

The Purpose Industry:  
The Production and Possibility of Meaningful Work  
in Post-Industrial Capitalism

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## Table of Content

I.	Introduction: Purpose in the Iron Cage of Post-Industrial Capitalism.....	3
II.	The Rise of the Purpose Consultants, Part One..... Rediscovering Worker Motivations across the 20 <sup>th</sup> Century	24
III.	The Rise of the Purpose Consultants, Part Two..... Reports from the Frontlines of the Purpose Crisis	41
IV.	Making Your Work Matter to God, Part One..... Mapping Resource and Organizational Growth of the Evangelical Faith and Work Movement, 1930-2015	90
V.	Making Your Work Matter to God, Part Two..... Remedial Theology for the Protestant Ethic in the 20 <sup>th</sup> Century	127
VI.	Making Your Work Matter to God, Part Three..... Modern Circuit Riders of the Faith and Work Movement	175
VII.	Conclusion: Toward a Critical Theory of Purposeful Work.....	267
	Appendix A: Research Methods.....	269
	Appendix B: Interview Script.....	305
	Appendix C: Administered Survey for Thought Leaders.....	307
	Sources Cited.....	310

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### Purpose in the Iron Cage of Post-Industrial Capitalism

"[Human nature] now has one additional need--the need for the ever new appearance of such teachers and teachings of a 'purpose.' Gradually, man has become a fantastic animal that has to fulfill one more condition of existence than any other animal: man *has* to believe, to know, from time to time *why* he exists; his race cannot flourish without a periodic trust in life--without faith in *reason in life*."

-Friedrich Nietzsche *The Gay Science*

"...the idea of duty to one's calling prowls about in our lives like the ghost of dead religious beliefs."

-Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*

On January 30, 2015, eighty individuals from across career field, industries, and ways of life gathered in New York City for an event focused on one thing: purpose. The list of attendees spanned job titles and sectors, including The New School president David Van Zandt, a former president of Trader Joe's, a writer from the *Atlantic*, an AARP vice president, and philanthropic representatives from the Templeton Foundation and the Lilly Endowment. Scholars from Yale, University of Michigan, and Stanford lent their expertise to gathering. Career coaches, nonprofit leaders, and progressive faith groups filled out the reception hall. "This is fast becoming the age of purpose," stated Stanford University professor William Damon, a featured speaker of the event. "There are decentralizing, centripetal forces pulling people away from another. Communities are dissolving in the face of technology and the next generation is facing incredibly complex choices for which they need their own internal compass that is both meaningful to the self and consequential to the world." The keynote address for the event was delivered by *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof. "It was a huge success. It really was incredible," one of the coordinators recounted to me afterward. The event, coordinated by a nonprofit called Echoing Green, was tentatively structured around a hypothesis: that all these leaders and thinkers, in their recent turn to the concept of purpose

in their various fields, were in fact part of the same unified conversation. The reports and documents generated by the event declared an emphatic affirmation for this hypothesis:

“Something big is happening. For what may be the first time in history, we are convinced that something like a larger purpose field is afoot. Purpose has a rich history, but this is a whole new chapter in the purpose conversation.”

“The purpose field is growing. It’s clear that the need or wish to live a meaningful life is one that is growing. Millennials are entering the workforce seeking ways to find purpose in their workplaces; older generations are searching for meaningful ways to use their skills and time post-career; and impact-driven purpose, meaning, and happiness are on the lips of everyone in between. The concepts are being researched by top universities, and they are being built into programming in everything from nonprofits to corporations to college career centers. This is a seminal moment, and there is a real opportunity to catalyze this energy and redefine what it means to be individually successful while pursuing one’s most desirable social impact.”

“Our country’s attention toward creating purposeful lives and work appears to be increasing at an unprecedented rate. Various sectors are adapting to capture and encourage the benefit of purpose--from changing corporate recruitment strategies to revamping systems and launching new programs that support students. And with good reason! Research shows that a sense of purpose is correlated with achievement, creativity, and resilience, and even improves psychological and physical health.”<sup>1</sup>

The official event documents mention several times that while the group shared an enthusiasm in discovering unifying themes, rallying around a term like “purpose” also had its challenges. Several times disagreements and

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<sup>1</sup> Except where noted, all quotations are taken from Echoing Green documents accessed online: <http://www.echoinggreen.org/ideas/purpose360-why-we-believe-new-field-afoot>  
<http://www.echoinggreen.org/pubs/Purpose360-RoundUp.html>  
<http://www.echoinggreen.org/pubs/Echoing-Green-Purpose-Matters.pdf>

“diversities of opinions” were mentioned, even about the most fundamental definitions of their shared concept. Echoing Green, the sponsoring organization, laid out its definition of purpose: “a boldly acted-upon life aim that is both right for you and good for the world.” The documents recount healthy debate on whether there is one purpose for every individual--they designate this “purpose with a capital P”--or perhaps purpose means asking not “what is my purpose?” but “how can I live more purposefully?” Some in the conversation focused on personal meaningfulness, such as a janitor valuing their job to keep a school or hospital clean. Others saw purpose as taking on something consequential to the world. The event document identified an aspiration to preserve space for nontraditional “leaders” or purpose virtuosos, noting the importance of “looking not only at the ‘Mother Teresas’ of the world but also the ‘Mother Jones’ down the block doing everything she can for her kids and community, day after day.” Ecumenical-minded religious representatives in the group also noted terminology choices like “calling” and “vocation” that could imply a difference between religious and nonreligious guided purposes. Despite this diversity in thought, a coordinator of the event recounted to me in our interview that the event still affirmed “it is all the same conversation. There is a thing called the purpose field.”

This dissertation is an exploratory study of that new movement surrounding purpose, meaning, and modern life. Across a diverse set of sectors, life spheres, and moral traditions, a variety of voices and organizations have invested in a new conversation around “purpose,” “meaning,” “significance,” and “calling.” Though the above event traces how purpose and meaning flow throughout different institutions and activities--from retirement to career coaching to philanthropy--my study narrows in on the discourse surrounding meaning and purpose as it relates to modern conceptions of work. Purposeful work is only a subset of the Echoing Green gathering, though an important and wide-ranging subset that draws together academics-turned-consultants, organizational behavior theorists, theological voices, philanthropic foundations, and business leaders driving ethical business practices. As evidenced by the gathering, understandings of purpose can at times be quite ambiguous and not even uniformly held by movement leaders. Many in the movement value the autonomy and freedom that such definitional ambiguity offers to adherents: as one corporate leader told me, no one has the authority to judge someone else’s purpose right or wrong. Yet the conversation around work also draws in more well-formulated moral traditions, ethical agendas, and theological frameworks: there is far more to this conversation than a “just be true to

yourself” ethos. Purpose, while lacking a wide consensus in meaning, can come to mean very specific things within certain pockets of the purposeful work conversation.

This study primarily engages purpose as a particular element of culture. Sociologists employing the term culture can mean vastly different and even contradictory things, shaped by the term’s fundamentally polysemic characteristics (Williams 1958, see Wuthnow 1989, Smith 2016). Here the positioning of “purpose” as an element of culture draws on culture as the realm of values, powerful symbols, and representations that shape and enhance the meaning of our lives (Illouz 2003). Culture in this framework is not just an element of perceiving or interpretative sense-making but also deeply and inherently moral: the values, symbols, and representations embedded within relations and practices is bestowed with normative, evaluative, and morally binding elements. While culture serves both phenomenological and existential needs related to personal meaning, analysis of culture also requires “sociologizing” the social positions, historical underpinnings, recurring patterns, relationship to social structure that animate culture (Wuthnow 1989, Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992). It is here that the important “objective” elements of culture are illuminated, as subjective approaches to culture may erroneously posit culture as the *ex nihilo* self-creations of values and beliefs by actors. While culture provides these subjective elements, it is produced, distributed, and legitimated at the social level. Wuthnow (1989) posits this “institutional” approach to culture that pinpoints the social production through “actors who have special competencies” and “organizations that in a sense process resources for the purpose of ritualizing, codifying, and transmitting cultural products” (Wuthnow 1989:15). While attention to production and distribution may invoke visions of actors encountering these end-result products as a menu of repertoires and vocabularies (Swidler 1985) or a “supermarket” of “ultimate meanings” (Luckmann 1967) to be freely and rationally picked over, such visions lose sight of the morally binding nature of culture (Durkheim 1969, see Hunter 2000). The “products” of cultural production in many cases become a “cultural order” with an “assumed structure of reality”: interpretations, representations, and rules of actions are generated from the ontological order that--when perceived as legitimized--imposes itself upon actors as factual (see Thomas 1989). Thus, corresponding with many investigations of moral actions and beliefs (e.g. Abend 2014), moral behaviors and actions are at times driven by evaluations embedded within an underlying cultural ontology of how the world works. To summarize, culture blends together phenomenological, moral, and

ontological elements, and culture is generated and transmitted at the social level, relying on actors with special competences and organizations endowed with resources.

This framework provides greater illumination for the study of purpose. As an example, if one takes at face value the claims of the above event, purpose has become a more prevalent meaning or interpretation (the phenomenological) that depicts a social reality (the ontological) in which certain practices and actions are imbued with the evaluative status (the moral) of being “purposeful.” While the moral content of “purposeful” requires further investigation--thus warranting the project at hand--purposeful can be roughly constructed as pertaining to several attributes perceived as normatively good: an intersubjective sense of significance, efficacy regarding social impact, and a moral orientation that guides action. What is not immediately illuminated by the above is the *institutional* dimension of the cultural production of purpose. Purpose linguistically has a very minimal definition: “something set up as an object or end to be attained.”<sup>2</sup> To gather eighty leaders for a conference and discover they all are part of “one conversation” about “purpose” clearly requires further sociological unpacking: how and why are actors imputing on purpose a shared (though contested) understanding, and how does that understanding take on sufficient substantive significance that actors feel they hold a shared identity around it? This project seeks to unpack the historical and contemporary phenomena that allow “purpose” to encompass shared understandings and substantive moral content related to meaning, and more specifically, meaning related to work (discussed below) Thus, I have shorthanded this inquiry to the study of a new “purposeful work discourse,” replicating the movement’s own usage of a term while maintaining a specific interest in exploring both contemporary understandings and historical production of what “purpose” means in this usage.

## The Purpose Industry

While this project is attuned to a newly emergent conversation, questions of meaning, purpose, and work date back to the earliest sociological thinking. Max Weber’s work first introduced the meaning-and-work question into sociological theory: how do workers in settings of disenchantment and rationalization ground a sense of vocation

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/purpose>

within a wider “universe of meaning”? While the question of meaning-making guides much of Weber’s economic explorations, work scholarship in the early 20th century largely circumvented this question, though occasionally exploring subjective meaning in discussions of alienation or worker motivation techniques. The present project follows the later “cultural turn” of post-industrial work scholarship, as scholars began to draw attention to new managerial practices and “soft” control mechanisms that make up a “new” form of capitalism (Ray 1986, Biggart 1989, Hochschild 2000, Ray & Sayer 1999, Illouz 2007). Consistent with older forms of work, the experience of one’s “vocational workaday life” (Weber 1946:357) in these settings continues to provide a central “set of meanings through which people can relate themselves to the world” (Bell 1976:146). Thus, this project joins in other sociological inquiries into *the frameworks of meaning and significance workers draw upon to make sense of economic activity in post-industrial settings*.

The development of events like the one described above points to the central phenomenon of interest here: in recent decades many educated knowledge-workers have a new source of assistance in thinking about meaningful work. A growing number of organizations, think tanks, theologians, managerial gurus, organizational theorists, sustainability experts, consultants, career coaches, and self-help writers have ramped up the “cultural production” of frameworks related to purpose, vocation, and meaning, providing workers with repertoires of religious, humanistic, or ethical ends to import into their work. I have called this configuration of actors the “Purpose Industry,” drawing attention to their role in the production of cultural frameworks that hold potential to coordinate the economic orientations of a wider group of people in advanced capitalism (cf. Horkheimer & Adorno 2002). Thus, this project undertakes a cultural production analysis of frameworks related to purposeful work for contemporary knowledge workers. As I argue below, the culture-producing organizations behind this discourse function as “moral entrepreneurs,” driving awareness of a particular crisis related to meaning and purpose for which their “symbolic wares” offer reprieve. Different actors in the purposeful work discourse target different audiences--organizations, individuals, religious spaces--but they appear similar in navigating an overlapping moral discourse. Thus, in my analysis these actors are stitching together new and old cultural frameworks that serve as “symbolic repertoires” that span the phenomenological, ontological, and moral dimensions of culture (cf. Spillman 2012).



The Purpose Industry is located within a powerful but complex intersectional space: actors work to inject their moral frameworks into institutions as a means to influence the broader cultural thinking as it relates to the economic activity of work. To add yet another sphere to the mix, these frameworks hold deep political power. As Daniel Bell (1976) observed, cultural thinking on work can shape how one perceives and envisions their social existence (cf. Taylor 2003). These frameworks also relate to how one perceives the wider economic system in which one finds oneself. In one sense this is a more ontological dimension of the cultural framework: ideas on how markets work, how goods are allocated, how the wage system evaluates and rewards labor, how supraindividual coordinating mechanisms do or do not function. In a broader sense these frameworks can take on ideological (Therborn 1998) or even metaphysical dimensions, subscribing to (or rejecting) the “social physics” (Bell 1956) or “natural arithmetic” (Tawney 1926) that coordinates work in formally organized settings. This importantly points to the way the Purpose Industry manufactures cultural frameworks that serve as the postindustrial economy’s work ideology and work ethic (see Bendix 1956, Althusser 1970, Anthony 1977), providing workers with a needed motivational system (Habermas 1975) for participation in economic activity.

Taking on the production approach to culture requires keying in on a limited number of culture-production hubs within this discourse. Empirical study of all relevant thinking related to work and meaning in postindustrial Western economies was of course far too broad a topic for any one study to take on. Specific cases would need to be selected to draw analytical parameters around the discourse of relevance. To make this selection of cases, I looked primarily to two places: which actors were producing books on meaning and modern work, and which actors were being tapped by the national press in stories about meaning and work. Two cases quickly emerged that were churning out more books and achieving more national prestige than any other voices in this movement: the American Evangelical faith and work movement and an assortment of “purpose consultants,” described in more detail below. I refer to both of these cases as “movements,” which reflects both a conceptual framework but also the self-identity of most of the actors involved. The American Evangelical case was selected after seeing their substantial production of books, online materials, courses, curriculum, film series, and conferences related to work. The flow and influence of philanthropic money devoted to exploration of ideas like vocation and calling have

also boosted this movement's production in the last two decades. The "purpose consultants" also distinguished themselves in book production and conference speaking. While not as tightly cohesive as the Evangelical movement, these consultants were all united around shared ideas that work could be "more than a job" in some way.

The decentralized and largely de-institutionalized nature of both movements provided no obvious way to study them: there were no central authorities controlling entrance into the field, no formal credentialing agency certifying "purpose expertise," and in many spaces no easily visible hierarchy for inner-movement status. Leaders also seemed to be absorbed from all different sources and backgrounds, at times amending purpose terminology onto previous fields of expertise, such as community organizing efforts, corporate social responsibility, marketing, human management resources, or consulting. It is also fair to say that for either movement, even a complete movement outsider is only one successful book away from becoming a dominant player in the movement. My methodology was structured around tracing influence and status in both movements to construct a sample of the events and leaders who arguably exercise the most power in these spaces. For both movements I monitored online discussions and discourse for several months--following about fifty different individuals and organizations from each of the movements on Twitter--in order to select a central node that acted as a subcultural "tent pole" for my analysis before expanding out to individuals, organizations, events, and resources that connected to that hub. Drawing on a criterion purposive sampling strategy (Patton 1990), I selected centrally influential leaders from both movements to participate in a semistructured interview on their efforts to promote purposeful work. Wanting to see how the movement mobilized group energies, emotions, and shared identities, I also undertook participant observations at six national conferences related to purposeful work and a variety of other events: a one-week summer course, a specialized conference for college students, a series of themed luncheons, two public lectures, and special relevant one-off sessions at other types of national gatherings. All in all my field work accumulated about one hundred hours of participant-observation over a span of two years, taking me to thirteen different cities to observe events. This was combined with fifty-one interviews with selected leaders in the movement, as well as observation of online discourse and analysis of around seventy printed texts. Many more details on methodology can be found in Appendix A

Studying the Purpose Industry required carving out an analytical space for the study of “thought leaders,” largely de-institutionalized experts who, while credentialed in different ways, primarily make their case for cultural legitimation through charisma and incorporation into existing networks. Thought leaders are not a population often studied by sociologists: they slide in between the major institutional spheres that many studies are built upon (family, politics, economics, law, etc.) and are by lifestyle, profession, and cultural status somewhat amorphous and ambiguous in form. My own conceptualization of thought leaders positions them as the organic intellectuals of their respective movements: in providing the intellectual elaboration of the movement, enhance the movement’s homogeneity and provide “an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also the social and political field” (Gramsci 1971:5). Importantly, with a few notable exceptions, most thought leaders are not formal intellectuals in the terms of affiliating with the academy. Those who do affiliate with academic institutions largely legitimate themselves outside the academy, giving talks at specialized conferences, TED conferences, and at other conferences as featured keynote speakers. They also make themselves distinct from other academics by publishing trade books on nonacademic presses. The thought leaders could be considered cultural elites in terms of being far more educated than the wider population (see Chapter Four). However, their primary social positioning is far more related to inner-movement dynamics and the group’s status order. While many people that I interviewed do tend to rub shoulders with more widely influential figures when speaking at conferences, few of the thought leaders could claim all that much recognition or status outside the circles of their field (whether managerialism, popular managerial publications, organizational behavior, or Evangelicalism). They could more accurately be placed in a postindustrial knowledge-economy-professional subclass. I have written more about the conceptualization of thought leaders in Appendix A.

In selecting these two movements, my original conjecture was that they shared many similarities that made them straightforward cases for comparison. They in some sense occupy structurally equivalent spaces within a shared cultural environment of advanced capitalism. However, on looking more closely at their institutional location and activities I realized they also diverge sharply. I will outline here how they are indeed similar in form and function before drawing out sharper distinctions in the next section. First, both movements are grounded around the

activities and cultural production of central thought leaders. These leaders' basic lifestyles and activities are largely shared across movements: they speak at large gatherings themed tightly around their expertise area, they speak at other gatherings where their expertise is more of an outlier or novelty, they speak to smaller groups, they may provide consulting services, they are almost all active on social media, and they write books for a non-academic lay audience. At times they build organizations around themselves and their writing or consulting services; other times they maintain a position at an organization that permits high levels of travel and conference speaking. A handful of thought leaders (primarily on the Evangelical side) also have "day jobs"--positions in firms that have little directly to do with their speaking and writing themes, but these positions permit travel flexibility to be frequent conference speakers. Secondly, both movements speak distinctly to the predominantly college-educated knowledge worker of the postindustrial economy. While producing cultural frameworks related to "work" with little specification as to what "work" is, their frameworks reveal a primary cultural and social location within the white-collar world of managerial, creative, and knowledge work, where certain amounts of job flexibility and autonomy are presumed. Some of this is built into the central reliance on the form of conferences held during the workweek, which tend to filter out all but those workers who can travel and attend relevant events during the workweek without penalty. Their cultural production forms also target this audience: a successful book can show up in airport bookstores among other managerial-guru and self-help titles, attempting to appeal to the middle to upper-middle professional class. Thus, the cultural frameworks they produce--and the entire "purpose movement" celebrated above--largely resides in this particular sociocultural location. Thirdly, as will be laid out below in greater detail, their cultural frameworks speak in a particular post-materialist language (Inglehart 2008). That is, the language of meaning and purpose appeals primarily to the autonomous self and projects of the self (Foucault 2008, Bauman 2013) rather than any sort of collectivity or social form beyond a particular firm. Importantly, and particularly true for the Evangelicals, the self is not in these frameworks composing meaning and purpose within a disenchanted or metaphysically empty universe: certainly notions of God, spirituality, transcendence, sanctification, the soul, and eschatology are alive and well for many of these frameworks.<sup>3</sup> But the cultural

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<sup>3</sup>As outlined in Chapter Six, in one observed setting a speaker suggested "callings" might be a term that could be used independent of conceiving of a "caller": one could locate a calling within oneself rather than being called by God. The Evangelicals attending the event were not at peace with this suggestion, exhibiting a particular doctrinal commitment of an independent metaphysical entity being involved in assisting in the construction or perception of one's purpose.

frameworks of meaning and purpose would not be confused with those of a more traditional or even “neo-Durkheimian” society (see Giddens 1991, Taylor 2007).<sup>4</sup> There are, however, some aspirations to re-embed work and purpose in more thickly shared spaces of *gemeinschaft*-type communities (discussed in Chapter Six), though these aspirations are generally expressed through mediums that reinforce a more individualist orientation toward purpose.

## **Movements as Cultural and Institutional Entrepreneurs**

While both purpose consultants and faith and work leaders contribute to a similar discourse of purposeful work, the attention to the production side of these movements quickly brought me to recognize that they also embodied important differences. These differences were not recognizable before going into the field: both sets of thought leaders appeared to be primarily engaged in a shared task of making postindustrial work meaningful for a greater portion of the labor force. However, in looking more closely at the institutional spaces in which these actors maneuvered, I recognized they are ultimately using similar-appearing frameworks (described in the next section) to contend against different antagonistic forces. I also found their respective institutional spaces created more asymmetry than I had anticipated. As a result, these movements can be compared case-to-case in some ways but not others. Here I turn to the unique institutional locations in which they operate to draw out the more particular ways these movements function diverge. The question of potential for comparison is taken up in greater detail in Chapter Seven.

To stay with similarities, both movements embody what Weber called cultural “carrier groups”--those groups within a particular setting that have strong interests, both material and ideal, to preserve and promote particular cultural values (see Xu & Gorski 2012)--in Weber’s case related to a religious system (Weber 1946). Carrier groups work to expand their influence by passing off their own cultural visions as legitimate in the wider culture. It is here

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<sup>4</sup> In 1960 *Life* magazine published a five-part forum on America’s “national purpose,” featuring a wide variety of known figures of the time like Walter Lippmann, Aldai Stevenson, and Billy Graham. Henry R. Luce, *Life* editor, laid out the need for this conversation by lamenting that Americans do not know their purpose: “A group of citizens may begin by talking about the price of eggs or the merits of education, but they end by asking each other: what are we trying to do overall? Where are we trying to get? What is the National Purpose of the U.S.A.?” (quoted in Marsden 2014). This is a valuable comparison point for the current Purpose Industry: in current “purpose” discourse not only the state but any collectivity larger than perhaps a congregation or particular industry is completely absent.

that the word “entrepreneur” can become tediously overused in sociological theory, but both movements embody the “cultural entrepreneurial” impulse conceptualized by Eisenstadt (1986) in attempting to contend with the accepted structural order of a society. In this case these movements represent challenges to the separation of economic activity from various noneconomic values, whether religious or more broadly value rational in the Weberian sense. Yet this influence and social change is not only accomplished by disseminating values directly to the masses but through embodying another type of theorized entrepreneurial effort: institutional entrepreneurship (DiMaggio 1982, Battilana 2006). Here I closely follow Battilana’s conception of institutional entrepreneurs contending to transform existing institutions by importing foreign institutional logics into the dominant structures. Previous research on institutional entrepreneurs suggests for these efforts to be successful they must mobilize established allies, develop coalitions, mobilize key constituents such as highly embedded agents with *a priori* power, and draw on the authority of recognized professionals and experts (Leca et. al 2008). This understanding becomes crucial for mapping out the efforts of both movements: while they are entrepreneurially “building” new things (networks of researchers, new conferences, etc.) they always also have an eye toward infiltrating existing things. This is where the divergence between the two movements appears most sharply. Though both movements certainly offer up their symbolic wares and repertoires to the masses through popular books and keynote speeches in broader environments, they are strategically contending for infiltration of very different institutions.

The purpose consultants, as institutional entrepreneurs, are working to inject their cultural frameworks within institutions working in the space of modern managerialist discourse. Managerial discourse has always been guided by “managerial elites” (Guillén 1994) who operate at the vanguard of developing and adopting new managerial and organizational ideas. However, since the 1960s managerial discourses have been taken up by what Thrift (2005) labels a “cultural circuit” of capitalism--business schools, management consultants, management gurus, and the media. This circuit represents a new wing of the knowledge economy now devoting itself to new theories, practices, and metaphors that rework the role of the manager and the organization of labor. This circuit has become self-organizing and self-reproducing: it has a “constant and voracious need for new knowledge” (Thrift 2005:34). With the rapidly innovative nature of managerial knowledge, the cultural circuit in many ways represents

the “routinization of innovation” or even the somewhat contradictory “bureaucratization of innovation” according to Thrift. Growth in technologies, information capacities, and the number of different players within this circuit, as well as the now crossnational span of multinational corporations, have made this circuit more global than ever before. Thrift tracks the expanding presence of this global circuit within the academy, with one in four college and university students now majoring in business in the United States and the number of business schools growing fivefold since 1957. The rapid growth of consulting firms and the rise of the managerial “guru” since the 1980s have also expanded this circuit.

