

**Marketplace Conversations:
An Opportunity for Australian Anglicanism in the Global Business Context**

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It is no small pity, and should cause us no little shame, that through our own fault, we do not understand ourselves, or know who we are – as to how good qualities there may be in our souls, or who dwells within them, or how precious they are – those are things which we seldom consider and so we trouble little about preserving the soul’s beauty.

– Teresa of Avila

Introduction

Any conversation the focus of which is Anglicanism in Australian society would omit an essential part of community life if it were to miss discussing the inter-connectedness of Anglicanism with the now globalising business world and its technological emphasis.

This paper identifies an historical origin of and wrestles with some of the complex and at times confusing tensions in this relationship. These continue today as a long lasting influence on both institutions. This observation is made from five platforms; a history of church and business, Australian Anglicanism and business, spiritual movements, Australian indigenous spirituality, and the human condition in the workplace.

Within a Christian historical setting the Anglican tradition is briefly noted, as is the colonial derivative and its particular stamp of authority on Australian business. Today, the prominent place assumed by globalising business in the western developed world comes at a time of generally declining influence of the western church. In this new post-modern era, when foundations are questioned, what might emerge as a stimulus for building a better relationship between the two? A resurgence of spirituality, and its identification with an all-pervasive connectedness, is one such influence. Christian spirituality is explored in its historical maturity together with what we might learn from Australian indigenous spirituality. Spirituality’s mystic place is recovered as a new form of Christian collaboration with business people. For business leaders are beginning to ask critical ‘work and life’ questions when confronted with the often painful realisation that all is not well with past and current work orientations. These questions point to the natural and central search for a spiritual meaning not only in the life of the individual but also in the corporate milieu.

All these and other institutional issues are confronting the emerging church today. How might the church re-engage in deeper more open conversations with the marketplace? What is the future if nothing is explored? The institutional challenge for both church and business is to move away from the current way of relating to people, of suppressing human awareness, into a new paradigm of nurturing human consciousness. This paper concludes with a summary of some special conversation invitations facing Australian Anglicanism in this globalising business context and presents a unique critical reflection opportunity for Australian Christians.

A History of Church and Business

A brief look at the New Testament reveals many instances where some insight is given to Christian teaching and how it might influence the nature of the relationship between the church and business world. In the parable of Lazarus the beggar at the rich man's gate (Luke 16: 19-31, see also Luke 12:33-34, Luke 14: 33), there appears to be a command to give all of your worldly possessions to the poor. In the parable of the dishonest manager (Luke 16: 1-13), one cannot serve God and wealth. In the story of Jesus cleansing the temple (Luke 19: 45-46), making money appears to clash with Christian living. The parables of the narrow door to the kingdom (Luke 13:22-30) and the rich ruler (Luke 18: 18-30), point to the difficulty for the affluent and powerful of entering the kingdom of God.

A critical exegetical analysis of Scripture, including the Old Testament, would reveal a greater depth of understanding to these and other passages. In particular this would point to the need not just for charity but a response to Jesus' call for a *metanoia* (Luke 2: 35, 5: 22, & the Beatitudes Luke 6: 20-49) in *our* heart, a key point to which we will return. In the absence of a more careful and critical reading it might appear that Jesus' radicalism is opposed to the financial purpose of western business. Put another way, there seems to be little in common between these two institutions, church and business and the professionals who respectively lead them, the clergy and laity. This misunderstanding seems to be at the centre of the tensions between them.

This tension spills over in the clergy-lay relationship. Perhaps Paul Stevens best captures the clergy-lay division in his book, *The Other Six Days: Vocation, Work, and Ministry in Biblical Perspective*. He laments that throughout much of history the church has been composed of two types of people--those who 'do' ministry and those to whom it is 'done'. In some areas of the church there remains a deep suspicion of a business making profits and of labeling business people as guilty of questionable practices, of being self-centred and of having addictions to

idolatry. This orientation is sometimes politely referred to as ‘secularism’ or with more vehemence as ‘the forces of modernity’ or of ‘liberalism’. The church seems to have a pervading distrust of business.

