Faith & Economics— Number 40—Fall 2002—Pages 26–32.

THE MINISTRY OF REFEREES AND DISCUSSANTS

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Once there were three professors toiling in three different universities. One day, each of the three received an envelope containing a research manuscript along with a request from a journal editor that the professor read and review the paper as an unpaid service to the journal. The first professor was a new, untenured faculty member who immediately recognized the author of the manuscript as a well-known scholar who would likely be asked to serve as an external evaluator of his application for promotion and tenure in a few years' time. This worried the young man, who was desperately trying to publish his own, very similar research. He correctly calculated that if he delayed writing the referee report, and attacked the manuscript on a few relatively minor points, he could necessitate a cycle of revision and resubmission and further delay its inevitable publication. Furthermore, if he authoritatively invoked his own work as having already made some of these same points, he could induce the prominent author to cite the referee's work, and he could not only win needed citations and the race to publish the common results, but he could also establish his own work's value in the eyes of this scholar. So after a delay of eight months, he wrote just such a referee report. The second professor was nearly as eminent as the manuscript's author, and had an exceptionally full schedule. He therefore routinely either deferred refereeing manuscripts for journals until he faced a trans-oceanic flight—he could never sleep in airplanes—or passed them to a graduate student to perform the task, which he thought good training for them. In this particular case, the referee delighted in the prospect of humbling his more esteemed colleague. So he kept the manuscript for several months, began reading it eight hours into a fourteen hour flight, then hurriedly wrote a scathing referee report before his laptop batteries ran out and the pilot called for electronic devices to be shut down. The third professor was, like the first, untenured and relatively unknown. Conscious of how important it was to her to receive prompt and constructive referee reports she quickly reviewed the manuscript. She noticed the same errors that the previous two professors had found, but knew that these could be resolved using a technique she was working on but had not yet published. So she carefully wrote a report that not only criticized the flaws in the submission, but mapped out the technique by which these could be corrected, thereby enabling the established author to possibly "scoop" her at a time when she needed publications and recognition. Now, I ask you, which of the professors served science and God best?

Jesus obviously never offered up a "parable of the referees," like the one above we created. But if He had, we are confident He would have made some points similar to those we offer therein. Jesus routinely called people to serve others, to do the right thing in anonymity for God's sake rather than in pursuit of earthly recognition or reward, to act humbly, to eschew arrogance, revenge and manipulation, and to speak truth to power. These core Christian lessons are all too often forgotten in the everyday, uncelebrated tasks of refereeing and discussing others' grant proposals or manuscripts for journals and conferences. In this brief essay, we aspire to encourage at least a few readers to invest a bit more of themselves in these tasks, for Christ's sake.

It is easy to make the economic case for investing little of one's time as a referee or discussant. Among the myriad professional service activities available to economists, those of paper discussant and manuscript referee are surely among the least valued by the community at large. Editorships, Association offices, Committee and Department chairpersonships, and review panel membership all bring far greater recognition and respect than the anonymous toil of the referee. Because we economists have learned our micro theory well, the services rendered by discussants and referees are therefore predictably slow and of low quality, on average. Since our earthly reward from them is meager,

***Authors' Note:** We thank, without implicating them, Doug Brown, Terry Halliday, Ken Leonard, Julie Schaffner and Stephen Smith for helpful comments on an earlier version of this paper.*

we supply very little labor to these tasks. It is hard to argue with the logic of this position so long as one accepts the specification of the time allocation problem as one of maximizing material reward subject to a time constraint.

However, if one accepts this logic, one faces a challenge in explaining why a nontrivial minority within our scholarly community nonetheless invest a great deal of precious time in writing stunningly detailed and constructive referee reports and in preparing thoughtful comments about decidedly mediocre papers at conferences. Are these often-quite-distinguished colleagues patently irrational in their time allocation? Or might their behaviors reflect instead a somewhat different objective function, a richer set of constraints on choice, or both? Might we learn something from them?

