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Two Views of Social Justice: A Catholic/Georgist Dialogue

By Kenneth R. Lord*

Abstract. Sixteen scholars have come together in this issue to examine eight social-justice themes from the perspectives of Catholic Social Thought and the philosophy of Henry George. The themes they address are natural law, human nature, the nature of work, the nineteenth-century papal encyclical *Rerum novarum*, causes of war, immigration, development, and wealth, and neighborhood revitalization. While they sometimes wrangle with each other, their common aspiration is the same as their nineteenth-century predecessors: to find solutions to the human suffering caused by injustice.

A Meeting of the Minds

When a Catholic archbishop from New York and a subordinate (although at the time it appears he considered him insubordinate) priest who was championing Henry George's platform for social and economic reform sparred publicly in the 1880s over their different views of the path to social justice, it is doubtful either would have envisioned a scholarly exchange of views on that topic under the joint auspices of a Jesuit university and two Georgist organizations some 120 years later. On July 22 to 27, 2007, 16 experts assembled at the University of Scranton to engage in a dialogue on the contributions of Catholic Social Thought (CST) and of Henry George to eight central tenets of social justice and economic reform that are as relevant in the twenty-first century as they were in the nineteenth. Their essays, subjected to lively response and rebuttal during that conference and rigorous review and updating thereafter, are the focus of this issue. The themes addressed are the following.

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Natural Law

"Natural law" is a formative element in the contributions that both CST and Georgist economic theory bring to the troublesome political, economic, and social issues of this century. In its earliest known formulation (Aristotle's *Nichmachean Ethics*), natural-law theory predates both the nineteenth-century writings of Henry George and the sixteenth-century classical canon that has been a mainstay of CST on the topic (*Summa theologiae* by St. Thomas Aquinas).

Professor Anthony J. Lisska walks us through the views of "traditional Thomists," "analytic Thomists," and "post-modernists" (the old English major in me remains confused about how anything other than prophesy about the future can be "post-modern," but I will leave that and such modern—or should I say "post-modern"—marvels as "fat-free sour cream" for another day and audience) in the analysis and contemporary application of St. Thomas' exposition of natural-law concepts. He observes that "moral theory rests upon the social nature of human persons together with the obligation of each human agent to act in such a way that one's natural, human ends are fulfilled," that "[a]ny law, which, all things being equal, hinders the development of a natural disposition in a human person, is inherently unjust," and that "the common good—the commonweal—of a society must be part of the enactment of every positive law based upon the natural law." However, while "an unjust law is no law at all, . . . [Aquinas] argued that conditions must be severe and exhibit rampant injustice before an unjust law ought to be overthrown and overturned."

From the Georgist perspective, Professor Francis K. Peddle reminds us that in George's view "[t]he distinction between human law and natural law is the first necessity in the study of political economy." Expressing the view that "the enactment of human laws in contravention of the natural law may obstruct and temporally displace the latter but can never permanently abolish it," he goes on to suggest that to "do anything economically to restrain unjustifiably human well-being or flourishing" is to act "against the strictures of normative economics." Most tax laws, he writes, "are contrary to the normal inclinations of human nature" (indeed, they are "market destroying and generative of spurious competition") and "morally unjustifiable taxing statutes such

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as income taxes and consumption taxes must generally be abolished and replaced by statutes that rely on land value taxation for the operations of the state."

Even in the differences between Georgist and Catholic views of natural law, both Professors Peddle and Lisska find some parallels and bases for agreement. Mr. Peddle observes that "George's view of the hierarchical structure of political economy, in terms of all its natural laws emanating from a single fundamental principle, the first law of political economy, is . . . foundational in a way that is analogous with the Thomistic position that the natural law participates in the eternal law." Proessor Lisska points to the following, which by now should be apparent from the above quotes from the two authors, as a presumed point of agreement: "[P]olitical and legal theory—and I submit, economic theory—must be attentive to 'human needs, human purposes, and the human good.' Henry George's treatise, it appears, would adopt this position also."

