Project Title: “Regulating Pay: Christian Thought on Market Exchange, Property Rights in Labor and the Living Wage.”

My thanks to the professional development committee for approving this Spring 2007 sabbatical project. In lieu of writing a full sabbatical report, Interim Dean Warren Rogers offered me the opportunity to make a presentation on the sabbatical at a faculty forum in April 2008. The essence of my professional activity during the sabbatical is presented below.

My research for this project was pursued at the University of Chicago and Wheaton College. I found the University of Chicago libraries (including the archives on Chicago economists) particularly helpful. Using two major University of Chicago libraries, I engaged in archival research on the work of the University of Chicago economist Paul Douglas, specifically his concept of the ‘living wage’, its Christian foundations and public policy implications. I found A portion of this work was presented in a paper entitled “Fair Wage as Living Wage: Economists’ Competing Visions and the Living Wage Movement” at the annual conference of the History of Economics Society, held in June 2007 at George Mason University.

In addition, I engaged in research at the University of Chicago libraries and Wheaton College on Biblical values related to property rights and economic justice. A portion of this work was presented in a paper entitled “Exchange and Property Rights in the Light of Biblical Values” at the annual conference of the Association of Private Enterprise Education, held in April 2007 at Cancun, Mexico. This paper was received well and in turn was published in the Journal of Private Enterprise (Volume 22, Spring 2007). I also presented a paper tied to this same research work in a seminar for the business and economics department (faculty and students) at Wheaton College in April 2007.

During this sabbatical I also was pleased to engage in several other activities related to my work as an economist. First, I completed and published a review of Luigino Bruni, Civil Happiness: Economics and Human Flourishing in Historical Perspective for Economic History.Net in March 2007. Second, I enjoyed being part of the research life at the University of Chicago political economy seminar (on the Chinese economy and changes in government policy
on property rights). Third, I was interviewed on WETN, the campus radio for Wheaton College, with respect to current global and domestic economic policy developments.

I wish to again thank the Westmont professional development committee for approving the funding of this sabbatical. This has enabled me to continue moving forward on my research on Christian thinking on labor markets, property rights, and its contribution to the history of economic thought. I appreciate the opportunities afforded through the sabbatical to share my research with fellow economists and as well with students both at Westmont and Wheaton.

Edd Noell
Professor of Economics
Westmont College