Our point is not just that Christians ought to be troubled by a model specification that acknowledges only earthly rewards and biophysical (e.g., time) constraints, thereby ignoring spiritual rewards and ethical constraints, but also that economists concerned about the generalizability of behavioral models ought to think seriously about what does and should motivate professionals' labor allocation with respect to seemingly marginal tasks such as service as a discussant or a referee. In doing so, we put forward a vision of the ministry of referees and discussants.

This paper has two objectives. First, in Section 1, we challenge all Christian scholars to rethink why they should serve as referees and discussants. Specifically, we challenge readers to think of referee and discussant responsibilities as priestly service and doing high quality work with integrity as a Godly activity. Our second objective is to provide concrete suggestions for referees (Section 2) and discussants (Section 3) that will equip readers to do these tasks more effectively. These suggestions will be particularly helpful for graduate students and young scholars who have relatively little experience as referees and discussants, although we expect even seasoned referees can pick up some good tips in these sections. We believe both objectives are important—scholars may be competent in one of these areas without being competent in the other. However, God calls us to be clear in our sense of calling and to fulfill our callings skillfully. Section 4 presents some ideas that we use in the classroom to better equip graduate students to serve as referees and discussants. Section 5 concludes.

1. The Baptismal Obligation

Refereeing and discussing others' papers is a rite shared by everyone in the academic community. At some time, all are called to join the community through a personal commitment. In this sense, it is akin to baptism, although we caution against overstating the similarities. All baptized Christians are anointed, typically on the crown of the head, as a sign of the new dignity they enjoy as full participants in the prophetic, priestly and kingly office of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Each of these three roles has implications for the conduct of our daily lives, including professional tasks such as refereeing papers and grant proposals sent to us for review and discussing papers presented by others at conferences. These are corporate responsibilities, where we use the word "corporate" intentionally to signal our membership in a Body (*corpus*, the root of "corporate") to which we belong, as symbolized by common rites.

As prophets, we are called to stand up against sin and injustice. The prophetic tradition calls Christians to illuminate error and evil with the light of truth, even at some personal risk. Prophets speak truth to power. They are the conscience of the community, demanding faithfulness to core truths and integrity of word and deed, holding fast to what has been revealed and taught to them, as directed in the Pastoral letters (1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus). By the power of the Spirit, the prophet calls for repentance and helps the community put truth into words.

In our priestly offices, we are called to contribute to the sanctification of the world from within, like leaven. As Martin Luther emphasized, we are all called to this priesthood (1 Peter 2:9), to manifest Christ to others, bringing forgiveness, helpful teaching and reconciliation.

As kings, we are called to serve God and one another (Matthew 20:25–28). The Kingship of our Lord is not one of unjust or arbitrary exercise of power, but rather a sovereignty of love. The Christian king helps others grow and wields power to support rather than subordinate others. He provides for the public good, even at great cost to himself.

Servanthood is another key principle of Christian living that has direct applications in our roles as referees and discussants. Elzinga (1996) argued that Christ's service to his disciples is the most prominent image of what it means for him to be a good teacher. Elzinga emphasizes two important applications of servanthood for teaching—preparation and availability, both of which also apply to our roles as referee and discussant.

Knowledge is a public good. Developing this knowledge by using good critical review skills and the ability to communicate constructive criticism is also an imperfect public (or club) good—the benefits of improved published work are nonrival and nonexcludable. The advancement of knowledge requires scholarship, which in turn depends on the strength of the peer review process, involving both formal refereeing for grantsmaking organizations, journals and publishing houses, and informal review by peers willing to take the time to comment on a working paper version of a manuscript. Laband (1990) reports evidence that quality refereeing indeed adds value, measured in terms of subsequent citations. Like discussants at conferences, reviewers implicitly accept responsibility for improving the quality of the research, serving the corporate enterprise of scholarship. This role as servant nonetheless typically gets understated relative to the gatekeeper role of quality control judge.