The purpose consultants are conversant within, embedded within, and ultimately attempting to infiltrate this cultural circuit. Many of the thought leaders serve as hybrid types of actors in this space, not only writing books of new metaphors and ideas but launching consulting firms out of the ideas of the book. While Thrift draws on differentiation between the “academic guru” and the “popular guru,” purpose consultants are often able to play both roles. Best-selling popular gurus can often build the credibility to speak at conferences affiliated with universities, while academic gurus often represent academics who primarily package their academic research for broader audiences. Two business schools operate as central entry points for purpose consultant thought leaders and academic leaders to share and jointly legitimate cultural frameworks: Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan and Yale School of Management. The latter houses Amy Wrzesniewski, who hosts an annual “meaning” conference for practitioners, organizational behavior scholars, and managerial scholars. The Ross School of Business’s efforts are described in great detail in Chapter Three. Purpose consultants also set their sights on various networks of human resource management practitioners, pitching their ideas through talks, book promotions, webinars, and consulting services. Particularly with the grander visions of purpose outlined by these thought leaders, the purpose consultant leaders are attempting to push their shared understandings and cultural frameworks as a new managerial paradigm to engage employees, reframe organizational identities, enhance public trust of business, and fundamentally reshape how businesses present “work” to their employees. More detail on the specific cultural frameworks that accomplish this appears in the next section.

The Evangelical faith and work thought leaders are operating in a far different institutional context. Their efforts must be understood within a longer backdrop of modern Evangelicalism's development over the 20th century, from the revivalist faith of the turn of the century, into forms of fundamentalism, and then emerging toward a different cultural orientation through mid-century neo-Evangelicalism (Marsden 2006). As traced through early faith and work books and the formation of new "special purpose" organizations (Wuthnow 1988), faith and work has primarily taken up the task of confronting head-on the effects of modernity, specifically in its compartmentalizing tendencies that separate work and economic spheres from the religious sphere (Casanova 1994, Bruce 2002). Here the institutional entrepreneurial strategy has evolved over the 20th century: the first efforts, after building stand-alone special interest organizations, was publishing books with Christian publishers that promoted cultural frameworks related to work. A huge boost in faith and work book production in the late 1980s and 1990s suggests faith and work overcame initial resistance: today several interviewees reported publishers now see the market as completely saturated. Yet faith and work thought leaders since 2000 have largely shifted their entrepreneurial efforts toward establishing themselves within existing Evangelical gatherings, seminaries, and local congregations. With remarkable success both their pool of thought leaders and their cultural frameworks have been incorporated in nearly all the Evangelical mega-conferences, several dozen Evangelical seminaries, Evangelical college chapel services, and various Evangelical retreat themes sponsored by college ministries and local congregations. They also export their cultural frameworks directly to Evangelical laypersons through the production of online content, books for Evangelical laity, and the production of DVD curriculum that emphasize their ideas.

While the conception of institutional entrepreneurship captures each movement's transformational aspirations, I have labeled the two cases "movements" because of two theoretical dimensions of their efforts that are more insightfully interpreted through the social movement theory. This draws upon a newer strand of "multi-institutional social movements," (Armstrong & Bernstein 2008) which conceives of movements as "collectivities acting with some degree of organization and continuity outside of institutional or organizational channels for the purpose of challenging or defending extant authority, whether it is institutionally or culturally based in the group, organization, society, culture, or world order of which they are a part" (Snow 2004:11, quoted in Armstrong &



Bernstein 2008). This approach illuminates the ways that power in a society is not only organized around the state and formal political processes but also locates it within culture and institutions, spanning both material and symbolic resources. The cultural circuit of capital provides an important example of a non-state form of power that, through both cultural and material resources, holds crucial power in legitimating modern forms of capitalism. Using this framework, social movement theory illuminates two important elements of the Purpose Industry actors. First, both movements, following Eyerman and Jamison (1991), are centered around “cognitive praxes” made up of particular “concepts, ideas, and intellectual activities.” As movements they serve to mediate professional and everyday knowledge related to work, in both cases navigating a professional-specialized field of knowledge (theology or managerial/organizational knowledge) and the everyday experiences of workers. This idea importantly captures the liminal and trans-institutional space that thought leaders occupy: while eyeing the established institutions for the importation of their cultural frameworks, Purpose Industry leaders in the meantime focus on “opening a space in which creative interaction between individuals can take place” (Eyerman & Jamison 1991:55). These spaces typically take the form of new events and gatherings like the one described at the beginning of this chapter. This knowledge-centered understanding of movements also allows for more precise interpretation of stages of progression beyond merely contending for institutional control. Eyerman and Jamison argue for transient understandings of movements: the ideas behind them will eventually leave the opened-up space behind, possibly becoming formalized within the specialized knowledge field, possibly becoming internalized into the culture’s wider conceptual framework (see Rochon 1998), or possibly being discarded altogether.

The second element of social movement theory that illuminates these movements is their strategic navigation and deployment of material and symbolic resources. While institutional entrepreneurship gives attention to securing of allies, coalitions, and legitimation-granting authorities, resource mobilization theory provides the insights regarding the ways these movements have scooped up particular resources to aid in their efforts. McCarthy and Zald (1987) identify money, labor, communication media, physical space, technological tools, degrees of access to institutional centers, pre-existing networks, and occupational structures as crucial resources for movements. Purpose consultants operate from very different spaces of resources. Those working at highly prestigious management schools have a significant salary, access to research assistants, work flexibility for side projects,

access to high-level managerial networks, access to high-level educational networks, symbolic legitimacy through university affiliation, communication technologies, and research tools and space that can aid in the production of knowledge. The independent author may have far fewer resources than the academic thought leader. However, an important resource to leverage for many thought leaders is past experience working with well-known corporations or organizations: several former consultants are able to draw on these past relationships for anecdotes and data points around which they construct a knowledge base related to purpose. In the faith and work world, resources come in many forms: the number of books produced, existing conferences and gatherings where cultural frameworks can be disseminated, financial support from major foundations, existing networks of seminars, denominational networks of churches, and various parachurch organizations that can bring legitimacy to new efforts quickly. Chapter Four is devoted to mapping out the resources that have served the faith and work movement.

## **What Purpose Does**

After analyzing over five thousand responses to a survey on faith, economics, and meaning, Robert Wuthnow (1994) found American religion had largely conceded the workplace to its own norms and laws except one important exception: the subjective experience of work:

“Religion teachings concerning work have, it appears, come to focus almost entirely on subjective or psychological issues. People are counseled to recognize that their work matters to God. They are told that if they pray about work, they will experience peace of mind. When choosing a career, they will feel more confident if they have asked themselves what God would like them to do. They believe that God is interested above all in their own happiness...A tentative conclusion that can be drawn from considering the relationship between faith and work, therefore, is that religious commitment has come to play a kind of therapeutic role in relation to economic behavior in postindustrial society. It may not encourage people to work harder, or to work less hard, but it makes them feel better about how much they do work. Rather than providing guidance, religious convictions contribute meaning--that is, work becomes more interesting, if one stops to think about it, because it has cosmic significance” (Wuthnow 1994:77).

There are multiple claims for consideration here and, it is important to note that Wuthnow diverges from the present study both in methodological focus (workers' self-reported experience of work) and scope (the entire American religious landscape, but only religious moral frameworks). However, this claim can be used as a starting point to position the findings of the present study: what do frameworks of enchantment and embeddedness, grounded in faith or purpose, *do* for workers? There is no one answer, as the two movements studied here not only diverge between one another but vary within themselves in important ways. One also runs into an unusual sociological challenge: purpose-oriented and meaningful work does not have an obvious built-in outcome variable. While many are eager to assign it one--particularly outcomes related to organizational behavior--there is no single "purpose of purpose" that all Purpose Industry advocates share. Framing purpose and meaningful work as useful to some other ends--job performance, psychological health, creativity, stronger religiosity measures, socially conscious business practices--also runs into the question of instrumentalism and undermining the authenticity of the cultural frameworks. *What purpose does*, then, becomes a difficult question and is likely answered differently depending on whether the question is asked by an on-the-ground religious organization, a wellbeing-focused life coach, an organizational behavior scholar, or the political economy-focused sociologist. I take up this greater question of the Purpose Industry's functioning in Chapter Seven.

In the broader purposeful work discourse produced by the Purpose Industry, the cultural frameworks related to purpose fall broadly in two categories. The first category of cultural frameworks relates to the *enchantment* of economic activity. Here the classical theory of Weber obviously provides some guidance for defining enchanted economic activity: if disenchantment is marked by the "ultimate and most sublime values" retreating from public life (Weber 1946:155), one conception of enchanted work would be the opposite, where work resists "rationalization and intellectualization" and "incalculable mysterious forces" still act upon us. However, Weber's conceptualization of enchantment incites challenges due his multifaceted usage of the term "disenchantment" and difficult questions of metaphysics best dealt with head-on rather than through conceptual ambiguities. Therefore, the enchantment used here is closer to Charles Taylor's (1989) conception of enchantment, who traces from Friedrich Schiller a proto-Romantic understanding of enchantment that is more closely related to Weber's usage of charisma.

Cultural frameworks of enchantment in the Purpose Industry work to reconceive work as having intersubjectively-affirmed significance defined against routinization, instrumentalization, or impersonal disengagement. The antagonisms to this enchantment framework ran through the interviews and discourse studied: purposeful work is not “transactional,” “just a means to an end,” “disengaged,” or “just going through the motions.” Instead “full selves” are brought to work where they can experience work as “enriching” and “fulfilling.” The central themes of this usage of purpose align tightly with the enchantment traced by Taylor through the Romantic era that resists commercialized-bourgeois society and deeply opposes a “disengaged and instrumental mode of life.” In contrast, enchantment seeks out “sources which can restore depth, richness, and meaning in life” (Taylor 1989:495). Both purpose consultants and the faith and work movement draw on this term and exhibit a wide range of moral specificity regarding exactly *how* work is enchanted. In its lowest forms of specificity, enchanted purposeful work is defined primarily in the negative: work is not “just a job,” just your “Monday life,” or just a paycheck. Adding slightly more specificity for both movements typically means turning to adverbs as addendums to understanding otherwise routine activity. “How can I live more purposefully?” is the question Echoing Green advocates, while faith and work thought leaders often draw on particular adverbs from scripture (wholeheartedly, joyfully, excellently) to attach to work. Both movements also speak to a restored harmony in this usage of purpose: for purpose consultants, purposeful workers are bringing their whole (rather than fragmented) selves to work. They have achieved a harmony between their identity and their work, their personal purpose and their organization’s purpose. One interviewee described helping workers arriving at a peace with being a “purpose-driven cog”<sup>5</sup> in one’s organization. For the faith and work movement, purposeful workers have harmonized their spiritual lives and their work lives (the Sunday-Monday gap), the spiritual and the material worlds, the this-worldly and the other-worldly. Work gains eternal significance.

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<sup>5</sup>This represents a finding that was not predicted at all: the term “purpose-driven” mirrors--if not directly invokes--Rick Warren’s *The Purpose Driven Life*, a 2002 Evangelical devotional book that sold thirty million copies and is the bestselling hardback book in American history according to the publisher’s website. Not a single Evangelical interviewee made any reference to the book, the phrase, or Rick Warren. Meanwhile the phrase “purpose-driven” was sprinkled throughout the writings and interviews of several purpose consultants, a handful positively citing the book as influencing their own thinking on purpose. Some of this may relate to Warren’s very personal relationship with Peter Drucker, positioning him (oddly) closer to the purpose consultants than American Evangelicalism.

There are also points where the two movements diverge on purpose as enchantment. Purpose consultants, in working with organizations, frequently shift purpose up to the organizational level of purpose: businesses can have enchanted purpose. Here “purpose” entails turning to the “why” of a business’s existence. Once again, the instrumental and disengaged modes of functioning are antagonistic and antithetical to purpose: purpose consultants are insistent that organizational purposes not reference profit or any sort of ends-means relationship. For faith and work cultural frameworks, purpose as enchantment invokes an understanding of one’s work connecting to God’s character or intention in some way. Work is part of the created order, part of subduing the earth, part of redeeming the earth, part of the new creation. Even in the places where the two movements diverge on enchantment, they both still grasp for the depth, richness, and meaning while resisting routinization or an economic detachment. All usages of purpose as enchantment also imbue dignity on work.

The second kind of cultural framework moves work closer to the “ultimate and sublime values” in Weber’s understanding of enchantment. I call these second set of frameworks an *embedded* understanding of purposeful work. This signals the dependence on Karl Polanyi’s (1946) conception of market exchanges as *disembedded* from any extra-economic social relations or norms. Embedded purpose, then, imposes (restores) an extra-economic criteria of ends to work. This may at first seem like a rather miniscule difference from enchanted purpose, but differences emerge quickly in the discourse in ways that accentuate and separate these cultural frameworks.<sup>6</sup> Purpose-driven cogs have enchanted purpose but not embedded purpose. Doing one’s work “excellently” and “wholeheartedly” has enchanted purpose but not embedded purpose. Recognizing that one’s work “matters to God” or determining the “why” of one’s company’s existence is also only enchanted. Cultural frameworks related to embedded work move toward Weber’s conception of value rationality, applying to one’s work “certain criteria of ultimate ends, whether they be ethical, political, utilitarian, hedonistic, feudal, egalitarian or whatever” (Weber 1968:202). For purpose consultants, embedded work in most cases makes appeals to ends related to social

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<sup>6</sup>Though Weber would likely not be comfortable with the concept of an amoral enchantment that somehow enchants without “embedding,” I found again and again that the cultural frameworks of enchanted purpose--in steering their Romantic-inspired purpose toward expressivism or emotivism--frequently entailed only minimal moral content. Even among faith and work leaders, advocating one’s work “matters to God” and thereby enchanting work may not provide any particular ethical ends that one must thereby inject into his or her work. Dorothy Sayer’s theology of work--examined extensively in Chapter Five--explicitly argues for a theology of work that reenchants work as significant but refuses the imposition of any extra moral commitments or responsibilities on workers.

change, social justice, or sustainability. Organizational purposes can also be embedded in these pursuits. For faith and work leaders, embedded work draws on not only these terms but also on specific theological-rooted concepts like *shalom*, the common good, “the Kingdom,” resurrection, redemption, or restoration. Work with embedded purpose is focused on reforming, transforming, or contesting a particular conception of the status quo. Perhaps the most significant finding here is that the term “purpose” *has come to serve as a stand-in for all value rationalities relevant to the modern world*. Thus the purpose gathering described at the beginning of the chapter represents just one of many events that has rallied around “purpose” as an undefined but celebrated value rationality. Similarly, the discussion of purpose versus profit outlined in Chapter Three represents explorations on whether companies face tradeoffs should they pursue value rationalities.

In returning to Wuthnow’s conclusions, the Purpose Industry produces various cultural frameworks, some more subjectively oriented and others more normatively oriented. While enchanted frameworks can be “therapeutic,” they may also work to restore the sense of calling and duty that is closer to the moral asceticism associated with Puritan culture (Bell 1976, Wuthnow 1996). Importantly, embedded frameworks of purpose, unlike the frameworks Wuthnow observes, do not “concede” the economic sphere to its own norms, rationalities, and ends. They move beyond “your work matters” to “your work holds opportunity” or “your work bears responsibility.” Examples of this are provided in the empirical chapters associated with each movement. The Purpose Industry also at times produces cultural frameworks that embody critical distancing from particular elements of the economic system, an orientation I argue resembles an “artistic critique” of capitalism (Boltanski & Chiapello 2005). Thus, the cultural frameworks of the Purpose Industry imbue on purpose a variety of meanings related to work, organizations, and the larger economic system.

These brief descriptions of categories leave many interesting details left unexplored: the relationship between cultural frameworks and ideological functioning, the instrumentalization of cultural frameworks for profit-seeking ends, and the perceived tensions between thought leaders in the same movement on different sides of the enchanted-embedded division. Both movements also have actors subject to accusations of “purpose-washing” and “faith-washing,” respectively. The faith and work movement is also unique in drawing on two other cultural

frameworks around purposeful work: a framework that sacralized the workplace as a “mission field” and a framework that sacralized the status of wealthy elites. Meanwhile, the purpose consultants battle their own unique identity questions related to their ambivalent relationship with corporate social responsibility, a previously established value rationality approach they both uncritically swallow up and distance themselves from. All these issues are explored in later chapters before larger questions are explored in the conclusion.

## Chapter 2

### The Rise of the Purpose Consultants, Part One: Rediscovering Worker Motivations Across the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

“The most effective way to build an industrial economy based on private enterprise was to combine it with motivations which had nothing to do with the logic of the free market.”

-Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914-1991*, 1994

“...the transition to mature industrial society entailed a severe restructuring of working habits--new disciplines, new incentives, and a new human nature upon which these incentives could bite effectively...”

-E.P. Thompson, “Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism,” 1967

“Joy in work should be the all-pervading subject of industrial discussion.”

-Charles Eliot, *The Fortunate and Happy Conditions for a Life of Labor*, 1913

“Our task is nothing less than to rehumanize industry, to break down the disastrous partition that has grown up between brain-work and hand-work...We must find a way of putting not merely head and intelligence but heart into work, as also was the case of yore. We must search everywhere for the culture elements, which are inherent in every industry and even in every process, and which it is the tragedy of modern industrialism to have lost.”

-G. Stanley Hall, Address to Vocational Education Association of the Middle West, 1919

“People are tractable, docile, gullible, uncritical--and wanting to be led. But far more than this is deeply true of them. They want to feel united, tied, bound to something, some cause, bigger than they, commanding them yet worthy of them, summing them to significance in living.”

-Elton Mayo and Chester Barnard, *The Management Review*, 1935

Tracing out a sociological literature related to “meaningful work” is not a straightforward task. Weber’s economic history placed the interaction between economic forms and workers’ moral agency and motivations at the center of his studies, showing no hesitation to bridge individual “psychology,” theological orientations, and existential needs for meaning (see Tenbruck 1980, Brubaker 1984, Bauman 1991, Flanagan 2001). While historians have not been shy to study “not work but ideas about work” (Rodgers 1978:xi, see also Thompson 1963, 1971, Gutman



1972) or capitalism as a whole (Hirschman 1977), sociologists taking up Weber's project have primarily invested in the causal link Weber posits between a certain religious form--Calvinist-grounded Protestantism--and economic behavior. A certain mode of "new economic sociology" has since the 1980s re-embraced the larger Weberian notion of prioritizing cultural forms and frameworks as relevant to (and in many cases, causally "upstream" of) economic practices, mentalities, norms, and institutions (see Granovetter 1985, 1990, Swedberg 2004). The most Weberian-grounded work in this literature--though emerging not from the centers of new economic sociology but out of a French pragmatist approach--is Boltanski and Chiapello's (2005) *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, first appearing in 1999. The work grounds its approach in reflexively moving against the dominant strands of Weber-inspired economic sociology: "*We shall leave to one side the important post-Weberian debate*, essentially around the actual influence of Protestantism on the development of capitalism and, more generally, of the religious beliefs on economic practices, and draw above all from Weber's approach the idea that people need powerful moral reasons for rallying to capitalism" (2005:9, italics in original). Boltanski and Chiapello then turn directly to Hirschman's (1977) attention to "justifications" for participation in economic pursuits, a term they see bridging both individual-salvation (and more broadly, existential) concerns as well as more collective and general concerns such as serving the common good or producing socioeconomic benefits.

The longer sociological history of "moral justifications" for participation in economic practices--pre-Boltanski and Chiapello--is largely scattered across various subfields, approaches, and social theories, particularly related to political economy (e.g. Mann 1970), social cohesion (e.g. Habermas 1975), and ideological legitimization of the economic sphere (e.g. Bell 1976). An underappreciated linkage would also be a "sociology of callings" built around the moral justifications of undercompensated and marginalized workers. A few studies shine light here: Sullivan (2012) finds working-poor mothers articulate a deeply spiritualized work ethic of personal responsibility. Along the same lines, a study of homecare workers finds caregivers distance themselves even from the identity of "worker" due to a sense of "calling infused with spirituality" that frames their work more as a service than employment (Boris & Klein 2012). By and large these studies position callings as a compensatory good for inadequately compensated and dehumanizing work conditions, a far cry from Weber's more existentialist-salvation notion of calling that "prowls about in [all] our lives like the ghost of dead religious belief." However, these types of studies

capture the wider Weberian understanding--drawn out by Boltanski and Chiapello--of "powerful moral reasons" or moral justifications through which work is interpreted.

In this chapter I intentionally turn to a social location (and its respective history and literature) that is *not* the moral justifications probed by political or social theory or the internalized subjective motivations of various pockets of modern workers. Instead, following the institutional approach to culture (Wuthnow 1989) laid out in Chapter One, this chapter probes the moral justifications of economic participation located within managerial discourse, a critical sector of "produced" and legitimated cultural frameworks. While managerialism, like other professional bodies of knowledge, serves as a reservoir for specific specialized knowledge and techniques, many observe recognize managerialism also plays a critical cultural or ideological role in advanced capitalist societies (Jackall 1988, Boltanski & Chiapello 2005, Thrift 2005), an era some theorists have even labeled "managerial capitalism" (McMylor 1994). Managers, according to Jackall's study of their moral experiences, "are the principal carriers of the bureaucratic ethic in our era...Their occupational ethics and the way they come to see the world set both the frameworks and the vocabularies for a great many public issues our society" (1988:12). On a more abstract level these frameworks shape the dominant Foucault-like episteme or "social epistemology" (Steinmetz 2005) regarding what is considered plausible social knowledge. Yet as Chapter One outlines, these frameworks also diffuse through a global cultural circuit of knowledge, bouncing around business schools, management textbooks, managerial gurus, and consulting firms (Thrift 2005). Managerialism, as an interpretation of social practices and social phenomena, also has a capacity to "create" the very social world it claims to objectively describe: as MacIntyre (1979) points out, "Molecules do not read chemistry books; but managers do read books on organizational theory." The world managerialism creates for its chief operants may very well be adopted by its more subordinate occupants--the "managed"--who, through the aid of a "looping effect" (Hacking 1999), may come to see themselves and their economic activity through the very frameworks that managerial knowledge projects upon them. In this way managerialism, as a body of knowledge, plays a central role in storing and shaping the various moral justifications of advanced capitalism, through which various actors in the modern economy come to understand their activity.

Histories of managerial paradigms and the organization of production can be told in many ways. Here I work through four major eras of managerialism: scientific management, industrial psychology, human relations, and the present “managerial guru-ification” era. The central focus for each is the cultural frameworks which depict the worker’s “needs” and motivational interests, part of the workers’ conceived philosophical anthropology. While this is a topic frequently taken up by labor and social historians in their study of industrializing societies (Thompson 1963, 1967, 1971, Gutman 1976, Rodgers 1978), the present analysis seeks to apply those studies’ central topics--subjectivity formation, discipline, human nature, internal motivations, work ethic--to 20<sup>th</sup>-century managerial approaches to work. Importantly, this approach does not try to discern the relationship between managerial rhetoric and actual practices, as many observers have argued practices remain relatively stable even amidst changing rhetoric (Braverman 1974). Rather, as Barley and Kunda (1992) argue, studying managerial rhetoric and its evolution “enable scholars to link the world of business to the larger culture of which it is a part” (1992:365), a culture it also plays a powerful role in shaping, as outlined above. In places where this rhetoric serves a particular social function I have incorporated the word “ideological,” though here, importantly, there is no presumption that the rhetoric lacks all correspondence with reality or practice. Rather, following Bendix’s classic study of “ideologies of management,” the term ideology captures the “constant process of formulation and reformulation by which spokesmen identified with a social group seek to articulate what they sense to be its shared understandings” (Bendix 1956:443).

The central argument embedded within this narrative is that managerialism has routinized within its own development a repeated “discovery” of new worker subjectivities specifically around multidimensional worker motivations and interests. I label this routinized discovery process “innovation amnesia,” a repeated rhetorical framing for improving upon managerial theories by unlocking or demystifying certain aspects of worker engagement. In analyzing this repeated discovery across the 20<sup>th</sup> century, I argue this rhetoric primarily serves to continually overcome emergent tensions between the technical and coordinating forms of managerial knowledge and a wider cultural ethos that is antagonistic to the core functioning of managerialism.

## Scientific Management (1890-1920): Engineering Modernity's Work Ethic

Beginning in 1850, industrialization and its “profoundly different pattern of work discipline,” moved from the margins of the economic realm to the center by the end of the century, leaving few untouched by its effects (Gutman 1976:80). Craft-based production, small entrepreneurial enterprises, and agricultural work began steadily losing market share to factory-based labor. As economic enterprises increased in size, strength, and complexity, this transition brought with it an “increasing division of labor in the technical and administrative organization” (Bendix 1956:9) of these enterprises. These shifts in the organizational aspects of labor combined with a variety of social and cultural factors to disrupt many of the earlier American work ideals, creating a significant rupture to the “justificatory mystique” of work (Bell 1956). Rodgers (1972) observes that in the second half of the 19th century, “the factory system challenged each of the certainties upon which the work ethic had rested and unsettled the easy equation of work and morality in the minds of many perceptive Americans” (1972:22). At the center of this challenge was jarring loose the ideals of hard work from certain economic success: the semi-skilled laborer may find himself “caught in the anonymity of a late-nineteenth-century textile factory or steel mill” in which “no amount of sheer hard work would open the way to self-employment or wealth” (ibid:28). This undermining of the “entrepreneurial ideology” (Bendix 1956) took its toll on larger meaning systems and theodical understandings of success and failure, many of which still tied to the Puritan “Protestant Ethic” (see Bell 1956, Bendix 1956, Guillén 1994). As William H. Whyte observed in *The Organization Man* (1956), this era witnessed the Protestant Ethic ideology sustain a “shellacking from which it would not recover” as more workers begin to recognize “rugged individualism and hard work” provided an inadequate interpretation of individual economic fate. At the same time that this entrepreneurial ideology was losing legitimation, any sense of shared “traditionalism” regarding work ethic became fragmented, both as the result of an “intellectual assault” led by reform-minded progressives of the era (Whyte identifies here William James, John Dewey, Charles Beard, Thorstein Veblen) as well as a surge of new immigrants who entered factories bearing what Gutman (1976) labels “diverse premodern work habits.” With the new modes of organizing labor directly undermining an already weakened set of shared work motivations, the end of the 19th century saw a period of labor unrest, organizing, and protest in resistance to coercive factory practices of discipline and production control.

