

The “Ecclesial” Critique of Globalization: Rethinking the Questions

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I have never been a fan of dramatic irony—that cheap trick of stage and sitcom which generates laughs simply because we, the audience, have knowledge that the characters do not. As fly-on-the-wall observers, we cringe with mirth as we see the characters talking past one another, usually in awkward scenarios of double entendre wherein a phrase is *meant* one way but *received* very differently, precisely because the characters effectively inhabit different worlds, with different presuppositions and background conditions. In such a scenario, all the fun vanishes once the characters are on the same page.

Anyone who has followed the sporadic conversation between economics and Christian theology might cringe in a similar way, though without the comedy. If the dialogue between economics and theology sometimes devolves beyond irony to farce, this is largely because of a similar situation: the interlocutors might be on the same stage, but they are not on the same page. They think they are talking about the same thing, and they might even be using the same language, but even charitable observers can see that they are talking past one another. So we get all the dynamics of dramatic irony, but without the humor or the later resolution.

Our task here, I take it, is to ruin the so-called fun. But given that the failures in the economics/theology dialogue have never generated any uproarious sitcom spinoffs, but instead only deep frustration and even flared tempers, ruining the “fun” is hopefully a step in the right direction, helping us move beyond polemics.¹ The parameters of the conversation have been set for us: with the goal of trying to come to some agreement and consensus, we have been asked to lay out desiderata from our disciplinary backgrounds. That is, as a means of rapprochement, what do I, as a philosophical theologian, wish economists understood about theological critiques of globalization? More specifically, if I were to commend three or four works for consideration by interested economists, what would they be? And why?

I am grateful for this assignment and opportunity and here want to commend several works that hang together as representing a fairly unified school of thought.² In particular, I will highlight D. Stephen Long, *Calculated Futures: Theology, Ethics, and Economics* (with contributions from Nancy Ruth Fox and Tripp York), William Cavanaugh’s *Theopolitical*

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Imagination, and most recently, Graham Ward's *Political Discipleship* as a constellation of works that represents a robust theological critique of globalization.³ And while they are trenchantly critical of globalization, I hope that economists will recognize that these are *not* tired old debates between socialists and capitalists (or *about* socialism vs. capitalism); nor are these merely reactionary leftist proposals targeting the status quo on the right; nor does this reduce to questions of wealth and poverty. So it is imperative that the critique of globalized consumerism articulated by D. Stephen Long, William Cavanaugh, and Graham Ward not be confused with the "liberationist" critique of capitalism from a past generation.⁴ Indeed, what is most significant about these authors is that they refuse to play by outdated rules, refuse to let unhelpful paradigms establish the parameters of the debate.

1 Different Questions, Different Conversation: On the Paradigm Effect

The questions we ask inevitably shape the debate we will have. Bad questions generate unhelpful responses, even if they might generate "accurate data." For example, responding to a theological critique of globalization with quantified data showing that globalization has "helped the poor" (e.g., by increasing GDP across the board, or providing more access to consumer goods people do not need) does *not* constitute a response to the critique. It is an answer to a question that the theologian is not asking—a response that misses the point. No doubt the economist can sometimes level a similar charge: the theological critique of globalization ignores the data that are relevant. While theologians are trafficking in ideal scenarios, the economist is paying attention to on-the-ground realities. In both cases, our interlocutor is answering questions we never asked.

Recognizing this situation is crucial for any advance in the economics/theology dialogue. What we are facing here is what, following Thomas Kuhn, we might describe as a "paradigm effect" (Kuhn, 1970). This refers to the persistence of blind spots for interlocutors in a conversation due to the fact that they are working with different "paradigms"—different constellations of beliefs and commitments, often due to disciplinary formation, which shape how we see the world, and thus determine and condition the questions we ask of it. Recall Kuhn's analysis in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*: something like the Ptolemaic view of the universe persisted for so long precisely because a commitment to that worldview conditioned perception of the data.⁵ But someone with a different paradigm—say a Copernican understanding of the universe—

will encounter the same “data” and see a very different world.