Our prophetic calling as Christians does not stop at improving the general quality of research, but also includes the more fundamental calling to seek truth. While economists are formally trained to think in terms of maximizing personal utilities, God calls us to discover truth and has given us the privilege of serving Him at colleges and universities to fulfill that calling. Serving as referees and discussants can advance the discovery of God's truth even if these roles may be less known and less heralded. Refereeing may even be a type of spiritual discipline that puts the good of the other, or the common good, ahead of immediate personal gratification.

A life nourished by God's grace must be recycled as grace extended toward others; the love of God must be revealed in our love of neighbor. Just as we receive God's grace through innumerable everyday acts of charity, forgiveness, instruction and witness, so too must we engage in such acts. In the world of academic research, the referee and discussant's ministry becomes one common avenue for linking outward and inward grace.

If we believe that our baptismal obligation to serve as servant, priest, prophet and king applies to the mundane tasks faced by referees and discussants, then we also need to have the skills to fulfill our calling. How might these tasks be conceptualized as ministry? We address these interrelated roles sequentially in the next two sections.

2. The Referee's Ministry

Unfortunately, scholars typically receive no training on how to write good referee reports, nor does the profession explicitly reward those who do the job well for journals and publishers. As a result, the quality of refereeing is very uneven and often quite poor. Scholarship suffers as a result. Weak and even erroneous papers slide through peer-review screens, promising papers get summarily rejected, and the kernel of the brilliant ideas therein remains undeveloped for want of encouragement and guidance. Furthermore, over the years there has been a significant increase in the time necessary to publish a paper in a respected economics journal (Ellison 2001). Each of us individually can nonetheless contribute nontrivially to rectifying this unfortunate situation.

The typical formal reviewing arrangement involves either a "single-blind" review, in which the manuscript author's identity is known to the reviewer, or a "double-blind" review, in which the manuscript author is unknown to the reviewer just as the reviewer is unknown to the author. But while our identities as formal reviewers are technically unknown, we should not conclude that the "hidden" nature of our work means that it is less valuable or that it justifies our doing a poor job. In Jesus' words, "But there is nothing covered up that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known. Accordingly whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in the inner rooms shall be proclaimed up on the housetops" (Luke 12:2–3). Although our work may appear to be concealed, scholars acquire professional reputations for handling reviewing assignments responsibly or irresponsibly. And, in some cases, it becomes relatively easy to guess who authored a particular referee report.

The blind nature of the refereeing process may make it appear as though there is little opportunity for direct reciprocation or personal benefit. However, your experience and your reputation as a referee can also provide some important private benefits. For example, writing good reviews is one way for junior scholars to build a network of helpful contacts, induce reciprocal assistance from other scholars, build up a stock of professional capital, and stay abreast of current developments in their fields. Also, because journal editors are commonly gatekeepers in a subdiscipline, you might ask an editor for a letter of recommendation, and departments and colleges frequently invite editors to evaluate faculty for promotion and tenure. If an editor believes that you do excellent scholarship and are also a conscientious referee, s/he is likely to write you a more positive evaluation or letter of reference than if you systematically disregard your refereeing responsibilities. In addition, helpful, critical comments are a precious commodity in this business. Most authors will be very grateful for helpful informal reviews (and more inclined thereafter to reciprocate).

Good referee reports will serve both the author and editor by providing helpful feedback, offering detailed and constructive criticism, identifying errors, and providing guidance on how a promising paper might be made stronger or how the remediable flaws in a weak paper might be corrected. We typically organize our referee reports as follows:

