



Economic Wisdom Project

Research Notes on the 12 EWP Elements

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to assist writers and scholars who wish to explore the connections between the 12 Economic Wisdom Project (EWP) Elements and theology, biblical studies, and church history. Like the Elements themselves, this is not a comprehensive overview or summary of everything the Bible has to say about economics, nor is it a work of systematic or constructive theology. Rather, this document takes the Elements as a starting point and explores where they intersect with some important works in the traditional theological disciplines.

Method

Soliciting input from leading seminary faculty in the Oikonomia Network, we compiled a list of books and resources where overlap with the Elements might be identified. Under the guidance of professor Scott Rae (Talbot School, Biola University) and professor Charlie Self (Assemblies of God Theological Seminary), researchers Kathryn Arumae, Danny Castro, Annalyssa Lee and Ken Valardi (Talbot) and Luke James (AGTS) reviewed the books and resources, identifying points of overlap with the Elements. The core methodological standard set for this research was: “For each resource, produce a set of notes organized into 12 sections (one for each Element) listing material in that resource that relates to each Element. The purpose is not to evaluate the strength or validity of any arguments made, nor is it to search only for material that supports the Element. The purpose is to inform the person reading the notes about what the resource contains.” The notes were then compiled into a single document.

Table of Contents

Element 10: Programs aimed at economic problems need a fully rounded understanding of how people flourish.

<i>How people flourish</i>	4
<i>Issues and challenges for economic programs</i>	6
<i>Examples from history (biblical & extra-biblical)</i>	10

Element 11: Economic thinking must account for long-term effects and unintended consequences.

<i>Long-term affects</i>	13
<i>Unintended consequences</i>	16

Element 12: In general, economies flourish when goodwill is universal and global, but control is local, and personal knowledge guides decisions.

<i>Universal goodwill</i>	19
<i>Local control</i>	20
<i>Personal knowledge/decision-making</i>	22

Abbreviations

BCG	Kenman Wong and Scott Rae, “Business for the Common Good”
BE	R.C. Sproul, Jr., “Biblical Economics”
BGG	Wayne Grudem, “Business for the Glory of God”
C	William Placher, ed., “Callings”
CC	David Hall and Matthew Burton, “Calvin and Commerce”
CIV	Benedict XVI, “Caritas in Veritate”
EE	Bruce Longenecker and Kelly Liebengood, eds., “Engaging Economics”
EP	David Cowan, “Economic Parables”
FCC	Charlie Self, “Flourishing Churches and Communities”
FF	Chad Brand, “Flourishing Faith”
FW	Justo Gonzalez, “Faith and Wealth”
GW	David Miller, “God at Work”
HGM	David Wright, et. al., “How God Makes the World a Better Place”
LE	John Paul II, “Laborem Exercens”
MFC	Peter Phan, ed., “Message of the Fathers of the Church: Social Thought”
NPR	Craig Blomberg, “Neither Poverty Nor Riches”
OMB	Max Stackhouse, et. al., “On Moral Business”
OTE	Chris Wright, “Old Testament Ethics for the People of God”
PC	Max Weber, “Protestantism and Capitalism: The Weber Thesis and Its Critics”
PP	Abraham Kuyper, “The Problem of Poverty”
RD	Herman Bavinck, “Reformed Dogmatics, Volume 2”
RE	John Mueller, “Redeeming Economics”
SDC	Michael Novak, “The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism”
SSB	Stephen Grabill, ed., “The Stewardship Study Bible”
TFO	David Baker, “Tight Fists or Open Hands?”
TOW	Theology of Work Project (various papers)
VC	Austin Hill and Scott Rae, “The Virtues of Capitalism”
WBM	Jeff Van Duzer, “Why Business Matters to God – and What Still Needs to Be Fixed”
WIL	“The Word in Life Study Bible”

Element 10

Programs aimed at economic problems need a fully rounded understanding of how people flourish.

How people flourish

True development, economically and socially, must take into account the ways in which humanity improves itself. Life is more than just money. It involves everything that contributes to the true wealth (broad sense) of humanity. (CIV, p. 13)

True development finds value in glorifying God and committing to serving God in love which is leads to the benefit of all Creation. (CIV, p. 34)

Human development accounts for the spiritual and economic and social well-being of the person. (CIV, p. 47)

Being transformed into the likeness of Christ is the end of discipleship and any attempt at thinking on economic engagement takes into account the *telos* of individual Christians. (FCC, p. xxx)

Helping the poor and helping them flourish involves understanding the economy in terms of value creation and its connection with all spheres of what it means be human, e.g. the artistic and cultural. (FCC, p. 16-17)

