

TEACHING BUSINESS AS A VOCATION: ORTHODOXY AND ORTHOPRAXIS

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Abstract

The teaching of Catholic Social Teaching requires, above all, that theologians regain the confidence they once had in their ability to make meaningful judgments on economic matters. The fragmentation of moral vision and economic science, which occurred with the neo-classicists, has resulted in a divorce between the study of *orthodoxy* and *orthopraxis*, a divorce that does irreparable harm to both theology and political economy. This paper examines the roots of the divorce and the methods for healing it, and uses the “Social Justice for Business Leaders” course at the University of Dallas as a practical example of how to approach the problem in the classroom.

Does Faith Really Matter?

In the introduction to their textbook, *Managing As If Faith Mattered*, Helen Alford and Michael Naughton note that:

We have been educated and trained, by default usually, to work as if faith is a category completely separate from work. While we may adhere to a religious tradition, we tend not to see the relevance of that tradition to our work. If anything, we actively think of things the other way around: we cannot let the ethical or religious principles of our faith interfere with the way we manage the perplexities of organizational and professional life, in case this could compromise our efficiency or our return on capital.¹

However, if ethics and business have become separated, it is not for lack of an effort to join them in the field of business education. Since the 1970s there has been a thriving trade in “business ethics” courses, so that by the mid 1980s, there were at least 500 such courses with 40,000 students, at least twenty textbooks, and numerous societies, journals, and centers of business ethics.² Despite all these efforts, a glance at the business headlines reveals that nothing much seems to have changed since the days of the robber barons, and the proliferation of business ethics courses hasn’t done much to change the actual practice of business. The insight of Alford and Naughton seems to hold, and our faith doesn’t much matter, at least not in business practice.

It would be absurd to lay all the problems of business ethics at the feet of the academics, but neither can we avoid the opportunity for self-examination. We need to ask why so much sincere effort seems to have so little practical effect. The answer, I suspect, lies in the fact that we have, too often, succumbed to individualistic notions of morality, notions which confine the moral to an interior realm of personal preferences; such a purely interior realm cannot really affect, in any intrinsic way, the operation of any business in particular or the economy in general. Moral considerations will remain *extrinsic* to the practice of business or the course of an

economy. Ethics are something added to an economic system that is considered to be, in itself, something pre-moral or amoral, something that is *scientific* and therefore beyond the judgment of mere ethicists or theologians. Ethics are, therefore, an optional feature of economics, somewhat like leather seats in a car: a nice option, but not really intrinsic to the operation of the system.

It is not that ethicists have not done their best to tout the importance of their work. And certainly, all would agree that it would be more pleasant to work in a world where the environment was protected and the worker respected. As mere pleasantries, however, they remain outside the core of business practice and economic thought. But this cannot be correct; the environment is the very ground of our material being and hence the ground (literally) of business, and the compensation given to workers determines the size and shape of the market, and thus is the ultimate ground of the investment environment. The expense of the worker is also the income of the consumer; businesses may be loath to pay the one, but they are happy to collect from the other; alas, they are the same person. As G. K. Chesterton noted you cannot pay a man like a pauper and expect him to spend like a prince.³ Hence, these considerations are intrinsic to economics and not an added feature. Any particular business may indeed do well by, for example, polluting the environment or exploiting the workers. But such practices, extended throughout the economy, are the short route to economic ruin and social chaos.

Economists have come to think of their science in positivistic terms, a set of value-free, mathematical formalisms. Such a “science” requires very little of ethics, beyond notions of sanctity of contract and inviolability of private property. As these things can be provided by positive law, there is very little for the theologian to do. Indeed, the theologian has lost confidence in his or her ability to make meaningful judgments on economic matters. Yet despite its “positive” bias, the neoclassical economist makes specifically moral claims, such as touting capitalism as “the perfect system of natural liberty,” without confronting the terms “nature” or “liberty,” or asking where their perfection might lie. The economist deals with a “free” market without proper reflection on the nature of freedom. Only theology can provide the proper context for these terms, and many others as well.