1. We typically begin with a succinct, one-paragraph statement of what we understand to be the thrust and the central conclusions and contribution(s) of the paper. We mention everything good about the paper, including its principal contributions, the uniqueness of its data, the quality of the empirical analysis, and its potential impact.
2. Then we provide a structured review of major points of potential improvement. We offer constructive criticisms of the big issues in the paper, analyze the principal theoretical issues, suggest other relevant literature, explain how the theory, concepts or design might be reconceptualized, and discuss additional methodological work and relevant data. Everything is open to con-

structive critique: organization, omissions, opportunities for shortening the narrative without substantive loss, opportunities for extending the results easily, analytical or empirical methods, data quality and suitability for testing the key hypotheses, exposition, logical coherence, etc. Check the math and econometric work in the paper carefully. One should not assume it is all correct simply because the author is revered. At least as importantly, double-check all errors you find to make sure your technical points are correct.[1] Comments should be detailed enough to allow the author(s) to understand your critique and suggestions. Because space is always at a premium in journals, suggestions as to how a paper might be made more concise without sacrificing essential content are always helpful.

3. We conclude by listing minor points, such as sections where the text is unclear or confusing, notes to clarify tables and figures, highlighting consistent spelling or grammatical errors. There is no need to flag every typographical error; just note that such errors exist and that the author should recheck the manuscript carefully. Where appropriate we provide specific page numbers.

It is rare indeed that a good referee report can be written in less than a page. Most good ones are at least 2–3 single-spaced pages. Perhaps most importantly, always find something positive to say about the paper, and, when in doubt, err on the side of being encouraging and complimentary. It may be the best fruit an author reaps from an otherwise poor publishing harvest.

Timeliness is an important point with respect to referee reports. Generally, six weeks is ample time to do the job well, even for extremely busy people. If some extenuating circumstance (e.g., a long trip, family emergency, many other referee requests) precludes a timely reply, immediately email the editor to explain the situation. Editors will typically grant extra time, and appreciate the warning of a delay. Others have an alternate referee waiting in the wings and ready to do the job quickly.

When is it appropriate to turn down a request to referee? The first and most obvious condition is if you are unfamiliar with the subject matter or methodology of the paper. In this situation it will be costly for you to write the report, you will likely take a long time to finish it, and the report will likely provide very little benefit to either the editor or the author. Similarly, it may be appropriate to turn down a request when you are asked to referee a paper in a journal about which you know little or nothing. Both of us do interdisciplinary work and frequently receive requests to referee in a wide variety of journals. We have turned down some offers from journals that were too far removed from our areas of expertise. Also, if you are working on a very closely related paper where one paper could legitimately "scoop" the other, then it may be appropriate to turn down the request. Another situation where it is appropriate to turn down a request is when there is a confluence of personal and professional events that truly make it impossible for you to referee the paper in a timely manner. We have turned down other requests at the end of the school year, at the birth of our children, when we have had many other papers to referee, and when we have traveled for extended periods. Last, it is appropriate to turn down a request if you are being used "too much" by a given journal. The "too much" standard differs by person, but we will not do more than two new reviews in a calendar year for a given journal for which we are not members of the editorial board.

Just as we receive God's grace through innumerable everyday acts of charity, forgiveness, instruction and witness, so too must we engage in such acts. In the world of academic research, the referee and discussant's ministry becomes one common avenue for linking outward and inward grace.

Because few papers are accepted for publication after their initial submission, referees will commonly see the paper again, whether as a resubmission to the journal for which s/he refereed the manuscript originally or as a new submission to another outlet. Knowing that you may be asked to critique the paper again should help you write a better initial referee report. For example, clearly enumerating or outlining your concerns will help the author to more easily understand and address your concerns. Doing so will also help you serve the editor, who must eventually determine whether the author has sufficiently addressed the referees' concerns, and will lower your cost of evaluating subsequent editions of the same paper.

Two basic fairness principles must guide the handling of subsequent reviews. First, you shall not put the author in double jeopardy. If you have already reviewed the paper for another journal, decline the new invitation to referee it, especially if you have already skewered the paper once. If no one else is qualified to review it or no one else thinks it is any good, the paper should be rejected for its limited interest or low quality (Hammermesh 1992).[2] The second principle is convergence. If one has done a good job the first time in refereeing a paper, no new, substantive issues should arise on material present in the original version. The process of revision and resubmission should clearly converge toward publication or rejection. Serial introduction of new, substantive concerns over a sequence of resubmissions reflects sloppiness of the referee and wastes the time and goodwill of both authors and editors.