Human Nature

Dr. Joseph Koterski and Professor James Dawsey articulated the Catholic and Georgist positions, respectively, on human nature. Both build on the premise that humans were created in God's image, making them His "supreme product" (Dawsey) and imbuing them with "a dignity that sets humanity apart from the rest of creatures" (Koterski).

The Catholic position points to a "real but immaterial power of the soul—the will and its ability to make free choices"; hence moral virtue stems from "a well-honed disposition to have the right feelings as well as a readiness to act rightly" (Koterski). Similarly, "George visualized people as artisans, helpers of God, in improving the world." While Mr. George embraced Christianity, the Catholic and Georgist positions part on the question of the centrality of Jesus Christ in the ultimate expression and purpose of human nature. "[I]t is absolutely vital to emphasize here the need for imitating the life of Christ, that is, for modeling not just individual actions but our whole lives on the pattern of Christ's life," Professor Koterski writes. For Mr. George, on the other hand, Professor Dawsey suggests that "[r]edemption was not tied to Christ's death on the cross, but to human work."

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While the Catholic finds heavenly inspiration for moral earthly behavior ("Once one recognizes that one's life is not for storing up earthly goods but heavenly ones . . . one can more easily gain a freedom in the spirit for the proper use of one's earthly goods"— Koterski), "George placed humans center-stage in changing the world," charting a "path to greater economic fairness . . . through right thinking, education, and political action" (Dawsey). What constitutes the correct focus and application of the human will? Reviewing papal encyclicals and the Second Vatican Council, Professor Koterski focuses on such objectives as "the development of underdeveloped peoples," "the protection of the unborn from abortion, of defective children from infanticide, of immigrants from racists, and of the senile and the comatose from deprivation of care," "the improvement of wages and working conditions, so as to ensure the stability of family life and the conditions needed for genuine human development, such as access to education, civic friendships, and rest," and "peace and disarmament." For Henry George, the aim, as expressed by Professor Dawsey, was "social progress . . . expressed in people's opportunity for a better, more bounteous life."

On the critical question of property that permeates much Georgist discussion, CST has long advocated the right to its private possession tied to the purpose of providing "individuals with a kind of independence that enhances their ability to do their duties to their dependence and that extends their freedom" (Koterski), while for Henry George "[t]o take away a person's God-given right to access nature's bounty in equal share to all others, or to charge a premium for what was God-ordained access, was tantamount to stealing part of that person's labor" (Dawsey).

Nature of Work

"Work is a fundamental reality of human existence" and "is at the center of issues related to morality and economic life," according to Mr. Brendan Hennigan and Professor Daniel K. Finn, respectively. In speaking to the topic of the nature of work from the perspective of CST, Professor Finn argues that "the worker as a person is the ultimate purpose of work and should never be subordinated to the

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objective output of the work done" and thus labor should have priority over capital. While "[a]ll the able-bodied [are] obliged to work, . . . the property claims of the well-to-do [are] not to exclude the poor from what they need"; indeed, the latter are obliged to share their surplus "because everything anyone owns is a gift from God." Any wage that falls short of providing the worker and his or her family with reasonable comfort "is an injustice even if the worker gives consent." Thus there is an "obligation of the owners of capital to ensure that their capital serves work"—"a stark challenge to U.S. corporate law, where boards of directors are legally restricted to serve only the interests of stockholders"—and the state has the "responsibility to specify in law the rights and responsibilities of labor and management."