So then, does faith really matter, and, if so, in what sense? If we accept the modern “orthodoxy” of a value-free economic “science” and moral subjectivism, then faith can contribute very little to the conversation. At best, ethics would be a matter of individual formation, either of individual persons or individual corporations. At the personal level, it would be a mere aid to character given by those self-help manuals with names like “The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Persons.” At the corporate level, “Corporate Social Responsibility” would be, at best, a set of limits (e.g., “don’t pollute the environment”) or else mainly confined to how companies spend the money they make rather than how they make the money they spend. In either case, such teaching would be platitudinous and peripheral.

But if, on the other hand, we acknowledge that morality is the very field of human action and that virtue governs all human relationships, without exception, then we must also say that there are no amoral or pre-moral systems, but that some notion of justice regulates every social system, including business systems. Faith, therefore, is at the very heart of business practice, and ethics at the core of economics. Faith, in this reckoning, is as intrinsic to economics as supply and demand or marketing. Every notion of equilibrium, full or partial, and every concrete instance of it, involves, willy-nilly, some corresponding notion of equity. This provides the

answer to our original question, “Does faith really matter?” “Yes, it does!” Indeed, every economic system roots itself in some concept of the human person, since man is the subject of economics. But concepts of the person are themselves rooted in faith; they involve a conception of man’s ultimate purpose and destiny. Even a denial of purpose and destiny is itself no more than an alternate system of faith, a rival creed; it is the creed of nihilism. And it is this creed which undergirds so much of neoclassical orthodoxy.

Therefore, from the standpoint of faith, the pedagogical task is profoundly *countercultural*. Economics is the social practice of the moral law. Without being embodied in specific economic and cultural systems, *orthodoxy* loses its necessary *orthopraxis*, while economics (*orthopraxy*) wanders without a necessary *orthodoxy*. However, as a practical matter, it is impossible for the two to be separated. What happens in practice is that economics grows its own orthodoxy, a utilitarian ethic that cannot be traced to the science itself, but upon which the “science” is dependent. Orthodoxy for its part grows a praxis which either makes the social teaching a handmaiden of some economic system (as in neoconservatism), or else it makes moralistic demands on the social system without regard to the economic consequences (neoliberalism). In either case, theology becomes a servant of ideologies rather than their critic.

The Vocation of Business

But there is a further pedagogical problem. A typical business student enters his or her course of studies more as an exercise in job training than in education. They seek not excellence but income. And business schools usually connive in this crippled view, promising the prestige of a degree without the burden of an education. This is not so much a defect in the students as it is a defect in their education and in the culture. From their earliest youth, they have been harangued about the connection between education and income, but have heard very little about the connection to virtue; if they have come to equate education with money rather than virtue, they could hardly be blamed. What business schools are really marketing is a claim to “expertise” based on a morally neutral “science” of organizing social ends.⁴ The society (be it the political or corporate society) will choose its goals, and the manager will implement them in the most efficient manner. Of course, this claim to a “scientific” expertise is spurious; the social sciences simply do not lend themselves to the kind of law-like generalizations that could validate such claims.⁵

Management is not a science, though it contains scientific elements. Indeed, if it were a science, then its application could be largely left to computers. Rather, management is an art; it requires an understanding of the density of human motivations, of the relationship of things (means) to persons (ends), and the relationship of persons to other persons in their individual, social, and economic complexity. That is to say, management is about virtue. Without the virtues, the student, and the manager he or she will become, is simply not equipped to handle the complexities of business or of the wider world in which any business exists. As the “reformed” management consultant, Matthew Stewart, puts it:

As anyone who has studied Aristotle will know, “values” aren’t something you bump into from time to time during the course of a business career. All of business is about values, all of the time. Notwithstanding the ostentatious use of stopwatches, Taylor’s pig iron case was not a *description* of some aspect of physical reality—how many tons *can* a worker lift? It was a *prescription*—how

many tons *should* a worker lift? The real issue at stake in Mayo's telephone factory was not *factual*—how can we best establish a sense of teamwork? It was *moral*—how much of a worker's sense of identity and well-being does a business have a right to harness for its purposes?⁶