I think the dialogue between Christian economists and theologians is an analogous situation: committed to different paradigms, we “see” a different world and thus ask different questions of it. Even if our lexicons might be similar, they also seem to mean something different in the context of our different paradigms. Dialogue could only really be constructive within a shared paradigm. However, I do not mean to suggest that we can reach consensus just yet. It is not as easy as simply asking, “Can’t we all get along?,” singing a couple stanzas of “The Church’s One Foundation,” and then proceeding to ascribe to the same paradigm. Not even the charitable intention of *wanting* to have a genuine dialogue is sufficient.

I am not out to prescribe *the* paradigm to which we should all subscribe. My goal is more modest than that: I think the conversation will move forward if we first simply recognize that we are working within the constraints of a paradigm. Further, my hope is that this article will help articulate elements of the paradigm that informs the theological critique of globalization. If we can make those commitments explicit and put them on the table, perhaps economists will better appreciate what is behind the theological critique of globalization, rather than just treating the critique as economically naïve.

The difficulties of this can be seen in *Calculated Futures*, the first two chapters of which are a running dialogue between economist Nancy Ruth Fox and theologian D. Stephen Long.⁶ From the beginning, one can see Fox trying to discern and diagnose the disciplinary chasm between economics and theology in a way that begins to be attentive to the paradigm effect. Thus she notes the limited perspectives of each discipline: “Just as neoclassical economists often fail to see the whole person, theologians fail to see the effect of economic change on the whole system” (Long, 2007, p. 32). But on this account, the theologian’s blind spots are chalked up to a limited purview, not a different paradigm. There are just “facts” that the theologian is not paying attention to. For example, “general equilibrium results are not taken into account;”⁷ or, “while others (including theologians) focus solely on the benefits of a particular policy, neoclassical economists see both the benefits *and the costs*” (p. 32); or whereas theologians are concerned about the fairness of outcomes, “the neoclassical economist will ask if the *process* was fair” (p. 34). So according to Fox, the theologian just is not seeing the whole picture; and she concedes the same for economists. If all of us put together the “facts” we see from our different angles, we will come close to being able to construct the puzzle of the whole picture.

But my claim regarding the “paradigm effect” is more radical than that:

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the economist and the theologian are looking at *different* pictures. Long pushes Fox on just this point. It is not just a matter of what we see (or do not see); it is a matter of *how* we see—or, as philosopher Martin Heidegger would put it, it is a matter of how we see *as*. For example, Long presses Fox's claims regarding the "facts" of efficiency (e.g., that the automobile industry is more efficient than horses and buggies). Long suggests that economists see differently because they do not recognize that they are seeing *as*—that their observation "makes" the world of facts:

Precisely because we have a social and historical order that is geared toward the efficiency of the automobile, that industry will indeed appear most efficient. Thus economists constantly mistake what is made at a particular social and historical moment for a natural fact. Insofar as neoclassical economists can recognize the contingent character of all their proposals, their analysis could be helpful. When they deny this, they inevitably become spokespersons for the present distribution of social and political power—whatever it might be—under the illusion that it is natural (Long, 2007, p. 38).⁸

One of the reasons the economics/theology dialogue often founders is because the citation of "facts" by economists are taken to be self-evidently given, and thus if the theologians demurs, the "realist" economist attributes to the theologian an "idealist," pie-in-the-sky avoidance of so-called "reality"—whereas, in fact, the theologian is not willfully ignoring the empirical but rather, *pace* Kuhn, emphasizing the contestability of the empirical. Furthermore, the theologian is suggesting that what the economists takes as a given, even as "natural," is in fact deeply contingent, could be otherwise, and perhaps *should* be otherwise. For example, too often economists treat the current configuration of commerce and exchange as if it were natural, a veritable "given." If the theologian then criticizes the capitalist order of commerce, then it would seem that the theologian is rejecting economic life *per se*. But this confirms Long's point.