According to Mr. Hennigan, George's "call for justice was based on respect for common and individual property rights, the independent nature of the laborer, cooperation, and equality of association in society." Justice and liberty are possible, he suggests, only "through equitable access of labor to the earth's resources, or what George calls the natural opportunities of nature." Giving George's ideas a decidedly twenty-first-century orientation, Mr. Hennigan gives his emphasis on "land" a broad interpretation: "land, in the economic sense, includes all the visible and invisible spatial-temporal resources, forces, and natural opportunities of nature, such as land, water, forests, minerals, electro-magnetic forces, and the broadband spectrum" and puts forward the suggestion that the "concentration of capital" in any of these sectors "leads to monopolies and oppression." Because "[w]ages will never rise to a natural level as long as the owners of land or capital take a greater share of the increase in wealth than is due to them," George adopted "the provocative view that landowners are not entitled to any share of the economic rent, because it is created by the community and not a product of one's labor." He predicted that "giving labor better access to land would increase wages, self-reliance, and an entrepreneurial spirit," would induce "greater cooperation between labor, commerce, and industry," would reduce "actual or hidden poverty," and would lead to "the actualization of individual potential, and an end to a misconceived class struggle between different economic classes or groups."

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Mr. Hennigan gives credit to CST for its emphasis on "the dignity of the human person and the rights of workers" but calls it to task for not offering "any technical solutions to the question of land ownership and taxation." He calls upon Catholics and Georgists to build upon their common views—that "involuntary poverty is an evil," that "workers should not be exploited," that both private and common property rights should be upheld, and that "the universal destination of goods must be guided by what is just and right not only for the individual, but also for the community"—to "embrace a cooperative approach and work towards a new understanding on the nature of work and the distribution of wealth."

Rerum novarum

If the prior topics give the impression that adherents to the Catholic and Georgist positions share broad swaths of approaches to social issues while respectfully offering some unique perspectives, the reader in search of controversy will find more pointed differences in the (for the most part) gentlemanly sparring between Professors J. Brian Benestad and Mason Gaffney as they dissect the first of the modern social encyclicals, Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum novarum*, issued in 1891. That the discussion should assume more the form of a debate on the merits of that document is hardly a surprise, given that that it was published not long after (and some view it at least in part as a response to) a nineteenth-century conflict between Archbishop Michael Corrigan and Fr. Edward McGlynn alluded to earlier. Viewpoints differ as to who was picking a fight with whom, but their intellectual descendants are still duking it out more than a century later.

Professor Benestad characterizes "George's expectations from restrictions on land ownership, coupled with the unlimited right to accumulate all other kinds of wealth" as "utopian," arguing with Pope Leo XIII that "social reform . . . requires conversion to virtue, many kinds of public and private initiatives, and the continuous exercise of prudence by leaders in the various sectors of society." Professor Gaffney, on the other hand, views the broader array of solutions advocated in CST as "expound[ing] glittering generalities but resist[ing] getting down to brass tacks." Mr. George's contention that there is an

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"unlimited right to acquire wealth by one's labor," according to Professor Benestad, is something that "the Catholic Church could never accept" because "the Lockean view that one has a property in one's person" is contradictory to the "Catholic teaching that the human being is created in God's image, redeemed by Jesus Christ, and is a temple of the Holy Spirit" and the unrestrained pursuit of wealth "flies in the face of the biblical and Catholic teaching on the proper attitude toward money." In rebuttal, Professor Gaffney attributes such presumed evils as payroll taxes to "the idea that we do not own ourselves" and argued that "neither organized religion nor patriotism can substitute for individual wisdom and judgment and responsibility"; rather, "we own ourselves, even to the point of choosing when to serve God or the state." Rather than seeing an improper attitude toward money in Georgist economics, he charges that it is in adherence to the views propounded in *Rerum novarum* that "[p]eccadillos of the poor are magnified into menaces to civilization" while "mortal sins of the rich are overlooked." Professor Benestad takes the position that "George compromised his Christian beliefs by espousing a political philosophy that promised a solution to political and social problems without prior conversion to virtue," while Professor Gaffney castigates the Catholic Church for "Crusades, persecutions, inquisitions, Falangists, suppression of science, male chauvinism, tortures, burnings, stonings, massacres of Anabaptists and Cathars and Albigensians and witches, superstition, worship of relics and graven images" and points to *Rerum novarum* specifically as the substance on which "most of the fascist dictators of Europe" were weaned.