The Bible provides the story through which humanity may understand its true value and economic thinking which seeks to add value to the world understands proper role of biblical values in that process. (FCC, p. 25)

Part of engaging economic problems includes educating people about how the economy works and how fit into the system. (FCC, p. 65)

Economic well-being is more than theory and abstract concepts. The economy is made up of working people who not only provide basic necessities for themselves, but also bless others with the wealth they produce. (HGM, p. 8)

The key element to human development is human work. (LE, p.6)

Families add value and creativity to society. (OTE, p. 355)

Those who manage and work in economies need a theologically informed approach to business and in the context of how cultures work and flourish. (OMB, p. 11-12)

A failure to understand the role of theological-ethical vision in society breaks down creative economic function. (OMB, p. 33)

Christian business people have the opportunity to help people discover a vision of society that conforms to the will of God. (OMB, p. 186)

Stewardship requires planning. (OMB, p. 433)

Investing the betterment of society includes discerning areas which will benefit most from development. (OMB, p. 491)

Economy inevitably involves philosophical thinking about the highest good and how people flourish. (RE, p. 355)

The necessary conditions for material prosperity are production, tool development, surplus capital and profit. (p. 41-59) The chapter on poverty includes some explanations for the causes of poverty and what can be done to help the poor flourish, particularly Biblical means of charity, such as giving, tithing (Deut. 14:20-29) and gleaning (Lev. 19:9-10; Deut 24: 19-22; Ruth 2:8-9) (p. 141-150).

Just as sound doctrine is important for healthy behavior in the church, it is also important for healthy behavior in the workplace. (TOW, "True Belief Leads to a Sound Organization (1 Timothy 1:11, 18-20; 3:14-16)")



Issues and challenges for economic programs

The individual is primarily responsible for development, and programs must account for this reality. (CIV, p. 30)

The local Church is the primary conduit through which God injects creative, thoughtful, innovative, and ethical actions into the economy. Economic thinking must account for the creative energies of local bodies of believers to impact the world. (FCC, p. xxxi)

The mission of God must always accompany the intentional movement to create flourishing churches and communities. (FCC, p. 121)

Governments can create positive structures that aid citizens in their development. (FF, p. 59)

Economic and social problems must be met with a variety of business and civic engagement. (HGM, p. 99)

The economic success of countries depends on inclusive economic institutions which encourage mass participation through guaranteeing private property rights, unbiased system of law, public services ensuring fair access, and the freedom of peoples to choose their callings in business. (HGM, p. 100-101)

The concept of human work as divine mandate and essential element of what it means to be human must be central to discussions about economic and social policy. (LE, p. 14)

Understanding the rights of humanity is the key to any economic policy. (LE, p. 36)

The development of mature human beings who contribute to the well-being of society must be a priority in shaping the way society establishes the spheres of labor. (LE, p. 39-40)

The socio-economic ethics of the OT speaks of inclusion of the needy present in society by ensuring they are cared for, helped, and given shares in the economy. (OTE, p. 195)

Economic programs cannot be divorced from theological or ethical convictions. (OMB, p. 111)

No social analysis is complete which does not consider the metaphysical-moral presuppositions of society. Economics operates within society and programs must operate within these structures. (OMB, p 111-112)

Greedy accumulation of wealth and forced poverty damages community and economic development. As such, efforts to address these ills must call the greedy into account and relieve the distress of the poor and bring both segments to a more disciplined life. (OMB, p. 112)

The basis for ordering of justice in the state and in citizens is writings and teachings on “divine things.” (OMB, p. 124)

Development that fails to address root causes of social distress will never succeed. (p. 334)

Societies are responsible for allowing people the freedom to live out their vocations faithfully to God. (OMB, p. 478)

Affirmation of Christian ideals of justice leads to individualism and democracy which will influence the socio-economic climate. (OMB, p. 816-817)

Moral principles must remain integrated in organizational character because to separate moral concerns is to remove the human element. (OMB, p. 866)

Economic thinking must include the love and hate that goes into economic decisions. People allocate their scarce resources based on more than rational thinking void of emotion. (RE, p. 2)

The four facets of economics include decision making and the three levels of human society: personal, domestic, and political. All of these levels are included in biblical and classical thinking, but forgotten by most contemporary economists. (RE, p. 2-3)

Employment can be explained in relation to fiscal policies. When governments substitute their role in value exchange for the value exchange which occurs in the family unemployment rises due to the decreased value of work. (RE, p. 320-321)

Trust in God is essential to the economy. (SSB, p. 887)

We have a responsibility to create economic systems and practices that help people flourish. (Micah 6: 6-8) (SSB, p. 1180)

