

Editor's Introduction

Steven McMullen

As noted by many of the contributors to this issue, the pro-globalization political consensus, while never overwhelming, has been undermined significantly in recent years. Economists have usually supported a global movement toward the liberalization of trade, migration, and finance, but Christian voices have often been more mixed. It is not difficult to find theologians critical of global capitalism or trade liberalization. Over the years, the Association of Christian Economists (ACE) has hosted conversations and published work that has tried to bridge this divide (Richardson, 2010; Smith, 2010). In this issue, we return to this topic, featuring work that comes out of an ACE-sponsored session at the 2023 ASSA meetings. Rob Tatum and Jie Ma's article starts the symposium by exploring some important scriptural themes that can undergird a concern for global humanity and push against more narrow or parochial economic interests; they also offer a set of theologically-motivated reforms to consider. We invited three responses to their essay, and all three are printed here. Judy Dean addresses current challenges in trade policy, surveying the literature on some key points of conflict. Brent Waters offers a theological counterpoint, stressing the relationship between economic activity and our theological categories. The last response to Tatum and Ma's paper came from Andrew Yuengert, and drew upon Catholic social teaching, and *Fratelli tutti* in particular, to examine the tensions around migration. Yuengert later expanded this work and offered a related plenary at the ACE conference in July. We have printed his plenary paper here as the lead article. It easily stands on its own but can also fruitfully be read alongside these other articles.

If there is an overarching theme to this discussion, it is that we should be careful about simple stories, of any kind, when thinking about a phenomenon as broad and complex as globalization. The benefits of trade liberalization and migration are real, and well documented, but at the same time, we know there are real disruptive effects of any large movement of people or capital. Similarly, Yuengert reminds us that there is a genuine goodness in communities and traditions that can be at risk in a fast-paced globalizing world, and that it is difficult to weigh, economically, these goods against our universal obligations to humanity

4 FAITH & ECONOMICS

globally. If we dig deeply into these articles, we see that it is not enough to simply say that some people are helped and others are hurt: we must also acknowledge that we have morally important relationships and obligations to people and communities, both local and across the world, and that those obligations are not always easily summarized in material terms.

This issue also features excellent articles by Paul Oslington and by Andrew Beauchamp and Jason Heron. Oslington offers a deep look at Alasdair MacIntyre's critique of economics. His article argues that we can separate Aristotelian–Thomist natural law arguments from MacIntyre's influence, and that this tradition can be an asset to economic thinking. Beauchamp and Heron offer a comprehensive look at different data that give us clues about work habits, and attitudes about good work in the US labor market. They argue that there is evidence for a decline in people having a sense of meaning in their lives and work that might explain some differences between labor market cohorts.

Finally, we have three book reviews in this issue, which offer a deep look at some important recent work. We are thankful to the reviewers who put their time into these reviews, as well as the editors and reviewers who helped to bring together this issue of *Faith & Economics*. We hope you find it edifying and challenging.

References

- Richardson, J. D.** (2010). Globalization and the Common Good: An Economist's Account for Skeptical Scholars. *Faith & Economics*, 56, 21–45.
- Smith, J. K. A.** (2010). The “Ecclesial” Critique of Globalization: Rethinking the Questions. *Faith & Economics*, 56, 5–19. ■