Indeed Long points out that economists too often treat even their own discipline as if it was a natural kind. "As a discipline," he concludes, "economics has seldom come to terms with its inextricable connectedness to a particular moral and theological tradition—utilitarianism" (p. 39). Therefore it also fails to discern the extent to which it sifts "facts" on the basis of utilitarian criteria. So when Fox the economist points out the theologian's ignorance about general equilibrium and thus his or her ignorance of the consequences of an economic decision or policy, Long the

theologian concedes her analysis: “Her characterization of the difference here between theologians and neoclassical economists could very well be correct” (p. 39). However, he goes on to point out that “correctness” here is not sufficient to persuade the theologian or address the theologian’s concerns:

To live by a just wage, or to seek to ground economic exchanges in charity and friendship rather than in the negative freedom of modern rights, may very well increase the suffering in the world. The question is so what?—so does living by the principle of not to kill innocent noncombatants or not to commit adultery. Can we not all easily imagine situations where, according to the ethical criteria of the useful, a little direct killing of the innocent, a little discrete adultery might very well increase the pleasure and diminish the pain of moral existence? But useful for what purpose? The neoclassical economist’s analysis can only respond, “for the purpose of increasing pleasure or decreasing pain.” And this response demonstrates that economists repeat nineteenth-century moralists who thought that the increase of pleasure and the diminishment of pain could adjudicate moral differences in human action (p. 39).

So appealing to the so-called economics “facts” of a situation to discipline the supposedly “ideal” claims of theology will be an adventure in missing the point, because what count as “facts” are so significantly shaped by the paradigms informing our observation.

I can see the eyes of social scientists beginning to roll. All these claims about facts being “made” and observation being “conditioned” will have visions of postmodernism dancing in our heads. And this may seem like a long opening detour. But I would argue that this is a crucial starting point for the economics/theology dialogue, and it is probably what most distinguishes the paradigms of the two disciplines.

At issue here are fundamental assumptions in the philosophy of social science, or what we might call the *hermeneutics* of the social sciences. Most economists—and perhaps especially most Christian economists—still tend to subscribe to what we might call an “objectivist” or “foundationalist” understanding of the social sciences. On this account, the social scientist is an impartial, attentive observer of situations and systems, recording the “facts” of the matter in a way that is neutral and “scientific.” Most theologians would vigorously reject such a model as problematic at best, and downright naïve at worst. Instead, theologians—

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along with many philosophers, including Kuhn—would ascribe to a “hermeneutic” account of the social sciences.⁹ Recognizing the role of what Kuhn called “paradigms,” such an account of the social sciences emphasizes that observation is selective and conditioned, and that the “facts” and data issuing from such research, while not merely invented chimera, are nonetheless “made” in a significant sense. In short, what counts as a fact is contested.

This might be a hard pill for economists to swallow. But I do not see any way for the economics/theology conversation to advance if we do not recognize this significant methodological and philosophical hurdle right from the start. Long tries to get at this in a later chapter, “A Catholic Church and Global Market: A Tale of Two Corporations.” In this chapter he analyzes two different corporations: a lobster and shrimp operation in Honduras, and a family-owned water meter factory in the Midwest. “Reading” them theologically, Long comes to clear and pointed evaluations. Economists might be encouraged by his affirmative analysis of the latter; they will not be surprised as his blunt appraisal of the fishing operation as exploitive and corrupt. But Long emphasizes that his evaluation of the operation as corrupt “is not based on the secure deliverances of some ‘abstract’ universal reason, be it a ‘natural’ law or an objective analysis of ‘social’ reality qua ‘social’” (p. 165). That is, his evaluation is not “disembodied from a particular tradition. It is grounded in a confessional claim about who God is.” Thus Long emphasizes that his approach is specifically and unapologetically *dogmatic*: the analysis is rooted in confessional claims.¹⁰ But Long would also emphasize that *every* analysis is rooted in *some* “confessional” starting point. So any Christian evaluation or description must be rooted in the thickness of Christian confession as its starting. There are no “facts” that are not always already selected and filtered by a pretheoretical starting point, even if the observers pretend to be neutral and unbiased. So Long is emphasizing that any Christian account of economic realities has to start from specifically *Christian* pretheoretical assumptions (paradigms).

