

automation, and the many other conversations where economic expertise is essential.

To conclude, therefore, let me paint a picture of what I am proposing. Most economics research is focused and technical in nature, and need not include interactions with philosophers or theologians. At least some part of our work, however, should be devoted to contributing to the larger ethical questions facing us in our economic life. I have tried to do this kind of interdisciplinary work with animal and environmental ethics, and I have found that a number of basic ethical questions are better approached with an understanding of both philosophy and economics. I know this is true in many other areas of inquiry, and I look forward to seeing my colleagues dig into these opportunities.

References

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For this symposium, *Faith and Economics* asked a fairly wide range of questions to economists in the earlier stages of their career. I chose to focus on two of them: “What things have been influential and helpful?” and “What potentially worthwhile things have been missing?” I am focusing on these two particular questions because I think that some of what I have found to be particularly influential and helpful are lacking to a degree within our community—namely intentional Christian mentorship within the community of Christian economists and purposeful two-way communication between Christian economists and the larger Christian community.

Mentorship from senior Christian economists has been one of the most significant factors in my own development as an economist and academic. However, *intentional* mentorship is missing more broadly in the community of Christian economists, and there are some possibly simple ways that we can begin to engender this kind of intentional mentorship within our community. Secondly, I find the popular writings such as those

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of Bruce Wydick for outlets such as *Christianity Today* to be incredibly useful tools for communicating relevant information from my field of work to interested individuals in my church community. I find people to be incredibly receptive and grateful for this information as they desire to use their resources (both monetary and non-monetary) wisely. We are uniquely positioned to assist individuals in this effort, as economics speaks to a wide range of topics and issues relevant to the larger Christian community. However, our efforts at engaging the broader Christian community in conversation are limited and narrow. If we were to more purposefully pursue this relationship, we, as Christian economists, could better use our skills and gifts to vocationally serve the kingdom of God.

1 Intentional Christian Mentorship in Economics

I was a fairly new Christian when I began the Master's program at the Dyson School (then, the department of Applied Economics and Management) at Cornell University and was still very much working to understand the relationship between my vocation and my new faith (an ongoing journey). I will forever be grateful that my thesis advisor was a faithful Christian who was also a highly respected development economist. As someone who both spoke and wrote openly about the intersection of his faith and research on understanding the causes and consequences of poverty, my advisor from the very beginning modeled what it means to serve God's kingdom as an economist. Based on this experience, I would without hesitation name mentorship from senior Christian academics as one of the most valuable factors influencing my development as an economist and academic.

As a Christian advisor with a Christian student, my advisor was able to offer and counsel prayer as I muddled my way through graduate school. More than that, he still models and intentionally teaches what good academic citizenship looks like when collaborating on research, teaching and mentoring, providing peer reviews, and participating in seminars and conferences. Finally, as he enjoys wide respect and success at a university that prides itself on its history of separation from religious affiliations, my advisor also provides a counter example to the story I had been told prior to entering academia (and am often still told) that if I am open about my Christian faith, I will lose the respect of my colleagues and may even be met by hostility.

I feel blessed that I attended graduate school at a department with such a visible Christian economist. Had I attended a different university (or even a different department) I do not know how difficult it might have been to find Christian mentorship in my vocation at such an early stage of my career. The Association of Christian Economists (ACE) is clearly attractive for Christian economists and provides an obvious forum for fostering connections between Christian economics students and faculty, as well as between senior and junior faculty. It was at the ACE annual luncheon at the American Economic Association (AEA) meetings and an ACE-affiliated conference (Conference on the Economics of Global Poverty in 2015) that I first met other senior Christian economists who graciously offered their own counsel and friendship.

The kind of accessibility and friendship fostered by ACE is unfortunately limited by the fact that it only meets once a year at the AEA annual meetings. The AEA meetings are costly to attend, and as I progress in the tenure process, I find it more valuable professionally to attend smaller field-specific conferences, such as the Northeast Universities Development Conference, the Midwest International Economic Development Conference, and the like. As much as I want to be an active part of the Christian economist community, even finding myself wanting to attend the AEA meetings solely to attend the ACE events, it is hard to justify the cost and time of attending the meetings for ACE alone. I would love to see ACE's presence extend to other regional or field-specific conferences. While I do not expect that ACE could sponsor formal events at all these conferences, it seems feasible that the organization could advertise informal gatherings for ACE members and those interested in this community, possibly having a current ACE member acting as a point of contact. This could be an effective way of enhancing the accessibility of this community (for both for faculty and students) while also being a way of strengthening connections among Christian economists living in the same geographic region and/or working in the same field.

