Well-being, Personal Wholeness and the Social Fabric

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

REIMAGINING FAITH-BASED LEADERSHIP FOR THE GREATER GOOD

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Religious leaders in Western countries, historically, held a more central role in society. Today that role is more marginalised by secularism and other influences. How do faith-based leaders reimagine their role and contribution in this contested space? What are ways in which faith-based leaders and their organisations today are serving the common good, locally and globally, including dialogue, compassionate service and advocacy for justice? In a complex and changing world, facing wicked problems, how can faith-based leaders “share wisdom well” as Miroslav Volf urges? The task is not merely for hierarchical or charismatic religious leaders, but for all people of faith. It is also not for any one religious group to work at alone, but leadership and activism for the greater good is necessarily an interfaith project. Pope Francis is calling attention to social justice and global issues such as climate change, but also reminding us that action on these issues is required of all of us, as a collaborative project. Diverse religious and spiritual communities are working together towards harmony and for the common good, harnessing the riches of their wisdom and compassion in mutual respect. The Parliament of World Religions movement has been a catalyst for nurturing this vision and catalysing regional cooperation and local projects. This paper conversationally explores pathways for reimagining faith-based leadership for the greater good, including perspectives from our Protestant, Catholic, Jewish and interfaith perspectives.

1 This chapter was originally inspired and suggested by John Fien and Sam Wilson as a Swinburne Leadership Institute project.
Introduction

Greens Senator Larissa Waters asked in parliamentary question time, on Monday 22 June 2015, if the then-Prime Minister Tony Abbott, being a Catholic and someone who had trained for the priesthood, would listen to Pope Francis’ recent encyclical proclamation on climate change calling for an urgent moral response.²

Pope Francis appeals for greater attention to our common home rather than preoccupation with consumption. He calls for collaboration for sustainable and integral development, suggesting what contribution Christianity may bring alongside awareness of scientific research, human causes of environmental degradation and the need for international and local policy. The statement advocated for the protection of the complex system of our climate, fresh water and biodiversity. Pope Francis grounds these elements in the social ethics notion of the common good—including concern for the poor and future generations. It is a reasoned and thoughtful appeal for dialogue, education, action and “ecological conversion” by one of the world’s best-known religious leaders on the biggest issues facing our world. It deserves attention by Catholics and people of other faiths or none.³

In a strange conflation of controversial topics, another Senator asked if Waters was married (although withdrew that question). Thus one Senator thought marital status was somehow relevant, but others were convinced religion was not. The President of the Senate stated it was not appropriate to refer to a Senator’s religion, so ruled that part of the question out of order. Deputy Government leader in the Senate George Brandis, representing the Prime Minister, responded by suggesting that reflecting


on the religious beliefs of any member of parliament is “disgusting”. It seems the cultural script that religion and politics should not mix is alive and well in Canberra.

What is the role, then, of religions and religious leaders in public discourse? Is faith merely a private devotional matter with no relevance for the public world of civic leadership, or is it part of a potentially valuable and values-based contribution? What is the basis of listening to one another’s perspectives—including religious leaders learning from other sectors, and others hearing the perspectives of people of faith?

Religious leaders in Western countries, historically, held a more central role in society. Today that role is more marginalised by secularism and other influences. Surveys such as the annual report on trust in global leadership prepared for the Davos World Economic Forum suggest that religious leaders are not trusted as much as they used to be. The response of some religious institutions to abuse claims and violent extremism or at least intolerant adversarial perspectives of other groups has tainted community views against religion, and institutional religion is declining in the West. Yet interest in the contribution of spirituality and a transcendent basis for justice and human dignity is growing.

In a “post-secular” age, faith-based leaders are caught, as public theologian Elaine Graham suggests, between the “rock” of religious resurgence and the irresistible “hard place” of secularism and institutional decline, or between faithfulness to faith-based traditions and openness to diverse and critical conversation in the public domain. The pure secular response is to argue religion has no place in the public square, and that to suggest otherwise is “disgusting” or at least unenlightened. The fundamentalist response is to assert the universal authority of particular religious values.

Yale Divinity School’s Miroslav Volf grew up in the former communist Yugoslavia, so knows the pressures of religious pluralism and aggressive secularism. He helpfully argues that faith is malfunctioning

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5 Elaine Graham, Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Public Theology in a Post-Secular Age (London: SCM, 2013).
when it is violent, oppressive and life-destroying, but it is so also when it is apathetic about the condition of the world and does nothing prophetically to help people thrive and to mend the world. So without retreating into a private realm of religious devotion on the one hand, or pretending religious organisations have a place of privilege at the centre of society on the other, how do faith-based leaders reimagine their role and contribution in this contested space?

In a complex and changing world, faith-based leaders need to be aware of the systems we find ourselves in and maximise the networks we utilise. We live in a world of wicked problems: social inequality is widening and environmental disaster is reaching a tipping point; education systems are archaic and who knows what health epidemic challenges are around the corner. It is no longer possible (if it ever was) to think that any one organisation or group (let alone individual) can come up with appropriate responses, alone. We need to cultivate space where people of all ages, all cultures, all abilities, all stages of faith (or no faith or struggling faith or different faith) can contribute.

Richard Hames points in helpful directions of purposeful collaboration to create a future we can hand on to our children with pride. He describes the profound ability to create wisdom through dialogue, and our need to collaborate, since “individual genius is fragile in comparison with the power of collective wisdom”.

The best leadership postures and responses to the biggest questions we face will harness the interests of government, business, civil society and individuals; will integrate secular and sacred; will put the cause (and the shared interests of multiple stakeholders) ahead of any one organisation; and will challenge all of us to be prepared to change our accepted modes of operating. We desperately need fresh approaches to leadership that reflect this “connectedness”. Faith-based

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leaders have important contributions to make, including pointing us beyond a purely materialistic and individualistic mindset to recognise our need for deeper meaning and spiritual groundedness, as Hames argues:

The need for a spiritual base—of a deeper sense of relatedness to the world around us, and towards each other—becomes more apparent each day. Many people around the world have concluded that the assumptions and beliefs on which current frameworks were built, especially those of production and consumption in the West have become totally incompatible with the objectives we now need to pursue as a global community.⁹

This resonates with Volf’s appeal for faith-based leaders to “share wisdom well” in ways that help foster human flourishing and the common good. This is not just a one-way flow, but learning together how to see human flourishing not merely as experiential satisfaction or individual success, but living for something larger including compassion for the poor and marginalised and living peacefully in a world of escalating conflict. All of us in the world need wisdom for these big issues. Volf concludes:

Jews, Christians, and Muslims (as well as adherents of other world religions) have a common mission in the world. It is not just to roll up their sleeves and collaborate in stemming the relentless and rising tide of human misery, whether that comes in the form of disease, hunger, violated rights, or a polluted environment. The common mission is also to make plausible in contemporary culture that human beings will flourish only when the love of pleasure, a dominant driving force in our culture, gives way to the pleasure of love.¹⁰

Our society desperately needs leadership that is focused on the greater good in government, business and civil society. Faith-based leaders have much to contribute to this conversation—both for their role in worshipping congregations and faith-based social service organisations, and also for their thoughtful contributions on the nature of leadership needed in society today. This conviction is the basis of exploring interfaith perspectives to reflect on this chapter’s theme “Reimagining faith-based leadership for the greater good”. As co-authors, we draw on Jewish, Protestant and Catholic traditions, but we also have had conversations with Muslim and Hindu leaders. Our project was inspired, in part, by ecumenical and interfaith conversations in the United

⁹ Hames, Five Literacies, 162.
¹⁰ Miroslav Volf, A Public Faith, 145.
Kingdom and the “Together for the Common Good” project. The agenda is to move beyond the interests of religious organisations and “seek the welfare of the city”. What might this look like in Australia?

**Mimesis and Modelling: Leadership That Transforms**

Addressing the contribution of faith-based Leadership in public life invites us to interrogate the origins and traditions of leadership in our particular faith. For example, the Christian tradition hosts a complex contest of leadership templates and traditions. The sources of Scripture from the early Christian movement offer a tangle of subversive, grass roots, idiosyncratic, contextual movements with equally subversive, grass roots, idiosyncratic, contextual leadership. The centuries of political hierarchical Christendom in the West and glacially stable, cultural orthodoxy in the East provide another set of organisational structures and leadership postures. Such divergent systems leave many intriguing, though perhaps irreconcilable suggestions for answering the question of how faith-based leadership might function for the common good.

The question of what contribution faith-based leadership may make for the greater good demands that we seek some clarity in the relationship between faith communities and the public square of political, commerce, education, health and the arts. Within this general relationship, the specific role of the leader also requires careful exegesis. In this section, we will devote our attention not to individualistic leadership projections, but to the patterns and cultures of leadership practice.

We propose an elucidation of two types of leadership mimesis and a third alternative of leadership modelling, which is deeply rooted in the texts of Christian Scriptures. We want to provoke a critique of the church leadership that has imitated, replicated or even become implicated in historic and contemporary political structures.

The contemporary context for this work is located in the jumble of Australian communities and orders that have grown up in the past two

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and a half centuries on the lands of, alongside the peoples of, and as we must confess, with violence against the traditional custodian dwellers on this continent. This is a multi-cultural context in the deepest dimensions of our sociality. The indigenous peoples are many nations; the various European settlements in urban centres and the many rural communities represent another wide set of diverse values and ways of leading. The "Sydney–Melbourne" rivalry is common fodder for friendly jibes, and stand-up comedians, but there is a darker and more powerfully divisive reality that needs attention and truth-telling. The differences between our capital cities and regional centres and rural communities are not just about weather and the quality of coffee, but are embodied in power and principalities—deeply political, cultural and ideological trajectories that have an uncomfortable and misaligned history. In ecclesial orders and the religious world, these histories are also reflected along political, geographical and ideological lines.

Within Christendom, the alignment of religious observance and governance with political orders has been rigorously buttressed. Episcopal denominations (in the Australian context, principally Anglican and Catholic) in the traditions of their European antecedents have explicitly imitated the leadership forms and values of elitist hierarchies in which leadership is equated with power and authority and are accompanied by wealth, privilege and property. Leadership is bestowed through a personal and fictive–familial tradition of transference. In the context of Christendom, this has been a successful strategy for church order; its operational methods have been easily comprehensible; mimicry is an ingratiating form of flattery and thus by imitating the culture and methodology of civic rule, the church has made itself palatable to the state. The disadvantage of this relationship is clearly seen in the restrictions churches accept in their capacity to raise a voice of prophetic objection, correction or critique to the governments they mimic. Historically, churches that have adopted parallel leadership structures to hierarchical privilege-based systems forfeit their credibility and have legitimately suffered the same moral flaws of corruption, exploitation and self-interest. The recently created Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse is perhaps the flagship of public experience of this corruption, as the stories pour forth of parallel conditions and practices across secular and ecclesial institutions.

It is not only the episcopal churches that are beset by the impediments and compromises of leadership mimesis. Alongside the revolutions and
democracies of the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries which birthed new ideologies and structures of government and leadership in civic society, an outbreak of new church movements established mimetic democratic forms of leadership. The “free church” denominations reflect the new ideology of democratic governance. Baptist, Churches of Christ, Methodist, Congregational and Quaker churches are ordered by elected leaders, councils of representatives and collective meetings which vote on “business”. The leadership culture of these communities imitates the democratic leadership culture of the republican capitalism birthed in the seventeenth century and brought to rational maturity during the enlightenment.

Inasmuch as an elite, inherited, hierarchical, absolute power culture in the church suffered the moral and functional maladies of its state model, the “low church” democratic ecclesial systems of leadership have not escaped the difficulties of modern government either. Partisanship, the sway of the charismatic, populist leader, backroom lobbying, instability and pragmatic capitalism are common in this strain of the Australian church. Churches of this kind often stand or fall in the eyes of their own members and in society at large on the public persona of their leaders. Thus the Australian church allows itself to be known and evaluated by the public by such incendiary characters as Fred Nile, Tim Costello, John Dickson and Lyle Shelton. To some Christian minds all of these leaders embody strong prophetic voices and they have high approval in different sectors of the church and society, depending on political currents. Each of them is a man of substance, education and integrity. The limitations that we identify in this charismatic mode of leadership are not personal, however, but systemic in that it is not substantially related to the life of religious communities.

Despite the diversity of political and theological allegiances among this sample group, their rhetoric and gestures are similar: they take a polemic approach to political issues, seeking legislative solutions to social issues that have “moral” content. Though coming in the neapolitan flavours of our conservative right, liberal left and socialist fringe parties, the essential “politics” of these leaders align not only in parallel with one another, but with the genre of our political candidates.

