) and the associated *Faithful Economy* podcast http://christianeconomists.org/podcast

ACE UK Discussion Papers (Association of Christian Economists UK)

Journal of Markets and Morality (Acton Institute for Religion and Liberty USA)

*Journal of Economics, Theology and Religio*n (Erasmus Economics and Theology Institute)

Professional Associations

Economic Society of Australia www.ecosoc.org.au

Australian NZ Association of Theological Schools anzats.edu.au

American Economic Association www.aeaweb.org/

Association of Christian Economists USA christianeconomists.org/

Association of Christian Economists UK www.christian-economists.org.uk ■

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Reflecting on Markets and Morals

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In this pedagogical case study, I share an exercise that I have utilized in Principles of Microeconomics courses at Gordon College, where I am a professor of economics. The activity is based on an assigned reading from a book chapter by Michael Sandel: "How Markets Crowd Out Morals" (2012, Ch 3).

Michael Sandel is a political philosopher and professor of government at Harvard University. Although the book, *What Money Can't Buy*, is not explicitly Christian in its moral orientation, it is an ideal launching point for a Christian faith-informed exploration of how markets raise moral issues. It is scholarly, but accessible even for most first-year college students. It addresses moral issues in an analytical way—a practice which is new for many college students. And it is chock full of interesting and relevant examples of real markets.

The class exercise has three parts: students independently read the chapter (which totals 38 pages), they write a one-page "reflective essay," and we have an in-class discussion of the students' essays. I will share more detail about the three parts, and then share some thoughts about the outcomes of the exercise.

The Reading

In Chapter 3, Sandel asks readers to consider the question: What are the things that money cannot buy? Through thought-experiment examples of friendships, a Nobel Prize, or an MVP trophy that is purchased, he builds the argument that the qualitative properties of some goods preclude them from being truly bought and sold. Some goods effectively "dissolve" when they are traded in a market. He argues that the cases that are clearly degradations of the good—such as buying a Nobel Prize—help us to see that concerns about the morality of trading other goods, such as adopted babies or kidneys, may in fact arise because "the good survives the selling but is arguably degraded, or corrupted, or diminished as a result" (p. 96). Sandel calls this first category of objection to markets the "corruption" concern.

A second objection to markets is concerns about fairness: what is bought and sold in markets reflects underlying inequalities. Although market trades may appear to be voluntary, if one party engages because they are in economic distress, the trade may not be moral. Moral concern about some market exchanges, such as prostitution, may arise from both objections: some worry that the sale is never truly voluntary, while others worry about degradation of the sexual "goods" being traded.

Sandel turns his analysis to gift cards and the norms of gift-giving. Economists (most prominently Joel Waldfogel) have argued that gift-giving is a waste because, based on empirical evidence, gift recipients' monetary valuation of their gifts is less than the purchase prices. Sandel argues that while giving cash gifts may have the greatest utilitarian value, cash gifts may not support other qualities of friendship, such as expressing knowledge of each other.

Sandel uses the example of gifts to illustrate how market values can crowd out other values. When a good is newly exchanged, the underlying social norms and even the character of the good being traded, can also be changed. Sandel illustrates this principle with empirical examples that may be familiar to readers from behavioral economics. For example, when parents at an Israeli daycare center started having to pay a fee if they picked up their children late, there was actually more tardiness; the norm of feeling guilty about being late was pushed out by the market norm of paying a fee for an additional service. Similarly, paying people to do a task seems to "crowd out" their intrinsic motivation to do it.

Sandel concludes that, as citizens and consumers, we should not accept the unquestioned premises of mainstream economics: that commoditizing a good does not change it or threaten non-market norms.

The Assignment

The assignment prompt points the students to the reading by Sandel and also provides them with a list of a dozen or more examples of newly "commoditized" goods, as are often noted by Tyler Cowen and Alex Tabarrok on their blog, *Marginal Revolution*. Cowen and Tabarrok helpfully tag these blog posts with the phrase, "markets in everything." For example, a blog post about new markets for breast milk, and the fairness concerns they raise when potential sellers face widely different economic prospects, is titled, "Breast milk markets in everything sentences to ponder." A description of a new service in China, which offers buyers a virtual reality simulation of their own death, is titled, "China simulated death markets in everything."

The overview of the assignment is given as follows:

> We will use the framework that Michael Sandel develops in this chapter to reflect on the market supply and demand for a good or service that has recently become exchanged in a market or otherwise 'commoditized.' You should choose a good or service from your own life observation or one of the 'markets in everything' examples from the blog marginalrevolution.com (see next page).

The required submission is a one-page essay (I am strict on the page limit!), 1.5-line spaced with 12-point font. The heading should be "Student name + the good or service."

I provide relatively tight guidance on the content of the essay. This helps the students wrestle with the challenge of writing something so short (they often complain that they did not have enough space to say all they wanted to say) and helps me in grading. I'll provide here the text that I use to describe the essay's three parts. First, I'm looking for "a very short paragraph (2–3 sentences) describing the market: What is being traded, who are the buyers, and who are the sellers?" Then, I'm looking for:

> 1–2 paragraphs of positive analysis: Explain why you think we observe this 'market outcome' (what we actually observe is happening), from a strictly economic standpoint. Another way of saying this is: Why are there gains to trade in this market? Why do buyers engage in these trades (Why do they generate consumer surplus)? Why do sellers engage in these trades (Why do they generate producer surplus)? Is there any evidence of market power or positive or negative externalities?

Finally, students should offer:

> 1–2 paragraphs of normative analysis: Reflect on what is happening in this market from a moral or ethical standpoint. Taking into consideration fairness, corruption, crowding out of non-market values, or other issues raised by Sandel, your reflection

> should include answers to the following two questions: 1. Can money truly buy this good/service? 2. Should money be able to buy this good/service? I do not anticipate there being right or wrong answers to these questions (the answer to #2 could be either ‘yes’ or ‘no’), but you should explain your opinions clearly and justify them through some combination of economic reasoning, your Christian faith, and your personal experience.

I have four guidelines for evaluation, with a total of 20 points possible. The essay should: (a) correctly apply economic concepts from class to the market you are analyzing (8 points); (b) demonstrate understanding of the reading assigned for this essay (5 points); (c) clearly explain your opinions for the two normative questions above (4 points); and (d) show personal reflection (3 points).

Class Discussion

My experience with this activity so far has been in the context of in-person learning. The day the essays are due, we go around the room and each student says which topic (new market) they wrote about. I stand at the front of the class and keep track of the count by topic. Usually we end up with several topics that attracted many students’ interests. Based on this quasi-popularity contest, we focus our discussion on these settings. The students share their positive analyses. We then turn to the normative questions. I generally have the students discuss the questions in small groups first. We return to the large group and a student from each group shares highlights from their discussion. We identify the toughest issues that came up and try to tackle them with the help of Sandel’s framework.

Implementation

This activity has worked well in classes ranging from about 25 to 45 students. I situate the exercise in the class schedule after a unit on the supply–demand model. It can work well as an activity on a day soon before or after the supply–demand exam or quiz. It is useful for me to have a class meeting around exam time where the focus is not introducing new content. Students may sometimes quibble about having a writing assignment due near to the exam, but this is not a problem if the assignment is posted well in advance.

Outcomes

One of the goals of Gordon College's Core Curriculum is "Development of Christian character, moral discernment and civic responsibility." This assignment provides instruction and assessment for one of the learning outcomes associated with that core objective: "Students will explain the strengths and limitations of particular political and/or economic structures in promoting individual flourishing and the common good."

My interpretation is that, in this activity, students are considering the potential limitations of markets (an economic structure) in promoting moral values that are necessary for both individual flourishing and the common good. They are also explaining the strengths of markets in creating consumer surplus and producer surplus.

More informally, this activity fosters several other outcomes that I value: students get exposed to a leading economics blog; students engage with each other in small- and large-group discussion; students are provided with a method for intentionally integrating "positive economics" and "normative economics." To my best recollection this activity has never been a disappointment. Some faculty colleagues at Gordon have also adopted it and found similar success. I hope that my sharing it here may prove useful, and that readers may share their own experiences with the activity or related ideas with me.

