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Casting the Nets: Managing From “Needs of the Soul”

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Objectives

BEFORE HUMAN WORK BECOMES GOD’S, the human heart must become God’s. This priority of love and this pattern of divine super-persistence situates calling as a mystical experience. It is the soul that is being challenged, not skill-set. It is the soul that is being expanded, not competence. The objectives for this paper are to speak to the soul-needs of persons in business, tracking the spiritual progression of personal calling to also call forth the needs of creation, community and company within business. Based on the story of the first disciples in Luke 5, this exploration of calling is structured into four parts:

- i) Awaiting in the workplace;
- ii) Moving away to listen and learn with Jesus;
- iii) The testing in which expertise is transformed by grace

- iv) And the ultimate moment of decision to abandon one's self to the possibilities of profession as discipleship.

Introduction

Occupation is not ancillary to calling but constitutive to it. In Luke's gospel we are informed of the first disciples' work before we are told their names.¹ The four were in the act of labor, cleaning their nets, when Jesus arrived in their midst. Their first experience of companionship was within the milieu of their business, as Jesus chose to continue preaching to the crowd from their boat. And the call to obey, before it became a vocation, was to fish in what by hard-won experience they knew to be a barren bit of sea. The overwhelming catch taxed their skills, jeopardizing nets and boats. Transformed by this outpouring of grace, the four courageously accepted discipleship. But in Luke's poetic summary, this was not a change *in* career so much as a change *within* career—fishing now practiced with cosmic possibilities to catch human hearts and souls in the net of God's love.

There are two implications to consider from this text. First, business can indeed be the locus for God's calling. It would be surprising were it not since work matters profoundly, as a creative act, as a contribution to sustenance and community, as a mark of human dignity and identity. Hardly one to accept a "no fly zone," God works with what we do. Just as Simon, Andrew, James and John became "fishers of men" and women, every career and profession holds the possibility of expertise magnified by grace to also achieve an eschatological aim. What this involves, as Juan L. Hinojosa explains, is to work from within the blessing of our "charism" or "giftedness," so that "we engage what is deepest and best in us" in "a dance with the world's deepest needs."² The response to such a calling is not, however, the technical one of deciding what to do within work, but rather who to become in relationship to God through that work. This leads to the second lesson. The calling is actually plural—not a one-time intervention but a process of spiritual transformation that dissolves the division between profession and confession. Having fished all night, the nets were empty. Expertise and labor in and of themselves were merely exhausting. Only when faith was brought to life in work did the sea yield its full abundance. The demand from Jesus was not for outcomes but for fidelity practiced as hope, with nets tossed by hands trusting

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grace as well as technique. Social teaching and church making came later, after spiritual need grew into spiritual competence, and eventually became spiritual trust.

Many managers today have their own experience of coming up empty. Peter Drucker observes that many of his business students are in jobs without purpose that engage only a fraction of their skills or imagination.³ As a friend explains, her role as a senior executive demands many things but not the chance to be her best. These restless hearts are fertile ground for God's call. The very real needs of the soul have fomented various spiritualities in the workplace. As Laura Nash and Scott McLennan have found, much of this soul managing is *ad hoc*. There are moral as well as practical dangers to spiritual free-lancing, however, what Nash and McLennan stress is not the diversity or often ill-defined shape of the spiritual response, but rather the urgency of the common, underlying need.⁴ Souls in business are hungry—sometimes agonizingly so—for models or guides to enmesh the interior desire to live in God's embrace with the exterior desire to make a successful contribution as professionals. Despite this craving for integrity, few people in the trenches of business have yet to resolve the disconnection—the dis-integrity - between “church on Sunday” and “work on Monday.”

Paradoxically, the wisdom from religious imagination is very close to what businesses now acknowledge they need for excellence. Corporate trust has been lost to scandals, but even without these improprieties managers had been struggling to respond to the difficult moral claims of globalization, sustainability, fair trade and just labor. While corporations are legal constructs with commercial aims, their functionality and effectiveness hinge on the very attributes of wholeness that constitute human integrity. Investors depend on *truth*. Regulators expect *obedience* to the rule of law. Customers discern value through some calibration of *fairness*. Employees need a sense of animating *order* and belonging from vision. Managers rely on *hierarchy* to apportion resources and account for outcomes. Strategies aim to anticipate exigencies so as to secure operational *stability*. Renewal requires creative *risk* and innovation. Capital, to be *free*, paradoxically needs the regimen of a level playing field. And accountability, to be real, calls for penalties and *punishments* commensurate with transgressions. These virtues, which managers recognize as the operational standards from best practices, and which society holds as normative for integrity, are corporate expressions of what the French philosopher and mystic Simone Weil named as the “needs of the soul.”⁵

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This correspondence between the soul and corporate needs is actually quite logical. Weil fashioned her definition of needs as an exercise in whole-making, seeking an intellectual and moral basis for reunifying France after the fissuring trauma of Nazi occupation. As human beings cannot survive or be whole in isolation, the needs of the soul and the integrity these confer are inextricably also *corporate*—as in the larger *corpus* or body of community. Hence the overlap and opportunity: what persons in business crave in their spirituality the larger bodies of company, society or church also need in order to create and sustain systems of hopeful becoming.

