

What was lost by all these changes? In Brown's view, "what was left behind was almost too big to be seen: the erosion and final replacement of the mystique of the ancient cosmos by a Christian model of the universe dominated by the notion of sin, punishment, and reward" (205–6). Less sympathetically, and less cosmically—but no less accurately, it seems to me—one might add that the poor, always invisible in antiquity, once more receded into the background for a piety that was, paradoxically, increasingly individualistic and focused on an ever-more mythologized, and ever-more harrowing, postmortem odyssey of trial by demons, against which the soul had to be protected at all costs. It was, indeed, an "imaginative revolution" (209).

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**Theology and Economics: A Christian Vision  
of the Common Good**  
**Jeremy Kidwell and Sean Doherty (Editors)**  
New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015 (293 pages)

The multiauthor *Theology and Economics* is the product of scholars involved with the Kirby Laing Institute of Christian Ethics and the Association of Christian Economists (UK). It is divided into three parts, focused, respectively, on: (1) interdisciplinary barriers, (2) proposals for more constructive transdisciplinary work, and (3) various concepts of the *common good*. Each section ends with a summarizing essay. The work-as-a-whole concludes with: an editorial summation, selective bibliography, index, and notes on the contributors that afford brief introductions to the individual essayists. The editors pick up Isaiah's eschatological theme of beating swords into plowshares as illustrative of what they mean for the work to accomplish.

Part 1 opens by asking why a conversation proclaimed "important" frequently seems unprofitable. Andy Hartopp concludes this is a case of conversation partners "speaking different languages" (i.e., using different concepts, jargon, and methodologies). Michael Pollitt blames the breakdown primarily on theologians, listing some of their "common" economic misconceptions. Eve Poole's taxonomy of theological methods and Mark Chapman's critique of Red Toryism were not, at least to this reviewer, evidently relevant to the defined section focus. Malcolm Brown wraps up the section by questioning how much his fellows have advanced the conversation. He essentially charges Pollitt with knocking down strawmen, feels that Poole's application leaves much to be desired, and considers Chapman "not directly addressed to the broad question of dialogue between theology and economics."

Matthew Arbo launches part 2 by arguing that an ambiguous doctrine of God, combined with uncritical optimism in the goodness of commerce, led Adam Smith to presume that his deterministic model of economic evolution expressed the divine will. Andrew Henley laments economics' dominant anthropology (i.e., *homo economicus*), as well as its claim

to be merely a science of *what is*, rather than *what ought to be*. He proposes moving beyond utilitarianism by incorporating virtue ethics into economic decision-making and analysis. Jeremy Kidwell illumines John Chrysostom on wealth, idleness, the capacity of manual labor for virtue development, nuances of practicing charity, and more. Sean Doherty advocates a renewed use of dialectic to invigorate Christian economic reflection. His thesis is that an inadequate eschatology has led too many believers to the assumption that since all economic options this side of the eschaton are equally *not the kingdom*, they must be equally *far from* the kingdom. The end result is that the church has lost its capacity for prophetic critique. Paul Williams explains the diversity of his fellow section authors by appealing to their diverse audiences. Arbo and Henley provide resources for dialogue between Christians and the world, while Kidwell and Doherty supply resources for the church's internal reflection on its missiological agenda.

In part 3, Hans G. Ulrich believes lack of consensus on what the economy *is* leads to disagreements about its proper limits and governance. Like Henley, he rejects the notion of economics as a “value-free” science, and calls for a rededication to the *oikonomia tou theou* (literally, “the household of God”)—a phrase functionally defined as God's intentional actions oriented to the fulfillment of life in its fullest sense—as a proper model for economic behavior.

Ulrich emphasizes that the *oikonomia* is “without a positive perspective or point of reference, what we would call an ‘ethical perspective’ for this world.” Given his subsequent discussion of the subsidiarity principle from Catholic social thought, this reviewer can only surmise he means the *oikonomia* is without an economic metanarrative, which might be employed to design more righteous legal/judicial structures.

Donald Hay and Gordon Menzies echo Henley with their critique of rational choice theory (RCT) and its anthropology, identified as rational economic man (REM). In addition to criticizing attempts to apply RCT outside classic market exchange contexts, they argue that even within its traditional wheelhouse RCT has limits (e.g., failure to explain persistent cooperative behaviors by people in situations where it is evident that noncooperation is in their personal interest). Finally, they hold that RCT's lack of a telos defining the common good makes it a poor guide for macroeconomic policy decisions.

Nicholas Townsend contends that the Cold War limited economic modeling to a false binary (i.e., either capitalism or socialism) until 1991, after which time the world uncritically embraced capitalism. Townsend distinguishes between “narrow” capitalism (driven by a single motive: maximization of return on capital) and “broad” capitalism (which includes additional goals such as producing quality goods and serving the best interests of one's customers). He acknowledges that the latter is practiced by many market participants, but insists that the structure of modern economies exerts a relentless pull toward narrow capitalism, which in turn incentivizes the treatment of people as merely “factors of production” rather than as persons bearing the *imago Dei*. Socialism ultimately failed because it did not challenge the *end* of narrow capitalism (i.e., the primacy of capital), but merely its *form* (i.e., replacing private ownership with public ownership). Townsend's solution is to establish alternative business structures, specifying ends other than profit maximization.

Martyn Percy reflects on the tension of Christianity's call to *come out* from the world, while simultaneously living as a witness *within* it. He makes the case that Christianity is an inherently political faith. Percy highlights the movement of political theology away from an emphasis on governments and ideologies, and toward a more mediatory role on issues of common concern (sustainable development, fair trade, and so forth). Percy reminds the reader, however, that the church will always retain a prophetic calling as well. In his section summation, Oliver O'Donovan interprets Ulrich and Percy as developing theologies of economy (i.e., treating the economy as a phenomenon worthy of independent theological reflection), whereas Townsend, Hay, and Menzies seek dialogue between theology and economics, albeit primarily by critiquing economists' accepted platitudes.

Kidwell and Doherty conclude the book by reiterating the overarching goal of turning disciplinary swords into plowshares. They acknowledge, however, that this side of the eschaton there remain legitimate uses for swords. Owing to the fallen nature of humanity, there will continue to be disputes and thus a continuing need for swords, both metaphorical and actual. They acknowledge that some ideological swords have been drawn and utilized between at least some of the essayists, and defend this as an appropriate part of the larger goal of transdisciplinary collaboration. They conclude with five points for improved collaboration: (1) greater recognition of previous interdisciplinary dialogue; (2) ongoing self-critical analysis of the freighting in one's own discipline; (3) avoidance of stereotyping; (4) pursuit of transdisciplinary collaboration rather than mere "display" or "dialogue"; and (5) acknowledgement of the ongoing diversity of one's own discipline.

As is common for such works, essay quality varies widely. Some essays seem ill suited to the sections in which they appear. Additionally, particular essays seem either preoccupied with issues of English national interest or simply presume such a context. This is not necessarily a bad thing, though it does reduce the easy applicability of the work. Aside from these organizational complaints and the occasional grammatical error, the anthology is a good one. Although the introduction speaks of the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration arising, at least in part, from "a lack of resources for a Christian public hoping to find concurrence between their theological convictions and their daily participation in market economies," the level of specialized jargon in many of the essays probably ensures this book will be of most benefit to professional theologians and economists and to institutions supporting seminaries or graduate economics programs.

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