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The Good Endeavor of the Economist–Educator: An Interview with Kenneth G. Elzinga

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Hope College

On the surface, the career of Kenneth G. Elzinga seems to present a number of dichotomies. For example, no sooner did he obtain the title Dr., earning his PhD in economics from Michigan State University in 1967, than did he commit to a career as "Mr. Elzinga," as is customary for a member of the faculty of the University of Virginia. Now the Robert C. Taylor Professor of Economics and easily among the most well-known professors at UVA, Ken is a model of servant leader-ship in his teaching, taking seriously Christ's example of love for His dis-ciples, as he describes in the interview to follow. More practical but still remarkable among the contrasts, Ken teaches the largest course at the university, Principles of Microeconomics, every fall for over 1000 stu-dents and still, each spring, steps into a relatively small classroom to lead a course in antitrust economics using a traditional Socratic style.

But among the best reasons to inquire with Ken Elzinga about the role of the Christian professor is this seeming paradox: having already taught for more than half a century and around 50,000 students, Ken remains dedicated to honing his skills, refining each lecture he gives both before and after each class. That is, he's a perpetual student as part of his craft. His willingness to reflect upon and learn from his experience is an outgrowth of his orientation toward service and excellence, motivated by his deep Christian faith. Having known Ken for more than 20 years, and having worked closely with him for two years as his head teaching assistant, it was an honor to interview him for this volume of the journal.

The Interview

Estelle: To begin, thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for the spe-cial edition of *Faith & Economics* focused on economics education. You're respected in our profession for many things, and I dare say espe-cially so among Christian economists. Just one reason is your life of service to our discipline as an exceptional teacher. As recognition of this, for almost 20 years now the Southern Economic Association has made an award in your honor, the Kenneth G. Elzinga Distinguished Teaching Award, to faculty members who have made "outstanding contributions to economics education."

What do you think defines an "outstanding contribution" to our profession as educators, or what makes for excellent teaching?

Elzinga: This is what lawyers call a compound question so let me break it into two parts. The contribution we make as economist–educators is primarily one of transmitting the understanding of our discipline to others. A handful of economist–educators do add to the body of knowledge. But most of economist–educators are retailers of the dismal science. To say that is not to minimize their contribution. Just the opposite.

The retailing of goods and services is an important economic function. There is not likely to be any enhancement of consumer welfare if a new product cannot get to market. In like fashion, there is not likely to be an enhancement of economic understanding if economist–educators are not engaged in getting their discipline "to market."

In saying this, I am not disregarding or minimizing the importance of research. However, as is the case in other disciplines, so it is in economics: there is not much new (that's important) under the sun. And there is much that is "old" that merits being taught.

It would be idle to contend that economics is as important as music or as useful as cooking. Nevertheless, economist–educators should understand that what they teach is useful and important. For that reason alone, economists have a grave responsibility when they also are educators. To not pass the baton of economic analysis to students is to shortchange them and gives the subject of economics a bad reputation. Too often one hears, as cocktail party chatter, "I took an economics course once. I hated it."

What, then, makes for excellent teaching of the dismal science? Excellent teaching is excellent only if it engages students and if it ensures that the basic principles are mastered by students—before ancillary or technical material is communicated. Far more important than a mastery of the geometry or calculus of cost curves is that students come away with an economic way of thinking: that is, an understanding that most endeavors involve costs and benefits; that incentives matter and therefore should be reckoned with; how markets solve the three basic economic questions (and when they do not).

Add to this a working familiarity with the vocabulary of economics (opportunity cost; demand, supply; goods and services; land, labor and capital; factors of production and other terms that make up the rich language of economics, should distinguish the student of even a basic course in economics from non-students). Icing on the cake (or a windfall) is when the economist–educator causes students to be familiar with some of the great names in economics: Adam Smith, Alfred Marshall, Karl Marx, John Maynard Keynes, Milton Friedman, and a handful of others who are important to the teacher, should be known by students.

One can think of excellent teaching as like a three-strand cord. The first strand involves the economist–educator knowing the material that is to be taught. Economics is hard. So, this is no easy task. The second strand involves making the material interesting—without dumbing it down. For most economist–educators, this means reading widely in the subject of economics itself, keeping current on events in the economy specific to the economics course being taught, and also reading outside the normal bounds of economic literature—on the hunt, so to speak, for that memorable example that captures a student's attention.

The third strand is the difficult one to articulate: I'll call it a blend of empathy and enthusiasm. Perhaps there is just the right word that combines these two traits. By empathy, I mean the realization that for many students, economics is difficult; and even for those who take to the subject readily, they may face difficult distractions that affect their classroom performance. Having empathy for students, as opposed to disdain, is essential to good teaching. In like fashion, having enthusiasm for teaching economics is vital. No economist–educator can successfully hide a lack of empathy for students or a lack of enthusiasm for seeing students learn economics.

One way to cultivate this blend of empathy and enthusiasm is to engage and encourage the student who struggles through most of the semester – and then a "light goes on" near the end of the term and the student does well in the course. Maybe not with an A, but with a hard-earned B+. This third strand of good teaching can mean the professor takes as much satisfaction in this student's performance as that of an A + student. Truth be told, we as economist–educators may have little marginal productivity in the education of our A+ students.

Estelle: As your head TA I was blessed to learn from your methods and also the qualities you embodied in your work, which really helped shape my understanding of exceptional teaching. Among them, I'd point out your hospitality to students, your disciplined approach to class preparation, and, frankly, the fact that you just work very hard and long hours. Can you say more about why and how you manage these sorts of investments in your students and any evolution you've had in your thoughts or abilities in these areas?

Elzinga: When I was a young pup on the faculty at the University of Virginia, I had a daunting colleague: James Buchanan. In observing Buchanan, I saw the professional advantage of being incredibly smart, being an incredibly hard worker, and joining forces with an incredibly talented colleague. If one could pull off this academic hat trick, one might just win a Nobel Prize in economics—as Jim Buchanan did. He was brilliant, worked long hours, and teamed up with my colleague Gordon Tullock to found the field of Public Choice.

Most economist–educators cannot match Buchanan along these three metrics. We are not as smart, we are unwilling (or unable) to log the hours that Buchanan did, and we do not have a colleague the equivalent of Gordon Tullock willing to share his or her ideas with us.

In my case, the one metric over which I had some control was hours worked. As all my head teaching assistants observe, I work long hours. I have learned that what one lacks in intellectual horsepower can be made up, in part, by "outworking" others. I have been able to do this, in part, because I consider my work as a vocation, that is I have a sense of what the Reformers would describe as a calling—and my calling consumes many hours.

In part, I have been able to log long hours because I have never been a biological father. I have been a "spiritual father" to students, but that endeavor does not require the time and effort that a "real father" should devote. (It is also less expensive!) In addition, with some bumps along the road, I have been blessed with good health, which facilitates working long hours.

John Maynard Keynes was reported to have said that his one regret in life was that he did not drink more champagne. At this point, I do not regret the work/leisure ratio that has marked my life. I regularly enjoy the benefits of a Sabbath rest. I also believe I recognize the opportunity cost of the time I have spent in research, teaching, and Christian ministry to students. And in hindsight, as the expression goes, "I'd do it all over again."

Estelle: It's stated clearly on your personal website that you're a follower of Christ, and there is certainly indication of that to be found in your office and in your activities at the University outside of class. But as central as your faith is to your life, most of your students don't hear anything about that typically until the last day of class. What is your personal philosophy of being a Christian and having a Christian witness in secular higher education?

Elzinga: There is a distinction between "Christian witness in secular higher education" and "Christian witness" in a college that is faith based. However, it is easy to exaggerate the difference. Whether in a Christian institution of higher learning or a secular one, faculty members who are followers of Jesus should be mindful of what has come to be called "the great commission" (Matthew 28) as well as the marching orders from Peter to "be ready to give a defense of the hope that is within you"—also being mindful of the further instructions Peter gave to do so "with gentleness and reverence" (I Peter 3:15). Put differently, faculty at Christian colleges and universities should not leave spiritual mentoring and "Christian witness" to the Dean of the Chapel.