This failure of the business schools leaves open an opportunity for Catholic social teaching. For while students may have been conditioned to confuse education with money, what they really want is not so much money as meaning. Young people especially want this meaning in their lives, but their education—and the wider culture—so often trivializes their deepest aspirations. Therefore, the social teaching presents us with the opportunity to take the young seriously, to speak to them as nobody else in the business school can. This consists in showing them that they are training not merely for a *job* but for a *vocation*, a calling to fulfill the gospel in the concrete world, to move their societies closer to the Kingdom of God, even if only by an inch or two. My experience is that students respond to this message; it has the power of showing them their future careers in a new and heroic light. They are already tired of the self-interest and cynicism that are the hallmarks of our culture. Students want to hear the call, but somebody must issue it. Issuing this call—and clarifying what it means—is the primary task of theology.

The Two-Fold Task

Teaching the Social Teaching requires that theologians regain confidence in their ability to make judgments about economic theory and practice. This in turn requires that they offer a critique of neoclassical economics on at least two levels that fall within the domain of theology. The first is to examine the utilitarian basis of neoclassicism in order to show that it offers only a crippled and incomplete view of man, who is the *subject* of economics. The second level, related to the first, is to show that the mathematics of the new science, lacking (as it does) a proper distributive principle, is simply incapable of describing the actual situation in any economy, and in any case has never demonstrated any actual descriptive or predictive power. This critique does not in any way displace political economy as a separate science; the theologian does not become an economist. Rather, by placing political economy in proper relationship to its undeniably moral and cultural roots, theology strengthens political economy as a science, since every science is dependent on a higher science; thus biology is dependent on chemistry, and chemistry on physics. No biologist can arrive at a valid conclusion that contradicts chemistry, nor a chemist make a finding in despite of physics; each science on its near neighbors in the hierarchy of truth. The physical sciences all terminate in physics, but the humane sciences terminate in psychology, anthropology and, ultimately, theology.

It is not enough, however, merely to play the critic. The Social Teaching must be shown to have practical applications, both in history and in the present moment. A teaching that has no practice will be viewed by the student as suspicious, a mere collection of platitudes, and the student would be right to be suspicious. The social teaching must be capable of being embodied in a social practice, and if there are no such practices, it would be clear evidence that the teaching is an empty theory, a set of useless abstractions. Therefore, the pedagogical task is two-fold: right thinking and right action, orthodoxy and orthopraxis.

There are, of course, a number of ways to approach this two-fold task. This paper examines the approach taken in the “Social Justice for Business Majors” course at the University of Dallas. This course is required for the Business Leadership degree. It is *not* the Business

Ethics course, which is also a requirement. Rather, its purpose is to give the student a firm background in Catholic Social Teaching and to apply that teaching to the domains of business and economics. But above all, it seeks to convey to the student the idea of business not just as a means of making money, but as a *vocation*, a calling to fulfill the gospel message in concrete ways.

Orthodoxy

Before we can deal with the issues of social justice, we must first tackle a question that is prior to the whole discussion, namely, “Does the Church actually have a right to comment on economics and business? Does she have any competence in these matters?” Without establishing the Church’s authority, the whole question might be seen as a case of Galileo *redux*, that is, a case of churchmen meddling in areas beyond their competence. We must establish that the movement of the markets, unlike the movement of the stars, is concerned with the human person who is the subject of all economic systems. Indeed, the final cause of all economic activity is desire (*eros*), and the proper ordering of desire is undoubtedly a psychological and theological concern, one that cannot be answered from within economics. The key question is the relationship between *eros* and virtue.

The History of the Question

The first part of the course introduces the major themes and discusses the historical background. Of course, it is possible to face these questions apart from their particular histories. However, the use of history has some particular pedagogical advantages. For one thing, it allows a presentation of ideas which is, at least initially, more “neutral.” Although we certainly do judge the ideas and events, they can be presented, in the first instance, as simply things that happened. The historical presentation helps, therefore, to overcome what might be a certain resistance to ideas that might strike the student as novel and alien. In the second place, the historical presentation allows us to see our own situation in relation to the past and to its own development. When we see how ideas have developed, we can also see how they might have developed differently. Finally, without understanding the history of any question that touches on human welfare, it is impossible to fully understand the question and hence impossible to arrive at sane answers; we cannot find the way out unless we understand the way in.