Part One: *Awaiting*

As in the speaking forth of creation, the initiative for calling is God's: Jesus walks towards the workers cleaning the nets and, despite a bevy of followers, chooses them. St. Ignatius described his ecstatic experience of Eucharist as being swept up in the dance of the Trinity, the effusive and overflowing relationality that the church fathers named *perichoresis*. Calling is the dance coming to us, a gift of being seen and wanted before becoming an invitation to reciprocate and swing. It is sublimely precious to be called, yet not so unusual, for it is in the relational nature of God to reach out and in the nature of humans created in God's image to respond. For the four stooped in the work, calling materialized from the uninvited presence of Jesus. With the Incarnation, God walking among us is forever near, forever approaching uninvited, forever choosing us to participate in divine life.

With broad strokes Luke paints a reality of work surprisingly similar to our own. We are introduced to the workers through the diligence for their craft as they repair and prepare their nets. And eventually we learn that they had spent the night in futility, casting nets where experience told them they would find fish, yet harvesting nothing. The first impression reminds us of the dignity of work, which deserves honor, mindfulness and creativity. The second points to the ever-present possibility for exhaustion from relying solely on human expertise. This suspicion of human productivity is already embedded in the experience of Israel from enslavement and Exodus. As Marian Harris notes, the command for Sabbath and the law stipulating Jubilee (a Sabbath year once a generation) represented a covenantal gift from God, interrupting the tendency within even the best human systems to sacrifice freedom to productivity.⁶ Herein lies the dichotomy of fulsomeness and fall: the

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expertise that unleashes creativity and sustains life is also the compulsion that stymies liberty and exhausts, sometimes unto death. Expertise as a means serves while as an end it dehumanizes. God's calling to make work holy preserves the giftedness of expertise by rendering it subservient to relationship.

Work sustains. It is an instrument for both liberation and creativity. And yet, as we know, work without boundaries also exhausts. Much of the ecological crisis—including tragic over-fishing of the world's seas—stems from over-working. In this case, management exacerbates the damage with its focus on allocating resources and maximizing efficiency, what Dorothee Soelle calls “one dimensionality” that leads paradoxically to a “prevailing impoverishment and destruction.”⁷ It is not only the commons that are imperiled. According to the New York Times, “62% of workers say their workload has increased over the last six months; 53% say work leaves them “overtired and overwhelmed;” and more than half expect this pressure to only get worse. In addition to the financial burden to companies (over \$300 billion a year lost in the U.S. alone), the cost for workers is the grave one of health and hope. While advertising has made it seem sexy and smart to have a laptop or Blackberry on a beach, the intrusiveness of this technology has meant that more and more people “are always on the job.” For sociologist Arlie Hochschild, this conflation in which “home became work, and work became home” has induced a splintering (or disintegration) of self— “a constant state of distraction, doing one thing and expecting another.”⁸

Exhaustion is a perspective as well as condition, a lowering of horizons often lost in the strain on mind and muscle. The four fishermen did not want to cast their nets where Jesus instructed. They had listened to him, yet the filter of their own expertise and the fatigue from their previous night's work did not allow them to see the possibilities of the call they were already following. As Paul Ricoeur observes, human ingenuity—what he calls *techné*—enables mastery, which eventually breeds a dependence that reverses and comes to master us. As the amalgam of learning, skill, experience and competence, expertise can be highly productive, but productivity alone is not the measure of human integrity. Often the opposite happens: expertise isolates, alienates or segregates, leaving gaps or emptiness which the human heart experiences as imbalance, creating gaps or barriers which companies recognize as silos.

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In interviews with twenty-five large company CEOs and in a quantitative survey exploring the state of trust in companies and society, I found that the pressures for efficiency had become so great that little innovation or investment in civil society could escape the gravitational pull of the bottom line. Persons with the levers of power at their fingertips felt powerless—a surprising suspension of freedom and willing acceptance of reduced possibilities that in the report I call “despair from pragmatism.”⁹ The turning inwards to prayer and faith is in part a response to this constrictive practicality. Nash and McLennan found that spirituality for many business people is not simply for solace but for “engagement of life destroying forces.” Managers do care that “justice” prevails, and increasingly—as Drucker notes—business people are seeking to make a difference. The conundrum is reverting to expertise to solve problems that expertise often creates. Johan Verstraeten call this “the iron cage of modern rationality” in which even movements for ethics or environmental sustainability become “enclosed,” thereby affirming the *status quo* rather than allowing “real innovation in moral behaviour.”¹⁰

This was not the initial reaction of the fishermen. Despite their tiredness they jumped spontaneously at the invitation from Jesus to be taken aboard their boat and coast offshore. In later teachings Jesus would define this spontaneity as child-like: innocent yet receptive, dependent yet joyful, vulnerable yet adventurous. Fatigue may make us spiritually hungry for relief, but this passive expectation is not enough. Like the four who caught and counted fish for a living, expectancy also needs exuberance, for what else can be the reaction to being seen and chosen by God? It may be that “many are called but few are chosen” because, while many turn to spirituality when experiencing the futility of empty work, only a few have the exuberance to still respond with generosity out of that emptiness. Ignatius made generosity towards God a condition for beginning the Spiritual Exercises. The four fishermen anticipated this, suspending work, delaying rest, to oblige Jesus and generously take him out for a row.