That said, there is a difference between Christian witness in secular higher education and in a Christian college or university. I do not (and should not) pray before teaching a class. When I visit a Christian school and am invited to teach a class, I enjoy praying before I present the classroom material. The students sitting in front of me may find this a ho-hum exercise, but I find it refreshing—a liberty, so to speak, that I do not have at a school founded by Thomas Jefferson.

At Mr Jefferson's university, I am identified as a follower of Jesus—as signaled on my website and various items in my office. In addition, I specifically identify myself as a follower of Jesus on the last day of class. On the first day of class, I tell my students that I plan to teach the class from a Biblical perspective, and I then explain that the Biblical model of leadership puts me at the bottom and my students at the top. That is, in the Biblical model of leading a class, I am to serve my students and I tell them they have every right to hold me accountable to this standard.

For many students, the upside-down model of Biblical leadership is a new (and perhaps perplexing) concept. However, students in the class who are Christians generally know what I am talking about—and may even recognize that the taproot of what I am saying is found in the Gospel of John's account of Jesus washing the feet of his disciples.

In my lectures, I sometimes make reference to stories from the Bible, just as I reference stories from music, art, history, and business. For example, the Parable of the Lost Sheep (in Luke 15 and Matthew 18) provides a memorable counter-illustration to the law of diminishing marginal utility. For that matter, so does the Cracker Jack slogan (The More You Eat, the More You Want).

I am also identified as a follower of Jesus by talks I give on campus. I am a regular speaker at events sponsored by parachurch organizations like Chi Alpha, Cru, Grace Christian Fellowship, the Navigators and events at the Center for Christian Study near the grounds of the University of Virginia. I do not carry a Bible as I walk around campus, but I suspect that many students, faculty, and administrators know that I am a Christian or, as I have heard myself described, I am "very religious." Years ago, a colleague told me that at the faculty club I was portrayed as "the Ralph Nader of the right-wing Christian movement," which I found both odd and humorous. Today, of course, many of my students would react, "Who is Ralph Nader?" !!

Estelle: For a final question, let's continue to think at the margin. Where do you perceive the highest marginal returns for Christian influence you perceive in secular higher ed? (Perhaps it's some strategy of discipleship, or a way of engaging with colleagues, or an area where Christians can helpfully shape the institution.)

Elzinga: I am struck at how important it is to be faithful in "small things," such as making room in my schedule for students (or parents of my students) who stop by my office unannounced and unscheduled. I cannot explain this, but my experience is that making room at the margins of my schedule somehow results in the "big things" getting done: such as completing a lecture or finishing an article.

One aspect of my sense of calling is that I have resisted inquiries over the years to go into administration, whether as a departmental chair, dean, provost, or president. In the past when I considered these inquiries, I sought the counsel of close friends and their advice has been, with but one exception, that my calling is to work in the trenches—and not in administrative positions of authority.

Another component of my Christian witness to students is, when appropriate, to pray for them (and with them). When a student is in my office and has a problem that I cannot humanly solve (e.g., a parent has cancer or some other setback in the student's life has taken place), I will inform the student that in my faith tradition one prays about these matters—and would the student mind if I pray for her or him?

I could tell many stories of students who, sometimes years later, have told me how much such a prayer meant to them. I have had non-Christian students return and ask me to pray for them again, because they do not know anyone else who would pray for them. Students have told me this experience has given them the encouragement to pray themselves. To my mind, praying with students, when the circumstance is appropriate, is a form of servant leadership, in that it flattens my relationship with the student and undercuts the otherwise vertical nature of the professor–student relationship.

In closing, let me make clear that I consider teaching and research to be what Tim Keller called "a good endeavor." Just as God calls people to be pastors, the Reformed tradition in the Christian faith makes clear that God calls people to be—well—even economists. Doing economics well—that is, considering the endeavor itself as a "good endeavor"—is how the Lord ordains that the economic way of thinking gets transmitted, just as (to paraphrase Martin Luther) the way we get dairy products on the table is because God calls some people to be dairy farmers. ■

Book Reviews

Wealth, Virtue, and Moral Luck: Christian Ethics in an Age of Inequality
Kate Ward. 2021. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press. ISBN 978-1-64712-138-9. $49.95. Paperback.

Reviewed by D. Glenn Butner, Jr, Sterling College

Kate Ward's treatment of inequality fills two lacunae in the moral theology of economics. Where many treatments of inequality focus on the (important) issue of distributive justice, few consider the significance of inequality, wealth, and poverty on virtue formation. Similarly, while it is relatively easy to find Christian ethicists and moral theologians who argue for the corrupting or morally sweetening influence of participation in market economies, it is far less common to find treatments of the role that the starting distribution of wealth may play in virtue formation. Many readers will recognize Ward's *Wealth, Virtue, and Moral Luck* from the first several pages as an important project, and they will find many important insights in the seven chapters within which she develops her thesis.

In Chapter 1, Ward begins her work with a broad survey of prior treatments of inequality, drawing from a wide range of sources including ethicists, psychologists, and a variety of social scientists. Typical treatments tend to focus on societal ills produced by inequality, such as hindered economic growth and negative public health outcomes—Ward notes that "inequality is more salient for public health than poverty" (p. 16). Drawing on Thomas Picketty, Ward also argues that inequality self-perpetuates because $r > g$ (the rate of return on investments > economic growth). This fact suggests that inequality is less a byproduct of merit and effort and more a persistent challenge to distributive justice. Perhaps inequality is an example of exclusion or theft. Ward moves beyond such questions by providing a virtue ethics account of moral formation under unequal economic conditions, conditions that she examines under the concept of moral luck.

Chapters 2 and 3 develop Ward's moral theological perspective, which insists that economic virtue ethics consider the implications of economic inequality. "To insist that there is no distinction between the hopeful tycoon and the hopeful refugee erases the personal distinction that virtue ethics takes for granted and misses something essential about human experience" (p. 86). To make this case, Ward draws on a wide range of ethicists' explanations of virtues. One finds the traditional cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude combined with more contemporary concerns for self-care, solidarity, fidelity, and humility. Ward is impressively thorough in her survey of precedent treatments of each virtue, so thorough that at times the reader loses track of the many variant explanations of each virtue provided—one of the few substantive critiques I have of the entire book. Fortunately, Ward compensates for this robust and perhaps overly rapid survey of theory by illustrating the virtues narratively through such exemplars as Malcolm X, Dan Price, and Helen Prejean. Such narratives are immensely clarifying.

Moral luck, a concept Ward draws from secular feminist ethics and refines with Christian womanist ethics, is central to her argument. Moral luck refers to factors beyond the control of an agent that effect a moral agent's ability to make moral choices or to develop virtue. Moral luck can be incident, meaning related to a single act, or constitutive, meaning that it impacts the possible moral formation of an agent. Ward rightly insists that a Christian account must be optimistic about the ability of God's grace to foster transformation under any set of circumstances. However, Ward does demonstrate that moral luck plays a role in the formation of virtue among the wealthy and the poor.

I suspect that Ward's definition of wealth and poverty will be viewed by many readers of this journal as too imprecise. After surveying quantitative and positional definitions of poverty and wealth, Ward prefers to define wealth as "having more than we need" and poverty as "lacking the goods necessary for a life worthy of human dignity, or being able to secure those goods only through constant and precarious struggle" (p. 118). Such definitions might seem vague, crying out for some specific quantitative appeal to a cost of living, for example. For the purposes of economic modeling and empirical studies, such quantification is certainly necessary. However, for Ward's purposes of ethical analysis, I find the less precise definition appropriate and helpful. A quantifiable threshold for wealth could allow some readers to excuse themselves from considering the moral import of their wealth—as Ward notes, anyone earning \$34,000 a year is in the top 1% globally. She does not entirely ignore quantitative definitions but she does decenter them, because a vague threshold therefore allows the reader to exercise prudence, determining where practices such as divestiture of wealth (to name only one example) might foster higher virtue formation. In other words, Ward's definition allows individuals to make moral judgments within their specific community contexts, as is appropriate for virtue ethics.