In contrast, bad referee reports are erroneous, condescending, insulting, unclear, or unnecessarily brief. Even constructive comments tend to get lost in a forest of nasty barbs. A close friend of one of the authors was extremely discouraged by a referee report on one of his first papers. The referee severely criticized both the author and his work, eventually concluding by stating that the author had nothing to offer other scholars and should therefore consider an alternative career path. This author has proceeded to become an extremely prolific and highly-cited scholar. Bad reports also overreact to correctable errors. If you find a mathematical or statistical error, correct the author and draw out any obvious inferences. But unless the whole paper depends on the overturned result, it is unnecessary to scuttle the broader effort.

In some cases, referee reports regrettably become fora for settling old scores among scholars. Resist the temptation to be harsh toward someone who may have treated you badly in the past, lest you contribute to an ignominious decline in professional standards. Similarly, negative referee reports written to "throw sand in the gears" of professional rivals feed an unhealthy sense of jealously and degrade civility in the academy.

Occasionally, scholars take on refereeing responsibilities cavalierly. We may think ourselves too busy to undertake the task, and pass requests for reviews to graduate students to ghost write on our behalf, rationalizing the act as "training" for the student. This is deceptive; the editor wasn't looking for the graduate student. If one does not have time to do the job well and thinks a student—or anyone else—qualified to serve in one's place, it is appropriate to suggest the substitution to the editor and let him or her make the decision. Or, we may not know the literature sufficiently well to write a strong review, yet arrogance blinds us and we accept the assignment.

In general, bad reports—due to any of the above causes—serve mainly to delay and impede research progress, not to improve scholarship. In a few (thankfully) rare cases, otherwise outstanding scholars have become infamous for their shoddy work as referees, doing their professional reputations permanent harm.

Referees' ethical lapses can extend beyond the written report. One should not exploit the judgmental power of the referee's position to extort (if only implicitly) citations of one's own work from authors. One must only direct authors to one's own work when it is directly relevant and helpful to the paper under review, not whenever the manuscript evokes memories of a tangential point in something (often relatively obscure) one once wrote. Referees occasionally commit far worse ethical lapses. We are aware of unfortunate cases in which reviewers have used the ideas or language from others' grant proposals in their own work. Proposals are to be reviewed in confidence and the contents are certainly not to be used without the express permission of the applicant. Similarly, using the salary budget information in another's grant application to make the case for increasing one's pay is degrading to all concerned. One of us had the misfortune to see a page from a colleague's working paper, marked up mockingly and taped conspicuously to the wall outside a professor's office in a prominent department. Such boorish behavior should call to mind a gospel lesson about who ought (not) to be casting stones.

Some scholars, concerned about the quality of refereeing, sign their reviews as a form of enforced self-discipline. Bertrand Meyer, a well-known Swiss software engineer, articulately describes some of the negatives of blind referee reports:

> It is widely believed that anonymous refereeing helps fairness, by liberating reviewers from any fear that openly stated criticism might hurt their careers. In my experience, the effects of anonymity are worse than this hypothetical damage. Referees too often hide behind anonymity to turn in sloppy reviews; worse, some dismiss contributions unfairly to protect their own competing ideas or products. Even people who are not fundamentally dishonest will produce reviews of unsatisfactory quality out of negligence, laziness or lack of time because they know they can't be challenged. Putting your name on an assessment forces you to do a decent job.[3]

Whether or not one opts for Meyer's approach, one should plainly write as if one's name will be revealed to the author, not only to the editor or review panel, for the referee serves them all. Moreover, again in Meyer's words,

> The promise of anonymity is precarious anyway. It's so easy to give yourself out, especially if you do your job right: your comments will betray your style; in pointing out missing bibliographic references, you might—surprise!—include your own work, and that won't be very difficult to guess for a rejected author. Then, of course, editors make mistakes, more and more common now that all happens through email. . . . Some countries even have freedom of information laws that may force the editor to reveal the referees on request. So if the promise of anonymity lures you into making brash comments on the work of someone you know, you might be in for a bad surprise.