It was amidst this setting of shifting organizational forms and unsettled worker motivations that the first forms of “scientific management” got off the ground. Directed by engineers within the American Society of Mechanical Engineers with Frederick W. Taylor coming to serve as chief advocate, the method prized time-and-motion studies, optimized selection of workers best “fit” for the work, and the centralized gathering by management of all knowledge “which in the past has been kept in the heads of workmen” (Taylor 1947:48). While much could be said about scientific management as a technique and form, of greatest relevance here is the central ideological role scientific management played for the era: Taylor’s system “emphasized individualism and ‘exact scientific knowledge’ in order to determine what was a ‘fair day’s work’” which aided in the replacement of “industrial chaos and conflict with order and joint effort” (Guillén 1994:43). As Bell (1956) and Anthony (1977) observe, this mode instilling one “scientific” way to organize and compensate labor was very much an endeavor seeking to legitimate managerial authority. Taylor himself claimed his methods replace obedience to “personal authority” with obedience to “fact and laws” (quoted in Anthony 1978:223). Disputing with such facts and laws about work effort or pay would then, according to Taylor, become as reasonable as “bargaining about the time and place of the rising and setting sun” (quoted in Bell 1956:8).

With these facts and laws offering an “objective” understanding of the single way work production can be optimized, a new work ethic (and grounding for work discipline) becomes possible. This stems from the “complete mental revolution” that takes place for both workers and management:

“The great revolution that takes place in the mental attitude of the two parties under scientific management is that both sides take their eyes off of the division of the surplus as the all-important matter, and together turn their attention toward increasing the size of the surplus until the surplus becomes so large...that there is ample room for a large increase in wages for the workmen and an equally large increase in profits for the manufacturer” (Taylor 1947:29-30).

Taylor’s ultimate confidence in worker motivation ultimately appeals to self-interest, a confidence that extends to, in his mind, making collective bargaining and trade-unions “a matter of trifling importance.” This basic assumption of workers being propelled by self-interest in pursuing the “objective” optimization of their wealth--through a

harmonious cooperation with managers--provides a resource to shore up worker commitment in an age where entrepreneurial work ethics had lost legitimacy. Trusting in a scientifically optimized flow of work to maximize individual earnings made self-interest a reliable motivator not just for the baker (following Adam Smith's famous quotation) but also for the industrial steel worker.

## **Industrial Psychology (1910-1930): Discovering the Human Factor**

Even amidst the high point of scientific management in the 1910s, the conception of worker motivations within these methods had already begun to attract a steady stream of criticism. Early industrial psychologists began to criticize Taylor's "scientific" methods for neglecting the human person, a shortcoming they would seek to solve as they entered the fray of industrial consulting at the turn of the century. Yet these scholars faced a challenge unknown to the previous managerial paradigm: unlike Taylor and the engineer-led scientific management paradigm, industrial psychologists represented an imported expertise from those outside the industry. While many managers of the time initially resisted this intrusion due to a strong confidence in their own abilities, they soon came to recognize that psychologists too had insights to quell labor tensions, reduce employee turnover, and ultimately coordinate work more effectively. Industrial psychology, institutionalized in the 1910s and 1920s, first made its name by promising to locate the "psychological levers" that could improve output by illuminating particular personalities and "mental qualities [that] are especially fit for a particular kind of economic work" (Musterberg 1913). By the 1920s, two major psychological consulting organizations had formed, led by James McKeen Cattell and Walter Dill Scott, both promising increased productivity by implementing psychological tests that could identify the most efficient matching of employees with roles in the workplace.

A central contribution made by psychologists was revising the assumptions of engineers concerning human nature, challenging that workers were rational, uniform, and primarily self-interested. Psychologists were able to carve out a space for themselves by convincing managerial elites that "workers were human beings who would respond with gratitude to personnel programs designed to consider their feelings, attitudes, and hopes" (Baritz 1960:59).

Deflating some of Taylor's high aspirations for authoritative "facts and laws" to which workers would subordinate their attitudes and interests, managers began to recognize worker attitudes themselves must be attended to. As

Baritz writes, “scientific managers had earlier made functional analyses of the production process; now personnel experts began to functionalize personnel” (ibid:50). Bendix’s probing of managerial journals of the era allows him to assert the development of a “somewhat altered managerial ideology” after World War I:

“Instead of the struggle for survival, they emphasized cooperation; instead of regarding success as self-explanatory, they began to consider the duties of managers; and instead of exhorting workers to emulate their employers and achieve success, they emphasized the modest rewards and inherent satisfactions of good work” (Bendix 1956:285).

Bendix grounds this argument in a review of several managerial publications of the time. A 1920 publication declares the most important element of one’s job is not what they do but “the nature of the spirit in which the work is done.” Work which “takes the full creative effort of a man is the greatest of all pleasures.” And even the “humblest of tasks can be so shaped so as to absorb a great deal of creative energy.” A 1920 issue of the National Association of Corporate Schools Bulletin began to carve out an image of a worker seeking self-actualization through work:

“If I had men working for me I would not make the mistake by thinking that all a man works for is money. He works for money to live, but his greatest desire is for ‘Self-Expression,’ and an overwhelming desire to count among his fellow-men to be somebody other than an unidentified human unit in an industrial organization” (quoted in Bendix 1956:290).

Psychologist G. Stanley Hall’s 1919 address, cited in the epigraph above, also called for reinserting “heart” into work (Hall 1919). A June 1922 issue of the National Association of Corporation Training revealed that workers were motivated by a variety of noneconomic factors: the desire for activity in which he or she can excel, the desire to attain mastery over something, the desire of “being mastered in turn by brainy likeable people,” the desire for congenial company and surroundings, and the desire for approval of others. Many of these factors of course become the cornerstone of the next approach analyzed; however, relevant here, the authors of the 1922 piece are able to conclude a worker “do not ‘check’ his human nature at the plant door. He does not ‘park’ his inmost desires and become merely a pay envelope or profit-hunter” (quoted in Bendix 1956:306).

The era of industrial psychology largely wrote the script for all post-scientific management approaches for the rest of the century. They would first of all be fundamentally indebted to scientific management for the general form and practice of managerialism. Managerialism, as all approaches affirmed, required particular expertise represented by interpretation of the means and ends of production alongside a drive to “scientifically” investigate practices to improve functionality and efficiency. Managerial approaches also shared in taking particular aspects of production for granted: the role of capital, the need for higher productivity, increasing hierarchicalization and specialization, the delegation of authority, and economic roles consisting solely of administrative functioning. They also all sought the cooperation of workers in various ways as a means to combat labor unrest. Within all perspectives a certain class of managerial elites were required to play the role of avant-garde early adapters (Guillén 1994), giving this sort of knowledge not only a certain function but a particular audience. While enthusiasm for industrial psychology was already waning by the end of the 1920s, the fundamental form of its investigation and its findings can be directly linked to the emergence of the next major approach.

## **Human Relations (1930-1960): Discovering the Relational Factor**

The human relations approach, though initially mirroring the industrial psychology approach, began to carve out a unique path for itself in the late 1920s. At the time the famous Hawthorne studies, which began in 1927, had begun to challenge the standard modes of interpretation for the industrial psychologists. Early studies had focused on illumination in the room and rest breaks as possible inputs that would generate higher outputs. However, evidence was mounting that, regardless of stimuli and method measured, the “girls” in the study seemed to exhibit consistently higher productivity independent of condition. While industrial psychologists had already produced interpretations around individualistic factors, then-Harvard Business School professor Elton Mayo was invited to observe the studies in 1928. Mayo initially followed the form of hypothesizing individualist attributes and factors, attempting to tie worker productivity to blood pressure, pulse rate, and even hemoglobin counts. However, he eventually posed a radically new conclusion:

“What actually happened was that six individuals became a team and the team gave itself wholeheartedly and spontaneously to cooperation in the experiment. The consequence was that they felt themselves to



be participating, freely and without afterthought, and were happy in the knowledge that they were working without coercion from above or limitation from below" (Mayo 1945:72-73).

While these discoveries were recounted in his writing as "surprising" and groundbreaking, they were also almost certainly somewhat revisionary and subservient to Mayo's personal ambitions in establishing his expertise at Harvard. Gillespie (1991) points out that the "team's" impressive output may have also been the product of netting close to double the pay that they would have made on the shop floor over the same period; the observed workers even identified this as an important factor when interviewed (see Stewart 2009). Nevertheless, just as earlier industrial psychologists championed the elevation of the individual as their corrective to Taylorism, Mayo and his followers delivered the corrective that worker productivity depended on granting greater attention to worker social relations. This approach came tied to a particular methodology (interviews conducted by trained experts) that legitimated further involvement of the social scientist within industrial fields. Mayo's later writing on the subject pinpointed these interviews as not only a means of assessment but also an intervention in themselves, noting that: "many workers, I cannot say the majority for we have no statistics, seemed to have 'something on their minds,' in ordinary phrase, about which they wished to talk freely to a competent listener" (Mayo 1946:76). Workers would often wave aside the prepared statement assuring confidentiality and jump into talking; as Mayo recounted, the experience was "unusual." His explanation illuminated the shifting vision of human needs and motivations that came to shape managerialism: "There are few people in this world who have had the experience of finding someone intelligent, attentive, and eager to listen without interruption to all that he or she has to say" (ibid:72). Mayo tied his findings to the characteristics of industrial civilization, drawing heavily from Durkheim:

"...I had not fully realized in 1932...how profoundly the social structure of civilization has been shaken by scientific, engineering, and industrial development. This radical change--the passage from an established to an adaptive social order--has brought into being a host of new and unanticipated problems for management and for the individual worker...for the individual worker the problem is really much more serious. He has suffered a profound loss of security and certainty in his actual living and in the background of his thinking. For all of us the feeling of security and certainty derives always the assured membership of a group. If this is lost, no monetary gain, no job guarantee, can be sufficient compensation. Where groups

change ceaselessly as jobs and mechanical processes change, the individual inevitably experiences a sense of void, an emptiness, where his fathers knew the joy of comradeship and security” (ibid:76).

These observations were not marginal to Mayo’s thinking: his interpretations of the Hawthorne studies ultimately position the “social problems of an industrial society” as the previously overlooked condition or input factor. Good management would need to address Durkheimian anomie as much as any particular environmental factor. Once again, managerial expertise through Mayo would deliver another fatal blow to the image of the self-interested worker:

“It is at least evident that the economists’ presupposition of individual self-preservation as motive and logic as instrument is not characteristic of the industrial factors ordinarily encountered. The desire to stand well with one’s fellows, the so-called human instinct of association, easily outweighs the merely individual interest and the logical reasoning upon which so many spurious principles of management are based” (Mayo 1946:42-43, see also the epigraph above).

Mayo’s worker-centric solutions to the problems he investigated--employee turnover, absenteeism, low worker productivity--initiated the “human relations” approach within management studies. Most of his work at Harvard centered around his contributions to the Laboratory of Industrial Physiology, an effort he launched in 1927. Soon other industrial social science research institutes sprang up, including the Committee on Human Relations in Industry at the University of Chicago in 1943 and the Labor and Management Center at Yale University in 1944. The Hawthorne studies’ prescription of counseling programs, designed to give employees a setting to talk through issues and challenges obstructing productivity, led to the establishment of counseling programs in several hundred leading American companies by 1944 (Baritz 1960).

The human relations era has no definite endpoint but rather tends to evolve with new developments in psychology. By the mid-1940s many psychologists and sociologists involved in industrial work had, in Baritz’s words, come under illusions that were “at best a trifle grandiose and at worst silly” (1960:194). Yale psychologist Robert M. Yerkes, who spent the earlier part of his career shoring up scientific support for eugenics, by 1946 had declared industrial psychology “potentially the most important of sciences for the improvement of man and his

world-order” (quoted in Baritz 1960:193). This utopian vision--still propped up by the “scientific” knowledge that animated Taylorism--at times obstructed the profit-seeking basis of the approach altogether, instead celebrating, with Mayo, that new industrial methods might possibly serve the betterment of workers and society at large.

While Guillén’s (1994) and Barley and Kunda’s (1992) chronologies both mark the advent of a new era in managerial paradigms at 1960 and 1955, respectively, these shifts in many ways were usurped by later developments that “rediscovered” and repackaged many human relations and industrial psychology principles (see Illouz 2007, Stewart 2009, Kiechel 2012). Two thinkers active in the latter years of the human relations era had a particularly lasting impact on managerial thinking that extended beyond the era.

The first is Abraham Maslow, who in 1943 put forth his vision of a “hierarchy of needs.” Again challenging the understanding of workers as primarily motivated by financial earnings, Maslow’s hierarchy points to “higher” needs as those likely unfulfilled and thus driving worker motivation in the modern workplace. Thus, self-actualization through personal growth provided the major need that employers might leverage through environmental conditions. Maslow’s work (1956) responded to existing motivational literature that was very much embedded within the “industrial social science” of the day,” but he did not directly lend his theory to the needs of managerialism. That deployment would come from MIT management professor Douglas McGregor, who in 1960 published *The Human Side of Enterprise*. Drawing on Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, McGregor laid out two theories of motivation: theory X and theory Y. While Theory X held that workers are essentially lazy and need external control and discipline to be motivated, Theory Y posited that humans, following the Maslowian vision, are naturally inclined to seek out fulfillment and could be effectively motivated by inner compulsions:

“...the motivation, the potential for development, the capacity for assuming responsibility, the readiness to direct behavior toward organizational goals are all present in people. Management does not put them there. A responsibility of management is to make it possible for people to recognize and develop these human characteristics” (McGregor 1957:6).

Once again, the worker’s plurality of motivations is unearthed, this time drawing a sharp distinction between inner and outer controls. Research that followed McGregor’s and Maslow’s thinking focused on “job content factors”

which enriched the work or obstructed personal growth, important factors in tapping into Theory Y motivational drives (Latham and Budworth 2007).

## **Managerial Guru-ification (1980-present): Discovering People and Culture**

Most major assessments of managerialism and organizational theory stay within the more academic realm of business schools, organizational studies, and sociology. In this realm the paradigm that followed human relations is typically identified as “systems rationalization” or “structural analysis,” drawing attention to the turn to systems thinking and the increasing prevalence of organizational theory in managerialism. While those eras are certainly relevant to understanding the fuller history of “modes of management,” the story of interest here--worker motivations--receives far more attention in an emerging nonacademic space of expertise: the realm of the popularized managerial guru. This development largely originates with the publishing of Thomas Peters’ and Robert Waterman’s 1982 work *In Search of Excellence*. To the surprise of both the authors and the publishers, the book was the first managerial “blockbuster”—the first time a managerial book was popularly sold to a mass audience. The authors “not only became the first of a new breed of business guru--they thrust business thinking into the spotlight as never before, spawning a whole new industry” (Crainer & Dearlove 2006:36). Other managerial bestsellers followed suit in the years to follow (Deal & Kennedy 1982, Kotter & Heskett 1992, Pfeffer 1994). Huczynski (1993) provides a helpful typology of managerial gurus: there are academic gurus like Michael Porter and Rosabeth Moss Kanter, consultant gurus like Peter Drucker and Tom Peters, and hero-managers like Donald Trump and Whole Foods CEO John Mackey.

Several observers of the managerial guru literature draw linkages between early 20<sup>th</sup>-century thinkers and central guru-endorsed ideas specifically related to “rediscovering” the worker. At times this link is explicitly identified: Peter Drucker and Rosabeth Moss Kanter both celebrate the largely underappreciated insights of early 20<sup>th</sup> century managerial thinker Mary Parker Follett (Kiechel 2012). Follett posited that leaders should find a way to lead “from within” rather than “from above” in order to exercise more humane power over employee teams, an insight that, as Kiechel observes, allows Drucker to invoke the term “manager” over boss or foreman. Peters and Waterman’s work *In Search of Excellence* recognizes its indebtedness to Elton Mayo, crediting him with turning

attention to employees rather than work conditions. Yet the book still presents its central revelations for achieving “excellence” as a groundbreaking finding of their study: “Treating people--not money, machines, or minds--as the natural resources may be the key to it all” (Peters & Waterman 1982:39). Other bestselling gurus do not even give lip service to earlier humanistic approaches. Gary Hamel, promoting his 2007 book *The Future of Management*, asserted: “Management as it has been practiced over the past 100 years has not been very human-friendly. Today, for the first time since the industrial revolution, you can’t build a company that’s fit for the future unless it’s fit for human beings” (quoted in Stewart 2009). Pfeffer’s 1994 work *Competitive Advantage Through People: Unleashing the Power of the Workforce* identifies the untapped and underappreciated power of a motivated workforce as key to navigating new challenges in the global economy: “Culture, how people are managed, and the effects of this on their behavior and skills are sometimes seen as the ‘soft’ side of business, occasionally dismissed” (1994:15). Developing cultures that train and take care of workers is presented as the central new insight of the book.

This guru era’s turn toward worker motivations and organizational culture runs parallel to scholarly work on post-industrial workplaces. Many workplace scholars have reached for a new conceptualization of capitalism arising in these post-industrial settings: charismatic capitalism (Biggart 1989), emotional capitalism (Illouz 2007), soft capitalism (Rao & Sayer 1999, Thrift 2005), or a socially reinforced “new version” of capitalism (Hochschild 1997). In a study of direct-selling organizations like Mary Kay and Tupperware, Biggart (1989) finds widespread use of “soft control” practices of managing workers through personalistic strategies of self-control and social network pressures. Several other studies of workplaces have drawn on the concept of “strong culture,” a concept that has held prominence in organizational scholarship (O’Reilly 1989, Kunda 1992, O’Reilly & Chatman 1996). Kunda’s (1992) study of engineering firms emphasizes the use of corporate “strong culture” as a vehicle through which managers “consciously try to influence the behavior and experience” of workers. Sass (2000) discusses out how nursing homes build a shared emphasis on spirituality to align workers’ values with organizational mission. In an intensive study of an unnamed Midwestern corporation, Hochschild (2000) finds the company has “engineered” a corporate culture that employs the power of communal ties to build a “new version of capitalism” (1997:44). Cooper’s (2000) study of engineering fathers in Silicon Valley finds employees internalize “shared understandings” of their gender and work identities that provide strong “normative control” and regulation. Studies of more global

companies in Silicon Valley reveal strategies to promote strong, cohesive cultures even while maintaining room for both flexibility and global diversity (Bahrami 1996).

With both scholarly work and managerial guru-ism uncovering soft control and power at roughly the same time, it is tempting to pinpoint a time in managerialism history where Theory Y took the reins from Theory X and deployed managers to place all their attention on workplace “cultures” and internal motivations. Certainly there are good reasons to map out shifts in workplace organization and processes, particularly the flattening in organizational hierarchies and the turn to “self-management.” However, as Boltanski and Chiapello (2005) find, managerial literature has insisted on a rejection of the conventional bureaucratic manager and hierarchical structures since at least the 1960s: there is an enduring anxiety toward formal hierarchical structures that has persisted through the entire post-Fordism era. Additionally, aspects of managerialism related to motivation have always recognized soft power and theories of internal self-regulation (through engaging multidimensional motivations) over external, going back as far back as industrial psychology. Based on managerial rhetoric and journal articles, managers across the century have been attuned to many of the powers and processes that now draw the attention of contemporary work scholars. Barley and Kunda (1992) and Bendix (1956) are together attuned to “normative control” being less a unique characteristic of post-Fordist knowledge work than a standard operant of managerialism across the century. Though Taylorism showed perhaps the weakest discursive understanding of normative control, the hope was always that the “complete mental revolution” incited by the facts and laws of production would instill the same sort of self-motivations and shared identities seen in modern tech startups and engineering firms. Bendix (1956) effectively communicates the timeless recognition of soft power by beginning his first chapter with a quote from Rousseau: “The strongest is never strong enough to be always the master, unless he transforms his strength into right, and obedience into duty.”

## **Conclusion: Humanistic Managerialism and Innovation Amnesia**

Contemporary managerial literature has long been known for its fad-like tendencies and short-lived paradigm shifts. One of the books probed in the next chapter, *Meaning, Inc.: The Blueprint for Business Success in the 21st Century* (Bains 2009), lays out in its introduction a self-reflective desire not to participate in this production of

short-lived, ephemeral knowledge. Several times the author cites a 2006 piece “Whatever Happened to Yesterday’s Bright Ideas?” (Crainer & Dearlove 2006) which spends several pages laying out a “where are they now” recap of the last few decades of managerial “revolutions” and guru-ism. This self-reflection, however, does not deter *Meaning, Inc.* from asserting its own groundbreaking and innovative recipes for achieving success. The author even takes time to methodologically map out where the previous greats had faltered: Collins and Porras’ 1994 *Built to Last* had not properly assessed the “success strategies” of longevity, thus explaining why the eighteen “built to last” companies began struggling virtually “as soon as the book was out.” Remarkably, *Meaning, Inc.* is already showing its wrinkles eight years later, having methodologically chosen to swoon over Goldman Sachs as an example of “what the general public and political stakeholders want from businesses” right as the global recession began. Managerial guru-ism seems to live in the never-ending present and is not deterred by the demystifying threat of either the future or the past. There remains a persistent drive to uncover secret knowledge and insights previously missed by the established managerial elites. The free market of ideas in which gurus operate provides little accountability for “bad” knowledge, as many critics have pointed out (Stewart 2009, Wooldridge 2011).

Thrift (2005) argues the cultural circuit of capital in which managerialism now resides has in recent decades sped up its churn of groundbreaking ideas. Much of this circuit is dedicated to transmitting a constant critique of conventional understandings of capitalism, opting for variants that could qualify as “touchy-feely replays of Taylorism.” Continual innovation is not a threat to this space:

“A good proportion of these management theories were directly or indirectly concerned with creativity and innovation, and one way of looking at the knowledge revolution inspired by the cultural circuit of capitalism is as the routinization of innovation, or even the bureaucratization of innovation, as what had been exceptional practices carried out by only a few firms or consultancies (such as project organization) became routine means of attempting to manage change fruitfully, organize continuous innovation, and, in general, raise productivity” (Thrift 2005:6-7).

The rediscovery of multidimensional worker motivations has clearly become caught up in this routinization of innovation. Surveys of worker motivations across the century have revealed worker motivations, workplace

engagement, and loyalty depend on a wide variety of economic and noneconomic factors. Championing these findings, managerial elites have made the “cry for more respect” for the “humanity of production” a perennial part of their trade (Kiechel 2012). This cry will likely be equally as present in 2020 as it was in 1920. With managerial gurus largely offering their intellectual wares in the current language of “innovation,” worker motivations and purposes will likely continue to represent the latest “disruptive” discovery or company “hack” for assuring organizational success.

The next chapter moves to the present in mapping out a current cohort of consultants who embody this innovative rediscovering process. As I will discuss in greater detail below, most of these actors hold a complex relationship with the managerial history outlined here. Though rarely identifying as “human relations” or “human management” thinkers, these thought leaders continue the long tradition of repeatedly rediscovering the critical importance of personal worker motivations, championing the power of seeing work as something beyond transactional or “just a paycheck.” As I will argue in the chapters ahead, many of these actors have crafted the particular conception of “purposeful work” from the fundamental observations of Theory Y and its reliance on Maslowian needs in modern workers. One prominent actor in this spaces suggests the entire economy has collectively climbed upward to Maslow’s higher needs and drives, now inaugurating a new “purpose economy.”

However, unique to the larger human resource tradition, these actors have moved to a new institutional space-- following the trail blazed by managerial guru--in order to take up the role of being a “thought leader” on the subject of purposeful work. They have also become carriers of wider understandings of corporate social responsibility and the role that for-profit enterprises can play in working for social change, in many ways pulling these once-outward-facing efforts now inward toward employees. Their efforts as culture producers primarily represent an attempt to inject symbolic repertoires and cultural frameworks for work motivation into both the cultural circuit of capital as well as the general public. Assessing their efforts, then, provides important insights on the moral justifications and produced work ethics for the contemporary post-industrial worker.



## Chapter 3

### **The Rise of the Purpose Consultants, Part Two: Reports from the Frontlines of the Purpose Crisis**

“We would never let a building be seventy percent unoccupied, and we would never let a machine be broken or down seventy percent of the time; why we tolerate an environment where there aren't steps to make more people engaged is frightening.”

-CEO of Purpose Consulting Firm

“We’ve actually been able to decode the psychology of purpose. We’ve been able to actually determine for any individual, what is it that is going to give them a sense of meaning versus the person sitting next to them. What fundamentally distinguishes their psychology from the person sitting next to them so that we can predict what type of volunteering is actually going to be most meaningful to them. We can predict which organizations are going to be most meaningful to that person. Not just so they’re inspired, but so that when they go back to the office, it will help them become a better person. It will help them be better leaders...Big data and positive psychology have finally unlocked that opportunity to be able to figure out what your unique gift is and how you should be making a difference in the world.”

-Aaron Hurst, author of *The Purpose Economy*, speaking at the 2016 Social Innovation Summit

“The manager represents in his character the obliteration of the distinction between manipulative and nonmanipulative social relations; the therapist represents the same obliteration in the sphere of personal life. The manager treats ends as given, as outside his scope; his concern is with technique, with effectiveness in transforming raw materials into final products, unskilled labor into skilled labor, investment into profits. The therapist also treats ends as given, as outside his scope; his concern also is with technique, with effectiveness in transforming neurotic symptoms into directed energy, maladjusted individuals into well-adjusted ones.”

-Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (1981)

In this chapter I move from the managerial and organizational literature on worker motivations to the present day situation on the ground: the rise of the purpose consultants. This population has a complex relationship with the several literatures in which their work might be placed--human resource management, organizational behavior,

and corporate social responsibility literature--while their institutional location as moral entrepreneurs in the wider culture at large requires careful exploration of how these actors connect with the previous chapter and the wider purpose conversation. In what follows I first provide an in-depth participant-observation account of a gathering of "purpose" thought leaders. I then navigate several methodological and conceptual issues in order to map out the "purpose consulting" world. From here the chapter turns to analysis of discourse produced by the purpose consultants, drawn from interviews and conference sessions with thought leaders as well as supplementary popular texts on purposeful work. Purpose, I argue, is employed in this conversation through four major cultural frameworks: enchanting individual work with deeper meaning, enchanting organizational identity with deeper meaning, embedding individual work in broader ultimate ends, and embedding organizational identity in broader ultimate ends. This chapter concludes with a reflection on how actors navigate the "profitability" of purpose: the moral dimensions of "peddling" purpose to organizations as means of increasing employee engagement, organizational performance, and therefore economic profits.

## **Purpose with a Capital P**

I walked into the open atrium of an impressive looking, heavily windowed university building sprawling across several city blocks. The building, then in the midst of a major renovation funded by the second of two \$100+ million gifts, hosts the Stephen M. Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan. The space that morning bustled with business-casual-dressed professionals convening in small groups, scooping up coffee and pastries, and making small talk with representatives sitting at tables with various logos printed on them. I was greeted by a row of young, brochure-perfect smiling faces--most certainly MBA students--waiting to check me into the conference: the 2016 Positive Business Conference. I had signed up several months earlier, excited to see how a business school contributed to building "positive" workplaces and organization. Though held at a university, the event was billed for practitioners rather than academics. A generous faculty member involved in the conference had knocked down my registration fees to the University of Michigan student rate of \$425, allowing me to avoid the \$600 standard "corporate price." The pre-event emails promised I would leave the conference with "concrete ideas and tactics for implementing positive change in my organization." The price tag, branding, and marketing rhetoric all

made me envision droves of corporate-executive-types descending on the conference, nodding enthusiastically at TED-talk quality talks that waxed eloquently about new motivation techniques. Sessions on purpose, flourishing, and wellbeing in organizations convinced me this would be my access to the backstage world of purposeful work.

Another pre-event email instructed that I "get in tune with the Positive Business Conference" by adding "upbeat, uplifting tracks to energize and inspire us throughout the event" to the official event Spotify playlist. This caught my eye: the academic conferences with which I had become familiar never generate collective playlists. For one thing, they likely spanned too many generational cohorts and subcultures to agree upon a shared music tastes. Drawing inspiration from music was also not a familiar part of my previous conference experiences. Exactly how inspired and energized would this conference be, I found myself wondering, envisioning team cheers and trust falls. I glanced at the Spotify playlist of song titles: "Don't Worry Be Happy," "Pocket Full of Sunshine," "Walking on Sunshine," "Stronger," "Happy," "Defying Gravity," "Brave," "High Hopes," "Beautiful Day," "Don't You Worry About a Thing." This seemed like a particularly sunny bunch. I submitted my own musical suggestion--"Sleep Now in the Fire" by Rage Against the Machine--to determine if perhaps the playlist makers would consider a wider scope for assembling anthems of inspiration. After my submission did not appear instantly on the list, I checked back the next day, hopeful. More sunshine songs had been added, but no Rage Against the Machine. Two days later, even more songs, no Rage.

After getting my nametag and registering, the event volunteer pointed to a sheet of "locations on campus to reflect, pray, and meditate as you process the conference." This was clearly a carefully orchestrated offering, one that communicated the more holistic dimensions of the event's aspirations.<sup>7</sup> The registration table volunteers handed me off to another awaiting person, who led me to the next "station," unfortunately walking me right past the food and coffee table that was of far more interest to me in the moment. "This is our Sugar Cube Wall," said the volunteer, gesturing to a wall of small envelopes with the names of event attendees written on each one. This, I was told, was where I could write and deposit positive and encouraging notes to other conference attendees

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<sup>7</sup> None of the faith and work events I attended offered this sort of feature.

throughout the two days. I located my own envelope and remarked on the uniqueness of this event practice to the event volunteer. She voiced her appreciation that positive psychology so frequently integrated encouragement into their events and programs. I was unsure that I would effectively generate any encouragement or compliments from a two-day event while mostly spending time sitting through sessions with a room full of strangers, but perhaps I was underestimating what I was getting into. “We hope you have an inspiring time!” my guide proclaimed before returning to the front table. I ventured over to a nearby merchandise table to inspect the books for sale. Titles like “Finding Purpose: Environmental Stewardship as a Personal Calling,” “Life on Purpose: How Living for What Matters Most Changes Everything,” “Change the World: How Ordinary People Can Accomplish Extraordinary Results” seemed to span the spectrum of organizational studies, self-help pop psychology, and practical managerial texts.

The first session was about to kick off, so I found my seat in a large classroom-type auditorium. Three words--“Passion. Purpose. Performance.”--were printed in large typeface across the stage’s backdrop. I took this as an assurance I was in the right place. The room’s PA system was blaring a poppy-sounding tune about “liv[ing] your life with your arms wide open, today is where your book begins,” creating a high-energy atmosphere as people filed to empty seats. I took a seat in the back of the room and looked around at my co-attendees, largely men wearing sports jackets and women wearing a lot of professional-looking black attire. Two University of Michigan professors took the stage to welcome us, wearing the customary TED-talk-like wrap-around mics. Serving as our “MCs” for the event, the two injected a surprisingly enjoyable banter that gave the event a more self-deprecating and warm tone than the high-energy motivational tone I had anticipated. After a friendly welcome, the first speaker was introduced. From my seat in the back of the room I could see a professional-looking audio-visual crew smoothly switching among alternative camera views for the large screens on the side of the stage while also queuing up the speakers’ various presentation slides. Though set in a university, the whole event had a high-end corporate event feel.

“When this conference began in May of 2014, one of the key points we made was to solve the world’s toughest problems. We need business if we’re going to solve them. And not just business as usual, but Positive business,

with a capital ‘P.’” The Associate Dean of the Business School, kicked off the first session of speakers with this bold claim. “Positive business” is a concept born out of “positive organizational scholarship,” a movement dating back to an edited volume released in 2003. Borrowing from Martin Seligman’s newly proposed “positive psychology” in his 1998 American Psychological Association Presidential address, a group of organizational studies scholars led by University of Michigan’s Kim Cameron adapted the framework for the promotion and study of “positive organizations.” A Center for Positive Organizational Scholarship was established around roughly the same time. Attesting to the centrality of this center to the wider business school, the dean of the school in 2014 changed the school’s mission statement to reflect a commitment to positivity: “We develop leaders who make a positive difference in the world.”

The event itself was remarkably light on this kind of background knowledge, which at the time was largely unknown to me. While the giant terms “Passion. Performance. Purpose.”--all appropriately demarcated with a capital “P”--loomed in front of us during the sessions, content concerning exactly how “positive” business differentiated from negative or ordinary business was noticeably light. The Dean’s talk--the very first of the conference--came the closest to cluing myself and others in on what cultural and normative frameworks animated our gathering. “So many times our undergrads in their 20s will ask, ‘What is positive business?’” the Business School Dean narrated, subtly suggesting perhaps my ignorance of this question was atypical for the average event attendee. “At Ross, we know that there are a number of definitions, but for me it is about three questions that must be answered, understood, shared, embraced, and acted upon. One: how does business create economic value? Two: how do we create great places to work where people are thriving and want to get up every day to come to work?...And then the third one is, how to be a good neighbor in the communities that we live in, in our nation, and in the world.” The speaker then gave an example of this approach: while building the current facility the business school chose to relocate a large tree rather than simply cut it down. “While many said, ‘Chop it down and there’s nothing else we can do but throw up our hands and wait for the destruction of this tree,’ we took a different and innovative approach, a positive business approach that saved the life of the tree and brought our community together.” Here the example provided seemed to combine innovative and creative decision-making with the pursuit of multiple ends and objectives. “Positive businesses makes more than just money. They make a

difference,” confirmed the welcome letter of our event welcome packet. Though never referenced directly, non-positive business, I thought to myself, would presumably not share this commitment to innovation and possibly limit ends to solely the pursuit of profit. The tree would have been destroyed to save money.

While positive business and purpose are closely related, my interest was entirely directed toward the latter. This event did not leave me disappointed, as three different talks that day exemplified how positive business embraced cultural frameworks of purpose. As will quickly become clear, there was less than perfect overlap in conceptualizing purpose. The first “purpose” talk was delivered by an older professional-appearing man, introduced as a behavioral scientist and Director of Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship” at the University of Michigan’s School of Public Health. The event host reading this speaker’s introduction biography took time to carefully read and marvel at his current startup company: “[It’s a] a digital health solution company that integrates the science of ‘purpose in life,’ advanced smartphone and biometric technology, and big data analytics to improve wellbeing, helping users become better researchers of themselves as they develop and align daily with their purpose in life.” This speaker began his talk with a discussion of rising suicide rates before turning to Emile Durkheim to advance an explanation for why suicide rates might be increasing. The speaker projected a key Durkheim quote behind him: “He must feel himself more in solidarity with a collective existence which precedes him in time, which survives him, and which encompasses him at all times. If this occurs, he will no longer find the only aim of his conduct in himself, and understanding that he is an instrument of a purpose greater than himself,” the last four words--“purpose greater than himself”--bolded and printed in different color to accentuate them. Walking through Durkheim’s turn to occupational groups as potential sources of “sentiments of solidarity” in modern societies, The speaker celebrated Durkheim’s relevant insights: “Isn’t that amazing? Over a hundred years ago Durkheim started writing about what this conference is all about.” I pondered, rather darkly, if Foucault would also be given credit.

From here this speaker’s talk provided the first “sighting” of what was a standard fixture of my field work and discourse study in this movement: the “2013 Gallup poll data” on employee engagement. “In modern times, a Gallup poll in 2013 finds that seven in ten workers are not engaged or actively disengaged in their workplace. You

all know this or you wouldn't be here." The recognition of poor employee engagement was linked to Durkheim's recognition of a need to find a "purpose greater than yourself" in order to transition the talk toward the promotion of a health smartphone app. "[My company] is a company that is trying to help people develop greater life engagement and greater purpose in their lives." Though the speaker stated he wanted to avoid the form of a sales pitch for the app, what followed was a highly detailed overview that broke down app features, cited statistics of success, and set out the company's basic revenue model.<sup>8</sup> The app asks users to input aspirational purposes within four different domains: self, work, family, and community. After the user informs the app of particular benchmarks and activities that would constitute achieving purpose in these four arenas--for instance, meditating, sleeping well, exercising, eating healthy, spending time with family, volunteering, etc.--they can then check in with the app each day on more tangible and intangible dimensions of achieving their purpose that day. Every day the app asks the user, "How closely aligned were you with your personal purpose?" This is followed by the same question concerning work purpose, family purpose, and community purpose. The app then generates "daily precision wellbeing reports," which search for connections between the user's self-reports and data the app itself knows: day of the week, time of the month, local gas prices, local sports team performance, temperature, humidity, the lunar cycle, and any of many different biometric devices that can input bodily data into the app. Purpose had likely never been this precise before.

The sessions moved quickly to another speaker delivering a talk on purpose. "For the next twenty minutes, I'd like to ask one question," the professor told us, taking on the smooth stride and posture of someone well coached in public speaking, "and that question is: why do businesses exist? Is it to earn profit, or is it to serve a purpose?" The title of the talk--"The Business Value of Social Responsibility"--gave a subtle hint at how this potential "choice" would be resolved. He continued: "Do businesses exist for shareholders, or for society? For customers and

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<sup>8</sup> The revenue model of this app is worthy of its own analysis, which I do not have the space to do here. The app shares (sells, with permission) employees' self-charted health and wellness activities with their employers through their platform called "Vibe." Vibe allows employers to monitor workforces' wellbeing and performance and discern upturns and downturns related to mood, energy, or potential slowdowns during the work week. This implies--though the speaker did not discuss this--employees seeing great success in achieving their "community purpose," "family purpose," and possibly their "personal purpose"--to the extent that it comes at the expense of their "work purpose"--would be viewed as needing special monitoring and/or correction by the surveilling employer. The speaker helpfully clarified that employers using Vibe only see aggregate numbers of a 100+ workforce; this perhaps removes the possibility of worker-specific corrective interventions. Collective interventions, however, would seem to be in the realm of possibility, in the sense that this data would empower employers to problem-solve which nonwork commitments are inhibiting workforce performance.

employees, or the environment?” Though lacking a formal definition of what “purpose” is, the professor had already given strong hints of what it is not. He went on to lay out the “conventional view,” identifying economist Milton Friedman as the figurehead: “Businesses should just try to make as much money as possible and then everything else will just fall into place. So head to the land of profit and you’ll get all of these decisions right.” Though clearly presented in all the packaging of a breakthrough statistical finding, the proposed alternative to the conventional view, even the professor recognized, stayed fairly close to Friedman: “While it might seem a bit tree-huggy and out-of-touch, but it’s actually not too different from the first view. While it agrees that profit is a good thing, profit is only a byproduct; it’s not the end goal. Instead, businesses exist to serve a purpose. To make products that transform customers’ lives for the better. To provide employees with healthy and enriching workplaces as [an earlier speaker] just showed. And to conserve the environment for future generations.” A series of anecdotes and “tests” of socially responsible firms provide the needed support. With little explanation, the talk shifted to studies of firms pursuing “corporate social responsibility,” seemingly *not* how “purpose” had been defined moments earlier. Yet the measured variable in the professor’s study of “responsible firms” was the firm’s placement in the “best companies to work for” rankings, reflecting perhaps a very broad understanding of “responsibility.” Finding higher-ranked companies performed better financially compared to their non-ranked peers, the professor could land on a celebratory word of conciliation: “So caring about society--positive business--is not only not at the expense of profit, it supports it.” After reflecting on the ramifications for investors and CEO pay (arguing against calls to limit pay or tying it to performance), the professor returns to his basic binaries of the beginning of the talk:

“I said there was one question to consider: why do businesses exist? To earn profit or to serve a purpose? For shareholders, or society? Customers and employees or the environment? Well, twenty minutes in, what have we learned? The answer is: yes. [pause and audience laughter] But how can you answer yes to a multiple-choice question? Because the answer is: it’s not multiple choice. It’s not either-or. It’s not zero-sum. It’s both-and. Businesses exist to serve a purpose, and by doing so--and only by doing so--will they generate profits in the long run. To reach the land of profit, follow the road of purpose.”

Already these two talks had presented two far different dimensions of economic activity assigned to the descriptor of “purpose.” For one talk, purpose was at the individual level and somewhat like an individual “life mission



statement” that an app can easily help regulate and encourage. It was--in Foucauldian terms--the ultimate technology of the self, positing conditions, rules, and routines directed to bring about self-transformation. For this second talk, purpose had jumped to the organizational level to serve as framework for why businesses existed: it is the answer to the question *why do businesses exist?* As discussed below, the wider literature and my own interviews also embodies this plurality of meanings. At the event itself this looseness of meaning did not seem to interfere with the central agenda of the event. Purpose, in whatever understanding drawn upon, held symbolic power for its clear divergence from “business as usual.”

Finally, an afternoon session took on purpose from a third angle. This was a panel entitled: “Purpose From Within: What Are Today’s Employees Seeking from Companies?” Here the individual and organizational elements of purpose were more directly bridged. The panel facilitator, a senior editor from a middle-brow news magazine, kicked off the session by introducing their topic of “how companies can leverage the value of their talent--and their talent--to make a positive impact on the world.” Most of the discussion revolved around two issues: the unique needs and desires of millennials in the workplace and various corporate social responsibility and sustainability efforts that workplaces incorporate. One panelist, founder and CEO of a consulting firm, began the panel by laying out a number of statistics that compared millennials’ desire for “purpose” to their older counterparts in the workforce. “Millennials do have different attitudes: they are not conforming as much as previous generations have.” A sustainability director at a mid-size good production company echoed the significance of this finding: “Fifty percent of the workforce will be millennials by 2020...seventy-five percent by 2025. So we do know that responding to this need of having a greater purpose and truly delivering on it is going to be critical to the company’s growth.” This panelist went on to describe the company’s “heart and soul strategy,” an intentional effort to emphasize the company’s vision of nourishing families, supporting farmers’ livelihoods, nourishing the planet, and living out their founder’s values. Lopez was very insistent that this program was integrated at the “strategy” level: “If a company is truly serious about embedding purpose into everything they do, it’s got to be in their strategy and it’s got to be linked to how it’s going to grow.” The “heart and soul” name and its description seemed to reveal the particular location of this strategy was an internal PR campaign aimed at employees: employees are “engaged” and become “experienced” in seeing how the company lives out its values.

They become able to “answer with their own experience” questions of sustainable farming and food sourcing.

Another panelist later added that department-specific lunch-and-learns can get purpose outside the silos of the “sustainability department or CSR or whatever” to the whole company. The third panelist, a founder of an environmental consulting firm, echoed a mandate to integrate social, environmental, and economic values “into business strategy” in a way that prioritizes long-term objectives rather than short-term. She feels there is reason to believe this integration accomplishes two things at once: “And at the same time, by doing that, we solve this incredible employee engagement gap. It’s like a no-brainer. It’s like obvious. That’s the answer: engage everyone in solving these problems.” While a “no-brainer,” the first panelist who spoke followed up these more optimistic claims with the assessment that there are still challenges:

“I think the other thing that is easy to gloss over: this all sounds so rational and fabulous, why isn’t everybody doing it? It’s really hard. I don’t know how many of you in the audience have ever had a job where you needed to engage people, you know, and to bring their whole self to work every day, 250 to 365 days a year, depending on what you’re doing. But there’s a reason that only thirty percent of, at least the US workforce, is engaged at work. Think about how pathetic that is. Only thirty percent. Which means seventy percent aren’t. Which is about a 500 billion dollar problem that corporations face. And that’s because engaging people in general is really very hard. And then you throw on engaging them in programs that are in some organizations seen as ‘nice to haves’ and not ‘needs to haves.’”

This panelist provided good reason to invest in leading people on their “personal journeys” toward seeing purpose and meaning in their work:

“The phrase we use is changing the lenses in people’s glasses in how they see the world. And so they see not only their company in a new way but how they can add impact and in the process of adding impact towards those goals create a real sense of purpose and meaning for themselves. Because I think that’s one of the most powerful things that we see. And this gets back to, you know, when people realize they’re having an impact through their job, whether that’s as a housekeeper or as a purchasing agent or whether as that’s as someone who works with farms, they realize that they’re having an opportunity to make the world a better place through their job, they’re twice as likely to be one of your top performers. And there is a way for everyone in an organization to have an impact by getting them from where they don’t see

that connection to where everybody understands that connection is a journey, and it takes a lot of time, and it's not easy, and companies need a lot of help in this area."

While the earlier two talks showed more disunity in conceptualizing purpose, this panel may have illuminated the link between two separate conceptions. By engaging individual workers' sense of purpose and personal journeys (cf. Heelas & Woodhead 2001) with the firm's larger vision of its own purpose, firms can "leverage" the full power of their talent. This not only integrates the organization but can overcome the worrisome engagement gap. There is of course a very win-win optimism in this configuration: as one panelist observed, this seems like an obvious no-brainer. And of course, the enduring "challenges" of millennial workers are all the better overcome by this formula, as millennials refusal to "conform" to unpurposeful work can be harnessed when the company's purpose is properly packaged to mobilize them.

If there was a crowd favorite at this conference, it was clearly the earlier described purpose app. Offering an instant call-to-action and effectively pitched by a skilled spokesperson, the app was a frequent topic of discussion between sessions. In reviewing my notes from the event later, I realized that speaker's steal-the-show performance was hardly unplanned: he devoted the last five minutes of his talk to showing a high-production-value film of a spoken word artist delivering a poem. The poem was not about purpose: the poem was about how transformative the app was for the performer. The speaker followed this film by projecting a special link where conference participants could download the app "today for free." The event coordinator taking the stage after this talk praised him for accomplishing the task of integrating purpose with "this whole big data approach." "In some sense what he's developed is a GPS--a global purpose system for life." By the end of the conference, it seemed the app had been embraced as an official part of our gathering: the event host announced in her closing remarks that over one hundred people had downloaded the app. At that point a word map was projected on the large screen behind the speaker; looming over the room were the most frequent words the conference attendees had inputted into the app as their personal "purpose statement." The words "others," "family," and "positive" were sized to demonstrate the highest frequency of usage; slightly smaller words like "create," "make," "skills," and "help" appeared to lag just behind. If the word map provided a mirror image of the attendees--perhaps a representation of our collective consciousness--then the Frankenstein-like app user to emerge from our midst seemed to be very

committed to positive business and self-development. There were certainly indications this being also had extra-work relationships--"family," "children," and even "mom," "husband," and "girlfriend" appeared on the screen--but it was not evident that our being had any sort of social or political existence. Nevertheless, as the event host pointed out with pride, "others" seemed to be the most frequently used word. Perhaps we *had* avowed some sort of purpose that entailed "others"; the app would certainly provide the means to ensure our "others"-directed purpose actualized alongside our own.

## Mapping the Purpose Consultant World

As outlined in the previous chapter, the generation of purpose-centric internal motivations is not new to managerialism or organizational behavior. Managerial paradigms going back to Frederick Taylor either explicitly posited or indirectly embodied a particular vision of workers' motivating principles, needs, and desires. "Rediscovering" this dimension of workers has been a perennial characteristic of the managerial literature. This chapter shifts to a newer era in the world of workplace motivations: the emergence of the purpose consultant. These actors function very much as the "thought leaders" discussed in the introduction: they are noninstitutionalized entrepreneurs promoting particular "symbolic wares" related to workplace motivation. Their institutional location makes them a difficult class of experts to tack onto existing workplace literature: though they have taken up many functions and roles traditionally executed by human resources or human management departments, they largely reside outside of companies. Some of these speakers, though often organization focused, also double as pop psychology self-help gurus, championing visions of workers tapping into deep reservoirs of energy and a personal sense of calling in order to more passionately commit to their careers. Thus, while previous research has studied motivational speakers (Ehrenreich 2009), the evolution of human resource management (Jacoby 2003), workplace integration of humanistic psychology (Illouz 2003, Cabanas & Illouz 2016), and social investing discourse (Barman 2016), the present study focuses on a particular discourse of expertise and its respective advocates--the "thought leaders"--that operate in the midst of these other phenomena.

Constructing a sample of thought leaders in this space proved challenging both conceptually and methodologically. While multiple actors in the study have declared “we” are on the cusps (or even well within) a “purpose” revolution, only one actor manifested a collaborative orientation toward the wider movement that spurred identifying those actors perceived as allies in the same thought leader space. Most other actors--in selling their own unique creativity and innovativeness--marketed themselves as uniquely wise experts who alone occupy a niche of the purpose consulting market. This is not to say actors do not know each other personally or professionally, as events frequently bring together multiple actors and my interviews revealed actors were familiar with who else was in “their” terrain. But no text sources, interviews, or events produced a definitive list of leading “purpose consultants,” nor has that term even been universally accepted among the actors as their primary identity or role in this space. In describing the project to interviewees I always used the term “thought leaders,” but it was not until after I was deeper into field work that I recognized organizational consulting was the universal (or near universal) characteristic that united my group of purpose thought leaders. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) diagnose the challenge of studying a field in which participants “constantly work to differentiate themselves from their closest rivals in order to reduce competition and to establish a monopoly over their particular subsector of the field” (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992:100). Seeing the preference for novel titles, hybrid identities, and innovative never-before-seen expertise in this field of activity, I would conjecture some of this differentiation is manifested at the self-categorization level: no one wants to be an “organizational performance consultant” or, even more bland, a freelancing life coach with specializing in human management problems. In setting aside these terms the actors many times obstructed straightforward categorization. Thus, drawing parameters and boundaries around a set number of “purpose consultants” is a challenge, particularly in fulfilling Bourdieu and Wacquant’s (1992) admonishment that field boundaries should be products of empirical investigation rather than imposed *a priori*.

To avoid the dangers of constructing the cultural object one claims to be observing (in this case, a social movement or configuration of culture producers), I sought to impose a relatively straightforward, objective criteria of what purpose consultants were. The actors that were included in the purpose consultant group both a) contribute to modern discourse about purpose, calling, meaningful work, or vocation in some manner (books, online writing,

managerial journal writing), and b) must speak at general audience (not academic or purely managerial) conferences on this particular topic. These criteria together weed out a wider (and perhaps never-ending) universe of figures who share some resemblance but ultimately fall short of qualifying: academics who only speak and write in academic settings, specific religious or spiritual voices who do not tread out of their religious space (e.g. a Catholic Opus Dei thinker speaking on lay vocation to Catholic audiences), the hero-CEO or B-list celebrity hastily thrown onto a one-time conference panel on purpose, and the “leadership guru” world of popular writers, which stretches far beyond what any one study could tackle. Instead, what emerges in this category are a group of “thought leaders” attempting to peddle their symbolic wares and repertoires related to purposeful work to organizational leaders, managerial networks, and the broader public. With these parameters in place, the purpose consultant movement became far more defined and manageable for empirical study. Approximately twenty individuals met the criteria, of which ten agreed to be interviewed for the study.<sup>9</sup> Due to a high number of the interviewees having published work on this topic (seven out of ten), interview data was combined with the published writing on the topic for analysis. I also heard three of the interviewees speak at conferences and was able to contextualize their presentations within specific settings that structured the purposeful work universe.