Ward's most original and significant contributions are found in chapters 5 and 6, which explore the impact of moral luck on virtue formation by considering how wealth and poverty shape the eight virtues that she has selected for examination. Here, the reader finds a unique synthesis of theoretical ethics, the results of experiments in the social sciences, economic data, and ethnographic narratives. Ward argues that wealth leads to hyperagency, "giving persons abundant power, freedom, and choice beyond that enjoyed by other members of society" (p. 133). Hyperagency is often detrimental to the development of justice, as those who have the ability to improve the economic conditions of many of the poor consistently give less of their wealth. Hence, it is unsurprising that students have linked higher economic classes with higher rates of unethical behavior, ranging from cheating to cutting off other drivers. On the other hand, the fidelity—the habit of recognizing and acting in support of special relationships such as family or friends—is potentially enhanced by hyperagency as disposable income allows parents to focus more time and resources in the care of children and their marriages. Conversely, the limited resources available to the poor means that there is often a tradeoff between the practices required to develop justice, self-care, and fidelity. Time spent caring for oneself for a single working parent is often also time neglecting children and undermining fidelity. However, there is also evidence that the poor have advantages in prudence, as they are better able to make financial calculations and empathize with others. Ward synthesizes these findings in chapter 7 with a cursory treatment of corrective practices and policies available to Christians.

Ward is paving new ground, and so inevitably the reader is left with some desire for further analysis. Yet, I suspect that herein lies one of the greatest benefits of Ward's work for the community of Christian economists. Rarely do ethical analyses rely so heavily on experimental data, yet the groundbreaking nature of Ward's work calls for further empirical and experimental analysis to clarify her findings, a perfect opportunity for some of the readers of this review. Ward's text also serves as a corrective: even the strongest analyses of virtue formation in the marketplace have typically failed to consider the impact of income inequality. For example, Johan Graafland (2010) offers thorough analysis of virtue formation in the market that considers the way that markets may foster some virtues like diligence while also fostering certain vices like envy. Even this nuanced analysis of distinct virtues does not consider the way that income inequality might result in the benefits or risks to certain virtues playing out differently among different income brackets in the same economy. Ward shows the way to a more sophisticated analysis. Graafland's study is one of the more subtle available, but others (e.g., McCloskey, 2006) tend to offer more of a blanket analysis—markets foster *doux commerce,* sweetening our virtue by means of our trade. Such broad claims can no longer hold up to scrutiny: Ward has shown that income distribution within markets plays a vital role in the moral formation capabilities of the participants of those markets. Ward's text demands that future treatments of virtue formation in the market consider moral luck, and her own analysis paves the way for fruitful moral theological dialogue with economists. This is a very welcome contribution to an important field of study.

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Career & Family: Women's Century-long Journey toward Equity

Claudia Goldin. 2021. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. ISBN 978-0-691-20178-8. $27.95 (hardback)

Reviewed by Anna Josephson, University of Arizona

In 2019, 67 percent of adults in the United States identified as Christians, falling from 85 percent in 1985. Also in 2019, just over 57 percent of women participated in the labor force, only ever so slightly greater than the 55 percent in 1985. It might be tempting to attribute some causal relationship between these figures: as women enter the labor force, fewer and fewer people across the country identify as Christians. But we must be careful to interpret mere correlations as evidence of a causal relationship.

We can imagine what these figures would be, were we to cast back one hundred years or more. For the history of women in the labor force, this is where Claudia Goldin's excellent new book steps in. In it, Goldin creates a typology of women at work, classifying five groups of women, by birth year from 1878 to 1978. The typology is developed around the timing of two aspects of life (those which, unsurprisingly, give her book its title): career and family.

Goldin defines five groups, assembled by their birth year, that differ in their timing of career and family. Group 1 (born between 1878 and 1897) faces an either/or situation: family or career. Group 2 (born between 1898 and 1923) has a *job* followed by a family, while Group 3 (born between 1924 and 1943) is the reverse, with a family followed by a *job*. Terms shift for Groups 4 and 5, in which Group 4 (born between 1944 and 1957) has a *career* and then family, while Group 5 (born between 1958 and 1978)—optimistically perhaps—has both *career* and family. The change in terminology between job and career is of note, as Goldin remarks on page 53 that "Defining a 'career' consistently across the five groups is inherently subjective." Despite challenges of this classifying nature, Goldin carefully traces the marital, educational, and reproductive trends within each group, highlighting emblematic examples of women in each group, as well as the legal and social changes that occurred during the period in which each group was of reproductive age.

Before I continue with this review, I will share that I read *Career& Family* at a unique juncture for my own career and family, as I was returning to work after the birth of my first child. Although I am not of a birth year included in any of the groups in the book, there are a number of Group 5 scenarios which I see in my own life. I also think it is important to mention that Goldin does not discuss religion in *Career & Family*. While not a detriment to the overall narrative she tells, it does seem like a missed opportunity for a conversation about the role of religion and society in women's decisions about work.

Now, an anecdote from my life: I finished *Career & Family* over the weekend of my infant daughter's baptism. It was at her baptism that I was approached by an older parishioner who declared that it was inappropriate for me to work because, after all, who would teach my daughter? My husband offered that he would. The parishioner scoffed and informed us that he should be earning money. What a Group 1 perspective, I thought.

Goldin describes employment outside the home as being on a spectrum of "greediness," with some employment being less flexible and requiring more time, more weekends, more night hours, relative to other more flexible, less greedy employment. Greedy employments, of course, pay more and offer greater opportunities for advancement. Women have long been mandated not to take these greedy employment opportunities, particularly if they have families. Women must be available for the call from school that a child is sick or to make sure the refrigerator is full and dinner is on the table at six or that the cat has been to the vet or any number of major and minor crises which arise in our daily lives. Women—regardless of whether or not they are employed outside the home—are de facto household managers. A study from the juice company Welch's (do with this what you will…) says that American mothers with children aged between 5 and 12 regularly work 14-hour days. Goldin simply states this constraint on page 216: "…time is the enemy of women's quest for career and family."

Time is the enemy on two fronts. Parenthood, caregiving, homemaking all consume time, of course, but women are faced with a ticking clock—a short period of opportunity both to become a parent (without potentially considerable medical intervention, innovations which Goldin discusses in her chapters on later groups) and to advance in careers, commensurate with male peers. As economists, we know well about opportunity costs and tradeoffs. Goldin succinctly summarizes the constraints imposed by time: "Time is a great equalizer. We all have the same amount and must make difficult choices in its allocation" (p. 6).

But, for all the groups—in one way or another—society plays a role in dictating the timing of career and family. On page 100, Goldin notes: "The greatest constraints on these women [Group 3] were the norms of their day that dictated to those with young children that they *should* stay at home and that their children would 'suffer' if they worked." The pressures of society have, over time, driven some women to be homemakers, when they might otherwise have wished to work outside the home, and others to work outside the home, when they might otherwise have wished to be homemakers.

These ideas sent me down a wormhole on society's expectations and perceptions of women, and the role of religion and the church therein. I poured through Kristin Kobes Du Mez's *Jesus and John Wayne* and Beth Allison Barr's *The Making of Biblical Womanhood*, learning about the history of complementarianism and Biblical (Wo)Manhood, mapping the pathway taken by many religious families and women as Goldin's groups simultaneously progressed along their trail. Goldin lays out the changes that have occurred over time and where many women want to go in the future—but an undercurrent I perceived in the presented history of the church and women is that this advancement is can be perceived by Christians as bad—and women should have a family but not a career: a family should be the only career for women.