The history itself can be separated into three parts: a history of the modern moral dialogue, a history of the relationship between justice and economics, and a history of property relations.

The Moral Dialogue. The modern world casts a peculiar shadow over any discussion of morality, one that reduces morality to mere personal preference. But if, as we assert, economics is rooted in justice, we are immediately presented with a problem, since “justice” is a moral term. However, in a pluralistic society, is a moral dialogue really possible? In an age of individualism, can there be a “common good” that is more than just a summation of personal preferences? If we cannot get to some notion of an “objective” morality, then the conversation is over before it begins. But such an objective notion is excluded from modernity, and many students, even Christian students, will find the idea of a moral law that binds all persons, and all businesses, to be problematic. This modern view is rooted in notions received from the Enlightenment, notions

that fragment and isolate man in a sterile individualism and leads to a moral autism. Recovering an authentic moral dialogue requires that we see the individual as a “person,” a being in relationship with others. And since it is about right relationships, the moral dialogue is always a cultural discourse embedded in narratives and practices that are dependent on some notion of the ultimate purpose and nature of man.

Justice and Economics. The average person today, and hence the average student as well, takes economics to be something fixed and permanent. But in fact, there have been a variety of approaches to the problems of economics. Pre-capitalist economics relied on a unity of distributive and corrective justice that attempted to balance the personal and social aspects of man. With the rise of capitalism, purely individualistic notions of economics began to dominate, and the unity of corrective and distributive justice was shattered. Economics was bifurcated into two opposing traditions, the labor theorists who emphasized distributive justice and the utilitarians who emphasized corrective justice. Neither could form a complete economic theory. The marginalist revolution provided economists with a tool that was believed to dictate the distributions of all income and property by a “natural law” that operated totally within the bounds of corrective justice. This allowed distributive justice to be “swallowed up” by corrective justice. However, the system was increasingly unstable and prone to inequalities and depressions. Keynes reintroduces the question of distributive justice, but in a peculiar way; it becomes a question not so much of economics as of politics. The economic system will produce the wealth and the political system will tax and redistribute it. Distributive justice becomes, therefore, *re*-distributive. Distributive justice is banished to the political realm and ceases to be an economic factor. This banishment of justice is dogmatized in the “positive” economics of the Chicago School.

Property. Economics deals with social relationships and the most fundamental social relationships are property relations. Property is the foundation of all wealth, and the rules for the distribution of property will dictate economic outcomes. These rules vary greatly from culture to culture, leading to a variety of economic systems. In the course, four different property systems are analyzed from the standpoint of the Thomistic distinction between ownership and use of property. All property systems arise from a culture’s notions of justice, and these notions, along with the property systems that arise from them, are crucial in determining the shape of the economy and all income distributions.

The Social Encyclicals

Having laid the proper groundwork by considering the major issues through the historical presentation, the student is prepared to deal directly with the Church’s teachings, teachings that are outlined in the social encyclicals. These encyclicals define “orthodoxy” for the purposes of this course. In reading the encyclicals, the student is encouraged to come with an open mind and abandon, insofar as possible, the ideological baggage that we all carry with us. For this course, the student reads three of the encyclicals, *Rerum Novarum*, *Laborem Exercens*, and *Centesimus Anus*. These are presented with as little editorial comment as possible in an attempt to understand merely what the pontiffs are saying. However, certain key features that are not evident in the text, but are part of the historical circumstances surrounding the text, are highlighted.

*Rerum novarum*⁷ was written at the end of the 19th century, precisely the moment that the marginalist revolution was claiming to reduce economics to a “science.” But the Pontiff was

enunciating a purely moral requirement, the just wage, which he did not bother to relate to the new economic science, or indeed to any science, old or new. Was the Pope interfering in matters beyond his authority, or was he pointing out something the economists had missed?

