



Facilitator Materials

Reflection Groups

Building an Ethical Economy: Theology & the Marketplace

Guidelines for Theological Reflection Groups

Theological reflection groups provide a venue to explore the issues that emerge from the symposium on theology and the marketplace. You may wish to modify these suggestions to your particular needs, experience, and circumstances.

Small groups are an integral part of the conference. Learning often best takes place in an environment that provides an opportunity for self-expression, reflection with others, and an occasion to review the ideas and passions that emerge, so that what we learn may be applied in a useful way.

Create a group where everyone counts:

- Beginnings and endings are important. Take to set the stage and provide an opportunity for personal introductions. Start and finish on time. At the end of the conference, provide an opportunity for closure and farewell.
- Share your thoughts, feelings, experiences, and questions as openly as seems appropriate.
- Speak briefly and to the point so that others may have an opportunity to offer their contributions.
- Feel free to remain silent. Do not press others to speak if they are not willing or ready to do so. Silence gives those who need time to form their thoughts the opportunity to do so.
- Listen to others to understand their points of view and know them better, as well as to clarify your own positions. Avoid trying to convince others that you are right.
- Speak for yourself, not others. Some examples of “do’s” and “dонт’s” are:
 - a. *I think that...* (not *Christians believe...*)
 - b. *I feel, glad, sad, mad, scared* (not *Most people feel that...*)
 - c. *I wish that...* (not *Everyone wants...*)
 - d. *I notice that...* (not *It is obvious that...*)
 - e. *My practice is...* (not *All civilized people...*)
- Sometimes it helps to remind the group that “I” statements” are the best way to speak for oneself. This is not a debate. It is a time for reflection on the meaning of what we are encountering.
- Maintain confidences:
 - Keep to yourself who said what; do not reveal personal details contributed by others.
 - Feel free to share the topics that were discussed and their impact on you.



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Gathering the Community - Reflection Group Session I

Purpose: As we engage this timely topic of theology and economics, this reflection group offers an opportunity to engage the topic on a more personal basis. We begin our journey together for the next three days and set the stage for our explorations.

Goals

- Meet our fellow group members
- Begin to develop a sense of community with one another
- Name questions and concerns we have about our life of faith and economics

Design

Open by reading prayer by The Rev. Canon James Cooper, DD

Introductions:

5 minutes Ask everyone to state their names and where they are from

15 minutes Off the top of your head ...
Name one economic thought you have had today

Name one religious thought you have had today

5 minutes Review the purpose of the group, the norms for working together, and the schedule of the conference

40 minutes Topics for discussion:

Share how the economy has affected you personally and your wider community. What does this evoke in you?

Where is God for you in the midst of this?



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Theology and Economics: Two Different Worlds? - Reflection Group Session II

Purpose: We have heard the archbishop and the panel examine the relationship of our economic concerns and our faith convictions. This session provides an opportunity to engage these issues on a personal basis.

Goals:

- Identify the things we have heard that touch our lives
- Examine how theology and economics interact in our lives

Design

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| 5 minutes | Opening Prayer provided by Archbishop Rowan Williams Check-in and introduction of new members of the group |
| 10 minutes | What stood out for you in this morning's session and what made it significant for you? |
| 20 minutes | Name an occasion when your faith helped direct an economic decision. |
| 20 minutes | Briefly share stories of when economics challenged or supported your self-understanding as a person of faith. |
| 20 minutes | What do these stories of our economic activities reveal about our theological beliefs? |



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Is Capitalism a Belief System? - Reflection Group Session III

Purpose: Dr. Tanner's presentation provides an ethical perspective on our "free market" capitalistic system. This session offers an opportunity to explore assumptions about our economic culture and their effect on us personally, on our nation, and on others in the world.

Goals:

- Discuss what Dr. Tanner and the panel offered us
- Explore how theology can inform capitalism
- Identify values and actions that encourage beneficial outcomes for both individuals and society

Design

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| 5 minutes | Offer the prayer provided by Kathryn Tanner |
| 10 minutes | What common assumptions stand behind our economic system? |
| 15 minutes | What assumptions does our faith tradition give us that are different from and similar to these economic assumptions? |
| 20 minutes | In what ways do we participate in the moral failures that underestimate healthy economic life? |
| 25 minutes | In what ways can the economic life of our local communities contribute to the dignity of every human being? |



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What is Wealth? - Reflection Group Session IV

Purpose: Partha Dasgupta raises questions about the meaning of wealth and growth. This session provides us with an opportunity to ask how his definitions resonate with our theological beliefs.