Does this mean giving up on truth? Hardly. As Long puts it, “the true social descriptions I have given depend upon Christology, ecclesiology, and the doctrine of the Trinity” (p. 165). Given that this is a world created and (being) redeemed by the Triune God, any account of any aspect of the world that does not recognize this could not ultimately be “true.” As he concludes, “we understand creation, incarnation, and the ‘natural’ only by examining Christ’s life” (p. 182). There are not brute economic “facts” which then have to be correlated with Christian concerns; rather, there are

social and economic phenomena that need to be construed and discerned, and such discernment will always be informed by *some* pretheoretical paradigm. Theologians will contest the economists' habit of appealing to "reality" as if it were a neutral given.¹¹

So it may be the case that the theologian is not ignoring facts that the economist sees; they might just disagree on what counts as a "fact."

2 From "Christianity" to "the Church"

So far I have been arguing that the theological critique of globalization is rooted in a deeper critique of "foundationalist" paradigms in the social sciences. I do not pretend to have sufficiently summarized this critique to treat the issue as settled. As indicated above, my goal is to try to make explicit those aspects of the theologians' paradigm with the hopes of overcoming the "paradigm effect" which has hitherto had us talking past one another. And hopefully by doing so the dialogue can move to a new level.

This critique of foundationalism is not unrelated to a second feature of the "ecclesial" critique of globalization, *viz.*, the centrality of the church in its analysis and evaluation of globalization. This is a second aspect of the "paradigm shift" represented by Long, Cavanaugh, and Ward's critique of globalization. And I find this emphasis is particularly hard for evangelicals to appreciate. So what is the connection?

As Long pointed out, a theological engagement with economics should be unapologetically "dogmatic," informed by the specificities of Christian confession and revelation, rather than the minimalist approaches of mere theism or natural law. Long's sensibility is a "catholic" one which emphasizes that the specificities of Christian faith are tied to the specifics of Christian *practice* as the body of Christ. Thus he claims that "Christians can find a different kind of argument about theological economics by beginning with the orthodox confession that the church is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic" (Long, 2007, p. 3). So rather than simply talking about a "Christian perspective on" economics, or simply offering a "Christian position on" capitalism vs. socialism, the ecclesial critique of globalization sees the church as a community of practice called to enact culture as it ought to be, and hence called to be a community of economic practice that grows out of its worship. This is why, Long argues, the Nicene confession of "one, holy, catholic and apostolic church"

contains in seed an intriguing and inescapable vision of a theological economics. Central to Jesus' mission is the gathering of the twelve

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and establishing them, through the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, as a new global political reality, which we know as the church. This community is constituted through Christ's body, which is raised and now mediated to the church through Word and sacrament. It participates in his glorious reign through his Ascension. As the body of Christ in the world, the church is a transnational, global community whose allegiance takes priority over all other allegiances—especially those of the nation-state and the corporation. This allegiance requires a faithful, disciplined life in both our politics and economics (p. 3).

Because evangelicals tend to think of the Gospel as a “message” and Christianity as a set of beliefs, it can be difficult to appreciate the force of this paradigm shift to consider Christianity as first and foremost a way of life instantiated in the body of Christ as a community of practice.

But for Long and others, it is this focus on ecclesial life that is the real paradigm shift in the economics/theology encounter because it is this focus that really shifts the terms of debate and generates a different set of questions. “Rather than engaging in debates over whether Christianity should be in service to capitalism or socialism, theological economics would benefit by remembering that most of the church's economic analysis took place within the context of the call to holiness” (p. 12).¹² The result, he hopes, is that we might “move the conversation about theology and economics beyond the tired shibboleths of the Christian ‘left’ and ‘right’” (p. 16). So instead of asking “tired” questions about whether a “Christian perspective” supports capitalism or socialism, or whether a “biblical perspective” permits Christians to be wealthy, Long pursues different sorts of questions “to develop a *Christian* vision of a common economic life. (1) How can we best embody the Christian virtues and avoid deadly vices given the economy within which we live? (2) What difference do our Christian doctrines make for how we should think about economic exchanges” (pp. 16-17)?