To form a more balanced view of the business world we need to acknowledge it is thanks to the marketplace, and the business activity which supports it, that humankind receives the necessities of life: improved education & training, health & medical practices, employment, housing, food production, transportation & distribution, and communication, albeit mostly confined to developed countries. Second, there have been great technological discoveries that have been applied to the provision of these needs and that have fruitfully occupied the creative minds and energies of many people. Third, the intellectual specialisation of the art of management has moved from scientific enquiry and group and relational behaviour to understanding human development and its mental health and well-being. This extends to understanding how conversation drives decision making, all now under cultural and gender influences. As a consequence we now see effective values-based management practices, more flatter and networked management structures rather than hierarchical ones and value being found in diversity of experience. Companies are committed to opening up real conversations across organisational barriers to link more closely learning experiences in scattered work communities. A comparative observation of the two institutions might note that contemporary theology and philosophy are still trying to equal the sophistication found in the global business world.

These marketplace advances have not been without inappropriate technological developments, e.g., the armament industry, especially the nuclear, or unethical business conduct. There has also been cost to the environment and some individuals’ humanity. This is especially evident when business is measured against values seen in democracy, such as human rights, equality and co-operation.

In summary, at a personal level work has given people their sense of identity, especially where their own values and desires are reflected in their daily work vocation. Most people seek to balance their work lives with competing family life responsibilities. These are some of the Spirit-led blessings found in the workplace. The fine corporate achievements and the dedicated aspirations of those individuals in the workforce invite us to recognise authentic business activity as a basic human endeavour and therefore worthy of respect and honour.

With this polarised view, is it not surprising then that it seems many committed lay people joyfully attend Sunday worship and then wear a different hat when they begin their working week on Monday? They are neither encouraged nor able to reach a unifying practical means of applying their faith in their leadership roles in the marketplace.

Despite these tensions, there have been attempts by the Christian churches here to connect with and integrate their pastoral influence in business. A noteworthy example is the Inter-Church Trade and Industry Mission (ITIM), an ecumenical organisation providing chaplaincy services to Australian business. Formed in 1960, and substantially following Industrial Mission practices in the UK, it has a unique triarchy of business, church, and union membership as its management model. The careful placement of chaplains in hospitals is another.

Australian Anglicanism and Business

Historically speaking, Anglicanism brought into practice the Protestant work ethic, the belief that honest hard work is a biblical duty and a moral good. That approach has largely infiltrated the whole of western work life, certainly amongst its leaders. Yet that emphasis has been challenged by the Lutheran tradition, as indeed have the puritan evangelical and catholic positions in Anglicanism. These alternative positions place the emphasis on living in ‘faith’ and not simply on doing ‘good works’.

The early convict settlement in Australia saw the adoption of the close British association of religion to state. Yet political leaders here separated church from state, which division they vigorously maintain today. Despite this separation the Anglican Church became the de-facto state church in the early colonial days. Whilst over time diversity in religious belief saw other Christian traditions and faith beliefs establish themselves, Anglicans held the prominent influencing position for many years until quite recently. A characteristic practice it adopted here compared with some other Christian traditions was non-intervention in marketplace ethical matters, in effect accommodating rather than challenging business. This kind of complacency (Sykes, cited in Paul Avis) may stem from the Anglican tradition possessing many different strands of theological, social and political meaning, which has invited a practice of tolerance under a self-perceived notion of comprehensiveness (Avis).

What shifts are now occurring in the globalising post-modern business context that might influence the two institutions? Michael Whelan in his booklet “Without God All Things Are Lawful” argues that the traditional institutional sources of values in our society – the church, family, education and civil authority – have waned. Business has now become the fountainhead of values in our society, largely suppressing in the process that mysterious inner life which we refer to as the spiritual life. What might be leaching away is the sense of meaning and loss of faith and hope. His thesis is that we need to rediscover a respect for something otherworldly, something beyond ourselves, if we are to avoid mega-suicide.

There are various Anglican responses to the challenges of a post-modern world, where every foundation appears to be put in question. Each faction seems to press more fervently its particular style of comprehensiveness and certainty, whether the missionary evangelist, preaching the Word, the prayer & healing chrism, sacramental ritual, social justice activity, orthodox or liberational. Perhaps these competing demands simply illustrate the struggle the Anglican Church has with its transition into this new global age. Many Anglicans respond by seeking, with little deep self-examination, to defend ‘their’ position.

Certainly the Anglican identity is a developing and diversifying tradition, built upon a rich and variegated heritage. And it is painfully seeking through returning to its origins to apply the strength there derived to the problems of the present (Paul Avis). Anglicanism might provide for its renewal and rebirth but it will of necessity need to go deeper into the painful process of self-examination and heart-searching.