The affluent are not commanded to give money per se, but to help their neighbors generously. The idea is not that those with much are to be seen in a negative light; charity should be voluntary and not mandated: Acts 2:44-46. (BGG, p. 53-54)

We need a better understanding of the economic world in general, and the free enterprise system in particular, to have mature Christian thinking and properly use the economic opportunities God has provided us. (EP, p. 16-23)

Lifting developing countries out of poverty requires “capital and know-how,” and the resulting economic improvement will in turn also help these nations improve environmental conditions. (EP, p. 110)

Many anti-poverty activists lack an understanding of what economic and government systems should do to help people flourish and overcome poverty. (EP, p. 180-183)

There are ways to help the poor and weak, and pay them fair wages, while rejecting socialism. (GW, p. 26)

Pope Leo XIII’s “*Rerum Novarum*” argues against socialism as the answer the economic problems of the time. First, the dissolution of private property would prevent members of the working class from being to utilize wages for their own betterment. Second, socialism violates the natural right to private property, by which people are meant to provide for themselves and their families. Third, socialism distorts the role of the state by exercising excessive control over the family and paternal authority in provision for the family. Fourth, socialism would create confusion, disorder, and envy within society. The inviolability of private property is the most fundamental principle for alleviating the conditions of the working class because it allows them to properly utilize wages for their own betterment and to give away any excess when appropriate. (C, p. 360-365)

Christianity and the Social Crisis by Walter Rauschenbusch asserts that social equality can exist while there are other fundamental inequalities amongst people, such as intellect, education, age, authority, etc. He argues that capitalism has weakened the social equality of America by creating two distinct classes. (C, p. 378-380) Industry and commerce are good, but they must serve the moral good. The greatest contribution anyone can make to a social movement is to reform his own moral judgment, and thereby put justice above profit. (381-383)

In “Vocation in Work,” Dorothy Sayers argues that to deal with economic problems, we must first understand the right relation between work itself and man. The doctrine of creation and Christian anthropology show that people are meant to be makers and creators, since we are made in the image of the eternal creator. Enjoyment of work is meant to be the end of work; the end is not supposed to be economic security. (C, p. 405-412)

“Adam Smith, the father of modern capitalism, did not see business as merely a way to ‘make money’ to facilitate private individual gain. As the title for his most well-known book, ‘The Wealth of Nations,’ attests, he thought capitalism was a way to harness enlightened self-interest to serve the common good and make *everyone* better off.” (BCG, p. 29)

“The recent global economic crisis has re-alerted the general (non-business) public that it too has good reasons to care about these questions. Business touches almost every area of human life, including the food we eat, the clothes we wear, the air we breathe, the value of our investments, the working conditions of our global neighbors and even our cultural values. How business people and organizations envision their purpose and mission affects everyone.” (BCG, p. 31)

“Throughout this book we have argued that work should ideally be viewed as a calling (more accurately, as one of our particular callings), business should be practiced as a form of service to God and neighbor, and we must guard against falling to vices such as over identification with work, greed and over ambition. In order for this to occur, however, organizations and their leaders must do their part. To simply place the burden on employees to change their attitudes is far from sufficient and abdicates the role of leaders. An enabling context or a community where employees can live out their callings, grow as people and maintain a proper perspective on work



must be intentionally developed and nurtured. This, we argue, begins with god leadership.” (BCG, p. 192)

“Economic programs, thus, are not as value-free as some imagine, and many modern proposals are more reminiscent of Marx’s manifesto than of free-market principles that allow economies to self-correct by eliminating those who unjustly overextend themselves, which in turn creates an opportunity for new businesses to operate efficiently.” (CC, p. xxiv)

“We are cautious to avoid making a stealthy endorsement of all types and expressions of capitalism, for we are aware of its various shortcomings...Still, socialism does not make a man more righteous or capable of resisting temptation. Nor does communism, libertarianism, or environmentalism make man less of a sinner. Human sinfulness is a macro issue that persists throughout all systems and all of history. If the sinfulness of man is an inescapable axiom, then all economic or business systems can aptly be referred to as iron cages. It is only a question of knowing which cages confine and which idols are being worshipped. Capitalism abused is rooted in the idols of materialism and greed. Socialism abused is devoted to the idol of self-righteousness or communolatry. Honest assessments of presuppositions must also equitably address idolatry where it occurs.” (CC, p. xxvi)

