THINGS NONE OF US SHOULD SAY

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Normalizing the language of the marketplace within the academy and the church confuses and ultimately to subverts our deepest purposes

Category: Observations

I'm rereading the brilliant Caring for Words in a Culture of Lies for a project that I'm working on and these quotes seemed relevant in the light of my *things mission agencies shouldn't say* series.

> *We have appropriated the language of investment and profit to describe endeavors that ought rightly to remain distinct and free from market considerations. Self interest and increase pervade not only "motivational" seminars in the workplace but even churches' evangelical campaigns.*
>
> *p. 15*

> *Normalizing the language of the marketplace within the academy and the church confuses and ultimately subverts our deepest purposes: in the one case to promote critical thought and exchange of ideas free from coercion by those in positions of political or economic power, and in the other, to call people to something so radically different from the terms and paradigms of this world that it can be spoken of only in the variegated, complex, much-translated, much-pondered, prayerfully interpreted language of texts that have kept generations of people of faith kneeling at the threshold of unspeakable mystery and love beyond telling.*
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> *p. 16*

> *It can be hard to maintain a sense of and be faithful to the complexities of any issue that matters. Serving on a committee recently to review a piece of publicity material for a local organization, I registered strenuous objections to the clichÃ©s and vapid abstractions that seemed to bury the main points (such as they were) in wet cotton. "This is what works, was the reply. "This is what PR writing looks like. It reassures people." I will not record here the umbrage I took at this bland pragmatism. I left the committee meeting darkly convinced that people who buy (and buy into) prose with no sinews, atrophied syntax, emaciated metaphors, and calculated imprecision deserve what they get.*
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> *p. 43*

> *This brings us to another loss. In a similar if less painfully obvious way, the discourse of the church, the subtleties of biblical language and sensitivity to nuances of translation, the ear for*

> *poetry and care for theological distinctions may be eroded by allowing media language to become the dialect of our worship and fellowship.*
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> *p. 50*