Reading and reflecting, I saw echoes of how the expectations of society, the church, and society writ large impact women. Many of these echoes are really more like shouts: consider Mike Cosper's podcast *The Rise and Fall of Mars Hill* for *Christianity Today*, in which Mark Driscoll's policy on women working outside the home is plainly stated. The policy was: don't (and if you do, get lost—you are not welcome here). Another shout was through a chance encounter via Twitter: an excerpt from Missouri Senator Josh Hawley's podcast *This is Living*. With his wife, the Senator discusses ideas that describe the choices faced by Group 1 in Goldin's book—that is: career *or* family. In one excerpt, Mrs Hawley discusses the justification for leaving her career (at least part-time) as: "Your children are only young once." Such a refrain should make a person scream! Sure, it is true enough—children are only young once—but so are women. Again, we are forced to return to time. We only have a short amount of time to have children, to parent them, to advance on the career path that we have chosen. And we must choose and allocate according to our own preferences and values.

I think that here, it bears mention that not everyone wants a career *and* family. For some women, career *or* family (as a choice rather than society's determination) brings fulfillment. But, as Goldin outlines, for those of us who seek both, for perhaps the first time in history, we can have both. Throughout *Career & Family,* Goldin traces the steps of our foremothers and describes how their sacrifices brought us to this place.

These steps bring us, unsurprisingly, to questions about how to move forward. And, as economists, we should consider intrahousehold equity and resource allocation. Up to now, I have written of women as in a vacuum: a single unitary-type household model. But, of course, households tend to have two (or more) participants, and our economic models suggest that collective and bargaining models reflect far better the reality of a household than a unitary construction. Marriage is, after all, a complex and loosely structured social action, a repeated game between two players—but the results of which have reverberating consequences on the rest of the world. As Goldin notes on page 205 (emphasis hers): "*When couple equity is abandoned, gender equality in the workforce tends to follow*." That is, when couples abandon equity, the workplace falls not far after.

So, as women are not alone in this, what is the role of men? In the economics profession, in which only about 30 percent of those with doctoral degrees are women, this is worth particular pause. While I think that women will naturally gravitate towards Goldin's book—perhaps it is not women, but men, for whom this should be required reading. And so, more than anything else, maybe Goldin's book should ask us to reflect on our own lives. How does your household allocate resources and labor? How are decisions made? How do decisions from your household reflect in your workplace? How do decisions from your workplace reflect in your household?

Consider another anecdote from my life: I wrote this review in pieces during a period in which my family was without childcare. The first draft of the review was written before my family woke up in the early morning, while my daughter napped during the day, or after she slept, and while my partner made dinner. My time spent writing the review was carefully budgeted, with consideration from myself, my partner, and our daughter. This work, like all work, was put into the time budget for our household and, with considerations of the household work that had to be done and the career work that had to be done, we allocated time to various tasks. Despite time constraints, we found an outcome that worked for our household.

But decisions like this, made in our own households, can go beyond these confines as, even in the most equitable household, there is still a need to interact with an inequitable system. As Goldin writes on page 220: "…in order to achieve an ideal balance in our uncertain future, it is not merely the women or the families who need to change. Our nation's systems of work and care need to be reconsidered in order to repave the ground on which we stride. It's all a matter of time."

And so, I consider all the expectations set over generations, and unset or reset, depending on where one might find themselves. I ponder what we have lost through these expectations—women forced to choose career or family. I wonder what our daughters and sons will think of us: Have we done enough in our own life and work to ensure equality and equity in our households and workplaces? Have we done enough to make them proud? I wonder what Groups 6–10 will look like: Will they be more like Group 5? Or will they be forced to return to Groups 1–4? I can only hope that things are easier for them than they have been for us, or for the generations before. With these thoughts, I recommend that you spend some time with Claudia Goldin's *Career & Family: Women's Century-long Journey towards Equity* and consider how far we have come, but still how much farther we have to go. ■

The Dawning of the Apocalypse: The Roots of Slavery, White Supremacy, Settler Colonialism, and Capitalism in the Long Sixteenth Century

Gerald Horne. 2020. New York, NY: Monthly Review Press. ISBN 978-1583678725. $27.00. (Paperback)

Reviewed by Jamin Hübner, LCC International University and The University of the People

The trite, orthodox, and uncritically Eurocentric narratives about the rise of industrial capitalism and domination of Europe do not have the sway and influence they once used to. Eric Williams' *Capitalism and Slavery* in 1944 and then Walter Rodney's *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* in 1972 broke up the soil in talking about the relationship of British colonialism and the "rise of the west."[1] The history of Chinese capitalism (especially in the 1200s and 1300s) can no longer be ignored as being isolated and irrelevant to European development—especially today, in light of von Glahn's *The Economic History of China* and the *Cambridge Economic History of China*[2]—nor can the Islamic origins of capitalism.[3] Blaut exposed the entrenched biases of historians who resisted this sea-change in the 1990s,[4] facilitated by Frank, Abu-Lughod, Pomeranz, and others connected to world system theory and/or the "California school of economics."[5] Meanwhile, anthropologists have turned ancient economic history upside down,[6] challenging centuries of essentially baseless narratives about the origin of money, politics, markets, and civilization itself.

Gerald Horne's *The Dawning of the Apocalypse* is yet another important volume in this critical tradition. The book takes a closer look at the origins of capitalism, white supremacy, and the colonial slave trade (all three of which worked together and originated at roughly the same time). Chapters 1–2 introduce this basic framework; chapters 3–4 look at the initial violence against indigenes from the 1400s to the 1500s; chapters 5–8 look at the further development of colonialism on the east coast and explain how these events shaped early American society and identity. The book pays particular attention to Florida and the Caribbean.

Horne's work is rich in primary sources and filled with unexpected twists and turns for readers who are unfamiliar with the economic and social history of this period. For example, Horne notes the wide variety of slaveries that existed in Europe and the Mediterranean in the 1200s–1500s.[7] He also connects the relationship of antisemitism with racism against African Americans and their socio-economic evolution. He also raises questions about the now popular 1619 date for the first arrival of African American slaves in America (pp. 12, 195, 208).[8]

Readers also gain a different perspective of the Reformation. The year 1521, for example, is often remembered for the Diet of Worms—which (in Max Weber's narrative) should mark the beginning of the "Protestant ethic" that gave rise to "capitalism." However, 1521 was practically a turning point that marked the beginning of *anti*-capitalist revolution. Ponce de León was mortally wounded trying to conquer Florida, indigenes massacred colonizers in Santo Domingo, and slaves revolted on the sugar mill owned by the son of Columbus, which frightened conquistadors like never before.[9] Slave revolts have occurred ever since: Santo Domingo (1522), New Spain (1523, 1537), the Carolinas (1526), Cuba (1530, 1538), Columbia with its capital being destroyed (1530), Yucatan (1546), and so on (p. 75–79). This pattern would continue in far greater scale in the Haitian Revolution, American Civil War, in anti-industrial movements in Europe, and countless other such events of worker resistance that continue to the present day.[10]

In the bigger picture, Horne's detailed narrative connects (1) the Crusades, which directly led to (2) colonization of the Americas, which jump-started (3) capitalism—first in the form of mass agricultural production based on private ownership, cheap labor, all for making products to be sold in a new globalized market, then later perfected and modified by British colonizers to gain economic and geographic dominance.[11] Horne finds a turning point in the 1570s that began to facilitate Britain's rise to power, partly due to religious wars that plagued the Iberian peninsula and partly due to having a "second-mover advantage" in colonial ventures. Following in the footsteps of the Italian commercial capitalism of the 1300s, Europeans frequently followed sources of wealth and riches with theology and church action following in its wake (e.g., "a ruthless struggle for material advantage often cloaked in religious cant," p. 146). The "radical decentralization of Protestantism, as opposed to the centralization of Catholicism," he writes in the Introduction:

> provided fertile soil for the rise of racism and other 'faiths.' Besides, as besieged underdogs in the midst of religious wars, Protestants were poised to make overtures to the Jewish community and Islam alike, as a matter of survival. Protestants and

> Catholics, then the Jewish, were rebranded as 'white' republicans, curbing murderous interreligious conflict and ushering in an era of racialized conflict, victimizing Africans and indigenes alike. (p. 32–33)

The whole period is marked by coercion of all kinds—piracy, fraud, war, political dominations, slavery, etc:

> Colonialism and slavery—modernity in sum—emerged from the barrel of a gun. And, as with so much of what catapulted London, no small debt was owed to the Ottomans, which made muskets equal to, if not better than, the best Western Europe had to offer and spread their handiwork especially to their partners in the sixteenth century, which included England… (p. 211)

The Dawning of the Apocalypse is in many ways a horrifying story of how "Christians" brought entire continents of the planet to their knees for—to borrow the words of the Pope in 1452—"profit."[12] Combined with the book's earlier sequel, *The Apocalypse of Settler Colonialism: The Roots of Slavery, White Supremacy, and Capitalism in 17th Century North America and the Caribbean,* Horne certainly provides evidence that "this apocalypse spelled the devastation of multiple continents: the Americas, Australia, and Africa not least, all to the ultimate benefit of a relatively tiny elite in London, then Washington" (p. 12).