*Laborem exercens*⁸ was written by a pope with a working-class background, and it is not surprising that he makes work and the worker the whole key to the social question. Both Adam Smith and Karl Marx had attempted something similar by reducing all value to labor-values. Neither attempt was quite successful for a variety of reasons, but mainly because they were too narrowly focused on purely economic values. But the economic domain can never stand alone and apart. Pope John Paul II is able to see not just the economic value of labor, but its transcendent values as well.

*Centesimus annus*⁹ is written as the Soviet Empire is collapsing. In the midst of the justified euphoria surrounding these events, the Pope poses the question, “Which way forward?” Does the defeat of “scientific socialism” leave capitalism as the only remaining possibility? The Pope raises troubling questions about the future of a consumerist culture divorced from the real needs and ends of the human person.

Tensions between the Social Teachings and Economic Theory

The next task is to examine the tensions between Catholic social teaching and orthodox neoclassical economic theories with a view toward resolving the issues. The first task is to compare the major themes from the social encyclicals to the corresponding ideas from neoclassical economics in order to highlight the tensions between them. Since it is necessary to judge between these views, our next task is to establish the criteria for an “ethical” economics that will allow us to judge the various solutions to the economic questions. This judgment will come down to choosing between two views of the human person, and between two views of the allocation and pricing mechanisms. Both of these choices may be subsumed under a comparison of a pure economism and an economic personalism.

The neoclassical theory is “economistic” in its anthropology in that it reduces the human person to a utilitarian, egotistic, and interest-maximizing individual. The philosophical bases of this reductionism, especially as they appear in Ludwig von Mises’s *Praxeology*,¹⁰ are examined and found wanting, as are the economic conclusions that flow from it. The course then attempts to reconstruct economic theory on the basis of personalism by putting the human person and his social relationships at the heart of a proper economic theory. This implies that economics must replace self-interest with self-respect, put the worker ahead of capital as the true source of growth, and recognize that all consumption is, in the last analysis, based on love—either the love of self alone, in dysfunctional economies, or the love of self and neighbor.

The conflict between personalism and neoclassicism becomes categorical in the question of marginal productivity. Neoclassical theory allocates wealth and income by this formula and considers the resulting distributions to be “just.” Either this formula does or does not fairly allocate all incomes; if it does, then there is simply no space for any additional ethical considerations; if it does not, then neoclassicism cannot be a complete economic theory. This course examines J. B. Clark’s exposition of marginal productivity and notes its shortcomings, both from a moral and a purely economic standpoint. It then attempts to construct a theory of the just wage on natural law grounds, especially the law of property.¹¹

Responses to the Social Teaching

Since the social teaching of the Church is not in itself an “economic system,” it calls for a faithful response from the laity in order to bring it to life in the world. The content of this response is not dictated in advance but depends on the skill and perceptions of the laity. There is not necessarily one “right” way to realize the teaching in the real world, but human ingenuity and the freedom given by a proper understanding of economics will allow a variety of implementations. This does not mean that all responses are equally effective or equally embody the spirit and content of the teachings; any implementation will start with a certain *theoretic* approach which will give the boundaries to that implementation.

D. Stephen Long has classified the responses to Catholic Social Teaching according to three major traditions. He calls these “the dominant tradition,” “the emergent tradition,” and the “residual tradition.” Long bases these classifications on the relation each tradition has to the dominant marginalist rationality of neoclassical economics.¹² The dominant tradition, whether in its liberal, neoconservative, or libertarian strains, completely supports the utilitarianism of the marginalist revolution. In the emergent tradition, identified with “liberation” theology, certain aspects of marginalism are retained, while the residual tradition completely rejects marginalism. Before looking at some practical applications of Catholic Social Teaching, The course looks at some of the more important features of both the dominant and residual traditions; the bypassing of the emergent “liberation theology” is not meant to slight that view, which has important features of its own. But it is less relevant to a study of the relationship between business and the Church’s teaching, which is the main subject of the course.