Government projects or reforms are rarely as effective as they aim to be; nor are they as effective as private or charitable institutions, which are usually more clear about their goals and can aim all their resources to the specific needs of each area and its people. Moreover, it is important to have a realistic view of people: their potential and their depravity, and also how they flourish. Capitalism is the best economic system for taking all of this into account and creating incentives for people to be productive and virtuous for their own good and the good of others. When government controls too many of the entrepreneur’s decisions and what he can do or earn, it stifles his drive to flourish in these areas. When government rewards laziness and punishes wealth, it takes away people’s desire to be productive for themselves and others. Capitalism gives people the opportunity to flourish by incentivizing virtue and productivity for the good of all. Programs aimed at reforming what goes wrong in a capitalistic system should not blame capitalism, but rather take a close look at the morality of the businesspeople in question, and how government control affects the system. The economy, which is people making moral decisions in business and government, should not be confused with capitalism, which is the system and structure within which the economy operates. (VC)

Socialism believes it can create God’s utopia. (PP, p. 20)

“The cruelty of the socialist was never found in our savior.” (PP, p. 30)

Examples from history (biblical & extrabiblical)

John Calvin’s theology stressed the sacredness of work and each individual should take responsibility for their part in earning a wage. He believed that this is a proper response to living all of life devoted to God. The Puritans took up Calvin’s teaching on work. (FF, p. 19)

John Wesley understood the importance of work for the individual and the larger social network of the economy. He knew that political and legal structures influenced economies which in turn influenced individuals' experiences of labor. As a result, the Wesleyans sought to influence the economy in ways that mirrored biblical principles for the benefit of all society. (HGM, p. 7-8)

Wesley challenged people to positively impact the structures of England by supporting systems which promoted biblical values like freedom, access, fairness, and human dignity. (HGM, p. 58)

Once adopted as an official religion the Church was forced to develop a doctrine of social engagement. (MFC, p. 24)

The Church Fathers exhibited thought which reveals depth of reflection and teaching on social conditions necessary for human flourishing. (MFC, p. 16)

The health of Israel and the type of society they were (and supposed to be) was directly linked to the way they approached their relationship to God. They flourished when they were faithful to God. (OTE, p. 58)

The provisions of Jubilee kept Israel's focus on God as their provision along with ensuring segments of society never descended into perpetual poverty. The economics of Israel centered on the provision of God because that is how nations flourish. (OTE, p. 97)

The distribution of land by families and tribes in Israel made sure that no person/group ever suffered alienation and there was equitable distribution. (OTE, p. 200)

Scholastics thought the role of government was to provide a structure which allowed people to live virtuously for God. Virtue was necessary for the individual to live a fulfilled life. (RE, p. 38)

In the U.S., the birth rate is directly tied to the strength of the economy. The choice to have kids is because people choose to love them. This giving principle of love is tied to frequency of religious worship. Fulfilling the Genesis mandate to multiply already directs economic thinking to future generations. (RE, p. 238-243)

God's commands are for Israel's prosperity. (Deut. 6:24) (SSB, p. 222)

God is the source of wealth creation and this is never separated from his commandments and ethics. Wealth is more than money because otherwise it would be possible to divorce true wealth from covenant. (Deut. 8:18-20) (SSB, p. 225)

Parameters for centralized leadership still focused on wise use of resources and value creation through ethical leadership. (Deut. 17:14-20) (SSB, p. 237-238)

The Gospel can disrupt an economy if that economy is contrary to human flourishing. (Acts 14) (SSB, p. 1444-1445)

Social gospel and socialist attempts at building “a perfect economic world” do not properly understand the gospel or the effects of original sin. (EP, p. 44-48)

Much criticism of economic globalization is misguided; “governments, businesses, and other market organizations” are neither “instruments of salvation” nor “institutions in league with the devil,” but are means by which people and resources can be marshaled to serve people’s “wants, needs, and beliefs.” (EP, p. 95-98)

“One’s view of man and society also crops up in certain economic applications. Following the pioneering theory of Nobel economist Mohammed Yunus, many wonderful advances have been funded over the past twenty years by privately held microfinance groups. Among these successful programs, one clearly indicates not only that private capital is needed and appreciated in developing countries, but also that loans function best if they are tied to several types of accountability. Customarily microcredit organizations loan small amounts of capital as seed money for a productive business to those who do not have adequate resources. Such loans are then to be repaid after profitability and recycled again in the local economy. Those loans are then issued again to others, and the original recipients have learned much about responsibility and entrepreneurship. To fail to require repayment would be to instill economic expectations that are wrong.” (CC, p. xxiv)

1 Tim. 5:3-16 – Rules for who qualifies for help (WIL)

Element 11

Economic thinking must account for long-term effects and unintended consequences.