One clearly evident feature of this field was the porous boundaries and overlap with various disciplines, genres of popular writing, bodies of expertise, academic literatures of research, and institutionalized research efforts. The above methodology (detailed more thoroughly in Appendix A) effectively traced out a group of actors who resemble one another in a similar cultural functions and contribute to an overarching discourse--purposeful work--but many still came from far different backgrounds. When asked which thinkers interviewees saw as allies in their work, the answers ranged widely and, in sharp contrast to the faith and work interviewees discussed later, never became predictable to me. A popular choice of allies were managerial thinkers like Peter Drucker, Jim Collins, and human resources management scholar Charles Handy, an 85-year-old thinker frequently ranked near Peter

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<sup>9</sup> This does not mean the purpose discourse is limited to these twenty individuals: narrowly constructing the field is intended as an analytical heuristic to provide an objective criterion for inclusion in the study. One of the thought leaders discussed below helpfully construes the “purpose movement” as a cross-sector “field,” and her organization drew together the event highlighted in Chapter One. While these eighty leaders might have also provided insights for this study, the sample constructed here was more focused on “full time” purpose thought leaders. The larger population of leaders at the event certainly could speak the language of purpose when so prompted, but they came from leadership roles in diverse sector leaders--CEOs, nonprofit directors, university presidents, writers. Thus, my own sample members arguably represent those who have made it their “day job” to contribute to discourse related to purposeful work and meaning, which is the direct intention of the study at hand.

Drucker in influence. Many identified organizational behavior scholar Dr. Amy Wrzesniewski, an academic at the Yale School of Management, whose work shows up throughout their writings. Other interviewees walked me through leading figures from social investing and corporate social responsibility movements. This reflected some basic variations discovered only after assembling a sample: while all interviewees may contribute to the same discourse, some of the interviewees spoke more to the individual level of discerning one's calling, others to the organizational performance level, and still others to the role of business in addressing larger societal problems. As will be discussed below, all three orientations had ducked under the umbrella of "purpose" language to promote their ends, and often in their public speaking it was indiscernible from which of these approaches they were ultimately drawing. The persisting challenge as a researcher in this space was honoring the self-identification of the actors--who clearly valued their unique titles and perspectives--while also wanting to describe them in a way that illuminates connections to developed research literatures, self-help literature, human resources management, organizational behavior techniques, and corporate social responsibility. As will be discussed below, some of the interviewees went out of their way to describe their own differentiation from these existing fields.

In trying to find places where I could observe these thought leaders speak, I quickly discovered they do not create their own events or gatherings. There has yet to be a "Purpose Summit" or "Callings Conference" that puts all my interviewees in the same speaking lineup.<sup>10</sup> Thus, charting the particular settings in which their ideas, books, and expertise are promoted becomes a central part of institutionally and culturally locating these thought leaders. Two major types of events tend to draw these leaders to their speaking lineups. The first are organizational behavior or human resources events: gatherings of human resource professionals who range in topics from the very applied (employee retention, performance measures, navigating potential workplace tensions) to the more abstract and aspirational. The latter is where the purpose consultants have made their mark. For example, one thought leader was a featured keynote speaker at the 2016 Association for Human Resources Management in International Organizations (AHRMIO) Annual Conference. While the talk was on "The Significance of Purpose for Employees and Organization," the other keynote topics were on conflict resolution, organizational change, and "tools and

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<sup>10</sup> This is in sharp contrast to the faith and work leaders discussed in later chapters.

strategies for modernizing performance management.” Another example of this type of conference is the “positive business” gathering described above, at which in 2016 three different purpose consultants (as defined by the criteria described above) spoke. The second type of event is geared around corporate social responsibility, a term that spans corporate philanthropy, social investing, and social branding. Four national “brands” of conferences in particular tend to pull in purpose consultants: GreenBiz, Sustainable Brands, the Social Innovation Summit, and the Committee Encouraging Corporate Philanthropy (CECP) Conference. In 2016 GreenBiz—an event that claims to “convene the brightest minds in sustainability, technology, and business from the world’s largest companies, technology startups, utilities and cities”—offered a special “Purpose and Leadership” track for attendees. The brought together more conference speakers addressing the topic of purpose than any other event, making it a prime source for assembling my sample. The purpose track was described in the program as: “key strategies for individual and company effectiveness that can unlock opportunities to achieving sustainability and business goals.” Topics included “Science and Purpose-Based Sustainability Goals: From Theory to Action,” “Purpose, Millennials, & the Future of Business,” “Defining Purpose,” “Activating Purpose,” and “The ROI of Purpose: Measuring Adoption & Impact.” Three different participants in this study spoke at that event.

Speaking engagements seem to make up a large part of the purpose consultants’ lives. In their respective interviews, two thought leaders reported doing fifty speaking engagements a year. As shown, speaking gigs tend to be quite diverse, and the purpose consultant often end up being the sole person to talk on purpose at the event. Aside from speaking, the purpose consultants write thought pieces and practical articles for online publications, maintain an active social media presence, and provide direct services for organizations. As already mentioned, most have written books on the topic of purpose and, as a result, maintain a personal website or book website that generates content around the ideas of the book.

## **Constructing and Responding to the Purpose Crisis**



The purpose consultants nearly universally reference a rising need in their services at the present moment.<sup>11</sup>

Mirroring what Becker (1963) calls moral entrepreneurs, they invoke the urgency of a particular crisis as a means of warranting response and action. Nearly all the consultants I spoke with cited “the Gallup poll” on employee disengagement. This was also a standard starting point for conference speakers at the two events I observed. As I spent more time in this space I began to realize the year of the cited survey data seemed to slide around a bit: the “2013 Gallup poll,” the “2015 Gallup poll,” the “most recent Gallup poll.” As I researched this further I found Gallup has been conducting surveys on employee engagement levels for far longer than the operants in this field seemed to mention.<sup>12</sup> A Gallup press release dating back to March 15, 2001 carried largely the same shock headline of their more recent news releases: less than thirty percent of employees were “actively engaged” in their workplace, according to a 2000 telephone poll.<sup>13</sup> In 2000 the number was twenty-six percent, in 2003 it was twenty-seven percent, and the 2013 poll cited by the app creator above was at just below thirty percent. In fact, from 2011 to 2015 the percentage seems to have risen from twenty-nine to thirty-two percent, meaning that since the first survey was issued in 2000 the percentage of engaged workers has been on a gradual but steady climb. But neither this relatively consistent stability in employee engagement nor even this slight upturn deters the ability of purpose consultants to speak in urgent terms of shoring up these costly disengaged workers.

In an interview, the purpose consulting CEO identified disengagement levels as central to the concerns of her company’s clients:

“First and foremost when we say, “What are the three metrics they are trying to impact,” the first is the percent of employees that are engaged at work. So across the US workforce, that’s seventy percent of employees who are disengaged So we would never let a building be seventy percent unoccupied, and we

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<sup>11</sup> There was a notable exception: one author interviewed assessed “demand” for purpose at the present moment is very low. He instead believes his others’ efforts are before its time, right now receiving little buy-in from corporate executives. This was tied to his views on the larger economic environment in which firms operate, outlined below.

<sup>12</sup> The exception to this subtle presentism was the purpose consulting CEO mentioned above who remarked “the engagement number really has kind of sucked for a long time.”

<sup>13</sup> The 2001 press release is available online: <http://www.gallup.com/businessjournal/439/what-your-disaffected-workers-cost.aspx>. One important observation: since the oldest cohort members of the millennial generation were only twenty at the time of this 2000 survey (born 1980), low employee engagement is likely not related to the entrance of the millennials into the workplace, despite the “challenge of millennial engagement” being a major storyline in the purposeful work conversation. Disengagement predates them. The 2016 numbers reveal millennial workers are only slightly more likely to be disengaged compared to baby boomers: thirty-five percent to thirty-one percent, respectively. Report available online at: <http://www.gallup.com/reports/199961/state-american-workplace-report-2017.aspx>

would never let a machine be broken or down seventy percent of the time, so why we tolerate an environment where there aren't steps to make more people engaged is frightening. And the estimated cost of that is 550 billion dollars, and frankly how that number's estimated is massively underestimating the negative impact of disengagement at work. I think it affects so much more than business productivity; I think it affects family life quality, community, and everything like that."

A high-level corporate executive interviewed located the impetus for purposeful work in wider corporate strategies that focused on long-term results:

Lynn: What's going on at the present moment that people are interested in this?

Interviewee: You know I think it's a lot of things. If you look at Brexit and other things, society is changing at a rate that is so significant. And I think we're finally at the tipping point that people are realizing it's not what happens in the next five to ten years, it's what is actually going to happen in the next fifty years. And how we going to set ourselves up for future success, and success very generally: success as our organization but also success for those who serve our organization.

The popular books related to the need for purposeful work tended to follow suit in tying the need for purpose to much broader societal trends. While nearly all mentioned the need for employee engagement, their wider diagnoses and causes were quite diverse. Many highlight particular triggering events. Nikos Mourkogiannis's 2006 work *Purpose: The Starting Point of Great Companies* paints purpose as the response to (and antidote to) the "absence of character" present in companies like Enron, Arthur Andersen, and Worldcom. Purpose promises a means to avoid the same fate: "What is troubling about the faces we see going in and out of courthouses is that they look so like ours. Could they be us? Yes, if we find ourselves 'going along' with behavior that we know to be dodgy. No, if we are people of Purpose" (Mourkogiannis 2006:5). Declaring the "triumphant capitalism of the late nineties over" based on survey data of public views on corporations, Mourkogiannis sees purpose as a means to "stand out sharply against a background of corporate greed, scandal, and moral uncertainty (ibid:28). Another book published in 2008 added a new foreword for its paperback release in 2009. While the earlier edition packaged purpose as a strategy to "pull even" with companies like Southwest and Walmart, the added foreword had a new tone of urgency triggered by the recession:

“Then in 2009 the severe once-in-a-generation economic winter landed on the shores of America. The game changed. And the practices, purpose, principles, and values of companies here and around the world were under immense pressure and scrutiny. Every leader and every organization was tested like never before. Those Purpose-centered leaders and companies continued to weather the economic winter and become even more respected while so many others either went dormant, out of business, or needed massive assistance to stabilize. So what have we learned? By continuing to stay very active in the Purpose arena, we learned that when a disaster, whether natural or man-made, decimates the very foundation of your world, your company, and your country, you have several options. You can play like you’re doing something but have actually do nothing. You can try to rebuild what was there before. Or you can begin building what you should have been building all along” (Spence & Rushing 2009:xvi-xvii)

The foreword wraps up with a bold assessment:

“As the dust continues to settle and new life is beginning to emerge, it’s increasingly clear that the only businesses that will be left standing--and standing tall--are those that stand for something” (ibid:xviii).

Other authors think far more widely about our present moment and the various factors that have increased the need for purpose. David and Wendy Ulrich’s 2010 book *The Why of Work: How Great Leaders Build Abundant Organizations That Win* aggregated an impressive number of societal trends responsible for a contemporary “crisis of meaning”: rising mental illness and unhappiness, environmental demands, increased complexity of work, increased isolation, low employee commitment, disposability and change, hostility and enmity. Each of these trends is matched with a “keys concepts and disciplines” that leaders can use to respond to these crises. This list includes: positive psychology, positive work environments, social responsibility, civility, as well as the promotion of general virtues of “growth, learning, and resilience. Ulrich and Ulrich make it clear these responses are not undertaken out of benevolence or general social concern, but in order to displace other responses that may be more costly to the organization:

“These daunting trends suggest that many people you lead face personal and societal demands that affect their wellbeing, their families, their communities, and inevitably their work experience. Even in the world’s wealthiest nations, deficit thinking predominates. Workers at all levels respond by giving up on

traditional dreams, isolating themselves, reducing their expectations, becoming dependent on government or others for support, or finding temporary escape in addictive behaviors. *These responses are expensive and time consuming for employers and society.* They can instigate vicious cycles of despair, withdrawal, and breakdowns in personal meaning and purpose” (Ulrich & Ulrich 2010:22-23, emphasis added).

Aaron Hurst’s 2014 *The Purpose Economy: How Your Desire for Impact, Personal Growth, and Community is Changing the World* manages to string together the most impressive list of antecedents and causes to the current moment. It is worthwhile to capture how sweeping Hurst’s vision is: Hurst sees the information (or knowledge) economy currently in the process of giving way to a “new economy” centered on “the need for individuals to find purpose in their work and lives” (Hurst 2014:5). He sees himself and his colleagues as “each playing a small role in restructuring society and the economy to meet the growing demands of the people (and planet)” (ibid:5). To quote from a handful of comic book-like pages in the book--complete with a cartoonish Hurst acting as cultural-historian tour guide, the Information Economy “allowed us to work with our minds and not just our bodies” but left us with a deep void: “But in the process, we lost something. We were missing our connection to each other and the planet. We are increasingly searching for purpose in our lives. We need meaning and connection.” The cartoonish Hurst at this point climbs up on a pyramid drawn beside him, each level of which has one of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs written on it. The character stands proudly on the “self-actualization” level while the top level--“transcendence”--comes into view. The words “Purpose Economy” replace the previous caption of Information Economy. Cartoon Hurst explains: “The same technologies that disconnected us from each other and the planet are also enabling us to make our lives rich in purpose again. No matter your life’s journey you too can find purpose every single day.” Recognizing this quite radical proclamation, then, Hurst then lists ten “drivers” that are taking us into this new economic age: social media, the needs of millennials, increase in lifespan, evolving familial forms, globalization, positive psychology, distrust in government. Hurst also pinpoints a number of events that incited “growing uncertainty in our society”: Hurricane Katrina, Hurricane Sandy, the Deep Horizon oil spill, global warming, the 2008 recession. The September 11th attacks were also a time when “people had awakened to their need for purpose.”

It might be fair to say the thought leaders have woven together divergent explanations and causes for the present crisis: what they agree upon is that measures must be taken to take on this challenge. Several of the books mentioned here are all quite articulate about major shifts in the wider culture's sources of purpose: there is a "crisis of meaning," events are triggering growing uncertainty in our society, and there is a growing fixation on science and quantification that has crowded out beauty and experience. Though varied in details, these shifts in the meaning and purpose landscape have now proved disruptive to leaders of businesses and organizations. As the 2007 book *Meaning, Inc* pronounced in a chapter subheading: "What worked in the 1980s and 1990s is not working today." Surely some of this diagnosis is the product of the "innovation amnesia" that characterizes managerial and organizational literature, as outlined in the last chapter. Without Gallup data going back before 2000 it is difficult to know the historical rates of employee disengagement.<sup>14</sup> Yet setting aside the historical veracity of this account, the thought leaders have pulled together a narrative that emphasizes disruption, crisis, and instability. The need for action then follows: work must take on far more purpose and meaning for any company that want to survive this new world. Leaders must become enlightened in the ways of purpose and meaning to lead their companies through this tumultuous time. As one book's foreword states: "Enlightened leaders are building the kinds of companies that people want to work for, that customers flock to, that communities welcome, that investors respect." Thus the purpose consultants offer the means to navigate this new meaning landscape.

## **The Purpose of Purpose: Four Different Cultural Frameworks**

The previous chapter outlined the early and winding developments of granting attention to employee motivations within organizational settings. The purpose consultants, I argue, are working within this tradition. However, the thought leaders' hesitation (and active resistance) to simply identify themselves as human resource managers points to some of the complexities in simply grafting these thinkers into an Elton Mayo-like role for the modern

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<sup>14</sup> Sociologists have slightly better data available, including several surveys of industrial workers' engagement and work orientations in the 1960s. See Goldthorpe et al. 1968, Mann 1970. This data overall suggests industrial workers are more at peace with their economic and social status than what political economy theorists predict; unfortunately these earlier surveys did not think to ask workers how "engaged" they were in their jobs, which is what the Gallup poll measure.

knowledge economy. The fact that many deliver keynote addresses for human resource management conferences and openly cite earlier scholars in this field, while never identifying themselves with that field, gives good reason to probe deeper about the unique function that their understanding of “purpose” plays in their cultural and symbolic offerings. Here I turn to the cultural frameworks advanced by the thought leaders--the symbolic repertoires offered to organizations and individuals that can address the previously identified purpose crisis and overcome the various problems associated with it, at both individual and organizational levels. In Chapter Five, I analyze discourse from 20th century Evangelical faith and work theology to identify four major “theologies of work” cultural frameworks. Those four frameworks are re-commissioning work (promoting workplace evangelism), re-sacralizing work (valorizing the roles and functions of the economic system), re-enchanting work (imbuing work with sacred and God-ordained significance), and re-embedding work (reorienting work toward larger moral frameworks). With the cultural frameworks of the purpose consultants, the “re-” prefix is less appropriate: setting aside the “business romantic,” the business consultants are not working to restore work to its place in some natural or transcendent order now lost in modernity. However, the two movements at their core demonstrate a basic dedication to *enchancing* modern work with personal or transcendent meanings and *embedding* modern work with wider objectives and moral visions, and at times one finds contention between “embedding” and “enchancing” leaders. For the purpose consultants, these frameworks must also be delineated by the relevant actor or unit for whom the cultural framework applies, either the individual or the organization. Thus, the first two frameworks analyzed here are relevant to enchanting economic activity at two different levels, the individual and then the organization. The second two frameworks concern embedding economic activity in larger frameworks, again divided between individual and organizational focus.

## **Enchanting Individual Work: The Purpose-Driven Cog**

The most common cultural framework in the purposeful work discourse is enchanting individual work. The idea of enchantment could be rooted in Weber’s *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* as well as his “Science as a Vocation” lecture (1946). However, my use of it here draws closer to its usage by Charles Taylor (1989), who traces from Friedrich Schiller a proto-Romanticism that bears a strong resemblance to 1960s student movements

specifically regarding resistance to the commercialized-bourgeois society and opposition to a disengaged and instrumental “mode of life.” This understanding is not so much about “bringing back the gods” but breaking down divisions that obstruct harmonies, creativity, and fuller freedom while searching for “sources which can restore depth, riches, and meaning to life” (see Taylor 1989:495). As the next chapter will outline, this form of enchantment very much permeates the post-1990s managerial discourse (Boltanski & Chiapello 2006), reappropriating many of the values of the 1960s New Left for shaping the modern workplace

Many purpose consultants frame their efforts as imbuing individual work with a beyond-economic significance. Reflecting the enchantment described above, purposeful work resists and actively avoids the notion of an economic transaction. One interviewee hit on this theme right away in our interview:

Lynn: How would you describe someone who, sort of a purposeful worker, versus a non-purposeful worker? If you can imagine two people have the same job in an organization and one has really integrated it with a purpose and one has not, can you talk about how they would look different?

Interviewee: Yeah I think what we're seeing is that someone who comes to work and views their job as a transaction. So there are plenty of people who can be very highly skilled and do high quality work but they're coming, they're not asking questions, they're just doing work with how to get from A to Z in a straight line without worrying about each of the steps along the way and what are the implications: should they change, should they innovate, is that the right thing to do even though it's the thing we've always done, and so I think you see folks who are willing to come in and just treat their job like a job. And each of their to-do lists is something they're checking off. And then someone who's more purpose-driven, really looks at their work as an opportunity, and an opportunity to challenge, and wanting to find new ways to do things that will actually impact and scale better. Will challenge and ask the questions, ‘Why?’ a lot, and try to figure out are there nuances and are there ways that may not only lead to client satisfaction but also simultaneously able to boost societal output?

An author interviewed laid out his vision of workers finding the “sweet spot” at the intersection of their personal purpose, their work role’s purpose, and their organization’s purpose. “Transactional work” was again the dreaded alternative.

“It's not a specific answer, but I can't elaborate on the model of the sweet spot without saying it starts with you, you gotta work somewhere, and this organizational purpose is quite critical to the alignment of self. When that happens, then over here in the "role purpose" you feel a sense of enlightenment, engagement, openness, harmonious, whatever. But when you don't when you're just doing it for a paycheck, the transaction, whatever, the whole thing kind of generally speaking falls into disarray.”

Another active speaker and writer in this space, having co-founded a consulting, also saw purposeful work as resisting a more instrumental mode of living:

Lynn: What does it mean to integrate purpose in your work?

Interviewee: Our idea around integrating purpose in your work is that we each form a psychological relationship to our work largely influenced by our adolescence and the way that our role models early on in life framed work and what it means to them. And it's essentially that we see work either as a means to an end or we see work as an act of enrichment and an act of helping people. It's much more developmental than it is generational to be purpose-driven, and thus in order to help develop people to become more purpose-oriented we have to help give them the vocabulary for what drives purpose for them...It's basically the idea of bringing your full self to your work. And we believe that the people who are purpose-oriented are more authentically living their full potential and not seeing work as a necessary evil or a means to an ends and they essentially shield themselves from.

Of course, this task of rescuing work from a more transactional or means-end relationship is primarily a matter of reframing and renarrating work: as Woods said, his firm focuses on giving workers new vocabularies for uncovering what “drives purpose for them.” This highly subjective framing of enchantment sets parameters on how purpose consultants assist with this enchantment. Hurst and Schwartz, the TED presenter and author mentioned earlier, both draw on Wrzensniewski’s (2001) study of different work orientations discovered among



hospital custodial workers. Wrzensniewski's finding was that some custodians perceive their role in far different ways than other custodians: while most perceived their work as a "job" that provides pay and potential for advancement, a handful of custodians perceived work as a "calling," which led to reshaping work experiences along the lines of broader goals. "We've come to call this practice 'job-crafting,'" explains Wrzensniewski in Google-sponsored talk summarizing her study's findings. "We've defined it as what employees do to redesign their own jobs in ways that foster engagement at work, job satisfaction, resilience, and thriving."<sup>15</sup> As shown below, the accompanying discovery that these job-crafting employees are by almost all measures *better* employees draws substantial attention to Wrzensniewski's and other's findings. Yet Wrzensniewski may have also shaped this discourse in a more subtle way in her translation of descriptive social science results into prescriptive self-management techniques. Her 2010 aptly named co-authored piece in *Harvard Business Review*--"How to Turn the Job You Have into the Job You Want"--cuts to the chase: "A growing body of research suggests that an exercise we call 'job-crafting' can be a powerful tool for reenergizing and reimagining your work life. It involves redefining your job to incorporate your motives, strengths, and passions...Perhaps job-crafting's best feature is that it's driven by you, not your supervisor" (Wrzensniewski, Berg, & Dutton 2010). The purpose consultants who are tapped possibility of enchanting work see the potential to, in Woods's words, "develop more purpose-oriented people" in service of both the individual's and the organization's benefit.

One interviewee provided some of the most concise descriptions of what enchanting individual work means:

Interviewee: We were fascinated by that whole notion of being a cog in the wheel. People have said for so long, 'I don't want to be that,' right? Because that makes me feel like I'm just part of a nameless faceless system. Well we're seeing people are saying, 'I'm totally fine with being a cog in a wheel, just tell me why my place in particular is important.' (pause)

Lynn: Wow.

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<sup>15</sup> Video of talk accessed online: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C\\_igfncYjA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C_igfncYjA)

Interviewee: ...that's what the people who are purpose-driven are just saying: 'Tell me why you needed me. I see that you need me. So I'm okay with being that cog. But help me understand the value in which I play in making things run.'"

To call this notion of purpose-driven work "enchanted" does not connect it with any sort of other-worldly transcendent or theological framework; it is rather, in using Taylor's conception, a reach toward deeper meanings that move beyond disengagement or instrumental orientations. The purpose-driven cog located in this interviewee's research has found a way to achieve harmony between self and work, being and doing, personal identity and organizational identity. In comparison to the hypothetical transactional-driven cog, the purpose-driven cog has made peace with his or her place and role in a larger effort. Wrzensniewski's research can again be seen in the background. When one of the calling-oriented janitors in Wrzensniewski's study was asked about the supplemental tasks that she had attached to her job, the janitor's response became a central quote in Wrzensniewski's popular talks: "...that's not part of my job. But that's part of me." This harmonious view of role, self, and the ends of the organization serve as the conceptual centerpiece of this individual work enchantment framework. In fact, this framework labels this the "sweet spot," the intersection of (and alignment of) three different sources of purposes.

In his interview with me, one writer in this space made enchantedness the most explicit theme of his work, using almost religious language of awakening or converting to a greater reality:

Lynn: What do you think motivates people to seek out that deeper alignment and deeper purpose?

Interviewee: Well (long pause)...quite frankly in one regard people are going through the motions and don't know that it's out there, they think that this is as good as it gets. There are a lot of disenfranchised people--disenchanted, disillusioned...any other dis-word, (laughs), ummm, disengaged, they don't know that there's something more. So they've almost been conditioned that this is as good as it's gonna get.

The interviewee went on to describe an awakening phase for the purposeful worker, referred to as "the ones who get tapped on the head":

Interviewee: ...it has to come from within. Perhaps you learn it, you know, maybe from some stage in your life. But the polarity I'm trying to create here, the ones that get tapped or discover it, whether it's serendipitous, or it's by an autodidactic sort of discovery mode...like they're the enlightened ones, they get it.

Purpose consultants have set out to incite this enlightenment within the workforce at large. Drawing confidence from Wrzensniewski's research that such "callings" already happen "in the wild," they are optimistic that more workers can be brought to this enlightened orientation of viewing their work with greater purpose. Purpose consultants talk about individual purpose being "activated." As we will see below, many times this activation is tied to an organization's awakening of its wider purpose: establishing this at times becomes key to helping the purpose-driven cog make sense of his or her work. Importantly here, to contrast with the embedded individual work framework outlined below, there may not be a flashy "social cause" involved in enchanted individual work. Hurst, in a March 2016 webinar called "Purpose Changes Everything," argued for a need to "get past this idea that you need a cause in order to have purpose." Citing the "science" of purpose, Hurst dismissed the "core myth" that purpose and cause are the same thing: "We put this incredible emphasis on this need to have a cause to have purpose...you can have incredible purpose in your work without a cause."

