

Editorial | *The Editor as Steward*

The late Michael Novak, *requiescat in pace*, said that true callings are characterized by “[l]ong hours, frustrations, small steps forward, struggles: unless these too are welcomed with a certain joy, the claim to being called has a hollow ring.”¹ It has been my joy these past six years to work through “[l]ong hours, frustrations, small steps forward, [and] struggles” as part of the editorial staff of this journal, accompanied by the leadership, mentorship, and friendship of Dr. Jordan Ballor.

Having accepted a position as postdoctoral researcher in theology and economics at the VU (Free University) Amsterdam as part of its “What Good Markets Are Good For” project, Jordan has stepped down as executive editor of the *Journal of Markets & Morality*. His tenure at this journal is not limited to his time as executive editor, but began with volume 7, issue 1 (Spring 2004), his first issue as associate editor. Over the years he oversaw theme issues, controversies, translations, digital content, and more. This journal is richer for his influence and poorer for his absence.

Novak also said that callings “are not usually easy to discover.”² This has been true in my own case, at least. It was through a mutual friend at Calvin Theological Seminary that Jordan first approached me, quite providentially, about serving as this journal’s assistant editor. Like many studying for advanced degrees in the humanities, I had recently undergone something of an existential crisis, having come to realize how bleak my career prospects were likely to be after completing my education.³ Recently married that past fall and then with a baby on the way and no summer job lined up, I suddenly found myself able to provide for my family by doing something I loved to do and that actually utilized my education. I had not once even considered being an editor before being offered the job.

Working alongside Jordan, and at Acton more generally, I came to appreciate editing not only as something I unexpectedly enjoyed but also as something I had a duty to do well precisely because I was able to do it well. In his first editorial as executive editor, Jordan expressed his characteristically broad vision of Christian stewardship of the resources given to us in our digital age in terms of Jesus's example of the "faithful and wise steward" (Luke 12:42 NKJV): "For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more" (12:48). "[R]esearchers and scholars," Ballor wrote, "should view themselves as stewards, entrusted with the care and use of something by someone else."⁴ So, too, editors.

The editor holds a position of power. That power is ultimately quite narrow and limited, but even little power "tends to corrupt," to quote Acton.⁵ The "faithful and wise steward," on the other hand, knows that this power is derivative of another. The power of the steward is a gift, like the world itself, given to us for the common good and the kingdom of God. Technical expertise is no substitute for humility and gentleness in one's calling. The editor of the truest talent looks on each submission with charity, able to see the hidden potential even of a paper that must be rejected and able to correspond with authors and colleagues with the utmost professionalism.

Thankfully, Dr. Ballor, who has modeled these virtues with faith and wisdom in his editorial tenure, does not leave his post of executive editor vacant but passes it on to capable hands. Beginning with this issue, the *Journal of Markets & Morality* welcomes Dr. Kevin Schmiesing, our longtime book review editor, as its new executive editor. We also welcome Dr. Andrew McGinnis, editorial director and research fellow at the Acton Institute, as our new book review editor.

And I remain faithfully (if not wisely) steward of my current position and count myself blessed to be among such company.

—Dylan Pahman, Managing Editor

Notes

1. Michael Novak, *Business as a Calling: Work and the Examined Life* (New York: The Free Press, 1996), 35.
2. Novak, *Business as a Calling*, 35.
3. On this, see the Controversy between Dr. William Pannepacker and Dr. Marc Baer, “Should Students Be Encouraged to Pursue Graduate Education in the Humanities?” *Journal of Markets & Morality* 15, no. 2 (Fall 2012): 445–72.
4. Jordan Ballor, “Editorial: Printed Source and Digital Resource in Economics and Theology,” *Journal of Markets & Morality* 13, no. 2 (Fall 2010): 254.
5. John Emerich Edward Dalberg-Acton, “Acton-Creighton Correspondence,” in *Essays in the Study and Writing of History*, Selected Writings of Lord Acton, vol. 2, ed. J. Rufus Fears (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1986), 383.