

# CHRISTIAN MORAL RESOURCES FOR ECONOMIC JUSTICE AND SUSTAINABILITY

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## Abstract

As the recent global economic crisis has shown, we cannot leave the search for solutions exclusively to politicians and the so-called experts in finance and economics. It has become apparent that the usual economic focus on continued growth and short-term profitability is not sustainable and needs to be readjusted. This paper proposes that the moral resources of religions are a precious heritage of humanity in its search for meaning and the good life. This wisdom should not be restricted to the faithful but be made available to secular society as well. For the Christian churches, this seems to require firstly taking stock of their social and moral teachings and secondly translating them into a language that is comprehensible to believers and non-believers alike and that can inspire the moral discourse in pluralist society.

## บทคัดย่อ

ขณะที่วิกฤตเศรษฐกิจทั่วโลกปรากฏอยู่ขณะนี้ เราไม่สามารถปล่อยให้ การแสวงหาทางแก้ปัญหานั้นอยู่กับนักการเมืองและผู้เชี่ยวชาญด้านการเงินและ เศรษฐศาสตร์เพียงเท่านั้น วิกฤติเริ่มต้นชัดเจนว่าเศรษฐกิจที่เน้นเรื่องการเติบโต อย่างต่อเนื่องและผลกำไรในระยะสั้นนั้นไม่ยั่งยืนและจำเป็นต้องได้รับการปรับปรุง บทความนี้ได้นำเสนอแหล่งที่มาทางด้านศีลธรรมของศาสนาต่าง ๆ ซึ่งเป็นมรดกที่มี ค่าของมนุษยชาติในการแสวงหาความหมายและชีวิตที่ดี ภูมิปัญญานี้ไม่ควรจะจำกัด เฉพาะผู้ที่มีศรัทธาแต่ควรเปิดออกสู่สังคมโลกได้เป็นอย่างดี สำหรับคริสต์ศาสนจักร ก่อนอื่นดูเหมือนว่าจะต้องนำคัมภีร์ทางด้านสังคมและศีลธรรมออกมาและแปล คัมภีร์เหล่านั้นเป็นภาษาที่เข้าใจได้ทั้งสำหรับผู้มีความเชื่อและผู้ที่ไม่มีความเชื่อ

ซึ่งจะเป็นแรงบันดาลใจให้เกิดวาทกรรมทางด้านศีลธรรมในสังคมพหุนิยม

Let's imagine two ships of identical structure are going to sail from Cape Town to Shanghai and you must decide on which ship you will travel. You learn that the loading officer of ship "A" will be on board for the full journey and will get his bonus only on the ship's safe arrival. The loading officer on ship "B", however, will be paid in proportion to the quantity of the goods carried and he will neither be required to sail on the ship nor will his payments be affected should the cargo (or even the ship itself) be lost. — On which ship would you like to sail?

If you think that this story has something to do with the current economic and financial crisis, you are not mistaken. Obviously, the crisis is not only about money or the stability of the banking system but also and more importantly about values and ethics. It is about the erosion of trust in financial institutions, the lack of confidence in the economic system as a whole, and the reassessment of the moral foundations for prosperity in societies across the world.

In a crisis that directly affects the whole family of nations we cannot leave the search for solutions exclusively to politicians and the so-called experts in finance and economics, particularly since the latter failed to notice that something was about to go spectacularly wrong and to sound the alarm bells before it was too late. Instead, the crisis calls for an overhaul of the finance system and a thorough reform of the world economy that would also include strategies for effectively confronting environmental degradation, global warming, and the rapid depletion of non-renewable resources by accepting responsibility for future generations. It has become apparent that the usual economic focus on continued growth and short-term profitability is not sustainable and needs to be readjusted.

As the moral resources of religions are a precious heritage of humanity in its search for meaning and the good life they should not be restricted to the faithful but be made available to secular society as well. For the Christian churches, this seems to require firstly taking stock of their social and moral teachings and secondly translating them into a language that is comprehensible to believers and non-believers alike and that