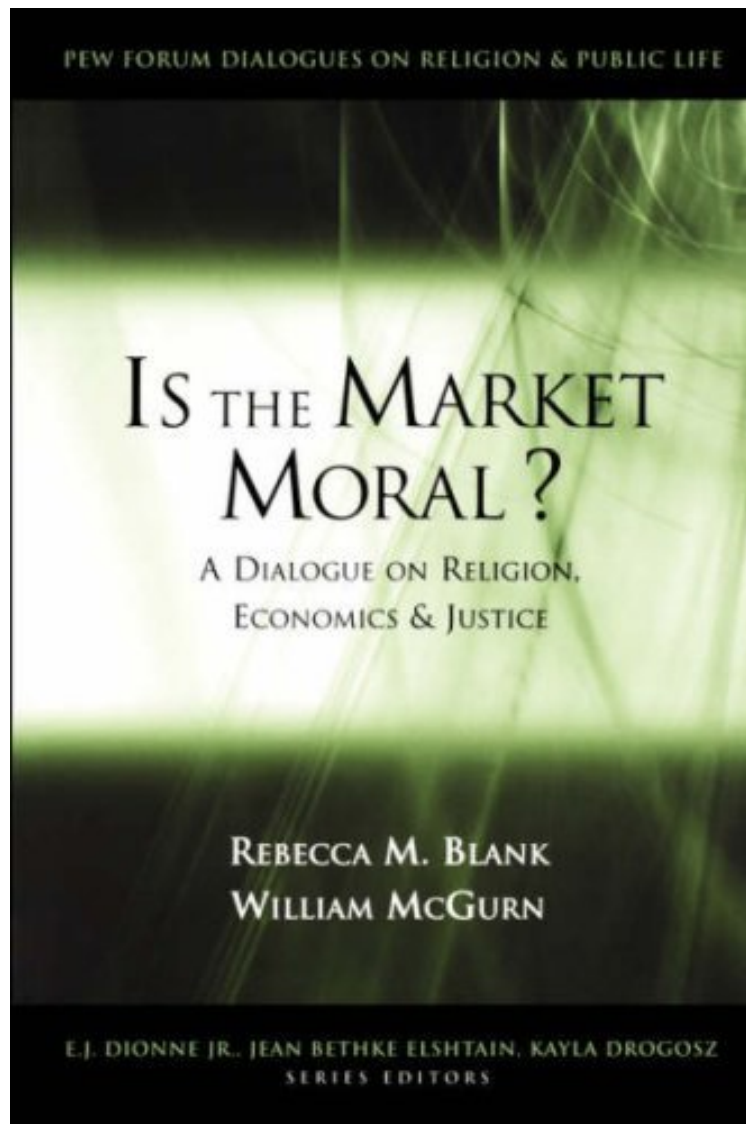


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Is the Market Moral?: A Dialogue on Religion, Economics and Justice (Pew Forum Dialogue Series on Religion and Public Life)

Rebecca M. Blank, William McGurn

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Rebecca M. Blank, William McGurn : Is the Market Moral?: A Dialogue on Religion, Economics and Justice (Pew Forum Dialogue Series on Religion and Public Life) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Is the Market Moral?: A Dialogue on Religion, Economics and Justice (Pew Forum Dialogue Series on Religion and Public Life):