Part Two: *Away With Jesus*

We are not told what Jesus said from the boat. Great teaching, including the Beatitudes, would follow shortly in the gospel. What Luke seems to say is that for discipleship, the spiritual movement is founded on intimacy rather than understanding. We

need to retreat, to cast-off, to float free—not necessarily forsaking the tools and environ of our work, but creating time and space within that productivity to encounter the divine. “The Spirit’s meanings are learned slowly,” explains John Haughey. This pause is essential for what Haughey calls “receivment,” awakening through grace to the transcendence that our knowledge or expertise alone cannot reach.¹¹ While a crowd wanted to be near Jesus, only the fishermen had the “backstage passes” to see Jesus close-up and—importantly—to see the impact of Jesus refracted in the faces of the people on shore. Receivment participates in an embrace from God that we feel personally yet which is not ours; that is in fact inherent to all creation, and extends to every face when we take the pause to see them. It is this instantaneous intimacy and solidarity that, even before the Beatitudes were spoken, created the substance of Christian ethics. The calling to be on the boat *with* Jesus cannot be segregated from the obligations to attend to the clamoring needs of those standing on the beach.

What did the crowd need that Jesus so agitated? There are many ways to envision Messiah or formulate Christology, but the common themes for understanding Jesus as the “anointed” are what John Paul II calls “the threefold mission of Christ as Priest, Prophet and King.”¹² In his priestly role Jesus broke the monopoly of institutions, making holiness accessible to all, creating sacrament around the simple fellowship of meals and teaching prayer of radical intimacy to God. Especially with his healing, which often violated religious rules, Jesus consecrated as holy, as grace-filled, the personal moments of need transformed by faith. Priesthood flowing as compassion: ritual releasing the cosmic in the mundane.

As prophet Jesus challenged the presumptions of how humans expected God to be. The Messiah was for sinners, not for the righteous. The feasting was for the Prodigal Son, not the steadfast. Wages paid to part-time laborers were equal to those of full-time workers. Jesus drove money-changers from the Temple, chastised hypocrites, and demanded self-renunciation for discipleship, yet he also wept over the impending suffering of Jerusalem, taught forgiveness on a scale greater than judgment and remembered—after miraculously bringing the little girl back to life—to have her fed. This is prophecy envisioning wondrous possibilities of life with God, while at the same time serving the urgency and coherence of practicality.

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Much of what Jesus taught had to do with Kingdom, but as Walter Wink explains, his model for realm and royalty was “a counter-assertion” against domination. “Jesus does not condemn ambition or aspiration; he merely changes the values to which they are attached: ‘Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.’ He does not reject power, but only its use to dominate others. He does not reject greatness, but finds it in identification and solidarity with the needy at the bottom of society.”¹³ In the lineage of David, the kingship of Jesus was inscribed on the cross.

Not all of this could have been clear to the sleep-deprived boat owners, but being so close to him, for seeing his ministry to the crowd, they could hardly escape the Messianic qualities of his person. Indeed, for being with him on the boat, the four also presaged the formation of church, the creation of the mystical body of Christ in which all its members share in the “anointing.” Echoing the Second Vatican Council, John Paul II writes of the “new aspect to the grace and dignity coming from Baptism” which is that “the lay faithful participate, for their part, in the threefold mission of Christ as Priest, Prophet and King.” As David Specht and Richard Broholm have outlined, all our work and efforts hold possibilities for priestly enactment of Eucharist—for offering sacrifice and extending the whole-making healing of compassion. All our tasks and projects offer occasion to also expose “contradictions” —to prophetically critique systems that perpetuate brokenness and project the alternative order of healing life with God. And all our roles and titles have as a latent job description the charge to “restore creation” —to exercise kingly power for “justice,” and with “charity.”¹⁴

If the terms seem anachronistic, the actual substance of priestly, prophetic and kingly roles corresponds with much of what management *should* entail. The expanding literature on “emotional intelligence” aims for more compassionate, respectful engagement of human resources. Strategic planning and visioning exercises are attempts to radar-scan the horizon for opportunity and renewal. And, as with Joseph Badarraco’s exploration of “quiet leadership,” there is a growing appreciation for power exercised with “modesty, restraint and tenacity.”¹⁵ These projects all hint as well at larger eschatological themes: the richness of the whole human being; sustainability within creation; and the ethical obligations of stewardship. Profoundly valuable, this managerial orientation still presumes that the problems of dehumanization, limited vision and faulty governance can be almost exclusively resolved

with more expertise—with more *techné*. As Verstraeten explains, the alternative “horizon” requires the “biblical imagination” to enable “Christians to look at the world and at life through [Christ’s] eyes (*“voir comme”*)” and to also “discover new way of being and new models of action (*“agir comme”*).”¹⁶

Part Three: Testing the Soul

Exuberance could have been stymied by expertise. Instead, with humility—with child-like deference—nets were cast where hard work had caught nothing. In doing this labor with Jesus, the threat now was the opposite of emptiness: fullness overflowing to the bursting point. In another context Ricoeur writes: “The logic of superabundance is the logic of love.”¹⁷ No wonder that in the face of such awesome love Simon would plead unworthy. No surprise that—as would happen again later with whole towns—Jesus would be asked to depart. Love always sparks upheaval so it is proportionate that the uprooting would be on yet another scale from encountering God’s love. This has been the pattern for many Hebrew prophets and Christian saints: calling not as invitation but as dislocation that eerily resembles what business calls a “hostile take-over.”