Goals:

- Identify what strikes us as most salient about the previous presentation
- Identify our own natural and social capital
- Draw out the theological implications of natural and social capital

Design

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| 5 minutes | Open with prayer provided by Sir Partha Dasgupta |
| 10 minutes | What did you hear in the last session that surprised you? |
| 20 minutes | What things in your community do you consider to be intangibles that bind society together (i.e., social capital)? |
| 20 minutes | What is the relationship between wealth, personal well-being, and communal well-being? |
| 20 minutes | In what ways is the Christian concept of modesty in lifestyle dangerous to our economy that depends upon ever increasing growth? |



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What Do We Owe the Future? - Closure — Reflection Group Session V

Purpose: This closing session provides an occasion to consider the future as we come to the close of this conference and prepare to return to our homes.

Goals:

- Name significant insights we take away
- Find ways to continue the conversation and be a catalyst in our communities
- Take time to say farewell to those who have journeyed with us in this group for the past three days.

Design

- 5 minutes Open with prayer provided by Mark Richardson and some quiet time
- 20 minutes As you think about the future, what do you take away from this last panel?
- 20 minutes As you prepare to return home, what do you take away from this conference? Where and how will you begin to act on your insights?
- 10 minutes As a summary of our time together write a prayer using the format:
- O God, you are....;
We thank you for....;
We pray that;
So that....
Amen
- 10 minutes Take time to say farewell and express your appreciation for what you have shared and learned in this group. Offer the closing prayer you produced to end this session.
- Move to closing plenary session



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Reflection Group Prayers

Gathering the Community - Reflection Group Session I

A prayer by the Rev. Canon James Cooper, DD

Almighty God, who created us in your own image and calls us to follow you in loving justice, we pray that you would bless this gathering with your presence. Help us to listen humbly and with discernment, speak boldly and in love, and act faithfully according to your call. Enable us to hear your voice in the lectures and panels, in our conversations, and in our hearts. When we leave this place may we be strengthened in faith, love, and hope as we play our part in building an ethical economy. This we pray through the one who came that all may have abundant life. Amen.

Theology and Economics: Two Different Worlds? - Reflection Group Session II

A prayer by Archbishop Rowan Williams

Loving Father, you have made us live together in households, to nourish and sustain one another in our calling to be human. Give us the courage and the vision to serve this calling and to build together a human family where no-one is forgotten, robbed of dignity and liberty, or judged dispensable. Give us the love that will move us towards justice, the love that has recreated us and opened our lives to you and to each other in Jesus our Savior. Amen

Is Capitalism a Belief System? - Reflection Group Session III

A prayer written for Professor Kathryn Tanner by Bishop Frank T. Griswold

In you, God, the Holy One your people address by many names,
we live and move and have our being.

Form in us, by the working of the Holy Spirit,
wise and discerning minds and hearts
imbued with your own desire and longing
for the full flourishing of all people,
and the wellbeing of the earth that sustains us.

Teach us to look through the wise and judging eyes of the prophets,
and to be fearless in examining the economic and social assumptions and practices
by which we order our common life.



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Deliver us from the personal and collective self-interest
which makes us blind to the needs and aspirations of all.

Shatter and transform our hearts of stone
by the force and power of your deathless love,
and grant that the abundant life, given so freely to us in Christ,
may enable us to live not to ourselves,
but by an economy of grace
which can heal, and reconcile and make all things new.

This we pray in the name of the One who came among us
not to be served but to serve,
and to give his life that in him we might all be one.

Amen.

What is Wealth? - Reflection Group Session IV

A prayer from Sir Partha Dasgupta

May we learn to see and appreciate the natural wealth that we so often fail to notice or take for granted. May we become caring stewards of that wealth, so that all people may benefit from it today and our children and grandchildren may enjoy it in the future. May we find the capacity to trust one another as we work in partnership to solve the problems of this world we share. And may we rededicate ourselves this day to work for the common good.

What Do We Owe the Future? - Reflection Group Session V

A prayer by the Rev. W. Mark Richardson, Ph.D.

O God, from whom we receive every good gift, we thank you for friendships made and renewed during this time. We ask now that you stir our hearts, and strengthen our resolve so that together we may serve the world as your household, and for the common good of all your people. We pray in the name of God, who is Grace, and Love, and Fellowship, all in One. Amen.