Positively, this creates a manner of familiarity and accessibility to the general public who listen to and observe the work of these leaders, as they speak and act like civic leaders and politicians. This “independent”
democratised Christian leader has moved away from the tone and style of ecclesial culture, eschewing Christian jargon and theological terms. Nevertheless, this familiarity “breeds contempt” for these leaders, who suffer the same partisan championing and dismissal that politicians do. The golden boy of one set is the enemy of another. Conservatives predictably applaud Lyle Shelton and despise Julie McCrossin (if they appear together for example on Q&A), and progressives the opposite. Frequently Christian contributions to public debate are indistinguishable from party politics. Again, the mirroring of the leadership culture of the State infects Christian leadership with the very problems that faith might be called to counter, not imitate.

Both of these problematised transactions of leadership hold some common elements of ethos that disable their efficacy in the contribution of faith-based leadership in society. Firstly, leadership is always construed in individual terms. Individual leaders are identified, authorised and profiled. Secondly, leadership is expressed in words and power, but in these cases rarely in lived action. Thirdly, leadership is expressed in both the posing of questions and the proposal of answers. Offering solutions to problems is the mark of the pragmatism of the low church, just as reiteration of traditional positions is the mark of the power of the high church. Unfortunately, when expressed by an individual leader, such proposals broadcast as “you should do this…”.

An exception to this is emerging in the leadership of Jarred McKenna and the “Love makes a Way” movement of Christians seeking more compassionate approaches for people seeking asylum.13 This is a model and almost unique example where words are few and action, symbol and collective presence are the “language” of Christian public faith leadership. The relative absence of an individual representative leader and the power of the gathering image provide a link to the area of faith-based leadership in public life that is often overlooked, but where Christianity’s truest form of existence and expression are embodied in vibrant and transforming life.

Both high and low church traditions contain theologies of the people of God as active agents in the work of the kingdom of God. The mimesis of civic fashions of leadership has not only influenced the behaviour, reputation and models of leaders, but also shaped (and in many ways

13 http://lovemakesaway.org.au/
disguised or disempowered) the behaviour, reputation and model of Christian congregations. Congregations are prone to treating leaders as elected or anointed representatives and thereby divest their own public presence to the profile of the leader. We are not always satisfied with the result, but the belief that the leader ought to be our voice in the public square remains intact, and we most likely seek a new voice to represent us, rather than re-examining the ways in which faith-ing communities can contribute to public life.

The demise of Christendom in which cultural participation in a local faith-based community was normative has been lamented widely by leaders and congregants alike. Even some media and political leaders nurse yearnings for a public life in which churches assisted in creating and sustaining moral and cultural norms. The aftermath of the post-war migration away from regular church participation, first by men then whole families in the generation following, reshaped the landscape of leadership, gender and political engagement of the local church community. Many churches were surprised to find themselves on the margins of local and national life. Other faith groups may have always felt on the margins in Australian public life. It is not difficult to see the link between the marginalisation of collective life and the rise of the articulate, persuasive individual leader as the keystone of faith-based public engagement.

Putting aside the frameworks of mimetic leadership, we invite a reconsideration of an alternative reading of the participation and contribution of twenty-first century faith communities in public life. Churches, synagogues, mosques and other religious groups across Australia exercise a robust leadership in local communities through the low profile, high impact "alongside" with others doing the business of daily life: raising children, planting gardens, seeking healthy routines, forging life-long partnerships, negotiating the twists and turns of physical health and the gullies and crevices of mental illness, learning new languages, discovering viable vocation and purposeful passion.

Different religions are inspired differently by their view of God and/or their founder. For Christians, faith-based leadership in the ways of Jesus is a lived and living leadership. Spokesmen are episodically significant, as we have discussed above. But Christian confession of the dimensions and dispositions of faith-based leadership for the public good draws deeply on a diverse but grounded, gathered practice. As we have
interrogated the mimetic direction of other leadership postures the church has taken historically, attention is appropriately refocused to the modelling and mimesis of Jesus within his discipleship community.

One pertinent example of the practical outworking of this ethos is seen in the demise of Christian Religious Education (CRE) in Victorian State schools. Once a thriving collaboration of churches, volunteers, schools and communities, with a curriculum that enabled creative and contextual explorations of children's faith, CRE was an accepted norm in most local primary schools, and a small number of individual students were exempted upon parental request without any fuss. (This was part of the legacy of Christendom in Australia, even though we have never had an established church.) Leadership of the program was held collaboratively at a local school level, with official administration both on the side of the supporting Christian organisation and government department kept to a minimum at the coalface. This is not the place to explore the leadership dynamics and political shifts that led to significant change and dismantling of general trust between the department and the accrediting body for CRE. What is of interest here, given the situation of systemic collapse, are the ways forward that local, informal, community-based initiatives can make in remaining faithful to seeking the well-being of children in their local communities. In lots of interesting, uniquely contextual ways, faith communities are upholding their commitment to the old notion of “parish” with a new vision, regardless of the official systems breaking down. When such expressions of faithfulness and concern transcend and outlast the privileged mechanisms of Christendom, a more prevailing and credible public good can be sought. While there are voices (though mostly in other states) that decry the detractors of legislated programmatic access to government schools for Christian operations, alternative projects are springing to life. If the access had been multi-religious, the accusation of Christian privilege in a public institution would have rung hollow. Instead, it has resonated unhelpfully with a generally anti-religious version of secularism.

Phenomenologically this ought to surprise us. Christianity, with its heritage in the history of the Jewish people, has often known life on the margins and sought to serve society from alongside. Political Christianity appears more dominant (historically) than might be statistically demonstrable. Power has the advantage of being able to project its own shadow larger than life, creating the illusion of greatness, and to determine the terms of “normative” in its own favour in the
narratives of the past, present and future. More than this, though, theologically, the grass-roots leadership and influence of the people of God, faithful in their collective life in serving their community, and sowers of common good, ought not to surprise us.

The call of the people of God was not to dominate or dictate, but to bless from the largess of their own blessing of abundant life in God. The function of leadership for the greater good is asked of all of the people of God as a collective, not thrust upon individuals. The early followers of Jesus were taught to seek the kingdom of God with a child in their midst as their model (Matthew 19:14), not as one who needed to be led himself. The model of Jesus himself of course upsets all notions of leadership being aligned with power. When Jesus had opportunity to grasp or even influence political power he chose a devastating silence. Jesus has plenty to say about injustice and how the public good might be sought, but curiously seemed to “waste” his words on the common everyman and everywoman.