Between rounds the two professors seem to remember that Pope Leo XIII and Henry George had some things in common after all. Professor Benestad pens the following: "George desires to facilitate the access to the possession of land by all through a tax on land; Leo desires to assure access to all goods of the earth by teaching that charity requires Christians to share their wealth and talent." He adds that Pope Leo and George shared "respect for the Christian faith, love of virtue, and hatred of vice" and acknowledges that "[e]ven if George's land policy would not overcome scarcity, and eliminate vice and produce love of God, it might indeed contribute to bringing about a more just society." Professor Gaffney holds out hope for "future

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cooperation between at least some Georgists and some Catholics." He credits both Georgists and Catholics with giving "great weight to natural law and rights," viewing "much modern economic literature as pretentious trash" and denying "that population control is the panacea for apparent resource scarcity." Finally, he expresses optimism "that with goodwill on both sides we may find pathways through, over, around or under [our differences] to work together towards our common goals."

Causes of War

From any view of social justice, the waging of war is troubling—something acknowledged by both Professor Margaret Monahan Hogan (Catholic) and Ms. Alanna Hartzok (Georgist). The questions of whether and under what circumstances it may be justified represent points of departure for the two authors, however.

Drawing upon just-war theory, Professor Hogan argues that the direct cause of war is the sin of injustice and "war understood as rectification of injustice perpetrated . . . must be designated as good." To qualify for that designation, war must be waged for a just cause, with right intention, with probable success, in conformity with international law, and only as a last resort—but when those conditions arise, and particularly when the victimization of the defenseless offers no other remedy, war is not only justified by required: "If we have compelling evidence that innocent people who are in no position to protect themselves will be grievously harmed unless coercive force is used to stop an aggressor, then the moral principle of love of neighbor calls us to the use of force." And even as just war is waged, those in societies thus engaged should pray and strive for peace and work for justice.

To Henry George, "seeking gratification at the expense of others meant the private appropriation of land rent, the monopolization of industry, the subjugation of workers, odious public debt, the domination of women by men, and tariffs and other policies that limited the freedom to trade"—all yielding a "concentration of wealth and power" that leads "to ever greater degrees of organization of lethal force," according to Ms. Hartzok. Thus war is a product of but not a solution

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to injustice. Mr. George, she suggests, "would assuredly take offense to the very idea of a 'just war' and view anyone putting forth such reasoning as a propagandist for the elite-ruled status quo." Fast forwarding to this century, she concludes that events surrounding 9/11 became an elitist tool "to stir up war fever, thus manipulating the masses into a war on Iraq for the purpose of geopolitical control of Eurasia as a key to the neocon elite power drive for full-spectrum dominance." Her solution? "[D]ismantle the military-industrial-financial complex" and "focus progressive movements on the land problem."

Immigration

Rev. William O. O'Neill, S. J. and Professor John Beck bring scholarly treatment to a topic that tends to make the news in sound bites of presidential-campaign rhetoric—immigration. Father O'Neill points out that the Catholic Church "recognizes persons' right to change nationality for social and economic as well as political reasons." From the CST perspective, a "moral entitlement to *equal* respect or consideration, in concert with the ethical ideal of the common good" not only requires that immigrants be accorded human dignity but "justifies *preferential* treatment for those whose basic rights are most imperiled." Thus "states are morally bound to respect and promote the basic human rights of both citizen and resident alien, especially the most vulnerable—and of these, in particular, women and children." This recognition of migrant rights imposes such duties as provision, protection, redress, and, where necessary, rescue. Such a "distinctively Christian virtue of solidarity" implies "not merely taking the victim's side . . . but taking the victim's side *as* our own" in "coming to the aid of wounded humanity."

