

FOREWORD SPIRIT IN FINANCE

BY LEEN VALKENBURG

In front of you is the first book written by my son Ivo. He was raised in a family of financial service providers in search of Spirit. For more than forty years I myself wandered through the world of savings, investments, mortgages, insurances and pensions. I have meanwhile reached the age of eighty and can hardly believe that Ivo, too, has been active in financial service providing for more than twenty years now. A bit like the odd one out. Ivo has never stuck to traditions. To Ivo, Spirit is just as alive in humans as in animals, plants and minerals. In this respect he is like me. Everything in life has a soul. I, too, believe this. Love is who we are. Love is all that is and the rest is an illusion.

Ivo invites us to take seriously the divine essence in all that grows and blossoms. Also in our daily lives and work, so that we can clear the space for Spirit to manifest its divine action through our hands and feet with the purpose of realising 'heaven on earth' in a society of Love. An economy of happiness in which money is once again given the simple function of enabling people to exchange the talents provided to them by Spirit. An economy in which there no longer is room for interest rates or making money with money. Why should we continue to facilitate this when we also have the possibility to carry out our true mission on earth?

For thousands of years we have embraced what Ivo refers to as 'the bark'. We have begun to attach more value to dogmas than to the essence of the universal message, as it was handed down by wise men from a vast range of persuasions such as Jesus, Buddha, Lao Tse, Pythagoras, St. Francis, Jung, Gandhi, Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela. We have become involved in fighting over what is yours and what is mine. We have started to pass judgment on whether or not someone is following the spiritual path in the correct manner. The spiritual world is teeming with dogmas. Distinguishing between good and evil. We quarrel about whether or not we should eat meat, whether or not we should smoke a cigarette, and whether or not we abide by the rules and regulations in the correct manner. In the

meantime, however, we forget the divine origin in everything and everybody. We are hardly able to maintain the belief that each human, each animal, plant and everything that grows and blossoms, harbours a blueprint of that divine origin. A blueprint which you and I can bring to life within ourselves. So that Spirit can breathe through us once again. In order to effect this, we need not change anyone or anything around us. We are not dependent on anyone or anything outside ourselves. This is a fabrication that we have started to believe in on such a massive scale. That is why you and I have begun to hand over so much of our autonomy to people and institutions around us. In his own words, Ivo repeats the ancient revolutionary message that the key to the Kingdom can be found within ourselves.

Ivo is not an exception. All over the world more and more people are rising up in love to be inspired by the voice of the heart. I know that Ivo has been travelling all over the world to watch and listen how spirituality is manifested in the dust of the earth through people and organisations. In his book, Ivo has embedded the vision of five fascinating people in his perception of Spirit in Finance. In this way he demonstrates that ‘heaven on earth’ need not just be a vague dream, but that it is within closer reach than you so far might have deemed possible.

Belgian money expert Bernard Lietaer in this book tells us what money is, that the monetary system is our own creation and therefore can also be changed by us. Meanwhile, hundreds of alternative money systems exist all over the world. Using the Swiss WIR as an example, Lietaer shows us that you and I need not be dependent on banks for the exchange of money. Canadian management guru Lance Secretan is actively involved in large companies in rekindling the Spirit in people. He refers to companies as living beings. Secretan puts Spirit in first and money in second place. As a former CEO of Manpower, one of the main employers in the world, he is far from being a spacey type. He demonstrates how spirituality is effective in actual practice.

I was also touched by Ivo’s conversation with Greek entrepreneur Paul Evmorfides, the founder of Co-Co Mat. To this successful entrepreneur love always comes first. The more love you give unconditionally, the more comes back to you. Paul Evmorfidis has constructed the business model of his multimillion company on the basis of love. It is an inspiring example for companies and institutions that are willing but not yet able to imagine that it is really possible to make love, joy and helpfulness the starting point of their organisation.

I know that Ivo, in meeting with economist Mark Anielski, not only encountered an inspired fellow worker but also a spiritual brother. Anielski shows that an economy of happiness is possible. He has done extensive research into the Swedish JAK Bank, a bank that for decades has been working without charging interest. He reached the conclusion that a sound business model free of interest charge can be used by any bank. A society free of interest charging can make love move faster than ever before.

The last person Ivo spoke to was his dear friend Ihaleakala Hew Len with whom he discussed Ho'oponopono, a Hawaiin method aimed at realising wellbeing, health, peace and a great many other good things. When I heard Ivo speak about Ihaleakala a few years ago it was all a mystery to me. How is it possible to start loving all situations in your life on a continuous basis? Especially for me as a cancer patient who cannot even wash himself any longer. For that purpose I have had to call in the dear help of someone else. Nevertheless, I stopped fighting the cancer and even began to love it. Ihaleakala Hew Len imparts a message based on his own Hawaiin tradition. To me personally it most resembles *A Course in Miracles*. In the workbook of this course, in lesson 58 (5), I have found the best medicine for my health situation, also thanks to Koos Janson who cooperated in translating *A Course in Miracles* into Dutch.

I am blessed as a Son of God.

Herein lies my claim to all good and only good. I am blessed as a Son of God. All good things are mine, because God intended them for me. I cannot suffer any loss or deprivation or pain because of Who I am. My Father supports me, protects me, and directs me in all things. His care for me is infinite, and is with me forever. I am eternally blessed as His Son.¹

Ivo has a deep respect for the universal principle found in all traditions. With his heart and soul he believes that you and I are capable of – without any outside help -, renewing our society so that it becomes a place of wellbeing for all of humanity as well as all animals, plants and minerals.

Throughout the book, I silently hear Ivo's continuous prayer toward the entire universe: 'I love you, I love you, I love you. In am in harmony with you!'