Long-term effects

Long term growth comes from value-creating work. (FCC, p. 65)

The key element to human development is human work. (LE, p.6)

Thinking about economy, especially in the West, needs to understand how the Bible has shaped culture. Without engaging biblical themes it is impossible to fully engage in economic thinking. (OMB, p. 37)

Mosaic laws guided Israel in a way that helped ensure long-term and short-term access to God's provision. (OMB, p. 38)

Companies have character and managers must engage in business in a way which focuses on legacy of their organization. (OMB, p. 527-528)

The influence of Aristotle and Augustine helped Aquinas present a fully formed economic theory. (RE, p. 28)

The long-term effect of Aquinas and Catholic economic thinking helps explain why there are no major differences between Catholic and Protestants since the Reformation. (RE, p. 32)

Abraham's dealing to buy a burial plot for Sara showed long-term economic thinking. (SSB, p. 29)

Joseph did not think about the long-term effect of forcing people into servitude for their food. (Gen. 47:13-26) (SSB, p. 62)

The only long-term solution to world poverty is business. Businesses produce goods and jobs, those being the best solutions to creating a middle class and getting people out of poverty. (BGG, p. 80-81)

Debt, whether large scale or small scale, is like a bubble that will burst; when it does, it could leave us in "deep trouble." (EP, Preface to the Second Edition) The parable of the unmerciful servant (Matt. 18:21-35) deals with debt, forgiveness and the practice (or not) of generosity. It also warns against misvaluing wealth, just as Paul warns against loving money in I Tim. 6:10. But there are positive as well as negative uses of debt. (Chapter 6)

When businesses adopt a short-term mentality to get quick gains and results, the ultimate result is layoffs, the elimination of middle management layers, and the break-up of long-term employment. (GW, p. 69-70)

The author quotes Nobel-winning economist Robert William Fogel: "The future of egalitarianism in America turns on the nation's ability to combine continued economic growth with an entirely new set of egalitarian reforms that address the urgent spiritual needs." (GW, p. 65)

"While many people and institutions—including borrowers, credit agencies and government regulators—can be faulted, much of the current trouble started with an industry, banking, that once saw itself in the more noble terms of a profession engaged in helping people achieve their dreams. More recently a distortion of purpose crept through the doors. Banks, particularly, those involved in subprime mortgage lending, saw all of the money that could be made if they 'relaxed' traditional guidelines and 'gamed' the system. Tenuous loans were issued and then packaged and sold off to investors, presumably washing away risk and culpability. Who would have thought that what seemed at the time to be nearly insignificant acts would come back to be a key cause of an economic crisis of global proportions?" (BCG, p. 28)

"The biblical concept of stewardship is not limited to how we spend our money. It extends to how we earn and invest it as well. If we are to exercise good stewardship and influence the globe positively, we must broaden our view of investment and look at it on a longer-term and more holistic basis. This means being prepared, if necessary, to accept lower financial return in exchange for greater social return. This could mean investing in socially responsible companies (with strong human-rights and environmental records) or direct investment into multiple bottom-line businesses, such as microfinance institutions." (BCG, p. 162)



Poor planning contributed to the recent financial crisis. Much of what business agreed to and the government supported was short-term thinking. Even when it started to become apparent that there would be serious problems and consequences for the long term, banks and businesses ignored this until it was too late. (VC, Chapters 7 & 8)

Capitalism works so well because of sustained growth. This is the “most dramatic breakthrough of the capitalist spirit, for Weber.” (SDC, p. 38)

Capitalism is a work in progress, and should be a long-term vision. It will be closer to fruition in 1,000 years, while we’re only 200 years in. “The new capitalism is not a matter of adventure or piracy but of continuous enterprise.” (SDC, p. 44)

Democratic capitalism does not create a pretense that everyone will be financially equal, but everyone will be better off than they were before. (SDC, p. 84)

The fortunes of others are of value to one who is trying to succeed. Democratic capitalism was founded on a “way of producing wealth in which the good fortune of others multiplied their own...They actually felt it to be true that an enlightened self-interest promoted the common good.” (SDC, p. 100)

“The ethos of capitalism transformed the nature of money by linking it to practical intelligence and future productivity.” (SDC, p. 101)

1 Tim. 6:6-19 – Save for the future (WIL)

Luke 19:23-27 – Banking to save for the future (WIL)

Unintended consequences

Critically thinking about engaging the cultures of the world must be accompanied by affirming and preserving distinctions. Authentic development accounts for different cultures by allowing progress to take place in individuals' unique environments. (CIV, p. 38)

In order to create wealth competition must be allowed to exist. When policies overly protect the interest of established entities and do not allow innovation to impact norms, freedom and wealth creation are stifled. (FF, p. 99-100)

Failing to account for the consequences of economic thinking may lead to anti-Christian ideals governing humanity. (OMB, p. 300)

Fighting the “tyranny of consumerism” involves more than just cutting back. It involves thinking about how consumerism impacts the world. (OMB, p. 594)