Professor Beck explores the views of Henry George on the emigration patterns of his time (a topic on which Mr. George wrote some 40 articles) and uses his broader social and economic prescriptions to arrive at policy recommendations for the present. Raising "concerns about cultural differences similar to arguments of conservative opponents of immigration today," Mr. George opposed the Chinese immigration taking place in his time on the grounds that it "would reduce wage rates . . . because the Chinese immigrants would accept a lower

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standard of living." It seems that "[i]n his later writings and speeches, George took a much more favorable view of European immigration than he had of immigration from Asia." He "attributed the negative effects of immigration to the monopoly power of privately owned land and argued that if his reforms of free trade and land value taxation were implemented the negative effects of immigration would be eliminated." This would occur because "by alleviating the downward pressure on wages, land-value taxation would reduce the incentive to emigrate from one's home country to find better economic opportunities elsewhere." Mr. George's land-value tax need not eliminate immigration in order to help address its adverse economic consequences, modern Georgists argue, noting "the potential for land-value taxation to raise revenues that could be redistributed to those harmed by immigration."

Development and Wealth

While issues of development and wealth are addressed robustly in both the Catholic and Georgist traditions, and both reject certain premises of neoclassical economics, from the perspective of one who is admittedly neither Catholic nor Georgist they seem to occupy very different places in the two paradigms. At the risk of simplifying (and perhaps misrepresenting) centuries of moral and economic reasoning, I offer the premise (I believe consistent with the articles by Professor Charles M. A. Clark and Dr. H. William Batt) that CST views economic development as but one part of "the broader framework of authentic human development" and one that must be guided by principles of charity and justice, whereas the Georgist view is that the equitable management of development and wealth (and the vehicle espoused for its realization—land-value taxation) are at the root of the positions taken on all of the other social-justice themes examined in this series of articles.

Professor Clark observes that CST "is not hostile to economic development, or even the materialistic aspects of economic development, but instead places economic development in its proper perspective"—a perspective that assumes that "economic activity is also social, political, cultural, and spiritual activity," that "market values do not

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supersede all other values," and that "the inherent dignity of each and every person needs to be the foundational value in understanding and evaluating economic and social actions." Neoclassical economic theory, he charges, "produces both bad ethical analysis and bad economic theory." In CST, wealth is "understood as a gift from God"; while humans participate in its creation, they must do so (and manage its distribution and use) in ways that are consistent with God's laws. That includes the "need to share wealth, especially with the poor." He identifies three problems with "consumerism": "the pursuit of more and more goods . . . becomes a false god," "the problem of seeking to have instead of seeking to be," and "the greed of the affluent promotes scarcity for the poor." In concert with Georgists, Professor Clark argues that "[t]he distribution of wealth and incomes cannot be left entirely to the market. He advises that "people of the poor countries" must be "at the center of their development drama" and that "[d]evelopment aid that continues and encourages further dependency will not help the authentic development of the poor."

The eminent Georgist Dr. H. William Batt notes that "[t]he world today faces challenges that Henry George never anticipated: skyrocketing population growth, environmental despoliation, blighted and degraded cities of tens of millions, and huge disparities in national wealth." He writes of "the transformation of nature into a commodity" that has been relied on "to generate wealth and for speculative gain." In this context, a redefinition of development is needed, he suggests, starting with the recognition that "the earth is finite," that the free-market theory "does not guarantee greater and more equal distribution of wealth," and that the discipline of economics "does not rest on the same epistemological premises as the natural sciences." He then applies Georgist philosophy to call for a reconfiguration of "the world's political and economic systems." Land-value taxation, he argues, "can . . . be collected for public service and be adequate for its total support at no loss to the general economy," "restores what is otherwise an imbalance between the public and the private realms of society," and "neutralizes and even reverses the centrifugal forces of sprawl development that have plagued many cities in the world." With added efficiency stemming from the taxation of "land" defined more broadly to include "any element and

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dimension of nature that had market value as a resource" (such as the electromagnetic spectrum, airport takeoff and landing timeslots, and cap-and-trade "pollution rights"), Dr. Batt sees the Georgist prescription offering "economic justice and clarity of vision, restoration of and protection for the commons," and "protection for the environment of the earth in a deft and gentle way that is within the capacity of governments to implement."