In the marketplace there is, on the one hand, the ever-present thrust for business to become excellent and cost effective. In this pursuit it is ready to adopt the leading edge technologies like e-business or a ‘new’ orthodoxy of American management practice, whatever that might be. ‘Why this year’s game won’t be like last year’s game’, ‘In the end there’s only one strategy – play to win’, ‘No time to waste’, and ‘We’re just tribes at work – just human characteristics that go back millennia’, shout some headlines from management journals! There are those in the middle who are quite ambivalent to what is really happening. At the other extreme there is increasing unease with this kind of management. Many people feel frustrated because they sense they are living a life of compromise, spending most of their conscious hours doing something they would rather not be doing. Some feel trapped and suppressed and are beginning to question past and present beliefs of ‘success’. Some begin to ask: What is the secret ingredient to fulfillment and satisfaction? If they are still lost there are plenty of ‘self-help’ or mind and body books that provide a more holistic and humanistic approach to finding fulfilling work and a better

mental health and well-being. We occasionally hear the church, including some Anglicans, dismiss these books and movements disparagingly as ‘new age’. Perhaps we should understand that this search for meaning in our life experience is a basic act of religious reflection inspired by the Divine. It is naming our own identity and in a meaning-filled way is naming our soul.

The situation we therefore arrive at today is a complex and often confusing ambiguity between business and church. What is most clearly evident though is the lack of an acknowledged deep connectedness and integration between the two. Church communications evidently do not satisfactorily address the primary human need for an authentic fulfillment within the increasingly painful realities of a complex work life. This paper seeks to explore that dis-connectedness by looking at how a more open conversation, responsive to the human condition, might be nurtured.

Spiritual Movements

The mere mention of spirituality arouses all kinds of responses in people, from the most passionate, to the inquisitive, to the dismissive. There is undoubtedly a recent resurgence in different kinds of spirituality of which many seem to have an origin from the earliest of recorded history. Some kinds of spirituality are quite superficial (Ken Wilber). Although translated from mystical traditions, their form is such that their profound depth is diluted and therefore the potential for revolutionary transformation is lost. The mainstream church institutions today do not show widespread understanding and acceptance of a deep Christian spirituality. Perhaps this present situation exists because of the preoccupation of the different Christian traditions that developed from the 16th century and a consequential loss of interest in spirituality.

The practice of spiritual formation seems to have reached a critical point in the 14th century with Meister Eckhart’s creation-centred spirituality. This thought found its way into a formal discipline in the 15th century in addressing the most intimate heart-journey possible for people in the mystics John of the Cross, Teresa of Avila and Julian of Norwich. Ignatius Loyola dealt with the discernment of good and evil spirits.

Whilst the Anglican tradition has maintained some connection with spirituality, as a consequence of 16th century changing forms and emphasis there has been some theological reticence with the idea of one person advising another on intimate matters of the Spirit.

The development of psychology as a scientific discipline in the early 20th century to observe the human mind has found the church ill-prepared to respond to the complex needs of people today, for psychology separated itself from the spirit found within the mind, and of matters of faith and morality in particular (Gerald May). But the Pentecostal-style movements, in offering direct experiences of the Spirit, have reinvigorated a human awareness of the Spirit in the church. In those who have had such Spirit-filled experiences, now found within a broad spectrum of mainstream church and some other faiths, we see an energetic push to reclaim the old traditions of spiritual formation and to integrate them in fresh ways of understanding the natural spiritual search of people. An example is the work of the Eremos Institute in Sydney. Even some strands of psychology are now attempting to integrate the two.

Those who identify that they have had such a spiritual experience, often in the ordinariness of daily living, report having broken through to another level of existence, as though they ‘see’ reality with a perception well beyond rational explanation or dogma. This illumination of looking, seeing and doing the mundane in a new way is not bound by race, culture, or religion, as evidenced in voluminous literature (May). Such widespread evidence suggests the experience is not a benign delusion, as critics argue. Spiritual literature from around the world describes how ordinary people, often through a painful experience, acquire a state of harmony that transforms the present reality, not in a way that seems exotic, but in a way that enriches and deepens it. The more accurate and liberating reality is that of a sense of connectedness, with our self, with the whole of creation, and with something other, which Christians might call the Divine.

Australia has a unique contribution to make to the developing understanding of Christian spirituality.

Australian Indigenous Spirituality

From my living and working in remote mining communities in close proximity to indigenous peoples I have come to experience a parallel between indigenous and Christian spiritualities.