What such a paradigm shift requires, William Cavanaugh argues, is a new “imagination”—a completely new way of seeing the world, and hence a very different understanding of the state, the market, and the church. All of these institutions, he emphasizes, are imagined communities: “three disciplined and interrelated ways of imagining space and time” (2002, pp. 1-2).¹³ So when we consider the state and the market, far from being “merely ‘secular’ institutions and processes, these ways of imagining organize bodies around stories of human nature and human destiny which have deep theological analogues” (p. 2). Cavanaugh wants to emphasize

the history and contingency of these social imaginaries: modern politics and “political economy” are not natural kinds; they were “not discovered but imagined, invented” (p. 2). They are particular ways of imagining the world and human social life which emerged in modernity; they are “takes” on the world that have suffused our imaginations such that we now simply call these imaginaries “the way things are.”¹⁴ But Cavanaugh’s project is to show these *as* imaginaries, and then to lay out how the church’s worship constitutes a very different imaginary. The failure of so much Christian reflection on economics (as well as so many versions of “public theology”), he would argue, is that “none of these models has fundamentally called into question the theological legitimacy of the imagination of modern politics” (p. 3).

The ecclesial critique of globalization argues that too much of what traffics under the banner of “Christian economics” has been merely a concession of economic life to a so-called “natural” or “secular” sphere which is then taken to be ordered and arranged by “natural” principles but which are, in fact, very contingent arrangements that run counter to the *way of life* envisioned by the practices of Christian worship and discipleship. “The church,” then, is not just that institution which pertains to some “spiritual” aspect of our lives while other compartments and sectors are governed by “secular” or “natural” principles; rather, “the church” names and embodies an institution and way of life that contains within it, so to speak, an alternative economics and politics. So “the economic” is not simply a *given*, common sphere of human life; it is a *contested* aspect of human social life that is and can be organized otherwise.¹⁵

This is why ecclesial critics of globalization are particularly frustrated with theologians like Michael Novak (1982) and Max Stackhouse (2009) who broker an easy peace between the church and the market (and the nation-state). For critics like Cavanaugh and Long, people like Stackhouse have failed to appreciate the antithesis between church and “the market” because they have treated the market as if it were a natural kind, a given reality, just “the way things are.” So when Stackhouse speaks of the corporation as a “worldly ecclesia,” or when Novak speaks of the modern business corporation as “fourth form of the body of Christ,” Long is puzzled: “in presenting a fourth form of the body of Christ, and without explaining how it is related to the other three forms, [their] work loses the capacity to speak well about God and thus, cannot speak well about the corporation either” (Long, 2007, p. 177). This results from two errors: (1) “their desire to avoid confessional particularity in theology”; and (2) their failure to appreciate the comprehensiveness of the church as a community

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of practice. By ceding and conceding commerce and economics to a so-called “secular” or “natural” plane, these Christian apologists for globalization have failed to see that the church embodies a comprehensive way of life with its own vision of human flourishing, including economic flourishing.

Thus, for Cavanaugh the global market and multinational corporations are a concern precisely because of their “catholicity” and universality—they represent a rival *Catholica* which implicitly narrates a different story about the nature of human social relations, commerce, and exchange (Cavanaugh, 2008, pp. 112-113). They spread a gospel of competition and accumulation in contrast to the church’s economies of both gift and sacrifice. Thus Cavanaugh “reads” the elements of a Christian economics in the church’s practice of Eucharist or communion. Like the multinational corporation, the Eucharist gathers the church as a universal, transnational body, but one also located in a place (embodied in the parish). So rather than homogenizing, the universal space of the church is complex (pp. 116-117). It is marked by an economy where those are who are thirst may come; all who are hungry may eat (cp. Isa. 55:1-2).