To be true to the founder of the church, the place for the entire body of Christ together as one is on their knees with the basin and cloth of a servant: cleansing, purifying, healing, refreshing the world. In working for the greater good of our neighbourhoods and society, Christian tradition does not just seek individual leaders to be “servant leaders”, but suggests that churches sought to collectively assume the posture of servant as an act of leadership and influence for the public good. Other religions may have a similar ethos. But it will be difficult and rare that our political leaders mimic such a leadership posture. Here, then is the possibility of a truly alternative and possibly subversive contribution.

The notion of the role of faith-based leadership for the greater good or common good or public good in this stream reminds us what is meant by “public”. Public ought not to be mistaken for the notions of the visible. The “public” pertains, rather, to the community as a whole—all constituents of life together. Public good, therefore, is a good that is sought, not for only the visible, the high profile, the obvious, the squeaky wheels, but for the community as a whole, which will include the invisible, ignominious, the necessarily unbroadcastable. The efficacy of faith-based leadership, whether it is Christian witness or equally the contribution of leaders from other faith traditions, is not dependent on excellent media relations, but rather on faithfulness.
We have asserted that faith-based leadership for the greater good comes best from a religious group as a whole—whether church, synagogue or mosque—rather than the hired holy person that a religious group puts forward.\(^14\) Nevertheless, we recognise and affirm the role of individual leaders in exemplifying and modelling leadership, especially when it points religious groups beyond their own interests, or prophetically calls society towards the greater good. The world’s most recognised religious leader is the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church, and the current Pope Francis is pointing the Catholic Church and modelling for other traditions and religions a leadership that is vocal and active for the greater good. The next section explores the nature of his leadership.

**Pope Francis: The Secret to His Surprising Leadership?**

When Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio was elected Pope in March 2013, few expected that he would become such a popular and skilful leader of the Catholic Church, and assume such Mandela-like prominence on the global stage, especially after the shock of the unfolding clergy sex abuse crisis. The cardinals in Rome wanted a change from the centralised discipline of Pope John Paul II and the drift in governance during his long illness; and from the extremely erudite but somewhat abstract style of Pope Benedict XVI. Both these popes had strongly developed Catholic social teaching.\(^15\) But in recent decades they were not always adept at communicating with the wider culture.

Francis has emerged as an astonishing communicator to elites and ordinary people, not just with Catholics but with many others concerned about social issues of our time. What is it about his message and style that makes him such a prominent leader today? He is leading the Catholic Church through an extraordinary process of change by calling everyone to discern how personally we might respond to the hungry and distressed of our world, as Jesus insisted in his Last Judgement parable in Matthew 25.


\(^{15}\) Modern papal social teaching began with Pope Leo XIII’s encyclical, *Rerum Novarum* in 1891 and has been vigorously developed, especially since John XXIII. See Bruce Duncan, *Church Social Teaching: From Rerum Novarum to 1931* (Melbourne: CollinsDove, 1991); Kenneth R. Himes (ed.), *Modern Catholic Social Teaching: Commentaries and Interpretations* (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2004).
It is a message for the greater good which resonates powerfully not just with other Christians, but with those of other religions, and even of none.

Francis in *The Joy of the Gospel* insisted that work for social justice is at the very core of the Gospel:

> Each individual Christian and every community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor, and for enabling them to be fully a part of society. This demands that we be ... attentive to the cry of the poor and to come to their aid.\(^\text{16}\)

He wants to move the Church beyond the so-called “culture wars” to a more productive engagement with current issues, in collaboration with everyone willing to work together for these goals. He calls for closer engagement with current concerns since “God is to be encountered in the world of today”.\(^\text{17}\)

He links these Gospel values intimately with the search for the true good of every person, whatever their belief or non-belief, since we are all part of God’s creation, and God loves everyone without exception. Francis called for a church “that is unsettled, always closer to the abandoned, the forgotten, the imperfect... Wherever you are, never build walls or borders, but meeting squares and field hospitals”.\(^\text{18}\) He stresses the need currently to build bridges, not walls, in this struggle to enhance the well-being of humans and of the entire planet and all its creatures.\(^\text{19}\)


\(^{17}\text{Antonio Spadaro, “A Big Heart open to God”, America, 30 September 2013, http://americamagazine.org/pope-interview}\)


Speak Simply, Use Symbols

Francis said he has learnt two valuable things in his life: to speak simply and use symbols. He has modelled leadership and service to those on the margins through symbolic actions including foot-washing and hospitality. His first visit outside Rome was to the refugee island of Lampedusa, saying Mass on an altar made from the timbers of a refugee boat. His first visit outside Italy was to Albania, where Christians and Muslims had shared great suffering under the communist regime. Instead of celebrating the solemn washing of the feet in the Last Supper Mass in a great cathedral, he went to a gym and washed the feet of two women and several Muslims. In 2016, he flew to the Moria refugee camp in Lesbos, in company with the Greek Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and Archbishop Ieronymos, praising the Greek people for their generosity, and sending a clear message to the rest of Europe about receiving asylum seekers and refugees. He brought back three refugee families to live at the Vatican as they prepare for resettlement, and these were Muslims.21

From his early years Bergoglio had long been deeply committed to the poor in his country, and enjoyed talking and walking with people in the slums.22 He became familiar with their lives and the straightened conditions which many endured, and this affected his understanding of the Gospel and what God asks of Christians. He became very pastoral in his concern for these people, not finger-wagging or insisting on impractical ideals but encouraging people to do the best they can in their circumstances. He said he prefers a church with muddy feet that is close to the people, and urges clergy to "smell like the sheep".23 From his first days

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as Pope, Francis yearned for a “poor church for the poor” of the world. He has commented: “I see clearly that the thing the Church needs most today is the ability to heal wounds and to warm the hearts of the faithful; it needs nearness, proximity”, like a field hospital after battle where wounds are tended. “The Church sometimes has locked itself up in small things, in small-minded rules”, obscuring the basic message of Jesus’ saving presence. This is leadership that avoids the temptation of ecclesiocentrism or preoccupation with doctrinal or worship matters with minimal implications for broader society, but that seeks to actively demonstrate the values and teachings of religion for the greater good.

Discernment and Responsibility

A key part of Jesuit spirituality is the practice of the Spiritual Exercises, where people embrace a disciplined process of prayer and reflection to open themselves more fully to how God’s Holy Spirit may be moving in their hearts, with a view to sometimes making life decisions. Francis recognises that God’s Spirit is present in everyone, and that whatever their circumstances all people go through processes of discernment in their lives, wresting in conscience with yearnings for a good and wholesome life. Pope Francis seeks to help people in often traumatic circumstances inform their consciences and make positive steps in their decision making. He understands that moral conscience develops and matures in these processes of discernment about life experience.