Neighborhood Revitalization

America's urban neighborhoods are the focus of calls for and proposed approaches to revitalization by Professor John A. Kromkoswki and Mr. John David Kromkowski representing the Catholic view and Mr. Joshua Vincent the Georgist. The "neighborhood movement of the 1970s grew out of and was greatly influenced by priests and organizers from urban parishes," the Kromkowskis write, and they trace the influence of Monsignor Geno Baroni and other Catholic activists to the emergence and evolution of neighborhood organizations in the decades that followed. Effective neighborhood organizations, they note, have mobilized and advocated for improved security, sanitation, family support, human-capital development, income production, property maintenance, and health and transportation services. The neighborhood and civil rights movements, they observe, share a common history and arose to address some common problems; they "should not be decoupled" but "mere racialism must broaden to include ethnicity and true pluralism." They find it "particularly important that sufficient capital flows to lower-income neighborhoods to permit home ownership, housing rehabilitation, development of new enterprises, and support of existing ones"—something that "should be facilitated through a combination of regulations assuring fair treatment of all neighborhoods and selective tax measures offering extra incentives to invest in neighborhoods with the greatest needs."

Mr. Vincent assails the "pernicious insistence on social rather than economic externalities as the cause of neighborhood decline." Thus the decline in population, jobs, community meeting places, and lending capital are symptoms, not causes, of decline. What, then, is to blame? "Taxes on capital, savings, and labor force those things to leave, in a

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matter of rational economic decision-making." He then traces the course of Clairton, Pennsylvania from a once-prosperous steel town, to a community decimated by urban blight with poverty levels well above state and national averages, and through an experiment with land-value taxation that reduced the tax burden on owner-occupied homes and multi-family dwellings and tripled the revenues from vacant parcels of land to "pay for the education of Clairton's children, and liberate working and middle-class families from the bonds of labor and capital taxation" and generate a significant uptick in building.

While Kromkowski and Kromkowski argue that George's land-tax remedy "lacks the breadth and scope of the neighborhood movement," Mr. Vincent, based on the views summarized above, sees that the issue (singular) "IS one of economics and justice, inextricably wed." The Kromkowskis question the evidence for the efficacy of a land-tax solution, observing that the "general failure of Georgists to get land-value taxation implemented, much less see the fruits, cannot be ignored," and note that "Fr. McGlynn did not close down the St. Stephen's Anti-Poverty Society that he founded while waiting for the Single Tax to be enacted." So where, given his advocacy of "selective tax measures," would a Georgist land tax fit into this picture? "If the land tax can actually be part ensuring that process, then the data must be prepared to show it so that citizens can support it and elected officials can enact it." Mr. Vincent's case study of the Clairton experience is a fitting follow-up to that challenge.

Widening the Web

The scholarly treatises on the eight social-justice themes find common ground and some significant differences between Catholic and Georgist scholars. While they sometimes wrangle with each other, their common aspiration is the same as their nineteenth-century predecessors: to find solutions to the human suffering caused by injustice.

Rev. David Hollenbach, S. J. (2009: 22) wrote as follows of social justice:

> *Social justice* addresses the economic and political structures and institutions through which our life together is organized. These structures and institutions should themselves be characterized by solidarity, i.e., they

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> should be marked by a reciprocal inclusiveness rather than by exclusion and inequality. This inclusive solidarity is demanded by the equal dignity of every person as created in the image of God and as having a capacity for freedom and reason.

Placing that "inclusive solidarity" into a global twenty-first-century context, Father Hollenbach (2009: 22) observes that while "markets and trade can be engines of improved well-being . . . many people, perhaps the majority in the poor countries of sub-Saharan Africa, lack all access to these markets and so do not benefit from them." As a result, "[e]xclusion and marginalization appear again as the markers of the injustice that causes poverty."