## **Enchanting Organizational Identity: The More-Than-Profit Mission**

Many of the thought leaders spoke a similar language of enchantment and crafting beyond-profit or beyond-economic understandings of economic activity, but the primary unit of analysis was not the individual. This became apparent several times in interviews when interviewees were not sure how to respond to questions about *individuals* integrating purpose in their work. While some (shown below) could simply mold together individual and organizational purpose, others were clearly being pulled away from their primary mode of thinking when asked to discuss individual work. Thus, delineating the place of "organizational purpose" becomes important in mapping out these frameworks. I at first believed this move toward organizational purpose was part of connecting organizational mission and vision to corporate social responsibility or sustainability efforts. However, I quickly

realized socially conscious aspirations and values were playing only peripheral roles in this framework: something else was going on. In trying to figure out how this framework was drawing on purpose, I found the 1996 bestseller *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies* held the solution to this confusion: in this text organizational purpose was about clarifying one's already existing mission. A few thought leaders gave credit to this work, which helped me recognize the way that purpose was, in this cultural framework, following Collins and Porras's imperative to clearly identify and communicate existing organizational identity and intention as the company's "purpose."

One writer interviewed was a key part of illuminating this framework. Collins' ideas appear throughout her co-written book and the first chapter starts off with an anecdote about Collins himself personally signing off on the book's argument. In a passage that demonstrates the unapologetic reverence the "guru managerial genre" hold for their predecessors, the interviewed writer revealed she and her co-author got their first official introduction to the idea of purpose when they "picked up the book *Built to Last*, by Jim Collins and Jerry Porras, in an airport bookstore." The book goes on to describe in great detail the euphoria that came over them (here writing in first-person singular) in taking in the *Built to Last*'s ideas amidst travel: "My heart was racing. I couldn't wait for the plane to land. The second the wheels hit the tarmac, I was on the phone. I called Jim Collins because, to be honest, I couldn't pronounce his co-author's last name. We had a good conversation, and by the time we got off the phone we both agreed on the secret ingredient of extraordinary companies—purpose." The book, described in greater detail above, goes on to sing the praises of a number of their longstanding clients and their "purposes" that guide everything they do. Purpose for organizations, in this framework, designates "the organization's fundamental reasons for existence beyond just making money—a perpetual guiding star on the horizon; not to be confused with specific goals or business strategies." The combination of a company's purpose together with a company's "core values"—"a small set of general principles...not to be compromised for financial gain or short-term expediency"—make up an organization's "core ideology" (Collins & Porras 1997:73). Collins and Porras tell us several times and in several different manners that purpose is more than profit maximization: "I think many people assume, wrongly, that a company exists simply to make money"; "Boeing built the 747 as much because of its self-identity as because of its desire for profits"; and "Texas Instruments [not exemplary but a "control" in their study] appeared

to define itself almost exclusively in terms of size, growth, and profitability, but very little on what [Hewlett-Packard co-founder] David Packard called ‘the *why* of business.’” These claims are introduced with a section entitled “Core Ideology: Exploding the Profit Myth.” Keeping with the stated method of the study--identifying the “habits of success” unique to (and presumably predictive of) long-term corporate success, the authors profess confidence a more-than-profit-oriented purpose is an essential part of success:

*“Contrary to business school doctrine, we did not find ‘maximizing shareholder wealth’ or ‘profit maximization’ as the dominant driving force or primary objective through the history of most of the visionary companies....Indeed, for many of the visionary companies, business has historically been more about economic activity, more than just a way to make money. Through the history of most of the visionary companies we saw a core ideology that transcended purely economic considerations” (Collins & Porras 1997:55, emphasis in original).*

This usage of purpose is alive and well within the contemporary purposeful work discourse. A TEDx talk captured this *Built to Last* usage:

*“My purpose...is that I feel driven to help organizations create a sense of purpose beyond making money so that the employees that show up every day can feel like their talents and energies and passions are actually used in the service of something they believe in. And can take pride in. Unfortunately too many people wake up Monday morning and don’t feel good about what they’re doing: they don’t have a sense of purpose in their work. And while it’s great to have a sense of purpose in your personal life, and your families, and your communities and your faith, at the end of the day we all have to spend forty to sixty hours of our lives every week at work. So if you can’t find purpose in your work life, it’s kind of hard to have a life that’s full of purpose and brimming with purpose if you’re having to relegate it to just your personal time. In my lifetime in the last fifteen years I’ve had the good fortune to work with some really remarkable purpose-driven organizations that have taught me what it means to have an organization that’s driven by purpose and not just profit. I’ve worked with Southwest Airlines, which I’ll talk a lot about, Whole Foods Market, John Deere, BMW--some really remarkable companies who have*

understood: it's a lot more fun to build a company that actually makes a difference than build a company that's just designed to make money."

While this speaker briefly discussed the problem of personal purpose above--the unfortunate circumstance of not having a good reason to get up in the morning--this is only a brief interlude. The heart of her talk is on organizations and purpose. This became more apparent in my interview with this same speaker, where I discovered the speaker was not all that interested in talking about individual purpose. The speaker's response to the question on how a worker can integrate purpose into their work was a long pause and then a list of names of thinkers helping individuals "think about what their strengths are, what their passions are." "They are looking at the personal level," the speaker explained. "We're looking at organizational purpose, so when we talk about purpose, it's about trying to get the organization to think about purpose." Importantly, this organizational focus does not rule out organizational purpose as potentially boosting personal purpose fulfillment at times. This interviewee's book approvingly quotes Victor Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning* as illustrating the value of personal purpose before turning to the example of a Southwest luggage handler who needed to explain to his daughter his absence at the family's Thanksgiving celebration. His justification directly cited Southwest's clearly communicated organizational purpose. The speaker lauded praise on this case as an example of an effectively diffused organizational purpose: "That's how purpose infiltrates an organization and transforms lives of toil into lives of purpose," read the book passage on this case.

Another form of this framework is embodied in Nikos Mourkogiannis 2006 book *Purpose: The Starting Point of Great Companies*. As the title suggests, the organizational level is prioritized. Mourkogiannis lays out an inductive approach that mirrors the earlier mentioned "purpose discovery" process: companies must review their strategy and identify the embedded implications for what the underlying moral ideas of the company are. Mourkogiannis protests one-size-fits-all approach or outside assessment. Instead, leadership should be able to map out their deeply held moral intuitions against four possible moral purposes: discover, excellence, altruism, and heroism. Quite creatively, Mourkogiannis links each of these purposes to different philosophers: Kierkegaard, Aristotle, Hume, and Nietzsche, respectively. He is not shy about labeling the ultra-competitive growth strategies of Microsoft, Ford, and ExxonMobil Nietzschean-worthy will-to-power type strategies. Whatever "moral purpose" a

firm discovers in itself, that purpose will be the company's "primary source of achievement," will "make employees feel their work is worthwhile," and will "encourage readers to make radical decisions" that create dominance. As discussed below, Mourkogiannis has no doubts this purpose will lead to success for the firm.

Those advocating this cultural framework for purpose hold a powerful place in the current purposeful work conversation. Several key proponents appeared as part of the 2016 Greenbiz "Purpose and Leadership" conference track. This framework is at times challenging to trace because it can sometimes take on a chameleon-like quality. I had been following the purpose conversation for several months before I understood what this pocket of purpose consultants were promoting. One of the immediate markers of this framework is that the discourse of corporate social responsibility, sustainability, or other social objectives, while possibly present in this framework, is not integral to it. Companies are not instructed to latch their efforts on to any "save the world" imperative but merely ask themselves: Why do we exist? Mourkogiannis provided a direct reproach toward collapsing purpose into corporate social responsibility: "Peripheral activities are by definition not connected to the driving intention of a company; they are not part of its Purpose. This is the case even when philanthropy is used for strategic purposes [that] approach represents a clever and creative way for managers to reconcile conflicting commercial and ethical pressures. But this is not the same as tapping into Purpose in order to guide or inspire strategy" (Mourkogiannis 2006:51).

Purpose consultants operating with this framework, from my view, seem functionally closer to management strategy than other actors in this field, as they are primarily working to streamline and allocate resources around pre-existing company priorities and intentions. There also seems to be a high priority placed on communicating back that strategy to the firm's employees and leadership itself, perhaps seeing this as an opportunity for boosting employee buy-in, once the already existing intentions have been inductively uncovered from current activity and functioning. While the desire to then portray the firm's intentions and strategies as in terms that obscure economic interest and profit maximization could be written off as an ideological gloss on capitalist activity, it is more insightful to see this framework in the mode of enchantment outlined above. For reasons not immediately obvious, the purpose consultants have latched onto the term "purpose" as a means of casting a "veil of

enchantment” (Bourdieu 1977) over a firm’s economic objectives. Here, in a way that parallels how Bourdieu uses the term in *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, there may be a need to disguise and transfigure an organization’s economic attributes: thus, market strategy and resource allocation are now infused with the warm glow of “purpose.” There is no question this translation to purpose language gets its proponents a lot of mileage: one book anoints the prestigious CEOs they consult for as “visionaries” who are pioneering a “new movement” of “Purpose-based capitalism and Purpose-inspired growth.” What is difficult to discern is: what is it about profit-driven economic activity that makes this veil of enchantment desirable? And why are consulting clients themselves lining up for these purpose-infused services? Employee buy-in may play some role here: the father missing Thanksgiving could tie his absence to something other than his employer’s fiduciary responsibilities to shareholders. But there is likely more to this story. These are larger cultural questions I will return to in Chapter Seven.

## **Embedding Individual Work: Your Job to Change the World**

While the divide between individual-focused and organizational-focused purpose consultants is relatively straightforward, the shared attribute that characterizes the following two frameworks--differentiating them from the first two--has relatively porous boundaries. As exemplified by the Positive Business Conference, purposeful work (or in that case, positive business) is not merely about enchanting economic activity with a deeper sense of connection with one’s economic activity. It is also about saving the world. This element of social responsibility and social consciousness may be the central component of many purpose consultants that drives them to resist categorization as human resource managers, as their “purposes” are far greater than coordinating employees and workplace processes. Here I have previously deployed Taylor’s understanding of enchantment over Weber’s in an effort to conserve Weber for the construction of my alternative category: a Weberian-infused--but ultimately (Karl) Polanyian--notion of embedded economic activity. Though Polanyi is notorious for slippage in how he uses the term, embedded and disembedded economic activity comes from a particular telling of economic history in Polanyi’s work. In a historical narrative challenged by many, Polanyi argues the economic sphere over the 19th century became effectively “disembedded” from the wider society, establishing itself for the first time as an independent, autonomous sphere. “It is motivationally distinct, for it receives its impulses from the urge of



monetary gain. It is institutionally separated from the political and governmental center. It attains to an autonomy that invests it with laws of its own" (Polanyi 1968:82). A disembedded economic sphere contrasts with earlier modes of economic exchange, which Polanyi interprets as "embedded in non-economic institutions, the economic process itself being instituted through kinship, marriage, age-groups, secret societies, totemic associations, and public solemnities," (ibid:84) in other places identified as "familial, political, or religious order" (ibid:85). Polanyi draws directly on Weber in places, and the two thinkers share similar readings on the increasing reach of economic rationalities in modern society. Weber sees in modern economic settings the prevalence of "formal rationality" of economic action that orders the "provision of needs" as expressed in numerical, calculable terms. This formal rationality is many times portrayed as seemingly "disembedded"--to borrow Polanyi's term--in comparison to "substantive rationalities." The latter applies "certain criteria of ultimate ends, whether they be ethical, political, utilitarian, hedonistic, feudal, egalitarian or whatever, and measure the results of the economic action...against these scales of 'value rationality' or 'substantive goal rationality'" (Weber 1968:202). In effect, embedded economic activity is subject to--and in some cases subordinate to--particular ends outside the formal and instrumental rationalities.<sup>16</sup>

Establishing this framework allows for interpretation of a certain subset of purpose consultants who advocate connecting individual work to corporate responsibility or socially conscious causes. One exemplar purpose consultant in this realm is an interviewee who played a lead role with a purpose nonprofit. Though this interviewee has since moved on to another organization, she was the founding director of a purpose program while at her earlier organization. This interviewee has shared stages with the other purpose consultants described above, taking part in the conference circuit as a nonprofit program director. She has also done her share of popular writing on purpose, though her writing stands out for its overall indifference to organizational outcomes. In our interview this leader referenced the concept of "capital P purpose" that she had seen used by others in the

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<sup>16</sup> My usage of embeddedness largely brackets the question of the relationship between "cultural framework" and actual practice. There is good reason to think embeddedness is operating more at the cultural (and certainly ideological) level than actually reshaping practices and norms, but that is outside the scope of my study. Polanyi's examples of embeddedness generally presuppose sources of authority that could enforce norms of economic activity and subordinate the forces and "market laws" that might otherwise be activated in that activity. These authoritative sources are notably not envisioned by the purpose consultants: both individuals and organizations are encouraged to voluntarily opt into embedding their activities within other sorts of extra-economic criteria.

conversation: "...the idea that there is one Purpose that you are called to and it's your job to find it, and it exists, and it's out there separate from you." This interviewee contrasted this with her own concept of "lower-case p purpose" which "really has to do, I think, with making purposeful decisions, and purposefully reflecting and purposefully making choices in small ways and large ways every day. And doing things that...[use] that kind of double-sided coin of 'right for you' and 'good for the world' to help navigate choices." Much the interviewee's efforts were initiated after her organization had published a book on social entrepreneurs that got a wider reception than what the organization anticipated. The organization realized that the ideas about purpose in the book were relevant for far more people than social entrepreneurs. "The world is changing in a way that you can design your own career and design your own jobs," the interviewee told me. "And all those types of things that are part and parcel of a social entrepreneur's life are increasingly becoming something that, in this new era of work, everyone has to do." The result was curriculum that came to be used in over 190 different universities, colleges, and nonprofits.

If the earlier-mentioned "purpose discovery" helps organizations uncover their vision and purpose, this interviewee's curriculum pushes the individual in this direction. Yet clearly the emphasis for this curriculum is not impassioning college students about traditional trades or occupations: as this interviewee described it, the program was geared for a "population of students who were specifically interested in making the world a better place and didn't have a lot of training and resources to take that interest and put it into pathways." She believed the space these students sought to impact--"social change space" as she called it--was incredibly complex: "There are almost no pathways that exist, you really have to cut your own." If enchanting cultural frameworks guide workers toward more-than-profit understandings of their work, embedded cultural frameworks move the bar higher to socially impactful work. Thus, it would not be enough to provide meaning for one's organizational contributions: new criteria are injected into economic activity: how will this make the world a better place? While such concerns may sound more at home in civil society activities or volunteerism, this interviewee and her organization see their efforts as bringing purpose *into* work, with social entrepreneurs as the model. Moving beyond the education and nonprofit setting, the curriculum was taken up by one company--Ben & Jerry's--for corporate employee training. The interviewee was optimistic more companies would follow.

This smaller involvement with for-profit organizations admittedly makes this interviewee one of the least consultant-like purpose consultants in the study. This interviewee's nonprofit status, though, should not be seen as indicative that embedded individual work frameworks are outside the corporate space. One of the purpose consulting firm leaders interviewed taps into this desire for individual work embedded within wider ends. During our interview, this consulting firm leader talked about purpose as very closely linked with corporate social responsibility and sustainability efforts. The list she provided of figures she perceives as allies was a who's-who of sustainability, corporate social responsibility, and triple-bottom-line approaches. Yet the interviewee's own efforts represent an important adaptation to these wider conversations, which have their own history in the consulting space. The purpose consulting firm's central services are providing employers with an online platform that allows individual employees to input causes and projects they want to be part of: the platform then uses "social and game metrics" to keep workers engaged in these projects and, apparently at the same time, their jobs. The interviewee speaks highly of the system's ability to increase employee retention, engagement, and even convert employees into evangelists for the company. While the interviewee provided some examples of employees taking the lead in improving business practices, the consulting firm largely leaves it to individuals to craft their own job around the social ends and activities in which they want to embed themselves. As the interviewee comments above, this platform is primarily about closing the engagement gap:

Interviewee: Businesses are recognizing if they can crack that nut [low engagement numbers] they will do better than the company they compete with who hasn't cracked that nut. I think companies are starting to--you know, they've been measuring it for a long time, but I don't think they were really doing much about it per se, you know. And I think there was a more traditional sense of what would drive engagement: having a good relationship with my manager, having a clear path of development. I think all of those things still matter. But what was fascinating was as this next generation came into the workplace, they really expected business to be a force for good in this world.

Two other thought leaders spoke particularly to this individual level of embedding work. The key actors in these visions were not "c-suite" executives or brand managers but what one interviewee called "corporate

changemakers” and another called “social intrapreneurs.” The first interviewee sees the need for more “corporate changemakers” who are “inside companies who want to make a difference; they have a social or environmental agenda or they believe that a company should operate in a different way, a more responsible way, a more innovative way. And so it’s someone who is acting like an entrepreneur inside a company with a social or environmental agenda.” This interviewee described this set of workers as far more passionately engaged than their colleagues who may be “there to get a paycheck and are there as cogs in the machine:” This interviewee perceives corporate changemakers may very well face higher levels of burnout because of their tireless agenda. The second interviewee mentioned above held a definition of social intrapreneurs similar to the aforementioned corporate change makers: “creating positive change without authority within organizations.” Neither of these interviewees seemed to be fretting about the notorious Gallup poll: their interests were very much in mobilizing workers to take on the role of change agent in the interest of solving social problems. They, like the nonprofit leader interviewed, saw a way to reallocate the innovation, discovery, and social change goals of social entrepreneurship to those already residing within the workplace, in many ways democratizing these attributes to make them more available to a wider proportion of the workforce.

### **Embedding Organizational Identity: The New Corporate Social Responsibility**

Finally, the last cultural framework drew on purpose as a means of reshaping an organization’s aspirations toward achieving socially conscious goals or ends. A more aspirational organizational identity, can, on the surface, sound very familiar: many of the purpose consultants in the *enchanted* organizational identity category see themselves taking on this challenge. However, like those embedding individual work, thought leaders embedding organizational identity are drawing on a language of connecting economic activity with wider ends. This difference can be subtle but is an important distinction in this conversation. *Built to Last* provides several pages of successful organizations’ “core ideologies,” which Collins and Porras see as embodying an organization’s purpose. A quick glance at items in this list reveals why I have classified Collins, Porras, and their intellectual heirs in the *enchanted organizational identity* category: heroic customer service, product quality and reliability, tackling huge challenges and risks, being on the leading edge of aeronautics, expansionism, aggressiveness and self-confidence. These all answer the “why” question in a manner that does not directly cite profit maximization as a means to enchant.

However, they do not link organizations with particular social ends or goals as a means to embed. Embedding organizational identity looks distinctly different.

The cultural frameworks of this variety worked their way through much of this conversation. Though one interview revealed the interviewee's central consulting product offers the promise of embedded individual work, our conversation touched on many themes of embedding organizational identity: "There's a great demand for companies to sort of align themselves with the U.N. Sustainability goals, so the driving force is, you could say, social problems or sustainability problems, and that's driving a lot of businesses to take this seriously." Returning to the panel discussion on "finding purpose within" outlined above, one panelist was adamant that purpose was about incorporating social and environmental concerns into core business strategies: "If a company is truly serious about embedding purpose into everything they do, it's got to be in their strategy and it's got to be linked to how it's going to grow." When in 2015 a privately held company and Huffington Post teamed up to create the Purpose+Profit section of their website, this embedding organizational identity framework was on full display. Arianna Huffington introduced the initiative by writing:

"The shift in the way an increasing number of businesses see their role in the world has been one of the most exciting, promising and desperately needed developments of the past few years. More and more companies are moving beyond the obsession with quarterly earnings and short-term gain toward a very different vision. As Unilever CEO Paul Polman has said, 'Business must make a bigger difference to global challenges by leveraging its scale, influence, expertise and resources to drive transformational change at a systemic level.' A sense of purpose has come to be seen, rightly, as a value that not only has a place in business but is essential to long-term success. That's why today I'm delighted to announce What's Working: Purpose + Profit, a new platform...that's putting a spotlight on the ways businesses are working toward solutions and widening the lens of their concern in ways that benefit not only the bottom line but their employees, their communities and the world at large" (Huffington 2015:1)."

A video from an August 2016 article on Fortune Magazine's website also used purpose in this manner. The video appeared under the bold headline "The Ultimate Purpose of Business Has Changed" with the subtitle underneath pronouncing: "It used to be solely about maximizing profits." In the video an editor at Fortune Magazine offers up

questions to several CEOs, beginning with: “You’ve been in business for a long time. We’re suddenly talking about purpose a lot. Do you think this is something that has always been there and just getting more attention, or do you think there’s been a real shift?” Various CEOs responded with affirmative answers: “Now I think all employees, all associates are looking for the higher purpose...that ethos in a company is so important”; “Really having ongoing discussion and dialogue on complex issues that impact the business is a must-do”; “I don’t know that any business can sit on the sidelines: you have to engage. Because that’s the expectation on how you’re going to move your company forward;”and “I think of the purpose of companies is coming up now because we’ve gone through such a difficult economic time. I think it’s forced both business leaders and individuals in society just to question: gee, what is it that our big companies are supposed to be doing? And I think we’ve all embraced something that my company’s been doing for a hundred years: this notion that you have a broader mission.”

A contentious and overly confusing question related to this last framework is: is purpose simply becoming a new term for corporate social responsibility (CSR)? After all, visions and calls for “widening the lens of concern” for corporations go back several decades (Vogel 2005), if not the entire twentieth century or even earlier (Abend 2014). The plethora of research exploring the relationship between profit and responsible firm behaviors--sometimes simplified as Corporate Financial Performance (CFP) versus Corporate Social Performance (CSP)--has also been a flourishing cottage industry of business ethics and business strategy research since the late 1970s, nearly all of it in dialogue with Friedman’s (1970) work, which bluntly dismisses the responsibility of businesses to any ends or duties beyond making a profit. Purpose could just be the latest packaging of these efforts to carve out these “wider missions.” The views of the thought leaders provide little clarity on this front: in asking all the leaders to identify thinkers they see as allies in their efforts, several interviewees produced a near-complete list of corporate social responsibility stars. Polman, cited by Huffington, would certainly fit that bill, as would John Mackey, CEO of Whole Foods, who several leaders openly admire. However, one interviewee rejected the equivalence: “Purpose is not about CSR,” this interviewee told me. “This is about core business activity.” This provides perhaps the best clarification for this question. In the last twenty years a number of leaders have pushed back against a particular conception of corporate social responsibility that locates it on the periphery of a company’s functions. Huffington’s piece quotes the central researchers in this anti-CSR effort, Harvard’s Michael

Porter and Mark Kramer: “Most companies remain stuck in a ‘social responsibility’ mind-set in which societal issues are at the periphery, not the core,” they wrote in a 2011 Harvard Business Review piece. This “older” mindset typically envisions traditional philanthropic efforts, such as writing checks to charity and perhaps developing photo-opp-worthy initiatives on the sidelines of a company’s operations. Porter and Kramer have become known for an alternative, a “shared value” approach that points to creating both economic and social value at the same time. Despite the embedded organization identity framework linking itself to this anti-CSR stream, they have not been inhibited from filling the CSR space, particularly in speaking at conferences, providing quotes in popular press articles, and--as outlined above--largely grafting themselves into the very core of CSR thinkers. Thus, while the aforementioned interviewee told me purpose is “not the new CSR,” the ambivalent relationship with the CSR world may demonstrate the ambiguities of CSR itself, which seems to have no problem making room in the “social responsibility” conversation for the purpose consultants.

## How Purpose Pays: The Profitable Side of Getting Beyond Profit

Several of the quotations above and much of the rhetoric of the Positive Business Conference reveal a recurring feature of the purposeful work discourse: a seemingly underexamined relationship between individual purpose and organizational purpose. Many purpose consultants seemed to pitch their services as simultaneously good for the individual and good for the company. And perhaps even more striking: there was little examination of whether perhaps the deployment of individual purpose for company goals might in some ways negate the authenticity of the purpose consultant’s central offerings: purposeful work and organizational identities that move beyond profit. Nothing brought this home better than a *Wall Street Journal* article from May 2016, which one interviewee’s organization retweeted without comment in March 2016. The article was titled “How to Get Employees to Work Harder Without Paying Them More.”<sup>17</sup> The answer: give them purpose. A laboratory experiment designed by a business professor and two economists, conducted in China with over four hundred university students, revealed that participants who were told their data would be of great importance to research project were shown to have

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<sup>17</sup> Article can be accessed here: <https://blogs.wsj.com/economics/2016/05/26/how-to-get-employees-to-work-harder-without-paying-them-more/?mod=e2tw>

fifteen percent greater productivity on a basic data entry project than a control. The experimenters framed their results as demonstrating the value of “non-monetary incentives” and “meaningful work” for increasing productivity. While this experiment seems to merely reaffirm the 1920s Hawthorne Studies findings, the *Wall Street Journal* headline made clear this knowledge continues to have value in the economic realm today.

Many of the purpose consultants were quick to talk about the “business impact” of providing employees with greater purpose. One interviewee shared her excitement for new data showing the link between engagement and employee performance.

“When we first started running [engagement programs] the value proposition was their ability to save energy, waste, water, fuel, hit their environmental targets, brand reputation around those commitments, and things like that. But what happened is they started embedding questions about these programs into their annual engagement surveys...and what they started seeing was a positive correlation, and in some cases even causation, between two things: first is, the employees that participated in sustainability programs, volunteering programs and other positive impact programs were twice as likely to be highly engaged employees. And those who hadn’t been engaged, who had started in those [engagement] programs, became more engaged. And we’ve had several customers who have also been able to prove out a link to customer loyalties. That those companies who have employees engaged in these programs not only have more engaged employees but they’re seeing it in their customers...there’s more and more data coming out to show the business impact of engaging employees in purpose and positive impact programs it becomes almost a no-brainer to invest in these initiatives.”