Consider the circumstances in the slums where Bergoglio placed some of his best priests and church workers, many of whom were targeted on the grounds that they were communists or subversives because of their work with the poor. Argentina had been through the “Dirty War” when 10,000 or more people were murdered by the military regime, including twenty priests and members of religious orders, eighty-four others who disappeared, along with many hundreds of lay activists and pastoral workers. The repression involved torture, disappearances, exile and

25 Spadaro, “A big heart open to God”.
corruption. Bergoglio had some people in his Jesuit College, and personally smuggled several out of Argentina.\textsuperscript{27}

In the slums, Bergoglio became familiar with the problems of drug running, prostitution, trafficking of humans, hunger, poverty, inadequate education and healthcare, unemployment and lack of housing, sanitation and potable water. He encouraged groups and networks to tackle these problems. The Argentine financial crisis of 2001–02, the largest ever at that time, plunged the country into prolonged distress, with more than half the people driven into harsh poverty, many losing their life savings as banks collapsed, along with 40,000 businesses.\textsuperscript{28} As Archbishop of Buenos Aires from 1998 and Cardinal from February 2001, Bergoglio faced these destructive global, institutional forces and became outspoken about the problems with international finance and neoliberal economics.\textsuperscript{29} His critique of these international economic forces was reinforced by the Global Financial Crisis and its impact on Latin America from 2007.

Pope Francis has thus experienced the worlds of poverty, hardship, violence and injustice, and is speaking as a voice for the excluded, poor and marginalised, particularly from the third world. In his encyclical \textit{Laudato Si’} on poverty, inequality and the environment, he invited everyone to join this dialogue about human and planetary well-being, listening carefully to informed specialists, of course, but so that this would result in appropriate action.

**Young Christian Workers and “See-judge-act”**

Along with the Jesuit tradition of discernment, another major influence on Bergoglio and Catholics in Latin America was the Young Christian Workers (YCW) movement. YCW was inspired from the 1920s by charismatic Belgian priest, Canon Joseph Cardijn, who was appointed a bishop and cardinal in 1965 and so attended final sessions of Vatican II. YCW spread widely through Latin America and was important in empowering young workers to break out of a sense of fatalism that nothing

\textsuperscript{27} Sergio Rubin and Francesca Ambrogetti, \textit{Pope Francis: His Life in his own Words: Conversations with Jorge Bergoglio} (New York: GP Putnam’s Sons, 2013), 199.


\textsuperscript{29} Vallely, \textit{Pope Francis}, 133.
or little could be done to change social situations—as if one just had to pray for a better outcome in heaven.

Cardijn encouraged young workers to come together in small groups to “see” and talk about their concerns and issues, particularly in their factories or work situations. Then they would “judge” by prayerfully considering passages from the Scriptures or Gospels, particularly in the life of Jesus, and reflect on what this had to say to their lives and workplaces. The third part of the process, deciding on concrete action, was extremely important because Cardijn wanted to empower young workers to engage purposefully with their workplaces and life situations, to challenge unjust practices and transform their localities and countries with greater social justice. Individuals felt empowered by the support of a group, and felt less isolated and exposed. Cardijn emphasised the need for workers to develop their consciousness and take responsibility to improve human well-being and challenge injustice.

As detailed in *Laudato Si’*, Francis believes that the work of social transformation is primarily the work of lay people with all their expertise, acting independently on their own initiative, but supported by the moral teaching and encouragement of the Church. Francis insists that God’s Spirit is present in the whole of creation, but God’s concern is particularly focused on those who are marginalised or in distress—the “poor” of the Bible. Francis draws powerfully from the Scriptures, including from the Last Judgement scene in Matthew 25 when God judges people not on fulfilling religious duties or rituals but exclusively on how we have cared for the sick, hungry, raised, the strangers or those in prison: “Working for a just distribution of the fruits of the earth and human labour is not mere philanthropy. It is a moral obligation. For Christians, the responsibility is even greater: it is a commandment.”

Francis focuses a “God’s-eye” view on human well-being and our responsibilities to others. The Incarnation reflects God’s intense identification with all of humanity, in Francis’ view, whatever people’s religion or even lack of religion. Even atheists can be saved if they are true to their consciences and do what they can to promote human well-being and the good of the planet. In a 2013 homily, Francis insisted that God has redeemed “all of us, not just Catholics. Everyone!” This includes even atheists: “The Lord created us in God’s image and likeness, and ... all of

us have this commandment at heart: 'do good and do not do evil.' God expects us to treat each other as living images of God, with care and respect. Francis said: 'We must meet one another doing good'.

Francis' invitation is for Catholics to join with other Christians and people of other religions or none, and to find common ground in working for good. Interestingly he does not assert a monopoly on knowing or deciding what Good is, but invites others to lead towards what they discern is for what we are calling in this chapter the greater good:

Everyone has their own idea of good and evil and must choose to follow the good and fight evil as they conceive them ... We have to encourage people to move towards what they think is Good.

Faiths Finding Common Ground for the Greater Good

Francis has developed strong links with leaders of other major Christian Churches, as well as with Muslim and Jewish leaders. Like his predecessors, Francis laments and apologises for the harm the Catholic Church and its members in the past have inflicted on other Christians.

As Bishop of Rome and Pastor of the Catholic Church, I want to invoke mercy and forgiveness for the non-evangelical behaviour of Catholics in their relations with Christians of other Churches. At the same time I invite all Catholic brothers and sisters to forgive if, today or in the past, they suffered offences by other Christians.

In response to the great social issues today, Francis believes Christians can work much more closely together:

While we are on the way to full communion between us, we can now develop many forms of collaboration to foster the spread of the Gospel. And by walking and working together, we realize that we are already united in the Lord's name.

31 "Pope Francis says atheists who do good are redeemed, not just Catholics", Huffington Post, 22 May 2013.
Even if we have very different ideas in various religious and philosophical traditions about what finally constitutes the human good, he insists we need to dialogue about the practical good we can achieve, as through the UN Sustainable Development Goals, respecting the consciences of others in their perceptions of the good, and work together as far as possible. He says that in God’s eyes, what finally matters is our care for the sick, hungry and destitute.

Francis has been such a significant leader because he is speaking to the real concerns our world is facing, inviting dialogue about the common good for all of us, encouraging participation so that all have a chance to speak and be heard, and urging us to do what we can to address current problems. Francis speaks strongly about poverty, extreme inequality between and within countries, violence and war, and the alarming threats to the environment from pollution and global warming. In the face of these unprecedented challenges to humanity, he is effectively calling for a process of global discernment about what constitutes the human good at this time, and how to preserve the environment to secure the well-being of everyone on the planet, including by abandoning the neoliberal economics which ignores wider social and cultural goods. In all of these things, Francis follows long-established traditions of Catholic Social Thought. But he has communicated them more effectively.