Intentional mentorship within the community of Christian economists is something that is currently lacking but has the potential to be quite valuable. Again, ACE is an obvious forum for fostering intentional Christian mentorship in economics. A potential model of intentional mentorship is the Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession (CWSEP). CWSEP has numerous avenues of intentional mentorship available to female economists. For example, at the AEA

meetings, CSWEP holds mentoring breakfasts where they group junior and mid-career economists based on common fields of interests. CSWEP also holds CeMENT workshops for doctoral and non-doctoral programs which provide more focused mentorship on research, publishing, tenure, grant writing, work/life balance, and similar topics. It may be possible for ACE to provide similar avenues (albeit on a smaller scale) of intentional mentorship within the community of Christian economists. For example, rather than focus on doctoral and non-doctoral programs, we could instead foster mentoring relationships focused on those teaching at Christian universities versus other public or private universities. This would be a valuable addition to ACE's activities at the AEA annual meetings.

2 Economics Within the Broader Christian Community

Economics offers a rigorous set of tools to analyze how we allocate resources to achieve societal goals. In my view, one of the primary responsibilities, if not *the* primary responsibility, of economists is to provide an evidence base for policy. As a Christian economist, I further believe that this is an important part of serving the kingdom of God within my vocation. While economists are not always effective at communicating to those outside of our own discipline, there is nonetheless purposeful effort to communicate the findings of our discipline to policy makers and practitioners. Recently I have wondered if we, as Christian economists, should be more specifically purposeful in communicating this evidence base to the larger Christian community—to churches, non-profits, parachurch organizations, and others.

As a development economist, I am frequently asked by other Christians in my community about the most effective ways to fight poverty in the world. People in the church desire to know what charities and programs are the most effective recipients for their time, their money, and/or their voice. There are so many mixed messages regarding what type of development initiatives are helpful and/or harmful, and it can be difficult to decipher which of these messages are well-supported and which are not. In responding to these requests, I frequently point them to some of Bruce Wydick's writings for *Christianity Today*. For example, in his article, "Cost-Effective Compassion: The 10 Most Popular Strategies for Helping the Poor," Wydick (2012) discusses common antipoverty programs and the evidence we have on their long-term effectiveness. Im-

portantly, in this article Bruce is not only able to summarize the evidence but also distinguish between good and bad evidence. Offering that kind of discernment may be just as helpful as providing answers to the questions at hand.

While it is helpful to be able to point people to these writings, there is more work in many other areas to be done. While caring for the needs of the poor is clearly commanded in Scripture, Christian stewardship does not end there. On a broader scale, most Christians desire to wisely manage the resources provided by God to serve his kingdom to help the poor (both domestically and globally), to be good stewards of the environment, to invest in our society's children in ways that allow them to flourish, and so forth. As economists we have the ability to not only summarize the evidence base of our discipline, but also to distinguish between high- and low-quality evidence and interpret that evidence for other people. Moreover, as *Christian* economists, we may enjoy a unique position to earn the trust of the larger Christian community (a group that can be at times suspicious of academia) to do this work faithfully.

In light of this, I wonder if we could regularly produce articles similar to Bruce Wydick's *Christianity Today* writings but touching on topics across the economics discipline. Annually or bi-annually, we could produce a collection of articles summarizing recent evidence in a particular field of economics such as development, education, environment and resources, migration, trade, and the like. For example, one year we could produce a volume summarizing recent evidence in education economics on topics relevant to Christians, and in a future volume we could do the same in development economics. We could then periodically produce articles updating these summaries as a field evolves and new evidence becomes available. *Faith and Economics* is one potential outlet for these articles. We could also target outlets for popular Christian media such as *Christianity Today*. Even posting these kinds of articles online might provide an education resource for those interested.

I am incredibly grateful for the community of Christian economists. I am grateful that there is an organization like ACE which helps us to foster and build a community that includes both our faith and our vocations. What I have described above are some of my thoughts on ways we can potentially deepen this community and serve the larger Christian community in our vocations. I am sure there are numerous other ways we can endeavor to accomplish these goals. I hope that this symposium and that

written by senior economists in the fall can help to foster conversations on how we can better serve each other as well as incorporate the mission of our faith into that of our work.

References

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Telos, Instrumental Rationality, and Modern Economics

During my graduate studies, I used to think about economics and finance, my field of specialty, exclusively along the lines of the traditional fact-value distinction, and assumed that they existed independently of any ethical considerations because of their technical aim. Back in those days, I didn't realize that positive statements also require a community of scholars to agree ex-ante on a set of standards (like efficiency or falsifiability . . .) that are necessary to define what a fact is, which means that even our statements about facts have value content. Positive economics is no exception and also relies on normative premises. For example, Schultz (2001) shows that Pareto efficiency requires a set of moral restrictions and conventions that make the coordination of agents occur, and the internalization of externalities possible. The more I considered the neoclassical paradigm, the more I wished I could be given a more realistic alternative representation of the world that would better account for actual human beings, and that would help me understand how they form their preferences, how they interact with each other, how they make decisions, and how they are transformed by their actions. I was first attracted to the behavioral finance literature, which explains many puzzles and relies on exciting advances in neurosciences and psychology. However, I also felt it sometimes didn't pay a fair tribute both to human reason and free will.

Then, a providential encounter with Andrew Yuengert at a conference opened new perspectives and gave me clues to grasp what I was