Again, I do not pretend to have sufficiently explicated this such that it would persuade anyone at this point. More modestly, I am trying to articulate why the church is central to the ecclesial critique of globalization. In this model, the church is understood not just as a “salvation station” for souls, but rather that covenantal people of God that is called to embody the culture-making for which humanity was commissioned at creation. And that work of rightly-ordered culture-making includes creating institutions and practices of economic life that run with “the grain of the universe” and are conducive to human flourishing. The church is the community of practice which, *in nuce*, embodies the seeds for reimagining such ways of life. And because the crystallized vision of economic life embodied in the church’s practice looks so different from that economic ordering we see in the global market, this ecclesial model generates a trenchant critique of globalization as a *rival* catholicity, a *rival* way of life.

3 Globalization as Liturgical Formation

This brings us to a third aspect of the ecclesial critique of globalization. Refusing to get mired in questions of capitalism vs. socialism which are generated by a mistaken paradigm, the ecclesial critique is critical of globalized capitalism, *not* because it is out to defend socialism as a “better” way to organize the supposedly “natural” sphere of economic life;¹⁶ instead, ecclesial theologians are critical of globalization because it is a rival *liturgy*.

The rhythms and routines of the market are not just something that we do; they do something to us. Thus the concern with global consumerism is its formative, liturgical power; as such, it constitutes a rival discipleship. It is in this sense that Long says “the market has become a counter-church in modern and post-modern society. It has become the one institution people look to for salvation” (Long, 2007, p. 42).

This is the central argument of Cavanaugh’s *Being Consumed*, an extension of his earlier work (Cavanaugh, 2008): the economic practices of consumer capitalism function as pedagogies of desire that train or aim our love.¹⁷ Rather than being merely neutral, pragmatic instruments for the distribution of goods and services, the rituals of the global market constitute a sort of liturgical formation of our identities precisely because they form our love.

A similar analysis, attuned to globalization, is offered by Graham Ward in *The Politics of Discipleship*, where he notes the limits and challenges for those who might desire a “postmaterialist” way of life:

Capitalism in its expanded global form is a participatory system. I may choose a postmaterialist option and not buy sportswear from Nike because of the charges of sweatshop exploitation, but my index-linked pension, the investments made by my mortgage company and my bank, my credit and debit cards, and online shopping all situate me firmly in the global economy. Globalization is not simply the effects of free-market economic policy adopted by this country or that, or even the ideology of international operatives driven by multinational corporations, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank; it is an environment, an atmosphere. It implicitly possesses and promotes a cosmology. Like a religion, it generates its own mythology, and however much it deals with empirical goods, metrics, positivist facts, and processes that are entirely focused on the concrete, immanent logics of this world, its ethos and ethics are utopian and transcendental (Ward, 2009, p. 97).

The reason that such critiques are “ecclesial” is because they see the liturgical formation of the church’s worship and discipleship as a *counter*-formation of our social imaginaries, contesting the formative stories and practices of globalized capitalism.¹⁸

If in response to this sort of analysis, the economist asserts that, in fact, the globalization of capitalism has actually improved the material situation of the poor (and let us grant that for the sake of argument), the

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ecclesial critic will see such a response as a red herring, an answer to a question that was not asked. For what is at issue here is not how to make the greatest number of people as wealthy as possible, but how to order our social, political, and economic lives in such a way that we are a people who bear witness to the cruciform way of life that characterizes those who have pledged allegiance to the coming King. It is not that such an ecclesial critique gnostically discounts concern with material conditions, but rather that it understands and interprets those conditions in light of the way of life we are called to embody in the “not yet” of our now. Whether that makes a dialogue with economists impossible remains to be seen in what follows.

Endnotes

1. I should say that I became more sanguine about the possibility of constructive dialogue between economists and theologians when Dave Richardson and several other economists (particularly John Lunn) participated in a conference I hosted in 2005 on “Secularity, Globalization, and the Re-enchantment of the World” (proceedings subsequently published as Smith, 2008). There were clearly deep disagreements that tended to track along disciplinary lines, but I was impressed by the patience and charity modeled by these economists. So the present essay is something of an attempt to follow their lead.
2. For reasons that might become clear below, we might describe this as an “ecclesial” or “ecclesiological” critique of globalization.
3. For the purposes of this first essay, I will generate treat “globalization” as a predominantly economic phenomenon whereby the flows of capital transcended national borders and hence national governance, engendering both the global market and the so-called multi-national corporation. In what follows, I also take globalization to be the global expansion of consumerism. Hence I treat “globalization” and “global consumerism” as basically synonymous. This will no doubt be a topic of conversation in the next round.
4. In fact, all of these theologians, as well as related voices such as John Milbank (1990) and Daniel Bell (2001), are radical critiques of liberation theology.
5. And Kuhn specifically describes such paradigms as constellations of “beliefs” and matters of “commitment” (Kuhn, 1970,