Faith-based leadership focused on inter-faith co-operation is centrally important in our globalised, post-colonial world—with its sometimes polarised and radical extremes. Interesting historical foundations underpin contemporary momentum—indeed a proliferation of initiatives as part of a growing movement at international, regional and local levels—that suggest substantial engagement with the “greater good” and hope for the future. The following sections explore international, regional and local initiatives of inter-faith cooperation in leadership for the greater good.

The Parliament of World Religions

In 1988 The Council of The Parliament of the World’s Religions formed to gather together religious leaders and communities in Chicago in 1993, as a centenary celebration of the first World Congress of Religions in Chicago. The Parliament had a parallel commitment to assess and to renew the role of the religions of the world in relation to personal spiritual growth and to the critical issues and challenges facing the global community. Thus a major focus of its cooperation has been contributing a
compassionate and constructive voice from the faith traditions to the pressing social, humanitarian, environmental and conflict resolution challenges facing the world. Catholic theologian Hans Kung was the principle architect for the foundational document, "Declaration Toward a Global Ethic" that was endorsed by these religious and spiritual leaders from around the world. Issues in focus included non-violence and respect for life; solidarity and a just economic order; tolerance and a life of truthfulness and equal rights; and partnerships between men and women. The Parliament has not been preoccupied with internal religious matters but has sought to foster cooperative action for compassionate service, environmental concern and social justice advocacy.

The subsequent 1999 Cape Town gathering enabled more than 7,000 participants to witness first-hand the role that religion and spirituality had played in ending the system of apartheid that had prevailed until 1990. A keynote document, "A Call to our Guiding Institutions", invited religion, government, business, education and the media to build new, reliable, and more imaginative partnerships towards the shaping of a better world. The display of the International AIDS Memorial Quilt to highlight the epidemic of AIDS in South Africa made an impact and highlighted the role that religious and spiritual leaders can play in facing the critical issues that face the world. Gifts of Service to the World showcased over 300 projects as examples of "the creative, constructive, and transformative power of groups, organizations, and communities that choose to make a difference in the world". Nelson Mandela reminded participants of the contribution of religion to the greater good in his context:

Hindus, Moslems, leaders of the Jewish faith, Christians, it was them who gave us the hope that one day we would come out. We would return. And in prisons, the religious institutions raised funds for our children who were arrested in thousands and thrown into jail. And many when they left prison had a high level of education because of the support we got from religious institutions. And that is why we so respect religious institutions and we try as much as we can to read the literature which outlines the fundamental

principles of human behaviour like the Bhagavad Gita, Koran, the Bible and other important religious documents.37

The 2004 Barcelona gathering engaged participants with the theme, "Pathways to Peace: The Wisdom of Listening, the Power of Commitment". Those attending were asked to make a commitment to a "simple and profound act" to work on one of the articulated goals: 

Supporting refugees world-wide; Overcoming religiously motivated violence; Eliminating international debt in poor countries; and Increasing access to clean water.38

The Melbourne 2009 Parliament primarily focused on “strengthening religious and spiritual communities” by providing a particular focus on Indigenous and Aboriginal spiritualities. The issues of global peace, justice, sustainability and climate change were explored through the lens of Indigenous spiritualities.

The Utah 2015 Parliament saw 10,000 people focus on “Reclaiming the Heart of Our Humanity—Working together for a World of Compassion, Peace, Justice, and Sustainability”. Again, the greater good was in focus as participants were called to respond to six declarations related to climate change, the dignity of women, the support of emerging leaders, income inequality, hate speech violence and war and indigenous peoples.39

**Charter of Compassion**

A feature of the Utah gathering was the contribution of Karen Armstrong and the affirmation of the Charter of Compassion inspired by her 2008 TED award and her book *Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life*.40 Unveiled in 2009, the Charter was written by representatives of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism. It transcends religious, ideological, and national differences and has widespread support

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from many traditions. It is activating the “Golden Rule” around the world and sees compassion as the principled determination to put ourselves in the shoes of the other; an impulse that lies at the heart of all religious and ethical systems. It seeks to encourage not only compassionate thinking but compassionate action at the centre of religious, moral and political life. The charter has been translated into more than 30 languages and has grown into a global movement with a network of over 350 “Cities of Compassion”. The hope is to “twin” some of these cities, so that a city in the Middle East can twin with one in the USA to exchange news and visits. In 2012, the Islamic Society of North America endorsed the Charter, making its schools “Schools of Compassion” and urging its mosques to become “Compassionate Mosques”.

Local developments—Melbourne, Australia

The Parliament of World Religions has often been a catalyst for local interfaith cooperation. In Melbourne, following the 2009 Parliament, interreligious local government sponsored committees increased from 3 to 23 and now 33 registered groups across Victoria. There are also some notable grass roots inter-faith initiatives, such as the “Building Bridges in Schools Program” of the Wellspring Spirituality Centre. This began in 2004 as a creative response to the widespread fear and incidents of violence that occurred around Australia following the 9/11 terrorist attack. Children from Islamic, Sikh and Jewish backgrounds were being verbally and sometimes physically abused because of their different appearance. Dr. Tim McCowan, founder of the program, believed the best antidote to the prejudice and violence arising from ignorance was to provide opportunities for respectful dialogue between young people:

In coming together the secondary students of different faiths and values learn key skills of dialogue and share personal experiences. This personal connection and dialogue allows understanding and trust to develop, and the wisdom of varied perspectives is explored. Respect is nurtured and these qualities serve as foundations to negotiate and engage with each other’s

42 Gary D. Bouma, “6 Years Ago, the Melbourne Parliament Made Interfaith a Staple of Society”; 2015 http://parlamentoofreligions.org/content/6-years-ago-melbourne-parliament-made-interfaith-staple-society
differences and commonalities, and are important for leaders of our country into the future.  