Indigenous culture has a special affinity and reverential respect for the land, something we westerners don’t readily grasp. But fortunately as part of a multi-cultural, multi-faith society Australian citizens are increasingly accepting the cultural gifts others bring. In this respect we thankfully observe Australians are increasingly recognising the ill effects of a violent culture, in stark contrast to some other developed nations, whose racial and religious intolerances continue

to breed horrific violence. Eugene Stockton names other indigenous cultural characteristics, a strong sense of community and celebration. He also explains indigenous religious philosophy.

In brief, indigenous religious philosophy includes an ancestral legacy of signs. It sees the human person as having intrinsic value in relation to caring spirits and supports the renewal and conservation of life in a human bonding with body, soul, and spirit. The material life is seen as being under a spiritual authority and religious practice requires the discipline of adherence to sacred tradition. Finally, it requires assent to and celebration of the complexities of life and the inculcated sense of mystery revealed through signs.

Perhaps it is in their high regard for ceremony that we non-indigenous are now coming to respect the essential spiritual ingredient of such celebrations. Knowing observers report on shared experiences of transcendence, to which they attribute deep meanings of purpose and being, amongst the indigenous participants in a ritual climax. Stockton also explains indigenous mysticism, *dadirri*, as ‘an inner deep listening and quiet still awareness’. A felt-effect takes place, involving internalisation, wholeness, peace, renewal, and togetherness.

What can non-indigenous Australian Christians learn from this indigenous spirituality? Let me tentatively answer that by quoting an old Native American saying about “walking in another person’s moccasins” before judging their path. This saying delightfully explores a lost deeper meaning of Christian compassion. What is being suggested is the next time you are confronted by an inner belief dilemma probably brought about through contact with another person, try living into that other’s viewpoint and step into their moccasins. Try to become the other. The gifts from this exercise will be many, as you’ll actually begin to ‘feel’ the experiences of the other person or being and with that comes new insights and understanding – allowing the essence of the other to speak. It actually can release us from perceiving ourselves as victims, and draw us into a much deeper understanding of our inner prejudices or illusory idealisations. A new realisation dawns without loss of our central beliefs. What this paper is exploring is the possibility through such an exercise of re-connecting in a deeper way with the ancestral Christian heritage of soul and spirit found in creation, in much the same lifeblood way as indigenous Australians understand they connect. Indigenous spirituality offers the tremendous gift of recovery of compassion; at the base of which is our natural bonding with a creation that freely offers itself to humankind but which we suppress. That is something of which we so-called civilised westerners have lost the memory .

We limit compassion to feelings of general kindness or tenderheartedness. Something much deeper is involved. We have misplaced our respect for the sacredness of each person's journey in all its delights and terrors and for *all* creation and our inter-dependency one with another.

An unstoppable social movement is now afoot here. It is a tentative walking of the non-indigenous toward reconciliation with Australia's indigenous people. When and how that progresses is anyone's guess. Prompted by Christian churches and others this is a unique happening in the global context. One can expect the Christian churches and academics to continue their exploration of indigenous spirituality, as illustrated by growing interest and number of books on the subject. Inevitably that will involve a rediscovery of the ancient Christian spiritual traditions with all its inter-connectedness. A recovery of this lost memory has the potential therefore to challenge and influence our business culture as much as our church spiritual culture.

The Human Condition in the Workplace

Let's enter the world of the business leader a little further, to wear business moccasins, to better understand the human predicament. He (usually) operates in a fast and volatile but none-the-less familiar and predictable world, where everything is more or less under control. This is a gruelling adrenaline-driven life, with a business leader seemingly consumed by an insatiable urge for self-realisation. Then along comes one of those random invariably stressful events. In some people it's a painful crisis, in others the excruciating insight that all is not well with past and present work orientations. Many just cannot quite understand what is happening to them.

As reported in a recent Australian Financial Review interview with five prominent Australian business people, Gerry Harvey, founder of the Harvey Norman retail giant, suddenly found his son had resigned his executive post in the company to pursue music, surfing and alternative therapies. In reflecting on this dramatic confrontation Gerry could not now rationalise what success meant, that his frugal living to build this empire now seemed to bring no moral joy, but disturbing thoughts and unnatural urges. Gerry's account of his son's new ambitions is an indicator of his own search for a new paradigm of relating in the present time. Each of the five interviewees had their own and quite different story to tell, but all had the common thread, as one suggested, that 'life is fragile and time to seek its purpose is running out'.