Horne's writing is sometimes dense with hanging adjectives and complex syntax. It is also sometimes difficult to trace the exact chronology of the narrative since it often overlaps. I would also recommend reading Horne alongside Streets-Salter and Getz,[13] Ortiz,[14] Lockard,[15] and Charles and Rah[16] for a more complete picture of this time and period. Ultimately, *The Dawning of the Apocalypse* is a solid, scholarly, concise, and incredibly important volume that I would recommend for anyone interested in socio-economic history in the sixteenth century. Highly recommended.

Notes

1. Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (London: Verso, 2018, orig. 1972); Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery,* 3rd edition. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2021, orig. 1944).

2. Richard von Glahn, *The Economic History of China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Debin Ma and Richard von Glahn, eds, *The Cambridge Economic History of China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022).
3. Peter Gran, *The Islamic Roots of Capitalism* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979); Jairus Banaji, *A Brief History of Commercial Capitalism* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2021); Maxime Rodinson, *Islam and Capitalism,* translated by Brian Pearce (London: Saqi Books, 2007, orig. 1966).
4. James Blaut, *1492* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1992); *The Colonizer's Model of the World* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1996); *Eight Eurocentric Historians* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2000).
5. Janet Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony: The World System A.D. 1250-1350* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Andre Gunder Frank, *Re-Orient: Global Economy in the Asian Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Prasannan Parthasarath *Why Europe Grew Rich and Asia Did Not: Global Economic Divergence, 1600–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).
6. See David Graeber, *Debt* (London: Melville, 2014) and, with David Wengrow, *The Dawn of Everything* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2021).
7. "Valencia's captives included Moors, Tatars, Circassians, Russians, Greeks, Canary Islanders—and Africans from the north and far south….The diversity of the enslaved in pre-1492 Spain was extraordinary, ensnaring Circassians, Bosnians, Poles, Russians, and Muslims of various ethnicities. As of 1492 in Spain, there was a startlingly eclectic array of the enslaved, including Moorish, 'Turkish' (actually Egyptians, Syrians, and Lebanese); 'white' Christians, including Sardinians, Greeks, Russians; Canary Islanders (Guanches); Jews; and those described as 'Black Africans'" (p. 49, cf. 36).
8. As portrayed in, for example, the popular work by Nikole Hannah-Jones, *The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story* (New York: One World, 2021).
9. Horne, *The Dawning*.

10. E.g., the unionization of Amazon warehouses and Starbucks stores, for example, is a continuation of this resistance movement. See Erik Loomis, *A History of America in Ten Strikes* (New York: The New Press, 2018); Immanuel Ness, *Organizing Insurgency: Workers' Movements in the Global South* (London: Pluto Press, 2021); *New Forms of Worker Organization* (Oakland: PM Press, 2014); *Ours to Master and to Own: Workers' Control from the Commune to the Presen*t (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2011); Jane McAlevey, *No Shortcuts: Organizing for Power in the New Gilded Age* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).
11. Cf. Heather Streets-Salter and Trevor Getz, *Empires and Colonies in the Modern World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), and especially J. Brent Crosson, "Humanism and the Enlightenment," in *The Oxford Handbook of Humanism,* ed. Anthony Pinn (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021):

    …the convergence of Europe, Africa and the Americas in Europe's first colonial theatre—the Caribbean—has marked the starting point for modernity in many scholarly accounts. Rather than the West's Enlightenment of Europe's subsequent Industrial Revolution, the iconic birthplace of modernity and modern conceptions of the human in this story is the Caribbean sugar plantation…the sugar plantation was the first experiment in large-scale industrialization, rationalized time-labor discipline, and exhaustive commodification (of both humans and materials). Because sugar would spoil if transported back to Europe for processing, it had to be refined in factories adjacent to plantations. Slaves thus worked in both export-intensive monocultures and in factories under a regime of hyper-exploitation. The processing of sugar required the large-scale coordination of labor, its quantification, and its disciplining along rhythms that were foreign to the agrarian cycles of European serfdom. Trinidadian Marxist intellectual CLR James thus argued that Caribbean slaves formed the world's first proletariat, with the Haitian Revolution an exemplar of a proletarian revolution. The Caribbean was not simply the modern world's first world within Marxist visions of a proletarian modernity. It was also modern for many scholars because it experienced the vicissitudes of Liberal capitalism in an early and intensive way. Dynamics that have come to be characteristics of global capitalist modernity—massive population displacement, individualization, or experiences of heterogeneity and cultural hybridity—were all said to have happened in the Caribbean first. (p.185)

12. "…to invade, search out, capture, vanquish, and subdue all Saracens (Muslims) and pagans whatsoever, and other enemies of Christ wheresoever placed, and the kingdoms, dukedoms, principalities, dominions, possessions, and all moveable and immovable goods whatsoever held and possessed by them and to reduce their persons to perpetual slavery, and to apply and appropriate to himself and his successors the kingdoms, dukedoms, counties, principalities, dominions, possessions, and goods, and to convert them to his and their use and profit." Cited in Mark Charles and Soong-Chan Rah, *Unsettling Truths: The Ongoing Dehumanizing Legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2019), p. 15.
13. Streets-Salter and Getz, *Empires and Colonies in the Modern World.*
14. Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous People's History of the United States* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2014).
15. Craig Lockard, *Societies, Networks, and Transitions.* 4th edition (Boston: Cengage, 2020).
16. Charles and Rah, *Unsettling Truths.* ■

The Inhumanity of Right

Christos Yannaras. Translated by Norman Russell. 2021. Cambridge, UK: James Clarke & Co. ISBN: 9780227177549. $98.00 (hardcover).

Reviewed by Dylan Pahman, Acton Institute

The Inhumanity of Right brings one of the major works of political philosophy from one of the most influential contemporary Greek Orthodox philosophers into English for the first time, more than two decades after its original publication in 1998. Yet I would not be surprised if anglophone political philosophers, not to mention Christian economists, might require some convincing to take notice of a book from another time and context. Though short (163+xiii pages), Yannaras's book is densely philosophical, sometimes—especially the first chapter—resembling the terse reflections of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, though more continental and existential than analytic in substance. Moreover, his goal of challenging the paradigm of individual rights, specifically as implemented in modern Europe, might seem uninteresting at best, dangerous at worst. While I have plenty of criticisms, some of which I will detail below, even while acknowledging those defects, I believe anyone up to the challenge of reading this work—including Christian economists—may nevertheless find much of value to consider.

My background is historical theology. Thus, many of my frustrations with *The Inhumanity of Right* are historicist's complaints (in some cases the same complaints I have about the historical caricatures drawn by more than a few social scientists). Despite some fascinating etymological explorations and genuinely insightful theological distinctions, Yannaras does not succeed in escaping overgeneralizations of both East and West, Greek and Latin, ancient and modern, and so on. To be fair, he acknowledges that the ideology of impersonal individualism that he seeks to counter is not limited to the West, having taken root also in historically Eastern Orthodox societies, but he still outlines a genealogy that lays most of the blame—and very little praise—at the feet of a too-often monolithic and reductionistic conception of "the West."

