

Interchange 38 Papers on Biblical and current questions, Sydney Christian Economics Group Papers, 1986, pp.64.

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Interchange is the journal of the Sydney Christian Economics Group. Issue number 38 contains four substantive papers from a conference held by the group, a short piece introducing the Sydney group and one review of Gary North's book, An Introduction to Christian Economics. Two of the articles, those by Anderson and Hawtrej, have been reproduced in this issue of the ACE journal. The other papers, and the history of the group are summarised in brief below to give readers an idea of what other Christian economists' groups do. The papers of the Sydney group are well worth considering.

The Australian Christian economists have several regional groups. The Zadok Economists Group was the first to start up under Doug Hynd in Canberra with the Sydney Christian Economists Group starting up in 1983. The Sydney Group describes itself as having the aim 'to explore the interface between Christian belief and economic thought, as well as to provide mutual support to each other as a professional fellowship'. The group also 'seeks to exercise a ministry to the wider church by involving itself in discussion forums as the opportunity arises.' (p.25). The precise size of the membership of the Sydney Group is not given but the summary of the conference says that there were 50 participants. The Sydney group is mainly composed of bank economists and postgraduate students. The discussion programme has reflected the membership's interests and has been of an applied nature. The papers contained in issue 38 of Interchange are of a more theoretical nature.

The papers which we have not reproduced in this issue of the ACE journal include a short piece by Sir Harold Knight, 'Ethics and Economics - A Christian Viewpoint' and a longer paper by Robert Forsyth 'Towards a Theology of the Economic Debate'. The paper by Knight is mostly directed at discussing individual Christians' professional behaviour. A brief set of behavioural norms of conduct are outlined and contrasted with those of the world. The formalisation of these criteria may be helpful to undergraduate or postgraduate students who are beginning to consider the ethical issues of their profession or business. Older readers might find the treatment superficial. Reading the books by Sir Fred. Catherwood would certainly be a better and more extensive consideration of such issues.

The paper by Forsyth is more deeply thought-provoking. His first point is that economics should not take the centre-stage; 'where does economics fit in? My answer is that it has a minor but not an irrelevant place' (p.41). In the rest of the paper, there is a thoughtful and often challenging integration of theoretical ideas and practical concerns, with a heart-warming section on the wisdom teaching of Proverbs. All in all Forsyth's paper is well worth reading and using for discussion group starters.

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