

Envisioning Economic Justice from a Eucharist Foundation

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the potential of envisioning economic justice from a Eucharistic foundation. The sustainability of both the free market and command system debates are questioned and the link between justice and the Eucharist is explored. With our focus upon envisioning fair distributive economic justice, the article will reflect on contending conceptions of a just and fair economic system. The theoretical basis of the distribution problem from an economics perspective and the current solutions offered and practiced to alleviate poverty and reduce inequality, are reflected from the perspective of (economic) justice in the Eucharist.

Introduction

Globally, countries' economic growth rates are recovering from the setback of the 2008 sub-prime crisis and the subsequent great recession. Economic growth rates or gross domestic product growth for 2015 are estimated to be 3.9% for the world, merely 2.3% for advanced economies and 5.3% for emerging and developing countries.¹ Despite the positive economic growth rates the current global economic, political and social dispensation is incapable of providing the basic needs of the world's population. High levels of poverty, increasing levels of distributive inequality and environmental destruction is evident throughout the world.

When the first major overall gap in human inequality emerged in the wake of the Industrial Revolution, distributive inequality differences were not yet large. It has been widening ever since, though not in a steady fashion. Estimates of the income gap between the fifth of the world's people living in the richest country and the fifth in the poorest are as follows: 1820: 3 to 1; 1870: 7 to 1; 1913: 11 to

¹ International Monetary Fund, *World Economic Outlook, Recovery Strengthens, Remains Uneven* (Washington: International Monetary Fund, 2014), 1-2.

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