The dominant tradition is examined through the lens of neoconservatism. This is not to imply that neoconservatism is the only strain within the dominant tradition, or even the best or most complete. There are indeed significant differences among the adherents of this tradition, mainly regarding public policy and economic matters, some being right-wing and some left, some “neoclassical” and some more “Keynesian.” Nevertheless, neoconservatism has come to enjoy overwhelming power, and hence it is the strain of the dominant tradition that the student is most likely to encounter; it has become the “dominant” strain within the “dominant tradition.” We examine the neoconservative response through a critical reading of one of its “founding” texts, Michael Novak’s *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*.¹³

As a representative of the residual tradition, we use the “Distributivism” of Chesterton and Belloc, mainly through an examination of Belloc’s *The Servile State*¹⁴ and *Economics for Helen*.¹⁵ Between the two poles represented by neoconservatism and distributivism, we construct a range of analytic tools for relating the social teachings to current practice and theory. At one end of the spectrum, the analytic tools are simply those provided by neoclassical economic theory, and the current structure is left intact; implementation of teachings is simply a matter of individual choice and conscience acting through and within the confines of a system which is, in itself, regarded as pre-moral or amoral. At the other end of the spectrum, we use the tools provided by a consideration of distributive justice, namely, a theologically informed view of natural law which is used to discern the purpose of an economy, the cultural basis of “merit” that is the basis of distributions, and an examination of the close relationship between equity and equilibrium.

Orthopraxis

The social teaching, and any theories one might derive from it, is worthless if it cannot be implemented by societies and businesses. Our final task is to examine real-world implementations of the social teaching such as the distribution of land and the means of production, and the just wage. The success of these implementations makes the strongest possible case for economic thinking based in an understanding of distributive and corrective justice. Also, they demonstrate to the student that the social teachings are not just a set of external requirements impossible to realize in the real world, but something that has practical applications. Finally—and most importantly—they stimulate the moral imagination of the students to find ways to apply the teachings to real situations.

Land Redistribution. Taiwan and the other “Asian Tigers” broke up the aristocratic monopoly on land and redistributed it to the farmers. The result was a flourishing—and internationally competitive—manufacturing economy.

Globalization and Development. In contrast to Taiwan, the development of other “backward” economies has been less successful, indeed retrograde. Why, after pouring trillions of dollars into development and opening up “free” markets, have the results been so poor? The promise of globalization is that it would be a rising tide lifting all boats. But this has not happened. What went wrong? In a shrinking world, development must come to all, or all will be destabilized. The failures of the World Bank are compared with the successes of other approaches.

Micro-Banking. What separates economic success from grinding poverty is the possession of capital, often just a few dollars’ worth of capital. The success of the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh in providing small loans to impoverished people is examined. Grameen is, in many ways, the best illustration of the effectiveness of distributive justice, even in small amounts, in eradicating poverty.

Cooperatives. The objection remains that distributive justice is simply impractical in a world where manufacturing requires large-scale production and huge amounts of capital. The answer to this objection is given by the Mondragón Cooperative Corporation, an employee-owned conglomerate in Spain with sales of \$16 billion/annum and 77,000 worker-owners. Mondragón cooperatives offer an immense range of products and services, from the simplest to the most technologically sophisticated.

The Just Wage in the Corporation. The most immediate problem facing most students when they begin their professional careers are those of the “normal” corporate environment, an environment where land redistribution and micro-banking may not be immediately useful. Moreover, each business exists in a competitive environment in which it may be necessary to compete with low-wage labor from around the world. Nevertheless, the corporation exists under the same moral imperatives, imperatives which must be harmonized with normal business requirements. The problem would seem to be, therefore, intractable; on the one hand we have a business requirement and on the other a moral requirement and the two are in conflict; there is an intrinsic opposition between the needs of labor and the needs of capital, and no moral requirement can overcome this opposition.

However, this opposition is based on a false notion of man, work, and even of economic science. Not only can the opposition between labor and capital be overcome, but it can be overcome in a way that confers competitive advantages on the firm and its workers. Here we examine actual firms which have found the key to overcoming the opposition between capital and labor and, in the process, found competitive advantages by doing so. Indeed, when we examine the work process, we find that it is often based on a false notion of “efficiency,” a notion that is in itself very inefficient, imposing as it does, excess management burdens and the attendant agency problems.