Economic decisions which do not address the integral attitudes or morals associated with the societal problems inevitably fail. (OMB, p. 766)

The Christian economist can increase outreach by encouraging free trade and by influencing thinking about how finances flow between governments. (OMB, p. 949)

By focusing on the “labor theory of value” Adam Smith’s views led logically to Marx’s conception of labor and its value relation to surplus and capital. (RE, p. 75-76)

A fully rounded economic theory must account for who finally consumes goods produced and exchanged, i.e., the “end user.” (RE, p. 86)

Economic thinking must coincide with political thinking. (RE, p. 113)

Economic thinking must account for love of persons as an end and also how we love those persons. (RE, p. 173)

Not thinking about economics thoroughly may lead to negative moral actions like influencing a society thinking on abortion. (RE, p. 175)

God’s commands are for Israel’s prosperity. (Deut. 6:24) (SSB, p. 222)

The author notes that based on the OT prophets, “concern for the poor and the oppressed must be a passion for any serious Christian” (BE, p. 9). At one time, he believed government was “the

only viable instrument to bring about authentic social justice” (p. 9-10). The author later came to the view that government policies brought about “crippling” problems for “both labor and management,” and the larger economic situation (p. 10). He relates the responsibilities we have to help the poor (Ex. 22:22-24; James 1:27; I Tim. 5:3,10; Lev. 19:9-10; Deut. 24:19-22; Ruth 2:8-9; Matt. 26:11), and meet the needs of our own families (I Tim. 5:8). The long-term effects of Adam Smith’s “invisible hand” (the free market) are preferable to increased government interference, which bring about “a politicized marketplace” and diminished economic growth (p. 40). “Excessive taxation, monetary inflation, massive federal debts, and government regulation” lead to lower productivity and weakened national economies (p. 47). Government policies that undercut economic laws (i.e. supply and demand) or oppose automation in an attempt to preserve jobs fail to recognize that respect for such economic laws and automation lead to increased production, economic growth, higher standards of living and more jobs (p. 51-54). Governmental policies, such as excessive taxation, tax shelters and inflation, make money unprofitable by removing it from the pool of surplus capital – which is necessary for tool acquisition and hence, increased productivity (p. 55-57). Price fixing through government establishment of either price ceilings or price floors disrupts the free market and leads to deleterious distortions such as shortages, surpluses, injustices, illegal attempt to circumvent the government regulations, or further government intervention and expenditures (p. 69-71). Socialism and government redistribution schemes violate both philosophical and biblical notions of justice; although the Bible commands charity (II Cor. 8:13-15), equity in judgments both legal (Ps. 98:9) and commercial (Lev. 19:36; Prov. 16:11), proper treatment of people (Col. 4:1; Philemon 16), and civil or remedial justice (Ex. 23:3-6), it never calls for laws to bring about material equity. In fact, it is “the Lord who makes poor and makes rich” (I Sam. 2:7). Further, socialist and redistribution plans undercut the conditions of economic growth and prosperity. (Ch. 10) Year of Jubilee practices in Lev. 25:11-16 protected private property and inheritances, and are actually an example of rental property (168-169). Deep deficits caused by increased government spending, as well as increased government control over people and poor economic decisions, undercut freedom and economic growth. (Ch. 11-13)

Christians and Westerners have mistakenly bought into socialist criticisms of capitalism, and have thus supported economic systems that fail to lift the poor out of poverty, instead of the imperfect but much better free-market system, which does lift people out of poverty. (EP, p. 16-23)

Modern environmentalism tends to produce policies that harm society, while the free market can produce “long-term change in technology” that “will bring about improvement to the environment.” (EP, p. 42-43)

Debt relief advocacy for poor nations does not reward value creation, but simply rewards poor economic management and corruption. In the parable of the two debtors in Luke 7:36-50, Jesus’ meaning of forgiveness is “a concept outside the realm of economics” (EP, p. 115) and is set “in the context of our relationship with God” (p. 123) rather than economic debt forgiveness. Leviticus’ call for debt relief and return of land during Jubilee refers only to those who are part of the people of Israel and occupying the land God gave Israel. Other biblical calls for forgiveness, such as in the Lord’s Prayer (Matt. 6:12, Luke 11:4), Eph. 4:32 and Col. 2:13 are about personal forgiveness in the context of relationship with God, and have nothing to do with monetary debt between nations. (Chapter 9)

The author cites the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector from Luke 18:9-14 to draw a parallel with secular statisticians who see themselves as morally superior to those who disagree with their plans for secular salvation of society through government social engineering. (EP, Chapter 11) He also approvingly quotes Augustine, who describes governments practicing legalized theft, and applies this to government redistributions schemes. (p. 142-143) There are economic effects from original sin. (p. 145)