Speaking to the relevance of Henry George's philosophy today, Edward Lawrence (2007: 14) expressed the following:

> It is important to keep in mind that the primary concern of Henry George was the vast disparity in wealth between rich and poor. The single tax was not an end in and of itself, but rather a means to the end of securing greater fairness and equity, and allowing people to benefit from the fruits of their own labor.

Lawrence and his fellow Georgists hold out the hope that land-value taxation (with the definition of "land" broadened to include "not only the surface of the solid earth, but the water and minerals below the surface, the air space above the earth, and the lakes, rivers, and oceans") can bring about a remedy for the injustice that motivated Henry George to propose it.

One journal issue could not pretend to contain the richness of thought that has emerged through more than a century of the Georgist movement and the millennia over which CST has evolved. I believe as well that the distinguished scholars whose work is contained in these pages would join with me in asserting that their common purpose will be achieved only by engaging with and accommodating the diversity of views and the shared commitment of similarly motivated people from a broad spectrum of faith traditions, economic perspectives, political viewpoints, cultural identities and academic disciplines. To illustrate, we might consider the reflections of Elder D. Todd Christofferson (2009), an individual whose boundary-spanning legal and ecclesiastical roles (formerly legal counsel and senior vice president for two major banks and currently a member of the Quorum of the

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Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints) give him a singular perspective on the social-justice challenges and solutions of our time:

> The societies in which many of us live have for more than a generation failed to foster moral discipline. They have taught that truth is relative and that everyone decides for himself or herself what is right. Concepts such as sin and wrong have been condemned as "value judgments". . . . As a consequence, self-discipline has eroded and societies are left to try to maintain order and civility by compulsion. The lack of internal control by individuals breeds external control by governments. . . . In most of the world, we have been experiencing an extended and devastating economic recession. It was brought on by multiple causes, but one of the major causes was widespread dishonest and unethical conduct, particularly in the U.S. housing and financial markets. Reactions have focused on enacting more and stronger regulation. Perhaps that may dissuade some from unprincipled conduct, but others will simply get more creative in their circumvention. There could never be enough rules so finely crafted as to anticipate and cover every situation, and even if there were, enforcement would be impossibly expensive and burdensome. This approach leads to diminished freedom for everyone. . . . In the end, it is only an internal moral compass in each individual that can effectively deal with the root causes as well as the symptoms of societal decay. Societies will struggle in vain to establish the common good until sin is denounced as sin and moral discipline takes its place in the pantheon of civic virtues. . . . Each must be persuaded that service and sacrifice for the well-being and happiness of others are far superior to making one's own comfort and possessions the highest priority. . . . We cannot presume that the future will resemble the past—that things and patterns we have relied upon economically, politically, socially will remain as they have been. Perhaps our moral discipline, if we will cultivate it, will have an influence for good and inspire others to pursue the same course. We may thereby have an impact on future trends and events. At a minimum, moral discipline will be of immense help to us as we deal with whatever stresses and challenges may come in a disintegrating society.

The success of this dialogue will lie in those who are stimulated to enter the discussion, adding their own views, recommendations, and efforts to the quest for social justice.

Acknowledgments

When I arrived at the University of Scranton in the summer of 2006, the vision for the "Two Views of Social Justice" conference was

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already in place and solid work had begun to plan the conference and engage prominent scholars. The sponsoring organizations of that conference—the University of Scranton, the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, and the Council of Georgist Organizations—contributed collectively and effectively to that task. The organization of any academic conference is incredibly time consuming, and the unique nature of this event, which brought together such a diverse array of organizations and participants, would not have happened without the solid commitment of a number of individuals, including Mr. Clifford W. Cobb, Dr. Hong V. Nguyen, Mr. Mark A. Sullivan, and Ms. Adele Wick of the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation (Dr. Nguyen is also on the Economics/Finance faculty at the University of Scranton), Mr. Ted Gwartney and Ms. Alanna Hartzok of the Council of Georgist Organizations, and Professor J. Brian Benestad, Dr. Edward M. Scahill, and Dean Michael O. Mensah of the University of Scranton.

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