Business as a School of Virtue

When students embark on their education, they are, quite properly, concerned with what kind of work they will do. Business training promises to offer a clear path and a way to get both an education and a career. However, the reduction of education to mere job training, to the mastery of a certain set of practical skills shortchanges both the students and the society they will serve. Students do indeed think about their careers, but they also think about other things. More than mere money, they want meaning in their lives. We must, therefore, approach our work as teachers with the idea that business *is* meaningful, not merely in terms of money, but in terms of ultimate values.

We can return to our first question, “Does faith *really* matter?” The answer is, I believe, is that not only does it matter, but that faith is present whether or not one acknowledges it. Modern economics, cast adrift from a proper theology, invents its own theology of man, or rather an anti-theology of hedonism and utilitarianism. But this anti-theology is no less a faith than is the belief in the Eucharist or the Second Coming of Christ. Utilitarianism cannot be logically demonstrated any more successfully than any other article of faith; it cannot be proved or disproved, it can only be believed or rejected. Therefore, if faith is at the root of economics, whether we wish it to be so or not, then the role of faith must be explicated.

Economics is dependent on theology for its final terms, which are all related to justice. The anti-theology of utilitarianism values persons only for their usefulness to our ends, but justice values persons as ends in themselves. This has grave economic consequences, consequences which cannot be ignored. If we fail to recognize the place that faith necessarily has, we will likely construct an unjust, and therefore unstable, economic order. Therefore, there can be no economics without an underlying orthodoxy. Theologians must be prepared to explicate this orthodoxy not only in terms of abstract requirements, but in terms of economic *praxis*. Above all, what theologian can communicate is the ultimate meaning of business.

The inescapable truth of the matter is that we are not, as utilitarian economists would have it, *autonomous* individuals, but *social* beings. We are formed by communities and must find ourselves within the context they provide. Economically, we can only fulfill our needs and desires in cooperation with others. The quality of that cooperation will vary from society to society. It may be a “cooperation” based on violence and power relationships, or it may be based on charity and mutual respect; it may treat people as ends or as means; it may discover a common good or be locked in a struggle for one’s own good alone. Each one of these possibilities entails, necessarily, a particular notion of the virtues. Business is the practice of the virtues, and makes concrete whatever that society rewards as “virtue.” A warrior culture will

reward physical strength and courage, an acquisitive society will reward cunning and a certain kind of intelligence. But some virtues will be rewarded and others will not. And since business involves such lofty issues, it is too important to be left to businessmen and economists; theologians must discover their rightful role and duty.

¹ Helen J. Alford, O.P. and Michael J. Naughton, *Managing as If Faith Mattered: Christian Social Principles in the Modern Organization* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 1.

² Richard T. De George, "A History of Business Ethics," (Markkula Center for Applied Ethics, 2005), 5.

³ G.K. Chesterton, *The Collected Works of G.K. Chesterton* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987).

⁴ Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, Second Edition ed. (Notre Dame, Indiana: Notre Dame University Press, 1984), 74.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 86.

⁶ Matthew Stewart, "The Management Myth," *The Atlantic Monthly*, June 2006, 87.

⁷ Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum* (Boston: St. Paul Books and Media, 1891).

⁸ Pope John Paul II, "Laborem Excercens," (1981).

⁹ Pope John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus* (Boston: St. Paul Books and Media, 1991).

¹⁰ Ludwig von Mises, *Human Action: A Treatise on Economics*, 4th Revised ed. (San Francisco: Fox & Wilkes, 1963).

¹¹ John Bates Clark, *The Distribution of Wealth: A Theory of Wages, Interest, and Profits* (New York: Augustus M. Kelly, 1899; reprint, 1965).

¹² D. Stephen Long, *Divine Economy: Theology and the Market*, ed. Catherine Pickstock John Milbank, Graham Ward, *Radical Orthodoxy* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 5.

¹³ Michael Novak, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1982).

¹⁴ Hilaire Belloc, *The Servile State* (Indianapolis, Indiana: Liberty Classics, 1977; reprint, 1913).

¹⁵ Hilaire Belloc, *Economics for Helen* (London: J. W. Arrowsmith, Ltd., 1924).

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