Simone Weil predicated human and social integrity on the needs of the soul because while she was an elite expert—one of the great thinkers of the French intellectual system—she gave precedence to the movement in her heart for being in God’s embrace. As a Jew who believed in Christ—who ached for Eucharist yet never felt worthy to convert—Weil has been described as one of the first postmodern saints. Just as appropriately we could see her as the prototype for postmodern calling. To test her social and philosophical concepts, her *techné*, Weil actually went to work for a time in the dangerous bowels of an automotive factory. As synchronicity would have it, she also served as a deck hand on a fishing boat. Too frail to survive such labor, Weil continued to pursue solidarity with the crowd as her measure of calling. Although she did not overtly espouse the three-fold mission, her discipleship seems to have spontaneously assumed that pattern, writing prophetic theories, priestly prayers and kingly constructs for healing the traumatized social order.

Weil’s “needs of the soul” were named within a larger project of securing place, restoring the integrity of society so as to provide “roots” for the individual person. While

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distinct from the world of politics and economics, the mystical by means of these needs infuses and actually serves the practical. God's way of fishing becomes ours, with the catch satisfying heart as well as hunger. Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote that the nature of Christian freedom is "to be free for others." Weil similarly believed that the obligations precede rights, that the needs of the soul in fact are the first claim of which human rights are the outcome. There is of course considerable awkwardness, if not outright antipathy, in proposing solutions based on needs of the soul to a secular society or institution. As it was, Weil was never really accepted by any of those whom she served from solidarity: too Jewish to be French, too Christian to be Jewish, too smart to be a laborer, too spiritual to be an intellectual, too feminine to be a leader. Yet Weil persisted, tossing the net of mystical love where God told her to, projecting the needs of the soul in seas that secular expertise considered unviable.

To define calling through the needs of the soul sets three tests for managers of faith: conversation, cross and courage. Conversation relates to upholding the sacred in corporate discourse, not as a hammer for righteousness or proselytizing, but as a voice in discerning the moral impact of choices. Respect for diversity invites tolerance, and for managers that may well mean first tolerating their own voice of religious consciousness. Markets and shareholders, as well as employees and communities would have been well served had managers of faith at any number of companies said, "It's against my religion to lie, cheat or steal." More constructive for the long-term is drawing without apology from religious imagination to grapple with the material problems facing companies. Engagement between religion and business leaders has already begun at the Davos Economic Forum, the Caux Roundtable and many business and theology schools. The charge for managers is to take this conversation about soul needs into the trenches of business. This means creating pause for the Spirit, learning the language of the heart, humbly hearing others and respecting difficult problems enough to bring our whole and best humanity to them.

Generic spirituality is a "house built on sand" that will not stand up to hurricane winds of market greed or typhoon floods of personal ambition. The foundation for building moral management must be on rock, which for Christians is inescapably the cross. As has always been the case, this is the big test. For all its familiarity as an icon the scandal of the cross has never abated. No single theology exhausts or satisfies the meaning of this mystery,

yet there is no way to be on the boat with Jesus—to be in a relationship of calling—without personally embracing the cross. “Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me,” said Jesus, “cannot be my disciple.” (Luke 14:27). Every job and career holds challenges in which “the fundamental and fierce tension between the ways of God and the ways of the world” require personal witness.¹⁸ This may be, as Paul J. Wadell explores, in the “refusal to lie” by which whistleblowers “make an indispensable contribution to the vocational integrity of institutions.”¹⁹ Or, as William J. Toth argues, this may mean “grounding” entrepreneurial activity in the “kenotic” example of Christ, risking not only capital or failure but also the “self-emptying” by which we “sacrifice ourselves for one another as we engage in concrete acts of neighbor love.”²⁰ Rather than a hard and fast ethical checklist, the cross compels us to become Christ in the moment, to serve as what Pope John Paul II calls “God’s co-workers.” J. Krishnamurti wrote that “Truth cannot be brought down: rather, the individual must ascend to it.”²¹ Holding the cross, bearing it, is really the only devotion for accessing its truth.