In the face of these, my own temptation—and it is precisely that—would be to fill this review with counterexamples, such as:

The "intellectualism" of the medieval West, for example, has roots in the Christian East to the point that one might even argue scholasticism represents a Byzantinization of the Western mind, one that bore undeniable and monumental civilizational fruit. The recent work of Marcus Plested on the Orthodox reception of Thomas Aquinas certainly complicates commonly accepted divisions between medieval East and West.

Furthermore, Enlightenment individualism comes in a wide variety of expressions, not all of which could be termed “impersonal” or “atom[ist]ic” (the latter a term Yannaras rarely uses but would likely be implied by the modern Greek word for individual—*atomon*). Adam Smith, for example, hardly represents the “zenith” of such “naturalistic sociology” that reduces the person to an atomized individual, rather claiming in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*: “Man naturally desires, not only to be loved, but to be lovely; or to be that thing which is the natural and proper object of love” (p. 40). The need and desire for loving, interpersonal relations are fundamental to Smith’s thought, as many of his interpreters who do not read his *Wealth of Nations* in isolation acknowledge today. The same could be said for many of the classical political economists.

Speaking of personalism, one could point out the influence of Jacques Maritain’s personalist Thomism on the UN’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights (which Russell identifies as a possible foil to Yannaras in his translator’s preface) or, for that matter, the fact that the Lebanese diplomat and Orthodox Christian philosopher Charles Malik was one of the principal drafters of the document. While it endeavored to be ideologically neutral, perhaps even fatally so, one could make a case for underlying influences of both philosophical personalism and even Eastern Orthodox Christianity, albethey alongside the United States’ Bill of Rights and the French *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*.

Lastly, one could identify many contemporary economists who have in various ways endeavored to broaden the anthropological model of modern economics beyond overly rationalistic and individualistic conceptions, such as Thomas Schelling, Robert Frank, Vernon Smith, Amartya Sen, Richard Thaler, Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, Samuel Bowles, and so on.

Yet many of these criticisms, if granted, would not be reasons to dismiss Yannaras but rather to read *The Inhumanity of Right*. Every instance in which the dichotomies of his critiques prove overrepresented makes them all the more relevant beyond his own time and context. The work is surprisingly contemporary while at the same time refreshingly original. Yannaras expresses many concerns of our resurgent nationalists today, for example, while avoiding many of the latter's defects. Perhaps surprisingly, he even rejects nationalism outright, despite its popularity in historically Orthodox contexts, rightly characterizing it as an alien Western ideological import (pp. 88–89); not all his oppositions between East and West are inaccurate. Rather, "The main space of the historical development of the Orthodox Churches was the multinational and multi-ethnic Roman Empire—the empire of New Rome-Constantinople…" (p. 89). Moreover, if many economists today—perhaps especially Christian economists—desire to broaden their anthropological model, Yannaras's book serves as a helpful, if challenging, exercise in seeing the world through a lens significantly different from many of those on offer in Western contexts today.

With that out of the way, what positive counter-proposal to modern, Western conceptions of individual rights does Yannaras have to offer? What could relatively mainstream Christian economists learn from him? And what might they have to offer him and his readers?

Yannaras sets three goals for the book in his preface: to sketch (1) "a political theory without anthropological gaps," including "the dynamically activated existential otherness of every human being"; (2) "the basic lines of political practice with the aim of a socially-centred concept and exercise of individual rights…as an initial guarantee of the possibilities of relation"; and (3) a political theory and practice that "guarantee[s] social adaptability to new needs and new [prioritization] of needs…" (xii–xiii). Note that a comprehensive and accurate historical narrative of the differences between East and West is not among them. It is also notable—and easily missed until reading the last chapter—that Yannaras does not actually seek to reject individual rights but rather to re-situate them as conceived not for the preservation of the individual *against* society but rather for the purpose of opening each person *to* communion with others. The ascetic self-giving and self-transcendent relations of communion constitute one's truest mode of being—the very essence of existentially authentic personhood. This importance of interpersonal relations is precisely the "anthropological gap" he seeks to fill, the corrected starting point of individual rights, and the basis upon which he claims new needs and challenges ought to be addressed.

Yannaras believes political liberalism, though possessing many "positive elements" (p. 97), has come to follow the logic of the supermarket through the reduction of communal ontology to utilitarian individualism, commodifying rights and freedoms and reducing the citizen to a consumer (p. 135). Thus, "Deliverance from the consumeristic sense and use of rights, the rediscovery of their political meaning and dynamic, could be considered an adequate clarification of the 'humanisation' of right" (p. 145). But what would that look like? "However unthinkable—or even repellent—it might seem to Western man…the 'place' for the rediscovery of politics and the communality of citizens in postmodernity can only be religion, if and when religion is founded on a socially-centered ontology" (p. 146). Though he cautions the necessity of long-term processes in this change, it is unclear to me how such a change might take place, both within Yannaras's monolithic conception of the West and—perhaps more problematically—in its variegated reality, especially in the religiously diverse United States. Maybe the trend of Westerners, such as myself, becoming Orthodox Christians is a start. At least I can bear some good news: no doubt many Westerners (and hardly only those who convert to Orthodoxy) consider religious revitalization of first importance to face the cultural and political crises of our day. They would not find such a suggestion "unthinkable" or "repellent" but, on the contrary, think about it a lot and find it quite attractive.

Furthermore, and this certainly qualifies as much as a criticism as a consolation, I expect constructive ways forward would be helped by greater interdisciplinary relations—perhaps some renewed communality must begin between political theory, philosophy, and theology, on the one hand, and the science of economics, on the other—precisely the vocation of Christian economists, among others. When Yannaras bemoans the collusion of political parties and big business interests, I think of the analyses of public choice theorists like Gordon Tullock and James Buchanan. When Yannaras worries over increasingly dense population centers for "a centrally organized consumer economy" (p. 125), I hear a resonance of Wilhelm Röpke's cautions over "mass man" in his *Humane Economy*, where he—better than the public choice theorists—explicitly rejects utilitarian individualism in favor of the image of God and personalism as his anthropological starting point. When Yannaras complains, "Political planning has ceased to presuppose citizens and [local] communities of citizens who possess knowledge, judgement and historical memory," I hear agreement, if only in part, with F. A. Hayek's "Use of Knowledge in Society" Nobel acceptance speech. What I do not hear enough of—or any of, for that matter—are actual citations of actual economists in *The Inhumanity of Right*. If economization of our communal life is the essence of the problem, one would expect some effort to understand modern economic theory, as well as a competent familiarity with the differences between the many schools and key figures of modern economics.

In addition to the many economists mentioned herein, I would commend the work of Kenneth Boulding as a starting point for Yannaras and his readers, as well as readers of this review. Despite my agreement with Yannaras in principle that true communion requires ascetic self-giving and self-transcendent relationships, it seems to me, for the sake of filling the personalistic "anthropological gaps" in our system of rights today, Yannaras too often misses the importance and necessity of *impersonal* social spaces—what Boulding refers to as "exchange systems," such as markets, and "threat systems," such as the state—alongside personal "integrative systems," such as families and churches.

In Yannaras's attempt to include the importance of mercy in society, he unfortunately conflates it with justice (p. 66), confusing its most basic meaning. God is just because "there is no partiality with God" (Romans 2:11), who "shows personal favoritism to no man" (Galatians 2:6). Such also is the essence of the rule of law in just societies. God is merciful in his loving and personal pursuit of every lost sheep in the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ our God, and in his Church that through its sacramental catholicity offers the possibility of true communion to all who answer his call and come into his fold. Byzantine society did take this into account in a way we have lost today, not by collapsing justice into mercy but by granting bishops the judiciary right and acknowledging the legitimacy of the Church's canon law alongside the civil law of the state, institutionalizing mercy in the former and justice in the latter, coordinating them, at its best, through the principle of *symphonia*. Alas, how to recover that today without sacrificing the good fruit of religious liberty is a topic worthy of another, separate philosophic tome.