Westgate Baptist Community

Martin West, Deacon for Social Justice and Engagement at Westgate Baptist Community, has quietly and consistently sought to put into practice a congregational commitment to building relationships with other faith communities in the region. The first of a series of congregational activities was “A Peace Picnic”. In September 2013, on the UN International Day of Peace, a barbecue picnic brought together eighty Buddhists, Muslims and Karen (Burmese/Myanmar) Baptists. They gathered at the iconic Hanging Rock to eat together, do team building activities and share interfaith prayers. Recent news had focused on the deaths of seventy-five Christians in Pakistan, sixty Shia Muslims in Iraq, and at least sixty Muslims, Hindus and Christians in a shopping mall in Kenya. The intent of the peace picnic was to tell another story: a Christian cooked halal sausages for a Muslim family; Muslims offered food to a Buddhist monk; a newly arrived Muslim refugee and a ten-year-old Karen Christian boy with no common language played soccer; a group of women with hijabs and men with beards ate lunch together; and they walked up Hanging Rock together. Christians and Buddhists listened quietly as Imam Haasim led the Muslims in praying for peace in the world and in Burma. Pastor Newton Daddow led a Christian prayer. Two monks recited prayers for loving-kindness and compassion. Almost everyone involved had experienced the trauma of war and life in refugee camps. As they prayed together, their different faiths became a source of unity instead of division.

Later that year a new initiative began “Giving Blood, Creating Shalom”. Westgate and Karen Baptists from Werribee began a relationship with the local Sikh community. They visited the Sikh gurdwara in Hoppers Crossing and after observing worship and joining a communal meal, they went together to the local Red Cross Blood Bank. A few weeks after the first event a group from the Sikh gurdwara visited Westgate and

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observed the baptism of two of the young people who had visited the
gurdwara. West commented:

I believe joining compassionate Sikhs in donating blood to save lives
testifies to the Jewish mbbi who praised a Good Samaritan. When we first
met the Sikh leaders and talked about building a relationship between our
communities, we talked about the biblical concept of shalom. Shalom is
not just the absence of conflict; it is the presence of positive relationships.
We also explained that the Christian bible commands us to welcome the
stranger in our land.

Early in 2015 a Sharing our Faith program involved a small group of four
Sunni Muslim women, a Baptist, a Catholic, an Anglican, and a Church of
Christ woman. At each meeting food and drink were bought to share. An
opening prayer was Islamic, a chapter of the Qur’an recited by a Muslim
woman. A closing prayer was led by a Christian. A series of meetings
included introductions, Muslim women talking about the Five Pillars of
Islam, Christians talking about the centrality of Jesus and the group
exploring different ways they worship. One Saturday they met at the
Virgin Mary Mosque in Hoppers Crossing to observe worship and share
supper. (Yes, the mosque is named after Mary the mother of Jesus.) On
Sunday the Muslims paired up with Christians to go to church together.
One participant commented: “Hearing Muslims talking about their faith
gave me a new perspective”. Two of the Muslim young women said that it
was their parents who had strongly encouraged them to join the program:
“We attend an Islamic college and socialise with other Muslims, and our
parents said it was really important we make friends with Christians and
learn about Christianity”.

In May 2016 twenty Baptists and Buddhists gathered at Westgate
Baptist Community to discuss religious conflict in Burma. A prominent
Buddhist monk in Karen State, Burma, has built pagodas in front of seven
Christian churches, and a mosque and police station. After sixty-seven
years of civil war, conflict in Karen State has diminished and religion has
ceased to be a source of conflict, and there are peace talks with the
Burmese military. Building pagodas in front of churches is raising tensions
and fears of renewed religious conflict. Karen Buddhists in Australia say

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46 Martin West, “Sharing our faith with Muslims”
47 Martin West, “Karen leaders meet for peace”, May 2016
that building pagodas without permission on church land is a violation of basic Buddhist principles, and that the monk U Thuzana does not represent them, or Buddhism. Westgate invited Karen leaders to a meeting where Venerable Moonieinda, abbot of the Karen Buddhist monastery in Bendigo, spoke of his community’s concern that religious conflict will lead to divisions between Karen Christians and Karen Buddhists in Australia. Those at the meeting wrote letters to Buddhist and Christian leaders in Karen State, encouraging them to avoid actions that will cause conflict, and work for peace and friendship between religions, and then Christians and Buddhists prayed for peace.

**Priestly and/or Prophetic Leadership?**

“Religion and politics don’t mix” is a cultural script often quoted by those who want to keep the influence of religion out of politics, or keep religion pure from the perceived distraction of politics. When it was suggested to Melbourne Synagogue leaders that they should make a statement about Australia’s treatment of refugees, as churches have done, one response was “No, let’s stick to spiritual matters”.

Part of the tension is the different role of faith-based leaders as priest and/or prophet. Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks has explored the biblical basis of leadership including this distinction.  

The priest represents normativity, balance and maintaining the status quo. The prophet offers challenge, critique and subversion of the status quo. Prophets boldly say to others who are misusing their power, “This is what you are doing, and it is wrong”. As we reimagine faith-based leadership we need both priest and prophet. It is not about selecting one over the other for all times and situations. But the standard expectation in Western secular society is that faith-based leaders fulfill a priestly role—epitomised by celebrating weddings and funerals, or conducting worship. People look for leaders who can fulfill a prophetic role, but often look first to journalists, University professors or public intellectuals to bring that challenge, rather than looking to faith-based leaders.

Judaism has been a minority religion in most of its history and so has tended to be conservative and interested in maintaining itself. Christianity

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[^48]: See e.g., Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, *Lessons in Leadership: A Weekly Reading of the Jewish Bible* (New Milford: Maggid, 2015). Others, such as Walter Brueggemann, have developed similar models in a Christian hermeneutical context.
in Western countries such as Australia is now also becoming a minority
religion, existing on the margins of society rather than operating from a
position of strength in the mainstream. The temptation for leaders of
minority religions is to be inward looking and preoccupied with survival.

The Imperative of Dialogue

It is a religious imperative, and even simply a moral imperative, especially
in a multicultural society and multi-religious world like ours, to enter into
dialogue with people of other faiths or none. Sacks suggests that it is only
due to what we hold in common and our common humanity that gives us a
place for conversation and enables us to talk to one another, but our
differences since we are not all the same give us something to talk about.
This is a real challenge with interfaith dialogue—carrying on a conversation
without denying our differences. Faith-based leaders with experience in
dialogue can model conversational exploration of important issues with
others of divergent opinions, but unfortunately too many religious leaders
are interested more in maintenance and talking only with people of their
own religion and—even more narrowly—usually only with people in their
own denomination or theological bandwidth.