The third test—courage—is precisely the one faced by the four fishermen. In every life, in every job, there will be moments that require the leap of faith to fish when it seems impossible to catch anything. One senior banker asked me to develop a “business case” for a more robust, company-wide ethics program. There exists such a case, but this motivation is flawed for again applying a model of productivity to correct productivity’s excesses. Sometimes the right moral action has no business case. Sometimes what is good requires outright obedience to principle rather than calibration of payback. While the correspondence between needs of the soul and those of business is considerable, there are inevitably situations in which the priority of the moral claim must stand in opposition to the overriding conventions of competitiveness and the bottom-line. “Vocations are fundamentally graces,” writes Wadell, “but they are undeniably *costly graces* because they demand that we expend ourselves for the sake of a good that always surpasses us.”²²

Part Four: Fishing Big

As the soul moves through the relational deepening from calling, the response, as happened with the four fishermen, becomes an opening for the Holy Spirit—for having skills and passions wholly taken over and wholly taken up to another level of agency. The

dance of calling, as an invitation to relationship, is Trinitarian. The commission of calling, as a commitment to companionship, is Christological. And the becoming of calling, as the grace-enhanced practice of personal gifts, is Pneumatological. While this has always been pattern of spiritual experience for Christians, we also need signposts for calling—not detailed software code—but patterns and categories by which we can glimpse the transcendent possibilities within everyday job descriptions. It is as such signposts that the needs of the soul can help orient the concrete tasks of work and management, while informing the personal, interior journey to God.

For Weil the needs were separate yet interconnected. So, too, the Christian commission. In specific moments or challenges we may be called to serve prophetically or priestly or kingly, but the calling of Christian life is to grow within the witness of all three. Some jobs and some personalities will be especially gifted in one role, which can be honored as part of the portfolio of talents God has entrusted to us. A key for integrity is to recognize that there is no check-list or formula. Each role involves quite specific dynamics of functional expertise and relationship: the mode of being prophetic is not the same as for being priestly or kingly. To reflect the spiritual and substantial differences, the examples that follow attempt to give each mission its own model, language and style.

i) Prophetic Agitation

Walter Brueggemann identifies four attributes of prophetic imagination: “long memory” holding the community’s wisdom; an overdeveloped capacity to “sense pain” that sparks outrage; an overdeveloped capacity for awe that agitates “hope;” and the ability to multiply impact through aggressive “discourse.”²³ Most companies have some SWOT process for strategic planning—assessing strengths and weaknesses, projecting opportunities and threats. Prophetic planners do SWOT with an “E” —with deep, uncompromising *empathy* for the human reality. They express “vision” not as a simplistic wish-list for achievement but as a means for what Verstraeten describes as “opening ways of challenging the status quo and offering the potential for alternatives to the present reality.”²⁴ Economists and planners prepare forecasts. Prophetic forecasters call forth a new reality that echoes God’s plan, remembers humanity’s possibilities and enables the flowering within creation of all God’s children. Many companies are now adopting “whistle-blowing” protocols to flag

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ethical impropriety. Prophetic ethical commitments use trumpets to bring down walls of insensitivity or exclusion, exposing the systems that breed impropriety.

Weil listed *order* as the first need of the soul. Human identity and purpose hinge on belonging. It is this essential interdependence that requires ordering, stability and predictability. Truth, beauty and freedom, the nutrients of the soul, are all founded on order and contribute to it. God's speaking creation into existence called order out of chaos, and all calling, all relationships to God, become participations in that unfolding order. The soul's need for belonging in this network of relationships situates human work in the ordering work of creation. Prophetic organization-designers carry this imprint of creation on their hearts, which means they organize process with feeling for other human beings as co-bearers of God's image and likeness. Companies need vision to order their activities, and prophetic vision setters are restless to make a difference as well as earn results. Warren Bennis argues that persons in companies making a contribution to society are "much more likely to bring vigor and enthusiasm to their tasks." People want to aim high and prophetic human resource managers aim to oblige.

For all the genuflecting to vision, disorder reigns in many companies. Some are unable to forsake the shortcuts for short-term results. Others fall into the simplistic assumption that "continuous change" is a strategy. Many aspire to "creative destruction" as a badge of competitiveness. Prophetic grief, enflamed by the human costs from such disorder, interjects the lessons of history and introduces the future claims of sustainability to make expediency strategically and morally untenable. Prophetic awe, aroused by missed opportunity, also prods for "creative creation" —the stable and generative order that hones human skill, grows confidence and mines fulsome wealth. In their study of 21st century organizations, S. Ghoshal, C. A. Bartlett and P. Moran argue that companies create value by thriving as "non-markets," with people working "to shared goals and values."²⁵ Prophetic restructuring works towards this balance within change, unmasking the forces that cause "exhaustion" and despair, because, as Brueggemann points out, it is this "loss of passion" that festers "immunity to any transcendent voice," and "disregard for the neighbor." Frenetic companies waste passion on ineffective merging and converging. Prophetic value creators instead build the compassion that generates the enriched belonging of productivity with meaning.

