

A response to David Parish on Corporate Social Responsibility

(FiBQ 17.3, pp. 13-19)

Gary Cundill finds that David Parish's article in FiBQ 17.3 may be inadequate in its arguments that CSR should be adopted by companies who are not owned by Christians. He adds extra reasons for non-Christian profit-driven corporations to be enthusiastic about CSR.

In FiBQ 17.3 David Parish has written a useful article on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). He has provided us with a historical introduction containing some delightful anecdotes, and he has highlighted some key aspects of the current state of play in this area of business activity. In illustrating some of the points he is making he quotes inspiring examples.

CSR is a large and controversial topic, and David has naturally had to be selective in his material in order

to comply with the space constraints of the journal. Several of the issues he deals with could easily form the subjects of articles of their own. For example, I am very sympathetic to the idea of driving CSR via regulation. The question is begged, though – would it then be CSR, or merely legal compliance? This is an important issue, but not one that is practical to unpack in a paragraph or two.

I would suggest, however, that David's description of CSR is marred by one significant flaw that

ultimately renders his treatment of the subject unconvincing. He has not addressed adequately the issue of motivation – *why* is it that companies should engage in CSR?

In his section on corporate giving, David makes the bold statement that 'business could and should do more in terms of giving'. The first component, the capability of business to give, is beyond the scope of this response. The second, normative point needs examination. Do David's arguments warrant his