In this group of well-known leaders as with others, these profound realisations are often accompanied by strong feelings of grief, fear, emptiness, sadness, anger, frustration, fragility, isolation, or confusion as traditional support structures disappear. Medical reports confirm that this adrenaline-sustained and stress-filled scene is all too familiar in large corporations. The business leader forever struggles to be in control again, but the situation is irretrievable. In many this torment lasts for lengthy periods, and, in some, debilitating illness or deep depression sets in. The more aware might then begin wrestling with a wish they could forget a particular shame of their human-ness. At this time of internal struggle, some of those left standing opt for new careers, take on less demanding roles, or drop out of work altogether, whilst others take time out from their career to work for a charitable organisation.

The fundamental question these stressed and desperate leaders are really asking concerns their 'work-life' balance. What is the real meaning of life for them when their achievements, whether affluence or sense of power, seem to count for so little? Can they change their addiction before it's too late?

Church and Business – a future?

So where does this understanding place the church in relation to business? What invitations arise? What conversation characteristics are essential?

It is reasonable to suggest that the marketplace has a lot to say about what goes on, so let's explore this first. New thinking challenges business too. Business understanding of itself is raising a new level of consciousness, a new way of seeing and processing reality. Business leaders now recognise that business can only thrive within the social cohesion of the community. Business, in recognising the dependency it has with developing countries, is increasingly looking at its distributive efforts, to return something more in appreciation of what it presently receives. Such views are often prompted by networks of concerned citizens dedicated to the promotion of ethical, sustainable and responsible corporate practices, such as found in the Institute of Social and Ethical AccountAbility, Business in the Community, or, locally, the Australian Corporate Citizenship Alliance. This represents a recognition that the economic-rationalised foundations on which the global marketplace presently stands are not sound. In addition to paying attention to the well-being of its western employees, there is a need to also pay attention to the 'underside' of the business world, including what happens in developing countries. This is now found in some business commitments to corporate social responsibility and in some business partnerships with the community. This recognition of the inter-connectedness and integration of the various parts

of the business world is an important shift in the marketplace. Especially amongst the younger business leaders, there is a real sense of feeling ‘time is running out’ to discover a pattern-changing solution that provides a sustainable way ahead. This turmoil points to a new openness amongst some business leaders to reflect on and engage in conversations on spiritual matters. How might the inter-connectedness found in spirituality apply to the business world and how might business relate to spirituality’s institutional promoters? In a post-modern age will Christian spiritual insights, as opposed to other non-transformational spiritual forms, emerge as a stimulus for a new relationship between the two institutions?

The church in all its traditions is facing a significant challenge from within its competing factions to establish its core meaning. But an individual response is not enough. A new paradigm is called for. New alliances, which respect the immense value found in difference, need to be explored with those who yesterday were considered to be in competing camps. In addressing its institutional crisis the church must also surely engage in a new deepening conversation with the marketplace. The felt pain in all these efforts must be considerable. Will this lead to a possible openness to exploratory discussions in Christian spiritual matters? How might the inter-connectedness found in Christian spirituality apply within the church and be integrated into the business world?

With the influencing tables now turned, how can the church begin a corporate marketplace conversation? What can the church learn from a sophisticated business experience? What can the church offer business? This paper suggests that the conversation begin with a compassionate understanding of the individual and the human condition in the work context, responding to the basic human quest for unfettered meaning. The Old Testament theologian, Walter Brueggemann, affirms this. He suggests that the issue of our time concerns the understanding of pain, in both personal and public spheres. His call is for individuals to embrace the felt-pain of others (i.e., compassion) so that the institutional structures that suppress pain are challenged. He points out that where pain is not dealt with effectively it will be driven underground, only to manifest itself in unexpected and harmful ways, either as an emotional pathology or an emotional disorder. Business has some recognition of this. Does the church?

On what meaningful basis, for example, might the clergy approach a stressed business leader? Will simplistic dogmatic pronouncements, that are prescriptive, instructional and exhortatory in tone, grab their attention? The reflective business leader will in all probability find that this style of church, which demands the adoption of ‘beliefs’, is at odds with all they have learnt and experienced about the world and the goodness they perceive in it. Such classical preaching style

will most likely be unresponsive to felt personal needs. Or will it be a comforting style that consoles, defends or that unquestioningly promotes the self. As long as the self believes the myths, performs the rituals, mouths the prayers, or embraces the dogma, it will be 'saved'. Then there is likely to be little change to the deeper level of consciousness necessary for personal and radical transformation. The reflective leader, whether from church or business, will understand that this style also ceases to console in pain-filled events. Both the instructional and placatory manners of exchange fail to engage in a compassionate-style of conversation on the human condition, its workplace predicaments and Spirit-led accomplishment aspirations and needs.