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Hierarchy is a dimension to order that respects the radical interdependence of human existence. As with the First Commandment, the first position belongs to God. Prophetic anger is harshest when human systems or arrogance displace that priority. The movement of the soul, as described by Bonaventure and other mystics, is one of ascent: upward from “purification” through “illumination” to the summit of “unification.” In spiritual terms, hierarchy is not a repudiation of our shared human equality. Rather it is a discipline for our shared human perfectibility. Business needs hierarchy to set the parameters, performance goals, operating standards and accountabilities that make up governance; and to actually manage by organizing resources, delineating processes, planning strategies, efficiency and effectiveness. Prophetic agitation is indispensable to both. Boards have been restructured for more independence, which provides a more objective check on managers. Prophetic governance suggests that they now need to be restructured again for interdependence, bringing other community voices to the boardroom table to provide an objective check on directors. One of the most vexing problems facing companies is the multiplication and hardening of operational silos. Even spirituality is often encased in concrete-like holding pens. New technology, reward systems and discussion groups have been ineffective in dissolving such boundaries because only rarely is fear properly addressed as the motivation for silo-building. Prophetic insistence on hope provides a much-needed antidote to such fear, while prophetic insistence on justice elicits the authentic, isolation-ending participation that individuals assume by means of the principle of subsidiarity.

For its dignity as free and creative and for its relational dependence on order, the soul needs *punishment*. Consequence is proof for the validity and power of choice. As Bernard Lonergan explained: to know is to be responsible. Many of Jesus’ parables had a punishment punch line: the Master returning and holding to account those who abused talents, mercy or emissaries. Premised on intimacy with the Father, Jesus extended accountability and potential for punishment to private thoughts as well as public actions. As everything belongs to the creator, everything, including thoughts, matters and has moral consequences. The need for punishment, as Weil stressed, is not for restitution or vengeance but for the personal and community renewal held in the promise of God’s mysterious mercy. As Wadell reminds us, Aquinas saw “fraternal correction” as “a duty of charity, an obligation of love.”

Punishment is not “to shame the wrongdoer, but to call him [or her] back to his [or her] true good.”²⁶

Markets have celebrated Eliot Spitzer’s persecution of corporate wrongdoers because punishment is seen as both appropriate to the crimes and essential for restoring confidence among investors. Prophetic conscience is more subtle and demanding. The call for repentance is to “see anew,” not merely punishing the most egregious, but calling into account the wider assumptions and complacencies that have made imbalance the norm. Prophetic accountability—more than the thin line to assigning blame—is a means for thickening relationship by caring. This changes the calculus for punishment. In 2004 Merrill Lynch paid \$350 million in fines and promised to never again structure loans that would deliberately falsify a client’s earnings. Prophetic penalties would have demanded nets to be cast in other seas, perhaps requiring a fund commensurate with that which was misappropriated to establish micro-credit capacity in inner cities or developing markets. Not just Merrill’s capital but also its executives would be on the prophetic line, drawing from face-to-face engagement the experience of care that would inform consequences for future decisions.

ii) Priestly Compassion

With their responsibility for strategy and aspiration to leadership, most managers have some appreciation for prophetic contribution. Content may be challenging but the role is actually understood, and its designation conferred as a badge. Much harder for managers to fathom is what it means to be priestly. A prophet agitates: What does a priest do? A prophet aggressively stakes out the high ground: how does a priest add value? Although not our usual intuition, the priestly function is in many ways tougher than the prophetic because it serves the soul needs for dealing with the messy, difficult challenges of life as it is rather than as it ought to be. Strategy, however smart, hinges on the details of implementation. The manager awakened with the empathy of priests serves people in the trenches of those details, honoring courage, consoling injury, revealing divine purpose and potentiality in the mundane situations of getting it done. Change is disruptive, sometimes destructive, and the priestly orientation to community keeps people together and within a framework of meaning during the tumult of transition. It is because we under-appreciate this vital whole-making that so

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companies struggle in transforming vision to action: it is because we accept the prerogatives of continuous change without attending to the human continuities and holy priorities that we have so much unproductive churn, disillusionment and change fatigue.

The Christian prototype for priesthood is of course Jesus Christ. Called *Rabboni* by contemporaries, Jesus taught in the synagogue, interpreted scriptures, and presided over everyday events of encounter, like shared meals, which became the basis for sacraments. In addition to a conventional ministry—a shepherd leading his sheep—Jesus also modeled the pervasive priesthood that we have come to understand to be the universal job description for being created in the image of God. On this level Jesus embodied an offering, living in response to love of God whom he called Father by giving of himself as gift to those whom he encountered, and most especially those in greatest need. From this emptying of self in gratitude towards union, Jesus lived and made manifest a seamless, intense and all-encompassing intersection between divine and human realms. Symbol as well as priest, Jesus healed the sick, fed the hungry, brought comfort to the widows and brought dignity to the most excluded – both to children who were the most vulnerable and to tax collectors who as power figures collaborating with the occupying Romans were the most reviled.

The three needs of the soul requiring priestly attentiveness from managers are *fairness*, *risk* and *security*. Fairness is not a transactional *quid pro quo*, but circular, as in the aggressive inclusion at the Eucharistic table. For everybody to equally count, the least powerful must count more. This foundational asymmetry to fairness means that the priestly focus is primarily to attend to those most taken for granted. Part-time workers are the ones most disposable to companies. Priestly contemplation works overtime to imagine as much fairness and dignity to the terms of such lowly employment, finding ways—like Costco—to break the Wal-Mart model, offer pay and benefits greater than minimum wage, and still thrive.²⁷ Priestly community is as big as the economy, connecting the dots of outsourcing to respect human impacts on all sides, attending to the benefits and bottle-necks of fair trade, and exposing discrimination, enslavement or exploitation that can be down the hallway or around the world. Priestly community is based on the universal dignity shared by all human beings as children of God. More than principle, this premise can help unlock the maturing of the global economy so that it evolves from the exclusive self-interest calculations of “global-I-zation” into the more responsible and sustainable opportunities from “global-we-zation.”