Aaron Hurst shares this confidence in the alignment between individual and organizational purpose. In a March 2016 webinar, “Purpose Changes Everything,” Hurst drove home the profitability of purpose: “We’re creating a real business case for purpose, and not just saying, ‘Yeah, we all know purpose is nice’...it’s actually an imperative. Those that use this data will thrive and those that don’t will go the way of the industrial economy.”<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Webinar accessed online: <https://www.netimpact.org/webinars/purpose-changes-everything-find-meaning-in-your-career>



In my conversation with a corporate executive promoting purpose, this point came up somewhat organically, as she remarked early on that both employees and executives are drawn to purpose but for different reasons. This interviewee saw executive leadership drawn to purpose because of the reputation around growth and innovation that the purpose emphasis could bring. The challenge was in how leadership chose to communicate their interest:

Interviewee ... if you're saying, 'Hey, I really want this to drive innovation [with purpose], because I wanna get revenue,' that's a different message than, 'Hey, I really want to drive innovation because I think when my people are innovating they can see a greater purpose for their skills. And that that will translate into more opportunities which will therefore then translate into revenue.' I think the leadership gets revenue quicker than what the employee is actually thinking.

It seemed for this interviewee the question was not *if* purposeful work drove revenue but how executives would choose--apparently from a menu of options-- to frame purpose's revenue-earning potential.

Several authors move beyond articulating a relationship between purpose and organizational performance to purpose and profit. Two authors writing in the Huffington Post took a similar synthesizing tone as the purpose vs. profits talk outlined earlier:

"The purpose of business is simply this--have a purpose! Have an object toward which the organization is striving that makes a positive difference in the lives of the people you are serving. Have something that you're fighting for that captures the hearts and imagination of your people. Find, as Victor Frankl said, 'a concrete assignment in the world which demands fulfillment,' and fill it. And guess what? The profitability and shareholder value will follow. Having a Purpose at the heart of a business is not a distraction from managing the bottom line. It drives the bottom line."

In *The Why of Work*, Ulrich and Ulrich (2010) are perhaps the most explicit about the profit value of instigating purposeful work:

"Thus, the search for meaning adds value in two senses of the word. First, humans are meaning-making machines who find inherent value in making sense out of life. The meaning we make of an experience determines its impact on us and can turn disaster into opportunity, loss into hope, failure into learning,

boredom into reflection. The meaning we create can make life feel rich and full regardless of our external circumstances or give us the courage to change our external circumstances. When we find meaning our work, we find meaning in life. In addition to inherent value, meaning has *market value*. Meaningful work solves real problems contributes real benefits, and thus adds real value to customers and investors. Employees who find meaning in their work are more satisfied, more engaged, and in turn more productive. They work harder, smarter, more passionately and creatively. They learn and adapt. They are more connected to customer needs. And they stick around. Leaders invest in meaning making not only because it is noble but also because it is profitable. Making sense can also make cents” (Ulrich & Ulrich 2010:3).

Along similar lines, Mourkogiannis’s *Purpose: The Starting Point of Great Companies* assures his readers: “A successful Purpose both drives a company forward and helps build sustainable competitive advantage.” Schwartz in *Why We Work* adds to the argument that making work more meaningful and engaging “makes better workers.” The “science” of purpose is clear for these thinkers: purpose pays.

There is both an empirical and a normative dimension to these sorts of observations. The empirical claim does not need to be discussed here: the thought leaders can certainly draw on a long history of supporting research.<sup>19</sup> The more interesting question to probe is the normative dimension: do purpose consultants sense a moral tension with positioning individual purpose as subservient to organizational ends? This practice could raise any of several ethical questions. First, the authenticity of the purposeful work discourse may be undermined by its deployment as a technique for greater employee productivity. This possibility is likely enhanced by the salient enchantment framework employed, which places a great emphasis on getting outside transactional and profit-driven motivations and overcoming an instrumental mode of approaching work. Perhaps then this discourse itself

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<sup>19</sup> The empirical claim also makes so much intuitive sense that it can begin to sound more like a tautology or analytical proposition (in a Kantian sense) rather than a testable claim about the world: those employees who report a personal devotion to their work devote themselves more fully to their work. Those employees who report finding meaning in work report being more satisfied and fulfilled with their work. Of course, one can imagine cases where work devotion might channel and direct energies in organizationally sub-optimal ways: the hospital custodian who stops cleaning floors out of a deep personal attachment to patients, for instance. But such cases would likely not be chalked up as counterevidence to the purpose-pays claim: the custodian granting excessive attention to patients over dirty floors may just as likely check the “not engaged” or “actively disengaged” box on the organizational survey. Their “jobcrafting” and “purpose discovery” has awakened them to greater meaning and “calling” that is actively hindering the ends of the organization, but the research data will not capture this phenomenon. But these are largely empirical and methodological matters not relevant to exploration of how purpose is engaged within cultural frameworks.

becomes compromised and corroded in value should it be made subservient to an agenda of instrumentalization and profit-maximization. Alternatively, perhaps employees might feel they have been lured into an employer-employee relationship under false pretenses: while employers on the surface honorably set aside shrewd productivity goals in favor of inspirational depictions of a purpose-driven machine needing dedicated cogs, this alteration has in fact been engaged under the calculative logic of now-veiled productivity goals. There may also be ethical perspectives that, simply on principle alone, would protest the semi-Machiavellian instrumentalization of either workers themselves or workers' very personal and affectively-charged sense of calling, something often deemed "sacred." Instrumentalizing purpose would also further exasperate many more structural criticisms of modern work configurations, such as those opposing the commodification of labor, wage-labor, deskilling, the earnings differentials within firms, the deployment of emotional labor, the corporate governance structures of stakeholder capitalism, the reproduction of various status hierarchies within the labor force, or the largely unprotected labor environment of neoliberalism.

Halfway through my fieldwork and interviews, as I saw this potential moral issue emerging, I began asking purpose consultants directly about any tension felt concerning the relationship between individual purpose and organizational purpose. This was difficult to do without sounding accusatory or asking a leading question. However, no one reacted negatively to this question because it appeared no one had previously considered this a moral tension for themselves. When I probed one interviewee's reflection on this, she revealed she felt to some degree the potential moral harms are offset by the workers themselves:

Lynn: Is there ever any trouble or skepticism--I'm trying to word this--because it's coming from the top down, there's sort of a exploitative factor of taking employees' passion and interests, looking at them, and using them to get the employees to work harder. Do you ever have to respond to that criticism?

Interviewee: Ummm...(pause)...I haven't, strangely enough. And I think...(pause), I think there's not a way to force purpose on someone. And in fact, for it to work you actually have to understand what gives that person a sense of purpose. You actually have to ask. Just because these are the company values doesn't mean that it's the employee values. And therefore what you have to find to activate purpose is that intersection between shared values, between company purpose and personal purpose. And I think you

can't be exploited: in order for it to happen I have to be part of the same conversation. I would also say my experience has been that unlike many compliant-oriented employee programs, these programs are often voluntary in nature. Meaning you're not forced to do it, you're just strongly encouraged to do it. So if you're not into it, if you don't want to do it, you just don't join.

This interviewee followed this by providing a “business case” for employees themselves to strongly consider involvement:

Interviewee Now, the interesting part around that to the extent that those in the program tend to do better, you are putting yourself at a competitive disadvantage not to participate, I would argue, long term. Because research says the people who participate in these programs are more engaged, retained better, activate more, and to behave that way at work is probably going to perform better in that company. What I do think though is you have to understand what matters to you.

I did not need to directly ask another interviewee because she reflected on it in an answer to another question. This particular interviewee entertained more skepticism of seeking purpose for profits, but her case against doing so rested more on the empirical question of: does purpose *need* authentic non-performance-driven motivations to be successful? This was an insightful and surprising reflection, though also noticeably not one that drew directly upon moral concerns:

Lynn: Any ideas on what motivates a client to reach out to you to develop their purpose? What is it that drives a person to say...we want someone to come along and really develop this for us?

Interviewee: There's a couple things, there's never just one thing. Some of it, there's been so much work done on the correlation between purpose and performance, that a lot of people--Jim Collins' work, Raj[endra] Sisodia's work--that validation now from the academic community about purpose being a driving factor in performing organizations. So oftentimes we we'll get CEOs or leaders calling us who are interested in inserting purpose and values into their culture as a performance-enhancing kind of strategy. Which, the tricky thing with that approach or that motivation, is that if you're not sincere in your commitment to purpose, in thinking about a purpose beyond making money: if you're only adopting purpose as a tool to make money, you're kind of missing the point, and so it won't actually work, when

you're just using it. So we can actually tell when we're working with companies that are interested in it for that reason, that it's not going to work. They're gonna put purpose in place for some period of time and if the ROI isn't there they'll jettison it and go to the next, you know, performance-enhancing strategy dejour. That's not a good reason to go after purpose. Purpose does drive performance but it only drives performance to the extent that it is genuinely embraced and adopted in an organization. So that's kind of the catch-22 of purpose.

One author's interview revealed his purpose thinking incorporates a term that could be applied to the same phenomenon a previous interviewee describes: purpose-washing. Writing on his blog. The author observed a growing discourse among CEOs of "combining purpose and profit." Rather than celebrating this configuration, the author is deeply skeptical:

"Not only is change hard, a balance between purpose and profit seems to be playing out as a new form of greenwashing. CEOs might talk a good game about combining purpose and profit, but not much is actually happening due to the entrenched 'market system' and this sort of thinking claiming to be 'uncharted territory.' Perhaps we can call it 'purpose-washing.'"

This interviewee himself brought up this "purpose-washing" criticism when I asked him about leaders he found himself working against. This interviewee's very open personality, subtle self-deprecating humor, and his choice to bring up this criticism without prompting allowed me to ask this question a bit more directly than was typical. The response, which stands out among other purpose consultants, was a critical account of the rise of neoliberalism:

Lynn: On the other hand, are there thinkers you find yourself working against?

Interviewee: (laughing) The Koch Brothers, for example

Lynn: (laughing) Okay, I know you're kidding, but in what way are you working against them?

Interviewee Well, they talk a good game but behind the scenes aren't exactly purposeful, right? So, it's leaders who are what I call ATNA's--all talk no action. They talk that good game, but then behind the scenes they're doing ill-advised actions or in fact aren't doing anything, right? To enact what they claim to be. So I think in the book I call it 'purpose-washing.' There's greenwashing, right? You know what greenwashing is. But there's all kinds of examples of purpose-washing. And the biggest culprit of this is

the CSR document. It's just...it's nuts. Corporate marketing speak in these CSR documents that are...all bullshit, for the most part. It's--we call it vaporware.

Lynn: Okay. Well let me go off script then. Respond to an accusation that--I'm sure you've gotten this--that you're conspiring with HR managers and most of your literature is sort of the purpose-washing to just get employees to work harder, for organizational outcomes to increase. In the history of management there are waves and waves of this--it goes back one hundred years. So how do you distance yourself from that accusation?

Interviewee: Yeah, you mean...Taylorism? And the stopwatch?

Lynn: Yeah. How are you not Taylor 5.0?

Interviewee: (laughter) Well I don't have a stopwatch and I don't care about faster, better, quicker. I think there's almost like a cultural fiduciary responsibility of the organization to invest in the health and wellness and wellbeing of its people. And we used to--here's the thing--we used to! And as soon as Milton Friedman came to town in 1970 and issued the shareholder primacy edict, particularly for for-profit, and then Elton Mayo's ill-fated attempts at performance review for the 1953 HR act whatever it was called in the States, which created annual performance reviews in the public sector, in your government, that became a sort of edict across the world. So you've got this shareholder primacy issue in 1970 and, in 1953, Elton's Mayo's performance development piece and that all crystallized in the 1970s when Reagan took hold of everything and Thatcher and frankly Brian Mulroney in Canada. Three conservative leaders pop in 1980, and all hell broke loose.

This interviewee's narrative indicted this conservatism for turning people into assets: "(mocking) 'Our people are our number one asset!' Bullshit, don't call me an asset.'" While this narrative of neoliberalism was fairly standard, his solution was unusual: neoliberalism and the corporate shareholder-value capitalism it entailed could be undermined at the organizational level by rethinking purpose. Authentic care for employee purpose, then, would be the result when organizations "redefine its purpose to serve stakeholders." *This* arrangement, the interviewee believes, will spur "psychological and physical commitment" because the company has shown they care. Purpose was not the "new carrot," insisted the interviewee "No, it's not the new carrot; it's the new horse! That's what it is: we're trying to reinvent a new horse. That's how we trot now on the path of life."

This response demonstrated the interviewee could sense the basic contradictions of practices that “purpose-wash”: it was problematic in its disingenuousness. This, he seemed to see, was an ethical problem. His diagnosis for the prevalence of purposewashing was the wider neoliberal economic environment. The prescription for correcting all of this arrangement--not only purposewashing as a practice but the organizational form of shareholder-serving firms and the wider economic environment from which these firms arose--was, for this interviewee reshaping purpose. It would not be accurate to reduce this interviewee’s prescriptive call to action as private voluntary acts of self-correcting, as surely his narrative recognized regulatory and political conditions and decisions that bear responsibility for the current predicament. But purpose could, for individual firms, offer an authentic haven from the world of purposewashing, shareholder primacy, and omnipresent performance reviews. This interviewee seemed to recognize the tensions and challenges here: this would require more than “new carrots” for HR managers. And perhaps most strikingly, he later stated in the interview: “There is no business case for social good.” If this was a revolution, it would not be one built on ROIs or making the case for competitive advantage.

This interviewee embodied perhaps the greatest moral ambivalence toward the profitability of purpose, its capacity to be instrumentalized, and the possibilities of firms in the current economic environment to authentically pursue purpose. His thinking stands somewhat outside the larger purposeful work conversation, which is overall unreflective on “selling purpose” to the wider managerial world as a proven product with high returns. This narrative of the rise of neoliberalism was also rare. In fact, many purpose consultants see purpose as less of a subversive effort against neoliberalism and more an alternative offering of goods in the new economy. Purpose seems to be the “substitute good” for the absence of secure jobs and likely advancement in the economy. Another interviewee presents the possibility that millennials in society have “not much left besides purpose”:

Interviewee: I think, as you probably know as well, there's much more economic pressure on this generation than probably their parents. They're the first generation that is not necessarily guaranteed the prosperity of their parents. It's no longer that linear path of getting a good education and getting a good job and a decent income and having a family; it's just much more volatile and fickle and you know,

uncertain. And also I think they are expected to be more mobile and be nomads. So I think the positive reading is they are looking for more meaning because they grew up differently with different values. But I think the more sort of cynical reading is well, they have not much left besides purpose. Because the economic pressures and flexibility that they are expected to exhibit, I think, are just too enormous.

Hurst's celebratory inauguration of the new purpose economy goes further, identifying purpose as a positive new feature of economic instability:

"The instability caused by these major structural changes and magnified by the economic recession brought with it a need to find stability and a future path within ourselves, rather than from our employer. This shift has placed meaning and purpose at the heart of the contemporary workforce--purpose, rather than career longevity, now provides the stability we need. As workplace researchers Paul Hartung and Brian Taber describe, 'Rather than fitting self to jobs and readying self to develop a career, workers now must focus increasingly on constructing self in work rather than advancing self in career'" (Hurst 2014:37).

Remarkably, the quote from the two researchers could likely have also come from Foucault's (2008) depiction of neoliberalism's effect on the self. Returning to the question of instrumentalizing purpose, Hurst's claim, if taken up by managers, offers an alternative to overcoming factors that lend to insecurity. The substitute good of purpose--at the "heart" of the new purpose economy--can come to replace stable and dependable work in this vision.

Mourkogiannis's *Purpose* book shares this hope: "In an era of change, the hope is that shared Purpose will provide an anchor, something to hold on to, which will make insecurity more tolerable. It will do in the twenty-first century what job loyalty was meant to do in the twentieth" (2006:28). Purpose here becomes not so much the subversive grassroots effort to correct the moral harms of neoliberalism so much as a salve to treat its wounds.

This reflects a larger finding from my time in the field and doing interviews: most purpose consultants clearly manifested a mix of uneasy and unreflective self-positioning within the longer tradition of managerialism, human resource management, and the current form of corporate capitalism that now shapes the labor market. Clearly there was an enthusiasm for mobilizing individual and organizational purpose to causes "beyond profit" and ends that serve wider society; this in some ways set the purpose consultants apart, not only from the wider history of managerial consultancy, but also from the "profit maximization" impulse of capitalism itself. Successful companies,



so the message goes, should not talk about profit, but instead, purpose. However, this distancing seemed to play more of a symbolic role in constructing particular identities--and particularly innovative job titles--for the purpose consultants and their trade. The classification of their books, the conferences that seek them out, and their ease of entering into managerialism-dominated spaces like business schools suggests that, despite this symbolic jockeying, purpose consultants very much inhabit the well-established world of managerialism and organizational behavior study. Their presence and reach in this world, then, suggests a discursive shift toward new symbolic repertoires and offerings in this space, with the purposeful work frameworks outlined here now leading candidates for new economic and organizational discourses. The larger possible interpretations of this shift--why it is happening and what it means--will be explored in greater detail in Chapter Seven.

## **Conclusion: The Purpose Consultants as a Social Movement**

In this section, I have mapped out the discourse and activities of the purpose consultant world. As consultants, speakers, and writers, these actors are attempting to move beyond “business as usual” to enchant and embed economic activity with greater meaning and wider ends. Understanding this population fully requires engaging difficult questions on how these actors position themselves within wider conversations regarding human resource management, corporate social responsibility, and lifecoaching. The packaging and selling of “purpose” as an organizational technique also raises ethical questions, on which purpose consultants could provide provisional moral reflection. This chapter and the previous one have attempted to tell the longer history of purpose within organizational settings and managerial discourse. The next chapter shifts to the other case of purposeful work, the American Evangelical faith and work movement. As will be made clear, these actors are concerned about purposeful work but are largely operating outside the confines, conference space, and dominant logics of organizational behavior discourse. However, the drive to enchant and embed modern work is a shared impulse across both movements, as both types of thought leaders grapple with the challenges of preserving the significance and personal meaning of the modern “vocational workaday life,” to draw on Weber’s view of modern economic activity.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Making Your Work Matter to God, Part One:**

#### **Mapping Resource and Organizational Growth of the Evangelical Faith & Work Movement, 1930-2015**

This chapter is the first of three chapters that shifts to the second case of interest in the contemporary Purpose Industry: the American Evangelical faith and work movement. These three chapters work to address a question of central interest to understanding the modern purposeful work discourse: how and why did the American Evangelicals, in recent decades, mobilize a vast amount of resources--organizations, events, books, and funding sources--toward making work meaningful? In the present chapter this question will be addressed largely by following the resource mobilization perspective of social movements: for movements to be successful they must draw upon both material and symbolic resources, including money, facilities, networks, and labor (McCarthy & Zald 1977). Included here are also infrastructural resources related to coordination of resources and actions as well as material resources like book production that can disseminate movement frames to a wider audience. The present chapter maps measurable growth across the 20th and into the 21st century, drawing largely on quantitative data taken from archival research. Where noted, responses from movement activists themselves supplemented the quantitative measures.

#### **Organizational Growth and Expansion**

The phenomenon of parachurch organizations reflects an enduring attribute of American Evangelical ecclesiology: American Evangelicalism has since the very beginning been fueled by a democratic, entrepreneurial impulse toward innovative forms and practices (see Hatch 1989, Thomas 1989). While circuit riders and tent revivals characterized the Second Great Awakening of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the post-war 20th century saw a surge of lay-lead, parachurch “special purpose” groups (Wuthnow 1988). These groups and organizations might be understood as a unique 20<sup>th</sup>-century form of the Evangelical entrepreneurial impulse, as ministries, associations, and charities began to span local churches and denominations at the beginning of the century. Groups operating outside denominational identities and structures at times seem to escape empirical study: social scientists frequently

adopt the unit of denominations to study and understand shifts, realignments, revivals, and contestation within American Evangelicalism. Yet parachurch organizations in recent decades have arguably absorbed from denominational leadership a greater share of moral energies, identity affiliation, and symbolic legitimation struggles that once took place within denominational structures. Both Wuthnow's (1988) and Hunter's (1991) analysis of American religious restructuring gesture toward these transformations, though their analysis is primarily focused on efforts of political engagement, which is only one dimension of parachurch organizations and their efforts. What is of central interest in the present analysis is the growth of parachurch efforts pertaining to theological doctrines, church-organizational issues, and "lifestyle issues" of parenting, marriage, gender-based issues, or work.

As the next chapter outlines, there is little that is new about the basic cultural frameworks that animate the modern faith and work movement: many of the ideas can be traced back as far as Martin Luther and John Calvin, and Protestants through the mid-19th century adhered to the Puritan orientations that saw faith as relevant to work and economics. The crucial phenomenon of 20<sup>th</sup>-century Evangelicalism is not the creation of ideas but their unprecedented recovery after going "silent" around the turn of the century. The creation of new organizations, networks, and--at the very end of the century--events almost certainly played a critical role in diffusing and reestablishing an Evangelical theology of work. Thus, following Eyerman and Jamison (1991), faith and work likely drew on organizational creation to open up new spaces where "creative interactions between individuals" could occur. The cultural frameworks examined in the next chapter--all appearing throughout published works before 1980--were largely dependent upon these organizational entities that could cultivate, disseminate, and legitimate these ideas. Miller's (2007) account also attests that the movement received a significant boost from mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century ecumenical efforts and the rise of lay-led and lay-focused "special purpose" groups (Wuthnow 1988) with expansive reach across denominations. Mid-century organizations like the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International (1952), Laity Lodge (1961), and the Fellowship of Companies for Christ International (1977) were some of the earliest organizations providing conferences, networks, and resources for business leaders actively integrating faith and work. Organizations varied in theological emphasis--some focusing more on evangelism,

others ethics, and others more transformational visions of culture change--but by and large they shared a commitment to overcoming compartmentalization of one's faith and one's work.

The last three decades has seen an unprecedented explosion in these types of organizations. Table 1 demonstrates a surge in the founding of new Evangelical faith and work organizations over the last decades of the 20th century. Prior to 1980, there were a handful of organizations, primarily networks that built cells or local chapters for male Christian business leaders. By the 1990s, new organizations were emerging with wider audiences than just business executives: organizations began producing vocational frameworks for a wider variety of economic actors and worker identities. In the two most recent decades at least one new Evangelical faith and work organization emerged every year.

At some point in the late 1980s various "marketplace ministry" organizations(broadly, faith-affiliated professional associations) begin taking off: groups like Christian Coaches Network and Crown Financial Services. These industry-specific and many time local organizations have not been included in the quantitative count here. Previous research that includes these more focused organizations suggests rapid expansion in recent decades: a 2000 "Faith & Work Directory" that spanned only North American and European groups had over 750 organizations listed, while the same directory in 2003 had over 1200 listings. The directory was not updated after 2003. Previous analysis of those organizations suggest the number of marketplace ministries has at least doubled every decade since the 1960s (Miller 2007). Thus, these organizations also show a similar growth pattern.

## **The Explosion of Evangelical Faith and Work Books**

Growth in the number of books published pertaining to faith and work follows a similar trend to the organizational growth: there is a surge in publishing over the final decade of the 20th century and into the first two of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Precise measures are made difficult here by the challenges of defining a "faith and work book" and, even more specifically, an "Evangelical" faith and work book as distinct from a religious or Christian faith and work book. Books on subjects such as leadership, day-to-day lay ministry, or evangelism also bear relevance to faith and work but may be inconsistently included within the "faith and work" category. Books on ethical issues related to specific

professions such as issues in the healthcare industry, science, or even the practices of governing are also difficult to categorize. To counteract or offset these ambiguities, the data provided here draws on three different strategies of categorization.

A global database of published materials in libraries worldwide (worldcat.org) was consulted for the first measure. Table 2 draws on the publication years of printed books (published in English) categorized in the database as pertaining to the subject “Work--Religious Aspects--Christianity.” This subject shows steady growth from the 1970s to the 1990s, with a plateauing around the turn of the century.<sup>20</sup> Since 2000 on average 185 new books appear in this category every year. This gives some idea of the rise in faith and work books but is not limited to Evangelicalism or books specifically produced for lay audiences. For that we must turn to more detailed measures.

Drawing on a different data source, Table 3 shows publication dates from a curated database of 1,648 “faith and work books” collected and curated by Seattle Pacific University’s University Library. This is the largest maintained database of faith and work books available. The collection is built, maintained, and shaped by the work of a committee of Evangelical scholars and leaders who carefully select which new books will be added each year. The list of books also includes theoretical, sociological, and historical works on the intersection of religion and economics, which, while valuable for the purposes of those maintaining the list, limits one’s ability to ascertain trends in books specifically directed toward laity. Setting aside these limitations, examining the growth rate over time (Table 3) shows a similar climb from the 1970s to 1990s and plateauing around 2000. Table 4 attempts to capture the growth of specifically Evangelical books, defined as books published by Evangelical publishing companies. This definition of an Evangelical faith and work book operates from the assumptions that books published by these publishers are responding to perceived interests of Evangelical laity and are then marketed to and read by Evangelical laity.<sup>21</sup> Once again, we see the same general trend as the first two tables: a steady growth

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<sup>20</sup> An anecdote from a book on the history of the Fellowship of Companies for Christ International captures just how sudden this growth was. The author recounts the beginning of a presentation by a speaker at a 1980 conference: “He shared that he had expected to go to the library, pull down some books on running a company for Christ, and develop talks, but he was shocked to find that there were no materials on the bookshelves. None!” (Mitchell 2013). For comparison’s sake, one author of a faith and work in 2006 (Wagner 2006) reports there are 288 new faith and work books published every year.

