

evasion precisely by limiting the reach of government; that is to say, its overall unchecked extension and growth in the size of funded projects. According to Yu, if expansive government programs are kept at bay by local and private initiative, as the Church both teaches and encourages the faithful, state treasuries are incentivized to remain lean and focused on what they fundamentally must do. As a result, taxpayers gain confidence and trust in government spending and, therefore, are more likely to pay their tax burden. Yu concludes: “Undoubtedly, a minimum and basic social welfare is both necessary and obligatory. But some of the existing social welfare activities in the first world countries seem to have violated the principle of subsidiarity. Without observing the principle of subsidiarity, there is no true common good” (161).

In sum, tax evasion may very well be sinful, but it also can be rightful rebellion against governments involved in activities to a degree they are naturally not designed to do, thereby crowding out moral initiatives, as in private welfare services. “If there is a violation of the principle of subsidiarity,” Yu points out, “there is *also* a violation of the common good. Tax money used for activities that go against the principle of subsidiarity may consequently be considered unjust” (196–97).

Render to Caesar? gives genuine and robust moral advice to concerned Christians as moral agents in the economy. The morality of taxation is a subject that is largely ignored by clergy in sermons and in confessionals, and, therefore, Fr. Yu’s book is of immense service to the Church and its faithful. Yu, furthermore, writes in the style of the social teachings that often leave generous space for individual prudential judgment about individual economic transactions that, on a daily basis, are as numerous and unique as living souls on earth.

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The Theology of Craft and the Craft of Work: From Tabernacle to Eucharist

Jeremy H. Kidwell

New York: Routledge, 2016 (242 pages)

There is a surplus—a glut even—of books about faith and work. Some are good, but many are the junk food of the publishing industry, unhealthy fare that does not satisfy a genuine hunger but sells (too) well. So when I picked up Kidwell’s latest, I couldn’t help but think: “We don’t need *another* book about faith and work.”

But we did. Because what is scarce in this field are stick-to-your-ribs kind of books that take time to prepare, eat, and digest—which is exactly what *The Theology of Craft and the Craft of Work* is.

When Oliver O’Donovan wrote *The Desire of Nations*—hearty fare indeed!—he noted that Christian political discipleship needs a theology consisting of “more than scattered political images; it needs a full political conceptuality.” Not content with speaking only

to his own tribe, he went on to say that “politics, for its part, needs a theological conceptual-ity.” Both, he noted, “are concerned with the one history that finds its goal in Christ, the desire of nations.”

In many ways, Kidwell offers this with the theology of work. He goes beyond the scriptural images that are scattered in our glut of faith-and-work books and provides a working conceptual-ity of theology and a theological conceptual-ity for our work. And like O’Donovan’s, Kidwell’s work finds *its* goal in Christ, to whom “the wealth of nations”—the fruit of our individual and collective labor—is brought and made coherent.

While highly accessible to the lay reader, the book is probably best suited for the academic palate—and not just because of the price (currently \$117 USD on Amazon). Kidwell delves deeply into both the original languages and the social contexts of Scripture and at the same time draws on a vast knowledge of debates about work within the guild of biblical studies.

He is refreshingly ruthless in his distribution of attention—choosing to eschew “spending [his] interpretative energy reconstructing redactive layers, presumed authorial strata, or form-critical units that lie behind the text we have” in favor of a presumption “that there is a theologically construed continuity [about work] to be found among the various texts of Scripture.” Key to understanding that continuity is “respecting the integrity of the canonical texts in its received form as it has been authorized by Christian communities over time.” The result is “an account of ‘holy work’ that is mediated through theologically peculiar, and ecclesiastically structured, worship.”

This approach allows Kidwell to go beyond the typical texts (e.g., Luke 10:7) and themes and allows the reader to listen to “Tabernacle and Temple construction narratives” that exist throughout Scripture in a way that leaves the listener—academic or otherwise—with the “‘texture’ of a larger moral account” of work ringing in their ears.

I am hesitant in this review to simply provide the reader with a bulleted list of that moral account as Kidwell (rightly) insists that it is meaningless if divorced from the story of the relationships of God, Israel, and the church, or from the practices that define that relationship. Two particularly profound exegeses from the book will have to suffice as an appetizer.

Some of us are used to thinking of Solomon’s construction of the Temple as the high point of Israel’s history. The king who opted for wisdom in lieu of riches, and ended up with both, is touted as the epitome of Godly greatness. His Temple project is often seen as the fulfillment of the temporary Tabernacle dwelling constructed in the desert. But Kidwell’s exegesis places the Temple’s construction in a more ambiguous and troubled place beside the Tabernacle. His reading suggests that we should pay as much (perhaps more) attention to *how*, by whom, and with what the Temple was built as with the final product. The result of Kidwell’s study left me feeling both wiser and richer than Solomon. This is one small example of how Kidwell’s approach underscores how work and worship are intertwined throughout the entire canon.

Perhaps the most striking—and challenging—section in the book is his description of how Jewish practices of nonpropitiatory sacrifices embodied the intertwining of work

and worship. Many readers are inclined to consign the practices of burnt offerings, grain offerings, tithes, and first fruits to the historical dustbin alongside Levitical prohibitions against eating shrimp. Others attempt to distill these into freestanding signs that lack substance that is embodied in worship. Kidwell's gift is to show how Levitical offertory commandments should not just inform but should *shape* our current *liturgical practices*. He notes that, for instance, the practice of giving the first fruits "provides some ritual context for the further affirmation of excellence." And, further, it "implicated the work of Israel in a direct way in their worship and provided a reminder in practical form that one's daily work was to be inextricably involved in one's worship." In light of our highly anemic, and almost entirely disembodied, liturgical practice of giving in the Western church, his exegesis provides the beginnings of an answer to "the crucial question [of] not merely how much money or even what sorts of things we bring, but about how the specific practices that go on in Christian worship might carry forward in our daily work."

Kidwell does not outline a specific program for how we might do this; he leaves this to the imagination of the reader. But, with its depth, its clarity, and its superb craftsmanship, Kidwell's book fulfills his hope that encounters with "the strange worshipping world" of Scripture "might provide a context in which to sing the ethos of God for our workplaces and industries in fresh and creative ways."

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