

Our Responsibility before God: Taming the ‘Seven Capital Sins’

How to bring back trust and confidence in our market economy

Felix Breidenstein lists seven ‘sins’ of our 21st Century market-driven society which erode trust and confidence. To overcome these, we need freedom, reliable institutions and a sense of personal moral responsibility. Instead of criticising, the churches should encourage the witness and integrity of their members in industry.

A fish takes water in the sea for granted – unless it is caught by fishermen. So it is with us: we take many things for granted, until a fisherman hooks us. Every day, we use water from the tap to wash, drink and cook. We don’t talk about water quality, we simply use it and take its quality for granted – until the water itself is polluted.

In our market-driven economy, we too take many things for granted. For the food we eat, we trust the baker, the butcher, the companies in

the food industry and the supermarkets who sell to us, that they market only products of reliable quality. For our medical care, we trust the doctor, the pharmacist and the pharmaceutical company to have our health at heart, not only their own financial benefit. We take it for granted that car manufacturers sell only cars in compliance with environmental protection laws, keeping us safe and healthy. And currently much in the spotlight, we trust bankers and financial advisers to sell us products and services that

support our financial wellbeing, not merely their own profits.

The scandals in the industries listed – the film *Erin Brockovich* about Pacific Gas and Electric’s contamination of the groundwater; the obesity-generating high-sugar fizzy drinks marketed by global corporations; the VW and GM scandals (see FIBQ 17.4, May 2016); and the ongoing mis-selling insurance and banking scandals – all these indicate a malaise at the core of our market economy.



The deadly San Bruno pipeline explosion for which Pacific Gas & Electric Co. were convicted of violating pipeline safety laws.

Photo: Noah Berger, Associated Press