Sacks wrote The Dignity of Difference as an extended midrash on the
Tower of Babel and Plato. He suggested we are all haunted by Plato’s
ghost and are looking for an answer for everything, which is a myth. Sacks
maintains that plurality and diversity are part of God’s plan. Instead of
reading the story of the Tower of Babel anthropocentrically as a story of
judgement, he presents it theocentrically as a story of ordained diversity—
that God wants diversity and that it is the challenge of humans to learn to
live with it. If we were all the same there would be no challenge; our
difference brings our dignity. This is the intrinsic moral dimension to the
economics and politics of globalisation. Dialogue is thus not merely about
searching for common values but reframing how we view our differences.
Reimagining faith-based leadership, therefore, has to include showing
dignity to the other and being a force for peace; that is, avoiding the clash
of civilisations at global and local levels.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Jonathan Sacks, The Dignity of Difference: How to Avoid the Clash of
Civilisations (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2003); also Jonathan Sacks, Not in
God’s Name: Confronting Religious Violence (New York: Schocken, 2015);
Raymond Gaita, A Common Humanity: Thinking about Love and Truth and Justice
(London: Routledge, 2002).
The Victorian Council for Christians and Jews organised the “Grassroots Dialogue project” in 2015 to broaden dialogue beyond special events. The project took the message of listening respectfully to one another into religious congregations. It trained 12 dialogue partners—Christians and Jews—and sent them on 31 visits to 29 congregations, always with a Jewish-Christian pair, and mostly at times of worship. For some this was a radical idea—having a Jew speak to a Christian, and a Christian to a Jew, during a time of worship. The occasional person who responded, “I did not come here for this”, apparently failed to see that “listening respectfully to the other” was itself a prayerful experience. Yet the biggest critical feedback was that congregations needed more time to go more deeply into the dialogue experience. Reimagining faith-based leadership needs to include helping people of faith see people of others faiths (or none) as people of common humanity, and to respect points of difference.

Joining with people of other faiths can extend also to shared community service. A member of Temple Beth Israel Melbourne, Rabbi Fred Morgan’s congregation, exercised local community leadership in initiating a food van program. The congregation had been concerned for local homeless people and those struggling with food security, but the synagogue, as much as they would have liked to, was unable to use its own kitchen to prepare meals. The volunteer leader asked the Father Bob Foundation for access to their food van and raised money for the food expenses, and they now operate it every Monday evening, with 50 volunteers. The food is not just for Jews of course, and the volunteers include Jews from the Synagogue and others from the community who were attracted by the vision.

Another dimension of faith-based leadership is moving beyond conversation and compassionate service to also advocating for a more just society. Jewish Aid Australia has been renamed as “Stand Up”, but it still reflects a “Jewish commitment to a better world” in the words of their mission statement. Stand Up works with indigenous partnerships, homework clubs, social justice education for youth and children, and refugee support. As well as responding to issues at grassroots levels, Stand Up is adopting a role as advocates for policy changes. Stand Up asked synagogues to open their doors to refugees, as some churches have done, which the synagogues were not able to do for legal reasons. But Stand Up drafted a statement, like some churches have done, and invited Synagogue leaders to sign it. An Orthodox Rabbinic group drafted a similar statement,
and the two statements have now been amalgamated and signed by at least twenty Jewish leaders.

When one leader asked his board to approve his signature on the refugee statement, as is that Synagogue’s policy for any public statement, someone suggested Synagogue leaders should leave the issue alone and focus on spiritual not political matters. Rabbi Fred Morgan’s response was to ask whether any issue is not political? It was not an issue of partisan politics but acting out of a sense of common humanity and out of convictions about Jewish values, in particular the Scriptural mandate to care for the stranger. In the Talmud it is claimed that the Torah mentions thirty-six times “Respect the stranger”, an injunction linked to the experience of the Jews in Egypt. This is an ethical position based on looking at the face of the other person and thus being obligated to act on their behalf, as Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas taught.50 Reimagining faith-based leadership has to acknowledge the humanity of the other, and do so with reference to specific persons not just humanity in the abstract.

In the Thatcher era in the United Kingdom, Anglican and other churches produced several reports on poverty and social justice issues. Contributing to this conversation, Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, before he was to become Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Synagogue of the British Commonwealth, asserted that Judaism does not hold to any particular economic theory but articulates appropriate goals to set for ourselves and principles for ways of reaching them. Religious leaders, therefore, can adopt a prophetic or critical stance, in essence as a voice “from the sidelines” that asks, “Why are you holding to this theory? Examine your motives”.51

A foundational challenge for faith-based or any leadership is to not only teach but embody values. This is an area faith-based leaders at their best can model for leaders in other sectors, and unfortunately it is also an area that at our worst we can model what not to do. A publicly obvious example of this, of course, is inappropriate responses of religious organisations to child sexual abuse that the recent Royal Commission has been investigating. Rabbi Jack Bloom explains that leaders, even religious

leaders, are flawed and we are all imperfect, but the challenge of leadership is how to deal with our flaws and symbolically point people beyond ourselves to God and to higher values, in part by seeking to embody those values.\textsuperscript{52}

Reimagining faith-based leadership involves prophetic activism that addresses and engages the world’s complex and wicked problems—climate change, AIDS, global poverty and the global flow of refugees. But any response must also lead with a focus on integrity, authenticity and open-heartedness as well as the wisdom of spiritual leaders—as exemplified by Pope Francis and others. In other words, the leader needs to be credible, honest (not corrupt or self-serving, as we so often accuse political leaders of being), and true to their message in their own behaviour. The prophetic element is also important, but we need to clarify what that means: able to see where society is going and in what ways or areas it is damaging itself, being counter-cultural; being self-critical (at least, to some extent) within and towards one’s own religious-cultural tradition—seeing the flaws in the ways that one’s own tradition expresses itself. The well-known practitioner of interfaith (Jewish-Christian) dialogue Leonard Swidler made this important point in his famous reference to “the Dialogue Decalogue”, or also known as the “Ten Commandments of Dialogue”, that a critical approach is necessary not only towards the other’s religious culture but also towards one’s own religious culture.\textsuperscript{53} That’s what Francis is doing, and this is partly why he can be respected apart from the child abuse controversy because he is not identified with the Catholic culture that produced it—despite the fact that he heads the Church that produced it. Instead he is able to exercise leadership on matters including climate change and migration.

This is not merely the task of one hierarchical leader or a selection of charismatic leaders, nor indeed the task of any one denominational religious group. In a secular or post-secular context, the challenge for re-imagining faith-based leadership for the greater good is for all people of faith, in collaboration with one another and with other groups and individuals active in serving the greater good.

\textsuperscript{52} Rabbi Jack H. Bloom, \textit{The Rabbi as Spiritual Exemplar: By the Power Vested In Me} (New York: Havorth, 2002).

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