“Good economics and commercial management” are better ways to generate wealth than political and bureaucratic structures. “Political will can help by not hindering commerce and by not putting red tape and bureaucracy in the way of people trying to be entrepreneurial.” (EP, p. 155-156)

Poor regulation, unwise lending practices, generally irresponsible behavior by individuals and corporations, a lack of savings by individuals, and risks that didn't turn out positively all contributed to the current financial mess. We should not return to failed systems such as socialism and communism. (EP, Afterword)

Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* argues that the abolition of private property and the institution of socialism would eventually lead to the degradation of all classes of people, both working and wealthy, by taking away the responsibility of each person for improving his own circumstances; by creating envy; and by removing any motivation for the proper use of talents or industry. Private property is the most fundamental principle for improving the condition of the working class. It allows each person to properly use his possessions. (C, p. 361-363)

Element 12

In general, economies flourish when goodwill is universal and global, but control is local, and personal knowledge guides decisions.

Universal goodwill

Wesleyans engage people of their community including the marginalized. They believe that spending time on the margins helps them learn about the needs of their community. (HGM, p. 95)

Examples of creating value such as hospitals and alms giving/distribution centers are found in the early in the Church's history. These initiatives were favored by imperial governments (MFC, p. 27)

The socio-economic ethics of the OT speaks of inclusion of the needy present in society by ensuring they are cared for, helped, and given shares in the economy. (OTE, p. 195)

Justice fosters the goodwill and trust necessary for a flourishing society. (OMB, p. 119-121)

Lactantius argues that humankind was created for sharing through compassion. (FW, p. 138)

Lactantius argues that justice has two components: piety and equity. Equity requires that all people are equally matched. According to Lactantius, this "solidarity with the oppressed" meant liberal almsgiving, not that the rich had to become like the poor. (FW, p. 138-139)

During the fourth century in North Africa, the Christian sect of Donatism attacked the official catholic church because the taxing of the poor and middle classes was enormously high, yet the

catholic church enjoyed more and more exemptions from Constantine in Rome. The Donatists believed the catholic church was valuing possessions above their souls. (FW, p. 160)

“One of the great myths of the business world is that greed is the engine of our economic system. Adam Smith, the ideological founder of capitalism, never said that ‘greed is good.’ He held that enlightened self-interest (not the same as greed) is the engine of capitalism, and that the free market would never work unless the individual participants has the moral values necessary to restrain their self-interest. For Smith, those values came from what he called the social passions, namely, justice and compassion, which reflected a moral consensus that could be seen as a holdover of Judeo-Christian morality. Greed run amok will alienate most of the parties that are necessary to build a lasting business, such as suppliers, employees, customers and partners (see chap. 3.)” (BCG, p. 172)

Local Control

Addressing the development of society must take account of the local responsibility of those areas most in need. Totalitarian control and manipulation can never foster local development. (CIV, p. 16)

Keeping the order of control first local, to regional, to national helps foster development that does not undermine democracy. (CIV, p. 26)

The local Church can be the primary conduit through which God injects creative, thoughtful, innovative, and ethical actions into the economy. Economic thinking must account for the creative energies of local bodies of believers to impact the world. (FCC, p. xxxi)



Local control of land by tribes was initial plan of God for Israel and this contrasted to the centralized governmental control of the King. (OTE, p. 56)

Localized government protecting the family was central to Israel. Equity and freedom of this structure was legitimated through the Covenant. (OTE, p. 340-342)

The flourishing monastic movements depended on their continued existence within the larger structures of governments. (OMB, p. 155)

Moses is given advice from his father-in-law to start setting up systems of localized governance. (Ex. 18:13-24) (SSB, p. 90)

Israel was warned that a powerful king (and therefore larger central government) would limit their freedom and take from them. This is in contrast to God's plan for cohesion through covenant faithfulness. (1 Sam. 8:4-21) (SSB, p. 339)

Knowledge of the different causes of poverty allows us to tailor our attempts to help the poor and therefore be more effective in our efforts. The author cites numerous biblical texts (Ex. 22:22-24; 23:3,6ff; Lev. 19:15,35; Deut 24:17,19; 27:19; Prov. 6:6; James 1:27; II Thess. 3:10; I Tim 5:3, 8, 10), and notes that many of the Old Testament and New Testament efforts at assisting the poor involved local decision-making by Israelites, church leaders, heads of families, and individuals, and therefore our efforts should also reflect this principle. (BE, Ch. 9)

Individuals and churches have an important role and valuable resources for helping people in need, and should not just leave it to government. (EP, p. 159-161)

