

Faculty Reading Groups

List of qualifying books:

***Alienated America: Why Some Places Thrive While Others Collapse* (Timothy P. Carney)**

In this broadly descriptive and narrative account of economic and social life in America today, DC-area columnist, author, and editor Timothy P. Carney seeks out the roots of the decline of the American dream in the collapse of the institutions that made us successful, including marriage, church, and civic life. Along the way, Carney visits communities from the dim country bars of Southwestern Pennsylvania to the bustling Mormon wards of Salt Lake City, and finds in many communities signs of hope and a way out of our modern malaise.

***Counting the Cost: Christian Perspectives on Capitalism* (Art Lindsley and Anne R. Bradley)**

This volume, edited by Art Lindsley and Anne Bradley of the Institute for Faith, Work, and Economics (in DC) and featuring the work of 14 Christian economists and theologians, provides theologically informed analyses of common critiques of capitalism—that it hurts the poor, promotes materialism, harms the environment, and leads to income inequality.

***Divine Conspiracy Continued: Fulfilling God's Kingdom on Earth* (Dallas Willard and Gary Black, Jr.)**

Philosopher and spiritual formation writer Willard's last book, co-written with theologian Gary Black Jr., applies the rich understanding of whole-life discipleship he first presented in his ground-breaking *Divine Conspiracy*. This book provides not only an individual but a social and institutional vision for how Christians are called to serve their neighbors' flourishing in such arenas as education, business, politics, and the professions.

***Economic Shalom: A Reformed Primer on Faith, Work, and Human Flourishing* (John Bolt)**

Reformed theologian presents a thoughtful and concise introduction to the real world of economics, commerce, and markets and their impacts (positive and negative) on human flourishing. Themes treated by Bolt include stewardship, property, capital, and morality in economics and human work. Along the way, he engages difficult problems related to the human need for liberty, the challenge of consumerism, concerns about fairness and justice, and evangelicalism's mixed history in applying Christian compassion in politics and economics.

***Economic Wisdom for Churches: A Primer on Poverty, Stewardship and Flourishing* (Adam Joyce and Greg Forster)**

Another small anthology with big impact, this volume, developed out of the Oikonomia Network of seminaries and its Economic Wisdom Project, presents a multifaceted vision for stewardship and economic flourishing rooted in scripture, grounded in Christian love and justice, and made practical in service to the poor and to civil society as a whole. Editor Greg Forster concludes with a reflection on the idea of "public discipleship."

Economics in Christian Perspective: Theory, Policy and Life Choices (Victor V. Claar and Robin J. Klay)

Now in its tenth printing and recently translated into Chinese, this vibrant and positive introductory book (in contradiction to this field’s reputation as “the dismal science”) by two Christian economists combines sober analysis and Christian principles to offer a vision of hope. Connects a clear presentation of basic economics to Christian approaches to important contemporary issues related to governments, markets, and civil society.

Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God's Work (Timothy Keller with Katherine Leary Alsdorf)

This 2014 book by one of America’s best-known pastors, along with the founder of his famous church’s Center for Faith and Work, has already become a classic in the faith and work conversation. With deep conviction, theological perceptiveness, and often surprising advice, Keller shows the relevance of biblical wisdom for Christians seeking to thrive and contribute in modern – and seemingly very secular – workplaces and sectors.

Flourishing Churches and Communities: A Pentecostal Primer on Faith, Work, and Economics for Spirit Empowered Discipleship (Charlie Self)

An ordained minister and church historian in the Pentecostal tradition and a longtime participant in the Faith, Work, and Economics conversation, currently serving as Director of Learning Communities for the Made To Flourish network of churches, Charlie Self here outlines a vision for Christian discipleship that embraces economic work and attends to the needs of local communities.

Flourishing Faith: A Baptist Primer on Work, Economics, and Civic Stewardship (Chad Brand)

Professor of Christian Theology at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and prolific author Chad Brand takes an introductory look here at how politics, economics, and citizenship responsibilities fit into a broader discipleship model of life stewardship. Along the way, he addresses issues related to work, wealth, government, and taxation, and highlights how Baptists have contributed to the political economy of America.

How God Makes the World a Better Place: A Wesleyan Primer on Faith, Work, and Economic Transformation (David Wright)

Serving as president of Indiana Wesleyan University since 2013, David Wright has served the church well with this thoughtful account of principles and values for work and economics with roots in the lives and thought of John and Charles Wesley. Wright develops from this source principles of taking joy in our work, holding to an economic vision reflecting God’s own design, and playing a role in helping build structures and institutions that truly make the world a better place.

Just Capitalism: A Christian Ethic of Economic Globalization (Brent Waters)

A fine examination of modern global capitalism, “warts and all,” by moral theologian Brent Waters. Argues that Christians can affirm capitalism on theological grounds despite harsh biblical words about wealth, but that the system must be reoriented toward koinonia in order to help actualize human flourishing.

The Economics of Neighborly Love (Tom Nelson)

Pastor Tim Keller calls this book “a great contribution to a growing and needed literature that helps churches connect to their parishes and neighborhoods and serve not only individuals, but the public good,” and adds: “few volumes are as practical as this one in describing the way forward.” As with Work Matters, the practical quality of this book is undergirded by Nelson’s characteristic theological depth. Says Fuller Seminary’s Mark Roberts: “it’s hard to imagine a more incisive, compassionate, biblical, and relevant discussion of economics and Christian faith.”

The Pastor’s Guide to Fruitful Work and Economic Wisdom: Understanding What Your People Do All Day (Drew Cleveland, Greg Forster, Tom Nelson)

Few books gather in such short scope such important voices for FWE. Theologians, ethicists, pastors, and researchers here provide sketches of our many vocations as Christians. Woven together, these chapters present a tapestry of callings, urging that we are made for love, discipleship, work, hope, worship, community, responsibility, and dignity. A short section of recommended “further resources” at the end can be a good place to start in exploring the FWE conversation, including books, videos, websites, and curricular resources.

When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor...and Yourself (Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert)

One of the best resources out there on poverty alleviation from a Christian perspective, Corbett and Fikkert’s book, which focuses on both North American and global contexts, both examines failures of some alleviation efforts and provides strategies for effectiveness in this complex task. Fikkert is President, and Corbett Faculty Advisor, of the Chalmers Center at Covenant College, Georgia – an initiative dedicated to helping the church discover better ways to love the poor.

Work Matters: Connecting Sunday Worship to Monday Work (Tom Nelson)

Tom Nelson, president of the extensive FWE pastors’ network Made to Flourish, laid out this helpful schematic overview of the faith and work conversation nearly ten years ago. For the “E” in FWE, you’ll need to go to Nelson’s more recent book, Economics of Neighborly Love (see below), but Work Matters is still an accessible and reliable introduction for those new to the church-based conversation about faith-work integration. And Nelson’s combination of theological depth and practical counsel also makes this a good one to use with students.

Working For Our Neighbor: A Lutheran Primer on Vocation, Economics, and Ordinary Life (Gene Veith)

Lutheran author Gene Edward Veith is a familiar name in the faith and work conversation. Here he opens up for readers the Lutheran doctrine of vocation, which emphasizes the spiritual and moral value of economic activity. According to Luther, God himself is hidden in vocation, as he providentially works through ordinary human beings to care for his creation. A fine introduction to a foundational Protestant idea, and how it has provided a theological basis for the division of labor, social equality, individual freedom, and the transformation of ordinary life and work with the powerful presence of God.