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IN ECONOMICS & THEOLOGY

INVISIBLE HANDS AND DIVIDED HEARTS: SEEKING ORDER FROM **IMPERFECTION**

Economics and Christianity are often perceived to be in tension – the tension between efficiency and morality, or self-interest and compassion. But economics and Christianity have significant common ground: both are rooted in a sober view of human imperfection and frailty. Both take human actors as they find them, eschewing naïve assumptions that societies can be built on perfect altruism or a morally perfect citizenry. Yet neither the economist nor the Christian despair at this reality — both offer practical ways forward to achieve social cooperation and moral progress. This lecture will explore aspects of the economic and Christian approach to dealing with human frailty, and explore scope for synthesis between these approaches.



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MICHAEL BRENNAN CEO, e61 Institute

Michael Brennan is an experienced Australian public policy economist. He is currently CEO of the e61 Institute – a non-partisan, not for profit economic research institute bringing frontier research insights to the Australian public policy debate.

He was previously the Chair of Australia's Productivity Commission, overseeing reports on a broad range of economic and social policy issues, and before that was Deputy Secretary in the Commonwealth Treasury with responsibility for the Fiscal Group. He has also been a Deputy Secretary of the Victorian Treasury, and worked as a senior adviser and Chief of Staff to Treasurers and Ministers for Finance at the State and Federal level.

> **THURSDAY** 29 January, 2026



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