At the end of the end of the third century, the church in most of the major cities of the Roman empire had become so large and diverse that the face-to-face sharing of earlier times was no longer possible. All were encouraged to give as they were able, but bishops became responsible for administering the funds and properties of the church and oversaw distribution of resources to the needy. (FW, p. 133)

“What the founders of democratic capitalism most feared is the gathering of all power into one. No human being, they believed, is wise or good enough to be trusted with undivided, unitary power.” (SDC, p. 56)

In spite of the market not being God's original perfect will, it is in fact an expression of God's common grace through its astonishing ability to meet so many human needs through individual decisions and apart from “any central planning or coordination.” (WBM, p. 77-79)

Personal Knowledge/Decision-making

Meaningful economic thinking accounts for biblical teaching on how value is created. (Ps. 119) (FCC, p. 7)

Overbearing governments which limit freedom tend to extract wealth rather than create it. (FF, p. 47)

“The role of government is to provide security for its citizens from dangerous threats both within and from without, to provide stability to commercial transactions, ease of travel from one part of the country to another, insofar as possible to create the conditions conducive to economic stability, and beyond that to give people as much freedom to live their lives in the way they see fit.” (FF, p. 55)

Limited government is the biblical ideal because when they grow too large they tend to take wealth away from citizens and limit freedoms. (FF, p. 67)

The Bible affirms limited state government and advocates personal responsibility in helping those in need. (FF, p. 114)

Legal and regulatory functions of governments can never create integrity if the individuals involved in the economy lack a desire to engage in ethical business practices. Regulations do not equate to integrity. Economies flourish when people trust each other. (HGM, p. 35)

According to Wesley, one of the most important venues for exhibiting integrity is in the area of work. When people work they engage with every area of society. Laws are never a substitute for the influence of honest people engaging the economy. People, empowered to live honest lives, are laws unto themselves. (HGM, p. 39)

The Church Fathers did not make communal sharing of private property mandatory because they did not believe private property was evil. They believe people should manage it according to their conscience and be aware of the dangers of wealth. (MFC, p. 36-37)

Sustenance and nurturing of common life is brought about through charity (the individual choice to give) and solidarity (expression of mutual goodwill). (MFC, p. 136)

Monarchy in Israel led to oppression and heavy tax burdens which limited personal freedom and production. (OTE, p. 232)

Governments are to foster goodwill by protecting against anarchy. But it should not stifle just economic freedoms of individuals. (OMB, p. 432)

Overbearing control doesn't mean value creation. (OMB, p. 810)

The principle means by which economies flourish starts with the personal and familial relationships which are governed by love. Love determines the distribution of scarce resources. (RE, p. 209)

The author points to some scripture to show that those who are near are a priority, although helping the poor in general is emphasized (1 John 3:17, Matt. 25:39-40, Rom. 15:25-27, 2 Cor. 8-9). (BGG, p. 58)

Martin Luther's "Trade and Usury" argues against the prevailing business rule of that day, which says that a businessman can sell his goods for as high a profit as he can. Instead, since selling is an act of service to your neighbor, Luther says that tradesmen should only sell at a price that is right and fair. (C, p. 215-216) The best way to achieve the fairest price for goods is for the authorities to appoint men to determine the price that would give the tradesmen adequate livings; if this option is not feasible, letting the market determine the prices is the second-best option. (p. 216)

In the 2008 financial crisis, government control of businesses, salaries, and decisions only caused more problems in the market economy. In business, medical insurance and other areas, removing the incentives created by profit and competition leads to worse outcomes. (This reasoning does not apply to cases where markets are not morally permissible in the first place, such as adoption, prostitution, and possibly organ donation.) Government projects and reform almost always are inefficient compared to the work of personal, charitable or private institutions that can understand the situation more closely and can act more immediately due to their well-defined goals and locality. (VC, Chapters 7 & 8)

As economies modernize, businesses attempt to empower workers to make creative decisions that will meet a company's objectives. (WBM, p. 70)

Managers should help reverse the effects of the fall by seeking to "re-inject a sense of mission, purpose and meaning into work where it has become rote and detached. Rather than emphasizing a top-down standardized approach, wherever possible Christian business managers will seek to empower their workers to engage in creative, life-giving work." (WBM, p. 114-115) Christians should call upon the Holy Spirit to guide them in their day-to-day work, and especially to enable them to make good decisions in this work. (p. 117-123) He also calls upon Christians in business to be ethical and godly, and confront dilemmas by seeking out creative solutions that may not be among the alternatives originally presented. By being in a Christian community and seeking God in prayer, Christian businesspeople can usually discover creative solutions to problems that both accomplish necessary business objectives and also honor God. (p. 118-123)