In the meantime, much more could be said about *The Inhumanity of Right*, but at the least I will conclude with this: Despite my many criticisms, I cannot deny Yannaras succeeds in highlighting the ontological and anthropological nature of the problem of rights today, as well as pointing to the most hopeful way forward—not a political platform but the renewal of both individual hearts and personal relationships in the Church of Jesus Christ. Any who share that hope will find in this book an excellent starting point for further constructive reflection and thus a true philosophical achievement. ■

Why We Fight: The Roots of War and the Paths to Peace
Christopher Blattman. 2022. Viking Press. ISBN 978-1-984-88157-1 . $32.00 (hardback).

Reviewed by Jeffrey R. Bloem, USDA

Matthew's Beatitudes include the well-known phrase, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (Matthew 5:9). But how do we most effectively make peace on earth?

In his first book, Christopher Blattman—a well-known development economist, University of Chicago professor, and policy blogger—presents, distills, and summarizes several decades of research in economics, political science, psychology, biology, sociology, and practical experience about peacemaking in a world that often seems all too violent. Blattman begins by turning the casual observation that the world is violent and full of conflict on its head. Many believe that war is easy and peace is hard, but Blattman argues that fighting is hard and getting to peace is easier than we often tend to think.

To see why this is the case, in Chapter 1 entitled, "Why We Don't Fight," Blattman leverages an explanation that should be well understood among economists: selection bias. Our casual observations about the relative frequency of war and peace are biased by the fact that we often do not observe instances where bitter rivals or enemies who could fight each other strike a deal. Most of the time enemies prefer to loathe one another in peace. We mostly observe the newsworthy and attention-grabbing acts of war and tend to ignore peaceful acts of banal compromise.

To illustrate this point Blattman retells the origins of Colombia's "Billiards War." It started in a prison holding local drug peddlers outside the city of Medellín. Nobody really remembers how it started but a game of billiards in the prison ended in bitter arguing and violence. The conflict grew and eventually spilled outside the prison. Two rival gangs, representing each side of the dispute, began to mobilize alliances with other gangs in the city. Everyone in Medellín braced for war but the "Billiards War" never made an appearance in the global new cycle and will likely never appear in a history book.

Understanding that peaceful compromise is the rule and that violence or war is the exception is important for understanding the strategic benefits of peace and the factors that disrupt this strategy that can lead to violence. The rival gangs in Medellín, Colombia, hold a strategic incentive to maintain peace, even if they dislike each other. They may want to control the other's territory, but fighting for control is costly and the benefit is uncertain. It is costly not only in terms of potential loss of life but also financially. Gangs in Medellín sell local staples such as milk, eggs, and *arepas*; this business suffers during times of conflict. This creates a range of compromises that each rival gang prefers over fighting. In the case of the "Billiards War" one rival gang gave up some territory to the other in a tense but peaceful compromise.

Blattman distills five reasons for war, which each account for the next five chapters of the book. This distillation of the logic of war in a world with strong incentives for peace is the backbone of the book. I will, briefly review the key details for each reason, but this seems like a good moment to emphasize that interested readers should read Blattman's book itself.

1. *Unchecked interests.* The strategic calculation motivating peace relies on the relatively high costs of war to incentivize peace. This incentive for peace breaks down when rulers, or the people who decide whether or not to go to war, are not accountable to the people who bear the brunt of the costs of war—when their interests are not held in check.
2. *Intangible incentives.* On the other side of the calculation, sometimes the benefits of fighting include something intangible—like vengeance, glory, or dominance. In such cases, the incentives for peace are overcome by these intangible incentives even in the face of enormous costs.
3. *Uncertainty.* So far, the costs and benefits governing strategic calculations have been certain, but this need not always represent reality. Enemies may not know the true size or strength of each other, and this uncertainty can lead to mistaken judgments and failed bargains.
4. *Commitment problems.* Negotiations leading to either war or peace are not static games; they are repeated games between players with dynamic and sporadic interests. This environment makes commitment challenging and, although both sides may prefer peace, they both know that neither can credibly commit to peace in the future.

5. *Misperceptions.* Strategic calculations are not performed by unemotional computers but by humans. This can constrain compromises because humans can be overconfident, biased, mistaken, naïve, or hold any other form of misperception about the world around them.

These five reasons for war are not the making of some new theory: rather, they are "a way to organize the huge number of theories and schools of thought" already discussed and debated by scholars and practitioners over the past several decades (p. 167). Although the persistence of any one of these reasons may not be enough to lead to all-out war, their presence narrows the range of possible compromises and makes war more likely. Throughout the book Blattman repeats an analogy of a talented fighter pilot—a "flying ace" as he writes—flying a plane through a narrow canyon. Blattman, introduces the analogy thus:

> … I want you to imagine a flying ace […] evading enemy fire. In open skies he can dive and swerve at will. Should he take bullets to the wings and fuselage, it will be damaging, but probably not fatal. Chance events, like a lightning storm or gusts of wind, are troublesome, but he'll steer through them, for his craft is still solid.
>
> Now suppose the ace navigates more treacherous terrain. He is piloting his craft through a narrow canyon. Now it's more difficult to dodge fire. Damage to the craft that, in open skies, would pose little worry now imperils the pilot. A sudden wind could crash the plane into the sheer walls. It's a fragile state.
>
> This is what it means for the bargaining range to narrow. It changes the landscape a society must navigate. (p. 80)

The second half of the book presents a variety of paths to peace, some of which show more promise than others. One path is interdependence. This includes both economic and social interdependence and the logic is simple. If your well-being is dependent on the well-being of a potential foe, then conflict and war are less likely. Another path is checks and balances. This follows directly from the first reason for war: unchecked interests. Leaders who must answer to those who bear the costs of fighting are less likely to lead their people into war. Yet another path is rules and enforcement. If uncertainty and commitment problems make war more likely, then clearly defined rules with methods and means to enforce those rules reduce the possibility of fighting. This section concludes with a discussion of possible paths to peace—such as broad and blunt economic sanctions—that, despite their popularity, may not be as effective as some hope.

Blattman concludes by acknowledging that war—and other such “wicked” social problems—is “an eternal human struggle” (p. 275). Many readers of this journal will likely agree and attribute these social problems to the presence of sin in our world. This reality can inspire many different reactions, such as an emotional response, intellectual engagement but emotional detachment, and perhaps even hopelessness. Blattman empathizes with these responses but advocates for a slight reframing. Rather than strive for world peace, work instead for a slightly more peaceful world. Blattman then lays out his ten commandments of peacemaking, which, like the Ten Commandments in the Old Testament, are simple yet powerful. These commandments, which I will not reproduce in this review, aim to encourage readers to take on an approach that aims to learn from trial-and-error in our peacemaking work. We find the path to a slightly more peaceful world by pursuing many paths, failing, learning, and trying again. Some may correctly see Blattman’s view hear as similar to Karl Popper’s view of knowledge progressing only through the repeated testing and falsification of ideas.

The caricature Blattman presents—of a patient and diligent engineer for a better world who looks to learn from failure—seems to align well with Bruce Wydick’s caricature of the “shrewd Samaritan.” In Wydick’s own words, shrewd Samaritans are people who “are motivated by feelings of compassion and a yearning for justice, but their actions are guided by careful reflection that is centered on the well-being of the other” (Wydick, 2019). Both advocate for progression beyond ignorance of and indifference to the social, economic, and political challenges of the world by emphasizing investigation and introspection about our action. Moreover, Blattman’s caricature—perhaps even more so than Wydick’s—syncs well with James Davison Hunter’s vision of “faithful presence” that advocates for Christians to aim less for grand dominance and celebrity but to engage the world more thoughtfully, diligently, and faithfully within our own present sphere of influence (Hunter, 2010).

Why We Fight is a clear must-read for anyone interested in work promoting peace around the world. However, I also recommend this book for anyone interested in pursuing thoughtful and effective action aiming to promote justice, equity, and socio-economic inclusion in a broad sense. Blattman develops a framework for guiding our efforts that balances both effectiveness and patience. This is a rare perspective, but one that is necessary as we work in the already but not yet reality of the Kingdom of God.

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