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Priestly creation recognizes that the boundaries of company are a false construct, with much of what creates value inside the company linked to profusions from the earth, or disproportions from over-using it. Fairness here means challenging the claims for environmental stewardship by GM and Ford for their hybrid vehicles because both companies continue to resist with all their corporate might any raising of EPA gas-mileage standards.

Risk and *security* are paradoxically linked and are priestly needs for echoing St. Paul's theology of salvation as "already" won and "not yet" complete. Souls need risk to express innate creativity and, particularity before God, to invest those precious talents entrusted to us. Yet souls also need security, including constancy of aim and disciplines for growth, to avoid the exhausting infinity of options. As bountiful as it is, creation needs the human risk-taking of responding to call, adding the work of our hands to that of grace to build in temporal reality the liberating security of God's kingdom. Business, too, needs risk for renewal through innovation and to attract investors through possibilities of reward. Yet business also needs the stability of a clear legal or regulatory structure.

Priestly prayerfulness contributes tangibly to renewal, making reflective space for the interior "flow" of creative breakthrough. Blessing creative work as a mode of participating in sacred creation calls forth grace and also sets proportionate parameters for risk and rewards. Howard Gardner's work on the psychology of creativity shows that breakthroughs are in fact community acts, requiring social support systems for knowledge and expertise and for recovery from the inevitable mistakes. Many managers fear risk-taking for fearing failure, or worse still, firing. Priestly compassion in this case can strengthen the community bonds within the organization to incite innovation, celebrate the courage for taking risks and provide the security of recognizing the great value in lessons and growth from failure. The opportunity within risk is to situate the gifts and benefits of what is being sought or created within the sacred embrace of creation. And for organizations, what sometimes must be risked are the very process systems or cultural convictions that limit horizon, stunt innovation or shackle employees.

iii) Kingly Proportions

Leaders stand on top of an organization. Kings (and Queens) stand on a nexus of boundaries, linking the present with the past, invoking memory as an expertise for shaping the future, connecting individual achievements to the common good, defending what is most precious while also investing in what is most worth sustaining, and providing the symbols, proclamations and values for making meaning out of new situations or persistent uncertainties. Kings rule, which sets boundaries for what is proper and of priority, and kings also demand fealty, which imposes a fixed boundary between the rights of the individual and the obligations to the larger realm. Kings adjudicate, the highest power for marking the boundary for not only what is lawful, but also for what is right. Such potency has forever shown itself to be so strong a magnet for desire as to pervert our longings and actions. Governance schemes, no matter how robust or well intentioned, are, in the end, rarely effective in circumscribing personal ambitions and desire for power. Kings are different, administering and deriving authority for their graceful power by standing on another boundary—that between heaven and earth.

Israel's kings provided hints of kingship: the warrior fierce and resolute in moral causes, the poet who conjures symbols and frames meaning, the builder who creates the infrastructure for work and worship, for practical life and creative fulfillment. But the prototype was flawed and incomplete until the kingly embodiment by Jesus Christ. "The King of the Jews" exemplifies power emptied out to liberate others from a host of enslavements, fashioning a realm that dignifies even the least powerful, and proclaiming the permanent Jubilee of God among, within and between—as well as above—us. Kings enable individuals and groups to reach their potential and partake of glory. At the same time kings symbolize and contribute to the coming together of parts towards human fulfillment, with power surging through the whole from the momentum of the whole being greater than the sum of individual contributions. Like David, kings dance before the Tabernacle, sharing the divine feast and celebrating human achievement in the streets of community. And like Christ, kings outstretch their arms to bring all peoples into the embrace of dignity, hope and love. While the prophetic sees what can be, and while the priestly inspires interior capacities to create, the kingly uses personal drive and institutional power to achieve in the real world what must be for the realm, and what can become for the individual.

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The first reflex must be to make such power accountable, corresponding to the soul's need for *obedience*. The second reflex must be to make power enabling, corresponding to the soul's need for *liberty*. And the third reflex must be to make power integral and integrating, corresponding to the soul's need for *truth*. Obedience places power within its obligations, honoring ancient moral laws and working out their meaning and relevance in the unique challenges and unknowns of our own situation. Liberty simultaneously exercises and shares power, deriving dignity from God's gift of free choice, and realizing its zenith only when those deemed by politics or economics as powerless are helped to be free. Truth finally both fuels and funnels power, providing its authority and aim, forming the bonds and motivations for bringing words to life as deeds. The king obeys to be a model of moral fealty, to discipline power towards its true divine purpose. The king liberates to be an agent for glory, to empower individuals towards their divine destiny and obligations. And the king serves and stands for what is true, undoing the relativity and disintegration of spin and checking the addictive exclusions from absolutism.