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review helpful. slightly nickedBy Roger GayThe book arrived in good time, slightly nicked on the edge. Looks like it went through a machine in a slightly odd way. All in all, it's a new book etc. as expected. I'll only knock this seller down hard if I had repeated problems. And if this problem seemed bad enough to me, I'd contact them about returning it. Stuff happens. I'll still give them a fairly high score (not 5 in this case) because I'm not even trying to do anything about this little flaw and I don't assume it happens often or on purpose. Just sayin' in case the next 100 people who read this had the same problem or something.7 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Good, Rational DiscussionsBy Adam SmytheThe format of this relatively short book by Rebecca Blank and William McGurn is that each author presents an essay on the morality of markets, then a (shorter) reply to the other's essay, and then finally some (shorter still) concluding remarks. In a sense, the book essentially presents a substantive (yet polite) debate that was carefully prepared over a number of months.Please note both the title of this book, "Is the Market Moral?", and the sub-title, "A Dialogue on Religion, Economics Justice." If you are looking for a secular discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of market-based economies, this is not your book--because both authors incorporate extensive discussion of Christian beliefs and concepts. One of the authors is a Protestant and the other is a Catholic; however, although their Christian reasoning develops along somewhat different paths, their different views about the morality of markets are not due to denominational differences. Indeed, their basic views as Christians are pretty similar. When it comes to the authors' views on the right and wrong roles for government in market economies, there are much more important differences. However, it's important to understand that this book is not a debate between a socialist and a capitalist. Both of the authors are mainline commentators on contemporary economics. Blank served on the Council of Economic Advisers for Presidents George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton, and she is an economics professor at the University of Michigan. McGurn has served on The Wall Street Journal's editorial board and has spent considerable time witnessing developing economies in Asia. In many respects, the two authors are more alike than different in their evaluation of the benefits and limits of market economies. Both authors, for example, freely acknowledge that markets have greatly advanced standards of living for the poorest people on Earth, and that in many situations there is no better means of achieving efficiency and prosperity than through markets. Both authors would also acknowledge that markets can't work as well when some costs (or benefits) are not captured by private markets--such as can be the case with pollution, for example. Still, there are enough differences to make for some lively, though always well-mannered, discussion. For example, in terms of delivering some measure of economic justice, however you might define that, Blank discusses more instances of "market failure," and McGurn addresses more examples of "government failure."The beauty of this book is that the reader is treated to well-written, rational arguments that challenge one's thinking--all without incorporating any of the name-calling that is all too commonly a part of what can pass for intelligent discourse today. Many readers will identify more closely with either Blank's or McGurn's arguments, but at least they will be exposed to intelligent, thoughtful counter-arguments. More basically, maybe I ought to say that we readers can benefit from the realization that these counter-arguments actually exist--and that not all the choices societies face when contemplating the benefits and limitations of markets are necessarily as black or white as some presume. For that realization alone, this book is well worth reading. For a more detailed and thoughtful discourse on economics and justice, viewed partly through the prism of Christian teaching, it is still more valuable.

In the great tradition of moral argument about the nature of the economic market, Rebecca Blank and William McGurn join to debate the fundamental questions--equality and efficiency, productivity and social justice, individual achievement and personal rights in the workplace, and the costs and benefits of corporate and entrepreneurial capitalism. Their arguments are grounded in both economic sophistication and religious commitment. Rebecca Blank is an economist by training and describes herself as "culturally Protestant in the habits of mind and heart." She has also chaired the committee that wrote the statement on Christian faith and economic life adopted by the United Church of Christ. Addressing market failure, for her, requires that sometimes "freedom to choose" give way to other human values. William McGurn, a journalist and a Roman Catholic, uses his expertise in economics to reflect on the teachings of the church concerning the morality of the market. For McGurn, humans reach their fullest potential when they are free from the constraints of others. He writes that "our quarrel is not so much with Adam Smith or Milton Friedman but with the Providence that so clearly designed man to be his most prosperous at his most free." This book grapples with the new imperatives of a global economy while working in the classic tradition of political economy which always treated seriously the questions of morality, justice, productivity, and freedom.

"lively and accessible...[Blank] and McGurn challenge readers to consider a spectrum of ways that individuals and groups may engage their faith, as they live within and beyond markets." --Robyn Klay, Hope College, Faith and Economics"... a literate discussion of serious issues of economic equality, efficiency, productivity, and social justice. The contrasting views of two strong-willed, intelligent, faithful, and astutely reasoned individuals." --Library Bookwatch, 7/1/2004"Seldom does one read a book on economics so well thought out and well written that it can treat a complex subject this thoroughly and understandably in only 151 pages... clearly both authors are exceptional thinkers and writers." --Gerald F. Vaughn, retired, University of Delaware, Journal of Economic Issues,

3/1/2005"Every economist could benefit from reading this book. It explores fundamental questions about the role and moral implications of the market in society...with honesty and a fresh new relevance." mdash;Robert H. Nelson, University of Maryland, Journal of Economic Literature, 3/1/2005"This book would be a particularly useful study for a seminary-level course in economic ethics, or perhaps a clergy or parish book study group. It is well referenced and accessibly written." mdash;Wendy Dackson, Anglican Theological "For feminist economists interested in religion and/or in the perspectives of leading US female social scientists, this book will make interesting reading." mdash;Julie A. Nelson, Tufts University, Feminist Economics, 7/1/2006About the AuthorRebecca M. Blank is dean of the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy at the University of Michigan. She was senior staff economist with the Council of Economic Advisers during the first Bush administration and was appointed to the council under President Clinton. William McGurn is chief editorial writer and a member of the editorial board of The Wall Street Journal. He has also held key positions for National and Far Eastern Economic .