One situation in which we believe it appropriate to disclose our names to the author is when an author invites us to informally review his paper and an editor invites you to referee the same paper for a journal. Recently, an author invited one of us to read and comment on his paper, which I agreed to do. Shortly thereafter, a journal editor sent me the same paper to do a double-blind referee report. My letter to the journal editor stated that I knew the author, that I had agreed to provide him with feedback on his paper before I was invited to referee, and that I would also provide my comments directly to the author.

As a young faculty member, one of us consistently took months to finish referee reports. In spite of numerous reminders, I delayed my reports, believing that some other responsibility was more important. At the same time, I was enraged because some of my papers were taking more than a year to receive the first round of referee reports. My behavior changed dramatically when I started to "referee unto others as I would have them referee unto me." We hope that the lessons above, which we have learned through prayer and guidance from thoughtful mentors, will help others likewise to try to referee as priest, prophet, king and, thus, servant.

3. The Discussant's Role

The role of discussant is another area where we can apply our Biblical calling as servants, prophets, priests and kings. Like referees, scholars receive no training to be a discussant. Unfortunately, there are numerous bad examples of discussants. We have both been astonished at how frequently we present a paper at a meeting and receive absolutely no valuable feedback from the discussants. We provide a few specific suggestions for discussants.

First, understand that your objective is to improve the quality of the paper. As in the case of refereeing, you were asked to serve because you would provide feedback to the author and audience. You can serve both the author and audience by explaining how the papers on a reasonably coherent panel relate to each other and to the larger literature. As with being a referee, make every effort to outline something positive about the paper.

Second, speak the truth in gentleness and with respect while keeping a clear conscience (I Peter 3:15–16). As with being a referee, outline the major weaknesses or shortcomings of the paper, followed by the more minor problems. Due to time limitations you may not be able to articulate all of your suggestions, so be sure to speak first about the primary ones. Under all circumstances resist the temptation to attack the person, no matter how much you may disagree with the paper. However, don't hold back from calling attention to weaknesses in the paper. Hate the sin and love the sinner.

Third, guard against pride. Some scholars lamentably view a workshop or their role as a discussant as an opportunity to show they are more clever and thoughtful than others. Prideful people often view being a discussant as an indirect opportunity to present their own work. But, as Proverbs (26:12) cautions, "Do you see a man who is wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him." Unfortunately, we have seen too many examples of people (often senior faculty) who make only a fleeting reference to the author's work before delving into detail about their own scholarship. This is a loss to all concerned, including the brazenly arrogant discussant.

Fourth, be prepared. Elzinga (1996) mentions preparation as an essential component of good teaching; it is also an essential component of good discussing. Too often we have seen people who look like they have not thought about or organized their comments until they were listening to the author present his paper. Try to write down your comments and email them to the author at least a few days before the presentation. Authors may be able to address some of your concerns during the presentation or more clearly communicate their methodology or conclusions to the audience. Sending your comments ahead of time may take away some of your thunder at the conference, but will result in a better paper and will make the conference time more productive.

Last, do not follow the example of a few prominent but exceedingly cantankerous scholars who have been known to threaten an organizer or moderator that they will withdraw if a paper they find objectionable is permitted to be presented. If you find fault with someone's work, seize the opportunity to reveal the untruths you see in the work publicly, encouraging the author to improve the work and the audience and readers to see what God had graced you to see in a flawed study.