What does this mean for managers? In business, the king exemplifies moral purpose and embeds ethical expectations, creates the secure and free environment for realizing the contributions of employees and provides the inclusiveness for the far-reaching dialogue that elicits shared understanding and commitment. Manager-kings demand obedience to moral law, to constrain bad behavior and mitigate risk and to also support freedom, spark innovation and engender the robust accountability from caring for truth. They use liberty not only as an economic principle in pursuit of open markets and competitive choice, but more importantly as a human and historical exigency, breaking those obvious and yet also hidden shackles that encumber dignity, diminish creativity or thwart potential. And they use truth to forge integrity, connecting behavior to principle, words to action, individual expertise to common purpose. Again the three soul-needs interconnect: obedience is a response to truth and a prerequisite for freedom; liberty is a precondition for discovering truth and for making obedience thick with choice; and truth is the criteria for obeying freely and for relishing freedom. Conversely, managerial power is disgraced when leaders or companies exempt themselves from obeying moral laws, when they deny or abuse the inalienable freedom of workers or stakeholders or when they stifle or transgress the truth.

The Kingly Balance Sheet

What To Do	Who To Be
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aiming for improvement • Focus on growing competence • Breaking down increments of process • Calibrating dynamics of expertise • Striving to minimize defects • Goal is efficiency and productivity • Task is growing proficiency • Exercising continuous learning • Mastering the complexities of change • Success by reaching targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aiming for human perfectibility • Focus on realizing relationship • Strengthening nodes of network • Catalytic engendering of creativity • Striving to minimize dehumanization • Goal is integrity and sustainability • Task is realizing potential • Alternating contemplation with action • Living the consistency of conversion • Fulfillment by reaching communion

Closing Outreach

I have used this model—or portions of it—with managers in several private sector firms, within a large governmental department and with a religiously-based NGO. Several themes emerge in practice. First, the issues raised by this approach are initially awkward but become quickly familiar and workable. People’s experience is that the smart question to ask in business is the one already burning inside their soul. The model validates this intuition. Second, the language of the three role mission is a difficult jump for most managers, and it is important, as Specht and Broholm have done, to provide substance to the roles in vernacular more comfortable to managers operating in the public realm. The wisdom of Vatican II is that it invites us to share the treasure of our religious concepts and categories while making them new and responsive to the signs of our times. The task in this context is a melding of theology and business that I call “retrieval and re-launch.” There is too much wealth in the designations of priest, prophet or king to forsake them. Retrieval aims to peel away distortions (and cultural prejudices) to reveal their essence for relational potential with God. Re-launch aims to hit the sweet spot of relevance. Again, my experience has been that the

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awkwardness managers feel with the terms was in the end a creative tension that invited other soul language into the work at hand.

The third theme is that soul language, once unleashed, has grace and momentum all its own. The needs of the soul are needs everyone recognizes, and needs that managers see quickly as relevant to business. There have been other situations in which the managerial mindset has appropriated terms from religious life, like vision or mission, only to empty them of their moral power. We will need prophetic vigilance to critique any such usurping, priestly vigilance to prayerfully keep the sacred present and kingly vigilance to demand that holy terms retain their beauty and power.

A fourth theme is that this model is obviously Christian, which is of comfort and concern. Comfort, because it helps Christian managers connect with more precision and relish to their tradition. Concern, because public space and important rights of diversity require heightened sensitivity for any religious discourse and use of language. Ironically, as noted, the diversity we extend to others we often do not claim—or own up to—personally. Much of the acceptability for prayer at work (in Canada) has been from the Muslim example for fidelity to the five-times daily call to prayer. The needs of the soul represent universal human experiences, providing a means for a much deeper engagement of diversity by framing religious and moral discourse. Deepening our Christian witness through the needs of the soul is not an impediment to such interchange, but can be a valuable contribution to that dialogue.

A final observation is that this approach to calling, and this model for applying soul needs at work, serves a basic pastoral need. People may well grow different competencies for work, but the movement is the spiritual one of bringing prayer to life. It would be a critical methodological omission, indeed arrogance, to enter any aspect of this model without grounding in prayer and testing in contemplation. In my work with managers, the silent or prayerful pause before getting to the problem to be solved often became referred to as the most productive time in the exercise. The soul's need to be at work is the same as the soul's need to be at prayer at work.

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- ³ Peter F. Drucker, *Managing the Future*. (New York: Truman Talley Books/Dutton, 1992), 102.
- ⁴ Laura Nash and Scott McLennan, *Church on Sunday. Work on Monday*. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001), 110-132.
- ⁵ Simone Weil, *The Need for Roots*. (London: Routledge, 1996), 6-27.
- ⁶ Marian Harris, *Proclaim Jubilee! A Spirituality for the Twenty-First Century* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 31.
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- ¹² John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici*, Apostolic Exhortation.
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- ²² Paul Wadell, Being Providentially Situated: The Indispensable Vocation of the Corporate Whistleblower."
- ²³ Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*. P. 13-40.
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