If the church is to recognise authentic business activity as a basic human endeavour and therefore worthy of respect and honour, it seems appropriate that it address the primary needs of the human pain-filled search for fulfillment. The church must become expressive of compassion; as Henri Neuwen suggests, suffering with, or going where it hurts, entering into places of pain, and sharing in brokenness, fear, confusion, and anguish.

What a stressed business leader really seeks is a companion, someone who will stand beside them and listen; someone who is neither judgmental nor patronising of them. That companion will honour them for who they are in their struggle with their pain. But that business leader must first ask; there must be no outside imposition and prescriptive solutions, which rob others of their words. The right of an individual to participate fully in the naming of their experience must be preserved.

They are invariably in need of 'time out' to reflect upon their life, to explore what their life story has been and now means. Can they put aside for a while the pain experienced in their life? Can they know when they have been 'held together' by a mysterious presence or absorb the infectious character of creation that can marvelously dwell in one's life? Can they discover that an acceptance of their 'being' is the key to a fruitful 'doing' or identify lost opportunities and those opportunities that ought to remain behind? Can they discern what their true heart desires are and how they might differ from their daily obsessions? As Teresa of Avila suggests, they need to discover anew the preciousness of their inner being that might preserve the soul's beauty. Finally, they may come to an acceptance of the many paradoxes in life, receiving a release of new energy, creativity and compassion. This internal process of nurturing oneself is the beginning of a possible *metanoia*, or change, in our heart.

Importantly, will their companion be careful not to overwhelm or prejudice the movement of the Spirit in that person's life? Is there a suitable metaphor to describe what is happening here, one that might inspire us? Perhaps it might be the chrysalis, one signifying a natural, gentle and profound death and re-birth, an affirmation of new life. The nurturing of that relationship will have a profound influence on both persons. From my experience of working with people in such pain, the *metanoia* unexpectedly flows two ways.

What is called for in the church is a recovery of the ancient and mystical Christian spiritual tradition. As Thomas Moore puts it the greatest malady of our time, implicated in all our troubles and affecting us individually and socially, is 'loss of soul'. When soul is neglected, it doesn't just go away; it appears symptomatically in our obsessions, addictions, violence, and loss of meaning.

Invitations for Australian Anglicanism in this Global Business Context

Let me try to pull some of these important conversational threads together.

What this paper suggests is that humankind are spiritual beings having human experiences. In this context 'spiritual' means sharing in the quality of being alive, and 'spirituality' means the externalisation of the spiritual in our thoughts, feelings, decisions and actions towards the self, the Divine, others and creation. 'Being alive' means becoming aware of the deep interconnectedness and integration evident in all creation. It means, for example, understanding that the air we last breathed-in was once air exhaled from another person, and another before that, and so on. Then to recognise that the oxygen needed to sustain human life is mysteriously regenerated by another part of creation.

Evidence points to a widespread recovery of the Christian mystical spiritual tradition. This will form part of a new multi-faceted approach to the expression of the hope found within one's faith. New opportunities for the Australian Anglican Church to enter into a deeper and more open Christian spiritual conversation with business are evident.

The Australian business marketplace is blessed with a multi-cultural, multi-faith composition. In corporate and individual church-business conversations, this diverse dimension must be respected and honoured. Business will accept no other way.

The institutional challenge for both church and business is to move away from the current rhetorical way of relating to people through power structures, of suppressing human awareness, into a new action paradigm of nurturing human consciousness. And in the experiential learning process demonstrating that *all* humankind has a special place of value in society. This is

Christian compassion, not just of a ‘feeling sorry for’ kind, but one inviting us to ‘suffer with another’ to bring to birth a *metanoia* in our hearts.

A marketplace conversation begins with *cura animarum*, the cure of souls, in view, with the primary responsibility that of our own soul. We will meet therefore with the clear intent to ‘treat each other well’ and with an openness to learn.

Effective conversations will be characterised by the creation of a hospitable space where questions that really matter may be explored. That exploration will connect a diverse range of people who bring different learning experiences and beliefs and therefore different ideas to share. As each person’s contribution is honoured, we will carefully listen for patterns, deeper insights, and more questions to probe beneath the hidden assumptions we all carry forward. As a consequence something new may emerge from the conversation, which is both profound and powerful.

Lay people who desire to immerse themselves in the workplace, to become more intentional in their faith, to act with openness and commitment to a deeper spiritual discourse, will play an important leadership role in marketplace conversations.

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