- pp. 40-43, 113). So paradigms are “faith-based,” in a sense.
6. I have chosen to focus on this work because it brings Long specifically into dialogue with an economist. For his more systemic critique of capitalism, see Long (2000).
 7. This can no doubt be true. For example, I was once speaking at a large conference for Christian graduate students where the plenary speaker, speaking on Sabbath and justice, encouraged all of the attendees to give their hotel housekeepers a day of rest by leaving their “do not disturb” sign up for the day and thus releasing them from having to make up the room on a Sunday. The next day we learned the fallout: in fact, the housekeepers were paid for “piecework,” so a recommendation given in a spirit of justice and solidarity with “the poor” was actually taking money out of their paychecks.
 8. I would add that seeing the global dominance of capitalist economies as the victorious outcome of the march of History (per Francis Fukuyama or Michael Novak) is *not* recognizing the contingency of capitalist ordering.
 9. There are social scientists who also criticize foundationalist accounts of social science and assume something like a post-foundationalist or “hermeneutic” account. See Christian Smith (2003; 2010).
 10. Long criticizes those theologians and ethicists (such as Max Stackhouse) who buy into “foundationalist” or “objectivist” understanding of the social sciences and thus reject Long’s approach as “too dogmatic,” preferring instead to appeal to the supposedly neutral categories of “creation” and “natural law.” But Long muses: “Why Christology and ecclesiology are too confessionally oriented—but something like creation is not—mystifies me. For to speak of ‘creation’ is already to make a confession standing within a particular tradition, and if that tradition is Christian then one cannot speak of creation without its Christological and Trinitarian resonances. Creation is not a more universal category than Christology or Trinity. They render it intelligible” (p. 165). For a related critique of “non-confessional” appeals to natural law, see Long (2006).
 11. This is also why the theologians I am discussing here are also critical of liberation theology. On their account, liberation theology buys into the same “objectivist” notion of economics, but ascribes objective truth to Marxism rather than capitalism. See

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- especially Milbank (1990, pp. 206-255), and Bell (2001).
12. “Holiness” here should not be confused with, or reduced to, private piety. See Long’s discussion of usury (2007, pp. 139-164).
 13. Cavanaugh emphasizes that institutions like the state and the market have a strange ontological status: “the state [and *mutatis mutandis*, the market] as such does not exist. What exists are buildings and aeroplanes and tax forms and border patrols. What mobilizes these into a project called ‘nation-state’ is a disciplined imagination of a community occupying a particular space with a common conception of time, a common history and a common destiny of salvation from peril” (p. 2). It is this strange reality which generates Cavanaugh’s opening question: “How does a provincial farm boy become persuaded that he must travel as a soldier to another part of the world and kill people he knows nothing about” (p. 1)? The intertwining of state and market can be seen if we tweak the question just a bit: “How does a provincial farm boy become persuaded that he must travel as a soldier to another part of the world and, in order to defend liberty and free markets, kill people he knows nothing about?”
 14. Showing up the contingency of modern social imaginaries such as the nation-state and the market is at the heart of Charles Taylor’s project in *A Secular Age* (Taylor, 2008).
 15. Long, Fox, and York (2007, p. 136), discusses Islamic banking systems, which reject usury and interest.
 16. This would be the strategy of liberation theology’s economics, which is roundly criticized by “ecclesial” theologians.
 17. I make a similar argument in J. Smith (2009).
 18. See Waalkes account of how the Christian liturgical calendar counters construals of time in our “flat” world (Waalkes, 2010).

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