4. Preparing Future Scholars For Ministry as Discussants and Referees

We are not only scholars in our own right, but also teachers and mentors to those who aspire to become economics researchers. Consequently, we have a duty to convey the importance of the ministry of referees and discussants to students and junior colleagues, thereby helping shape their future preferences with respect to professional behavior for the common good (Yuengert 2001). Because graduate students and young faculty rarely receive any training on these matters, our ministry can be particularly effective. Training others is partly accomplished by setting a good example in our own service. But more can be done.

As teachers, we can inculcate a sense of the responsibility and an understanding of good practice through incorporating training in these tasks into our curriculum. Graduate courses can include instruction and assignments on refereeing. The web is replete with current working papers in every field of economics. Faculty can assign papers to students or let students choose ones that especially interest them, and then pass along reports of at least some minimal quality level to the papers' authors as a sign of appreciation for them making their work-in-progress publicly available. We have tried this in some of our Ph.D. courses, with considerable success. Students routinely remark on how useful (and difficult) they found the refereeing assignment, while several of the resulting reports drew praise from the authors of the reviewed working papers to whom the screened assignments were ultimately forwarded. Last year, two prominent authors remarked that these student course referee reports were more constructive and insightful than the reports they received from reviewers at the prestigious journals that have since accepted the papers for publication!

As mentors, we can share and discuss the referee reports we receive and write with students and post-docs, so that they can see how the process works with more established scholars. We can arrange to have graduate students, post-docs and junior colleagues serve as discussants on panels/seminars at our home institutions to give them the opportunity to develop these skills in a familiar and safe environment. For example, one of our colleagues has hosted several Nobel Laureates for campus seminars in the past few years. Each time, he invites junior faculty to serve as discussants on these presentations, thereby giving them exposure to luminaries in the profession as well as an incentive to establish a practice of careful preparation for such assignments.

5. Conclusions

The ministry of referees and discussants can be understood and taught as sacrificial service in accordance with professional obligations that bear striking parallels to the baptismal obligations all Christians undertake and the Gospel injunction to serve and love our neighbor.[4] In this essay we have thus made a case for a different paradigm than that prevailing in the discipline today, which is often based on the microeconomic textbook principle of myopically maximizing individual utility. The prevailing paradigm predictably results in gross undersupply of quality service as referees and discussants.

The more radical paradigm we advocate here has positivist merits: it surely helps explain why many of our colleagues laudably invest themselves in the underappreciated tasks of referees and discussants, humbly—and usually anonymously—providing a valuable service to others and to the profession as a whole when there seems to be little or no return to such service. In the main, however, we advance this model for normative purposes. We believe that God and His creation are best served when we each heed the call to advance the profession of economics through the profession of God's truth, irrespective of whether we reap immediate, material reward. Publication and presentation of research findings advance a field of research. This is a collective undertaking, although we too often think of research findings as individual results. We all stand on the shoulders of giants as we seek to advance science. While many of these giants, like the third faculty member in the contrived parable with which we opened this essay, go unrecognized by our community of sinners, in God's eyes, "he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Luke 14:11).

Endnotes

1 One of us once received a referee report that said little more than "Proposition 1 is wrong. Therefore the whole argument falls. I stopped reading thereafter." Unfortunately, the referee had made a basic algebra error; the proposition was in fact correct. Fortunately, the editor read and accepted the proof subsequently submitted on appeal and ultimately published the paper as the lead article. The contested proposition is now well cited in the literature.

2 Both of us had the peculiar experience of receiving a mere photocopy of a referee report about an earlier version of the same paper, these earlier versions having been rejected by another journal and subsequently revised considerably. Consequently, all references to particular pages were erroneous and many of the substantive criticisms were no longer relevant. In one case, when this was pointed out to the editor, who was also provided with a copy of the original (and identical, down to a coffee stain on the paper's edge) referee report, the paper was immediately accepted with apologies. In the other case, the editor at the new journal still refused to review the paper.

3 See Meyer's eloquent explanation of why he signs his reviews: http://www.inf.ethz.ch/personal/meyer/publications/online/whysign/ .

4 For a simple model of duty-based behavior, see Barrett (1999).

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