<sup>21</sup> Publishers themselves were contacted about the availability of historical sales numbers for books but unfortunately neither sales numbers nor past catalogs were preserved in any accessible form.

from the 1970s and 1980s to the turn of the century and then a plateau since the year 2000. To provide a point of comparison for this growth, the worldcat.org database was also drawn upon to construct the total number of published books by year for every Evangelical publisher represented in the Seattle collection. There was remarkable consistency in book production across the 20th century for the majority of publishers, with no comparable surge late in the century. This suggests the production surge is specifically related to the genre of faith and work books.

These findings suggest major cultural-production entities within Evangelical subculture—book publishers—took interest in the publication of faith and work books beginning in the 1980s, with a steady surge rising into the mid-1990s. It is not clear from this data whether Evangelical publishers were leading this new phenomenon or merely cashing in on the subcultural trend. Several interviewees could speak to their experience with Christian publishers during this era. One interviewee attempted to publish an Evangelical book on Christian business practices with Christian publishers in the late 1980s and found there was little interest: by her account most publishers were not interested in work, a topic they judged as treading too close to economics, which had no clear connection to Evangelical theology. This is somewhat surprising, as the surge across most publishers seems to date back to this era, but at minimum, the anecdote that captures there was an era when publishers had little interest in an Evangelical book on business. Interviewees report this has changed dramatically: one interviewee reported publishers were speaking of the market as reaching a saturation point regarding faith and work books sometime before 2010.

## **Establishing the National Conference Circuit**

From my time in the field I observed that national conferences serve as central, public-facing events for parachurch organizations. Because of the publicity efforts to draw attendees, conference logistics and planning can hold significant symbolic meaning that extends beyond the attendees and one-time gathering. Conference speaker selection can incite national controversies, celebrity authors gain legitimation within these sites, and doctrinal controversies may spill out from conferences into the wider Evangelical world through Twitter and blog posts.

Intervarsity Press editor Al Hsu (2010) observed national “mega-conferences” have become a “big sort” mechanism of the larger Evangelical world, offering branded identities, affiliation status, and a closed-off tribalism to their respective attendees. While little sociological research has been conducted on this phenomenon, my own field work and immersion in this subculture supports Hsu’s claim that conferences hold significant influence in relation to both individual and collective identity formation within American Evangelicalism. Particularly as more locally autonomous “non-denominational” churches come to characterize the Evangelical landscape, mega-conferences likely inherit from traditional denominational structures many important functions related to group identity, boundary-drawing, doctrinal formation, resource sharing, and affiliation status. Building on this cursory understanding of mega-conferences, the following section outlines how the faith and work movement accumulated both valuable symbolic power and organizational resources through its entrance into the national circuit of mega-conferences. The evidence suggests the faith and work movement legitimated its influence and theological frameworks in a relatively a short time through establishing itself in this national conference space.

Assembling historical data on conference growth requires blending together multiple sources. Previous work on the history of the faith and work movement (Hammond, Stevens, & Svanoe 2002, Hillman 2004, Miller 2007, Johnson 2009, Mitchell 2013) identifies various milestones and developments of new organizations and gatherings. To build a sociological-historical account of conference growth, these written histories were combined with interviewees’ own accounts of the movement’s origins and archival research on specific conference histories. Of central interest in this analysis is *when, who, and how*, as these characteristics are believed to indicate the formation and reliance on networks, measures of lay engagement, and both geographical and institutional location of where these efforts took hold. Compared to book production and distribution, the history of conferences presents several challenges to empirical analysis, particularly related to establishing post hoc significance of a gathering. Movement activists and participants rarely canonize--either figuratively or literally--past conferences the way that they may recognize early books and authors in bibliographies years later. Many conference gatherings seem largely ephemeral, drawing national figures, large attendance, and a high degree of energy and yet leaving no observable trace on the movement at large. While the present analysis has worked to be comprehensive in including all national faith and work gatherings, the symbolic and intellectual significance of the

conference for the movement was largely evaluated in terms of the relative status of conference organizers. If organizers seemed to have influence that reached beyond their particular conference, that influence is judged to carry over to the conference itself as significant to the movement. If organizers seem to have more parochial influence--perhaps limited solely to their conference--the conference itself is positioned as more marginal to the movement. This mode of evaluation illuminated at least two major branches of faith and work rather than a single lineage. The earliest gatherings operated with a high degree of cultural legitimacy from Evangelical leaders but were demarcated by particular theological orientations, demographic reach, and logistical-organizational dimensions. A later developing movement of conferences absorbed a handful of earlier figures but largely forged a different path theologically and institutionally. While existing histories tend to focus on only one side of the conference lineage, the following analysis suggests there were two waves of Evangelical faith and work conferences, the first beginning in the 1980s to the 2010s and the second picking up in the mid-2000s and continuing today. Their distinctive techniques and cultural elements become a crucial part of understanding the movement today.

## **First Wave: Marketplace Ministries and the Charismatic-Transformationist Political Visions**

For most of the 20th century faith and work groups did not coordinate national faith and work conferences, at least not conferences that took the form of that characterized the modern movement. It was not until the 1980s that a particular type of gathering emerged: a gathering that sought (at least in its promotion) to appeal to all workers rather than a particular industry, tried to downplay any specific denominational affiliation, and was advertised widely to clergy, laity, and ministry organization leaders outside the hosting organization. Consequently, earlier 20<sup>th</sup>-century gatherings coordinated by groups like the Christian Businessmen's Committee (founded in 1930), the Full Gospel Businessmen International (founded in 1952), and the Fellowship of Christian Companies International (1977)<sup>22</sup>, while chronologically preceding the first wave of national conferences, did not produce

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<sup>22</sup> Mitchell (2013) records multi-day gatherings for the Fellowship of Christian Companies International in February 1980, September 1980, October 1980, and February 1983. Mitchell compares these conferences to "trade association"-type gatherings that brought together their members for encouragement and fellowship. His account of historical development is broadly in agreement with the narrative presented here, that these earlier gatherings did not attract unengaged individuals (non-members) and those engaged with other faith and work organizations the way



anything that looked like a national faith and work conference. Earlier organizations were also more focused on building local chapters to be networked together by an overarching organization rather than putting on elaborate one-time events to draw in those with little previous engagement with the organization (see Mitchell 2013). The first wave, then, represents a new social form for the movement: a programmatic turn hosting “national faith and work conferences.”

The first coordination of a national conference gathering was headed up by Os Hillman. Hillman was a successful advertising executive until he hit several personal crises in 1994: his advertising agency’s major client failed to pay its bills, he lost half a million dollars in investments, and he and his wife separated. Seeking a new calling, Hillman found mentorship from several organizational leaders already active in the faith and work space and soon began his own magazine and daily-devotional newsletter on faith and work issues. In 1997 he partnered with Larry Burkett, president of a group called Christian Financial Concepts, to coordinate a gathering of “marketplace ministry” leaders, the first gathering of its type. To the surprise of the organizers, the gathering drew participants from over forty-five different workplace organizations. This gathering combined with his magazine and daily devotional put Hillman on the radar of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, who contacted him in 2002 about coordinating a larger conference. Hillman and others worked with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association to create four gatherings entitled “His Church in the Workplace,” the most significant of which was hosted at the Billy Graham Training Center in North Carolina. According to the press release recounting the event “nearly 300 pastors, marketplace business leaders, and workplace ministry leaders descended on the Billy Graham Training Center in the mountains of western North Carolina for a 3-day conference designed to create an action plan to bring God’s presence into the workplace.” The participant list included major international organizations like the Fellowship of Companies for Christ and the International Fellowship of Workplace Ministries, then headed by Hillman. Other “His Church in the Workplace” gatherings coordinated with the help of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association took place in San Antonio in 2004 and Silicon Valley in 2005. Hillman’s wide network of contacts through his daily devotional newsletter--reaching 75,000 by 2004--and his success with the 2003

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that Os Hillman’s late-1990s gatherings did. Hillman’s early gatherings were also distinct in drawing professional clergy and church leaders as attendees in addition to full-time workers.

conference allowed him to organize an even larger gathering in 2007. Then heading the Atlanta-based group Marketplace Ministries, Hillman coordinated the first “Church in the Workplace” Conference in downtown Atlanta in January 2007, targeting Christian pastors and workplace leaders. The conference featured well-known Fuller Seminary professor C. Peter Wagner and author Henry Blackaby as well as Kent Humphreys who was then leading the Fellowship of Companies for Christ International. One of the speakers, Linda Rios Brook, also coordinated a “Women in the Workplace” conference immediately preceding the event that aimed at bringing together working women to “foster spiritual and professional alliances to more effectively influence the transformation of culture.”<sup>23</sup> Both events keyed in on the transformational opportunity workplaces held, as sites where believers could live out their callings and “impact their city through their authority.”

These events expanded their speaking lineup in 2008 and 2009 versions of the Church in the Workplace gathering. The attendees roster continued to represent a who’s-who of the existing faith and work organizations of the time, and coordinators were able to legitimate their efforts by citing ties to central Evangelical figures. A Billy Graham quote appeared frequently on marketing materials at the time: “I believe one of the next great moves of God is going to be through the believers in the workplace.” C. Peter Wagner, labeled by one Evangelical-charismatic publication on his death as “one of the foremost authorities on church growth”<sup>24</sup> and academic advisor to megachurch pastor and bestselling author Rick Warren, was regularly part of the speaking lineup.<sup>25</sup>

Yet the three Church in the Workplace conferences stand out among the wider Evangelical faith and work movement--and differ sharply from the second wave--on two dimensions that are deeply interrelated: a unique pool of speakers and a unique theological-political agenda tied to movements that appear to subsequently vanish from the faith and work space. Regarding the unique speakers pool, the analysis of faith and work conference speakers below revealed that out of the thirty-four speakers from the 2003, 2007, 2008, and 2009 “first wave” conferences, only one speaker (Katherine Alsdorf) overlapped with any of the sixty national conferences making up

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<sup>23</sup> <http://65058.inspyred.com/images/LydiaNewsletter1.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.charismanews.com/us/60747-apostolic-pioneer-c-peter-wagner-goes-on-to-glory>

<sup>25</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20080501122426/http://www.marketplaceleaders.org/pages.asp?pageid=42065>

the second wave. This uniqueness is likely related to the theological-political agenda, the second dimension. This agenda became subtly more prevalent each of the years the Church in the Workplace conference was held. The 2003 event press release and schedule of events frames the workplace as a crucial “mission field” to reach the unsaved. For advertising and summaries for the later events (2007, 2008, and 2009) the advertising and summaries of later events had taken on a more explicitly “transformationist” vision of workplaces that connects these efforts to wider reform efforts in transforming surrounding cities, cultures, and politics. Two very distinct theological movements—the New Apostolic Reformation and 7 Mountain Theology--seem to have taken over the space, based on internet searches of the speakers’ names and major keywords. Unfortunately there is little academic scholarship on either of these theological movements, and no interviewee made any reference to them, making this shift in the movement difficult to either explain or interpret. They both broadly fit in the “reconstructionist” or “theonomic” camp of political orientations, seeking ways to take over cultural institutions and reestablish Biblical principles. A newspaper article describing both movements’ connection with then-Presidential candidate Rick Perry describes New Apostolic Reformation adherents as having a “growing fascination with infiltrating politics and government” as well as “climb[ing] the commanding heights” of seven cultural institutions in order to “lord over society.”<sup>26</sup> The websites these groups produce largely confirm aspirations to seize “dominion” over cultural spheres, with work and business being the primary sphere drawing the interest of faith and work leaders.<sup>27</sup>

The first wave poses a poorly understood conundrum in the faith and work movement history: having clearly “invented” the national faith and work conference, how did these actors fail to maintain their central role in the movement? The central actors coordinating the national conferences of the first wave had no shortage of networks across organizations and individuals. Hillman reports his daily devotional reached 190,000 subscribers by 2011, and early rosters of attendees demonstrated a broad reach across parachurch organizations. Much more impressively, these first wave actors had an unmatched symbolic legitimacy in the backing of Billy Graham and his association, easily the most powerful post-war Evangelical figure in American history. Endorsement and involvement by well-known professors and authors also worked in their support. Yet their unique theological-

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<sup>26</sup> Article accessed online: <https://www.texasobserver.org/rick-perrys-army-of-god/>

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.7culturalmountains.org/>

political agendas--New Apostolic Reform and the 7 Mountains Vision--largely vanish from the national conference circuit after the 2010 Atlanta conference. Neither the speakers promoting such a vision nor their theological perspective shows any influence on the larger and more established second wave, as shown below.<sup>28</sup> When asked about this shift, Hillman points to his own intentional shift away from the work arena toward the culture arena of the 7 Mountain vision. He also identifies several organizational leaders who continue to be active in the movement and carry on the same vision as the first wave.<sup>29</sup> Another interviewee active in the movement during this era provided a more economic explanation: Hillman's first wave flourished in the pre-internet era when the "goods" of faith and work were limited and difficult to access. As other groups formed to offer their own goods and the internet overcame geographical challenges, the first wave of conferences fell into a much smaller niche of demand.<sup>30</sup> The first wave almost certainly deposited its greatest lasting influence in the publication of faith and work books written by not only Hillman, but also Peter Wagner, Ed Silvoso, Kent Humphreys, and Linda Rios Brook. These books continue to show up on bibliographies of faith and work books endorsed by actors and organizations across the movement.

## **Second Wave: Faith and Work Goes Mainstream**

The mid-2000s saw the emergence of several new conferences that demonstrated lasting power in the movement. Importantly for understanding the leadership of the wider movement, this "second wave" brought with it a new lineup of authoritative theologians, pastors, and popular thinkers that would circulate around the conference universe. In 2008 the California-based Faith and Work Life organization offered their first annual Faith at Work Leadership Conference. Though never stretching beyond a single day of programming, this conference began identifying as an international gathering in only its second year and drew a lineup of speakers comparable to the

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<sup>28</sup> In over a hundred hours of fieldwork--including attendance at major national conferences--there were no references to the 7 Mountains Vision and, even more broadly, no detectable influence of charismatic theology. One interviewee, on being directly asked about exposure to 7 Mountains Theology, recalled a speaker promoting the framework at a 2014 national conference. However, both the interviewee's recount of this event and the event program (provided by the interviewee) suggests 7 Mountains Theology was addressed by one out of the twenty-four different conference speakers. It seems to have largely vanished from the faith and work space, at least in the areas studied.

<sup>29</sup> Phone interview, 10/31/2016. Many of the leaders Hillman identified as active are more involved in CEO-focused groups, which locates them outside the pool of conference speakers analyzed.

<sup>30</sup> This explanation might be complemented by the entrance of outside funding sources, outlined below. None of these funding sources backed charismatic and more politically-driven first wave actors which allowed the second wave actors to rise to prominence in the space.

later efforts of the Center for Faith and Work. This conference ran five consecutive years.<sup>31</sup> Another gathering founded in this era continues to exist: in 2007 then-Yale faculty member David Miller (now a theologian at Princeton whose work is cited throughout this chapter) founded the Believers in Business Conference. The group held its first gathering at the Yale School of Business. This gathering explicitly targeted Christian MBA students and soon formed a network of Believer in Business representatives from all major business schools in the U.S. After its first few years Believers in Business partnered with Intervarsity, an ecumenical parachurch organization focused on higher education. The group moved its annual event to Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Manhattan, where it continues to hold annual conferences.

These conferences seemed to have led off a new surge. In 2012 a Christian nonprofit in Texas called Right Now Ministries launched their first Work as Worship Conference, which became an annual gathering and by 2017 had expanded its gatherings to three different cities.<sup>32</sup> The Center for Faith and Work out of Redeemer Presbyterian Church held their first faith and work conference in 2011, called the Gospel and Culture Conference. This conference established itself as an annual gathering that regularly sells out and has drawn well-known speakers like New York Times columnist David Brooks.<sup>33</sup> In 2014, the Evangelical magazine Christianity Today launched a conference initiative themed around “redeeming work,” with conferences taking place in six different cities over the next two years. Capitol Hill Baptist Church out of Washington, D.C. also established a Gospel at Work ministry--based around a book written by Sebastian Traeger and Greg Gilbert--that launched eight “Gospel at Work” conferences across the country, pairing the book’s authors with other authors, pastors, and local business leaders. This same era also saw Kern Family Foundation provide support for conferences with nationally recognizable speakers in Texas, Michigan, Illinois, and Minnesota, all since 2014. Two of the largest conferences--measured by both attendees and speakers--were “Faith and Work Summits,” first in Boston in 2014 and then in Dallas in 2016.

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<sup>31</sup> <http://faithandworklife.org/events/>

<sup>32</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20121105010203/http://www.workasworshipconference.org/>

<sup>33</sup> Another nationally recognized figure, Paypal founder Peter Thiel, was temporarily listed as a featured keynote speaker for the 2016 Center for Faith and Work Conference. However, at some point in the months leading up to the conference his name was removed from the promotional materials. This may have been related to his increasingly visible endorsement of Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential election, culminating in Thiel’s appearance at the 2016 Republican Convention.

Perhaps just as significant as launching new conferences is the movement's ability to insert itself into existing gatherings and events. Many established Evangelical parachurch conferences have since 2010 added workshops, themed tracks, and mini-conferences themed around faith and work. In pulling from the same pool of speakers that circulate within the national conferences listed above, these established conferences grant legitimacy to both the speakers and their cultural frameworks. These established conferences include the Gospel Coalition's "Together for the Gospel" Conference, the Gospel Coalition Women's Conference, Urbana, the Christian Community Development Association, and Acton University, a free-market oriented summer school for pastors and laypersons sponsored by the Acton Institute. The emergence of these tracks, workshops, and sessions at lay-centered Evangelical conferences represents a diffusion of faith and work frameworks, resources, and thinkers into the wider conference world.

A few diverging characteristics between first wave and second wave conferences immediately stand out. First, the first wave was largely conceived by executives and leaders of businesses and as a result made limited inroads within populations outside the middle-aged male executive population. The Fellowship of Christian Companies International, which had its hand in the coordination of all the first wave conferences, composed their statement of faith around the spiritual life of the chief executive officer and "his" company. Early photos of their first meetings reveal a lineup of very similar looking white, middle-aged-to-late-career males. This catering to business leaders as the exemplar worker archetype is at times more subtle. A 2004 article "Is the Church on the Job" in *Decision* magazine--a publication of the Billy Graham Evangelical Association--recounts the recent developments of first wave conferences sponsored by their organization as efforts to help Christian workers in general connect faith and work. Yet when the article turns to the motivations for these efforts, the "Type-A business person" and his or her spiritual needs subtly slip into the foreground:

"In talking with pastors and workplace ministry leaders partnering with the BGTC, Hammond said that often, the pastor does not understand the Type-A business person and the Type-A business person does not understand the pastor. 'BGEA wants to be a bridge to pull these together, working with and through

the local church,' Hammond said. 'BGEA's role in workplace ministry is largely to bridge this gap and provide an environment for healing and understanding'" (Paulson 2004).

Clearly it is the alienation of the business leader--and not the nurse, teacher, or manual laborer--that represents the key problem requiring action here. While the second wave does not completely break free from these narrow demographic profiles (as we will see below), conceptions of work begin widening almost immediately in the second wave. Work and occupations are conceived as wider than merely executives and business owners, or even the "business" field. Conference topics begin to span fields like teaching, healthcare, philanthropy, and even occasionally blue-collar work.

The second distinction is more subtle: between the first and second wave the faith and work movement seems to shift slightly upward on several measures of prestige and status--the movement's cultural capital in a Bourdieusian sense. This is more discernable in characteristics of the second wave conferences, which reflect a slightly narrower, urban, and higher-educated flavor than its predecessor. Anecdotally, attributes of first wave gatherings include seminary-educated speakers, gatherings predominantly in the American South, and broadly Pentecostal-grounded theology. By the second wave we see Ivy League educated speakers, far more gatherings in urban cultural centers, and Reformed-leaning theology, a theological tradition that historically draws higher educated Evangelicals (Dayton 1970). This changed not only the leadership of these conferences but the intended audiences: highly educated, urban-dwelling, "knowledge economy" and "creative class" workers found their way to second wave conferences, easily accessible in places like Boston, New York, New Haven, and San Francisco. As the statistics of leaders shows below, this shift is far from a "passing of the torch" to younger millennial leadership, as the same baby boomer (and older) generation that stewarded in the first wave of conferences very much continues to control the second wave conferences.

Thirdly, the theological traditions guiding the second wave have left behind the overt political agenda and the specifically Pentecostal notion of charismatic leadership that characterized the first wave. Instead, the second wave operates largely out of an ecumenical Evangelical theological basis, with the Reformed theology at times

overpowering other Evangelical theological perspectives. There is also a universalism within the second wave that reaches widely into theological and cultural sources across not only the Protestant but also the Catholic tradition. In comparison, the first wave stays much closer to a uniquely Evangelical baseline of theological sources and thinking, often drawing on thinkers known only in charismatic and Pentecostal circles.

This surge in conferences and gatherings themed around faith and work shows no sign of slowing down anytime soon. In fact, because of the movement's reliable funding and foundational support (see below), it is very likely the faith and work movement continues to expand into the Evangelical conference world, tacking it concerns onto other existing gatherings and groups while bringing along its favorite pool of speakers. It is difficult to overstate the rapid growth and legitimation of these actors by the core culture-producing institutions of Evangelical culture. At the end of the 20th century a lay Evangelical likely could not conceive what a faith and work conference or event was: now they likely have a hard time avoiding them. This sort of rapid penetration of Evangelical subculture had no single origin--and certainly no single mastermind behind it--but did exhibit a sophisticated strategy of injecting a new subset of thought leaders into an established network of conferences, theology "experts," and pastors. The need for these thought leaders likely appears unquestionable to most conference coordinators at this point, as their targeted conference attendee—a layperson investing their disposable time and income into Evangelical events--nicely aligns with the theology faith and work leaders promote. If, following Hsu's observations, these national gatherings really are the subcultural "kingmakers" in terms of legitimacy and tribe formation, the faith and work movement gained a significant amount of influence and power in a relatively short time by taking hold within these cultural sites.

## **The Entrance of Foundations and Outside Funding**

Indexing and assessing sources of material and financial resources provide important insights on how movement actors can sustain themselves and their organizations. For this particular movement, there are two additional reasons to probe funding sources. The first is a basic insight of sociology of knowledge that the social sources and production of ideas shape their content and form. Tracing these sources does not commit analysis to a material



reductionism but does provide a fuller sociological sketch of ideas and their sources. The second reason ties very much to the first: cultural frameworks for understanding economic behavior have remained an enduring interest for sociological theory, dating back to Marx and Weber, largely due to their political and ideological potential. In 20<sup>th</sup>-century social theory, thinkers from Daniel Bell to Jurgen Habermas to Louis Althusser drew specific attention to the power of self-understandings related to worker identity and work motivation as possessing significant symbolic and ideological power related to a social order's cohesion and legitimation, as discussed in a later chapter. For these two reasons, the entities that fund and drive this movement hold considerable political and cultural power in shaping worker attitudes for audiences reached by these efforts.

American Evangelicalism has been no stranger to the injection of corporate and foundational funding. The emergence of the mid-century "neo-Evangelicals" revolved around building new institutions and organizations, many of which were funded by corporate backers with certain interests. J. Howard Pew, a Texas oil executive and conservative Presbyterian, was a major funder of the newly founded *Christianity Today* publication, co-founded by Billy Graham and Fuller Seminary professor Carl Henry. Pew's economic and social conservatism shaped the editorial direction of the publication, personally nixing early efforts of writers voicing support for early civil rights activism (Heitzel 2009). A personal letter from Billy Graham to Pew requesting initial support for the magazine promised the magazine would be "conservative, evangelical, and anti-Communist" (quoted in Phillips-Fein 2009), an apparently effective appeal for securing \$150,000 in funding. Pew held a deep dislike of New Deal policies and a distrust of more liberal theologians' advocacy for a "third way" between capitalism and socialism. A member of the Mont Pelerin Society alongside economists Milton Friedman and Friedrich von Hayek, Pew was an avid supporter of free market principles whose confidence in the compatibility between Christianity and capitalism occasionally brought him into conflict with Carl Henry, one of the few Evangelical ethicists of the time. "Carl Henry is a socialist," one of Pew's friends wrote in a private correspondence to Pew, observing his provisional support of unions and occasional criticism of capitalism (Schmalzbauer 2003). Nevertheless, in this earlier era funders with political agendas were far more concerned with more abstract levels of economics and the enduring showdown of American capitalism with "godless" Soviet communism. Politicizing theologies of work was not yet on the horizon.

While these outside sources are crucial to the growth of the movement, not all the organizational or conference growth has ties to these sources. Many leaders and organizations generated support and resources from sources more internal to the Evangelical subculture, such as speaking fees, book royalties, conference fees, or fundraising that drew from Evangelicals themselves. Just as there is a niche market (demand and resources available) for marriage, parenting, or church growth “experts” and “thought leaders,” there is likely a market for faith and work “experts.” This is evidenced by the relatively late dates that the following sources establish themselves, most of them well after the surge in book production has peaked and organizational growth has taken off. the movement transcends these sources, their presence and infusion of resources likely made the movement all the more powerful in recent decades, particularly as the second wave of conferences established itself.

## **The Lilly Endowment**

The first funder to grant major attention to theological thinking surrounding work was the Lilly Endowment. Created in 1937 by family members of Eli Lilly, the endowment continues to be made up largely of stock in the Eli Lilly Company. The Lilly Endowment is managed by a board of directors separate from the company and focuses on support for three different funding areas: religion, community development, and education. At one point in 1998, the Lilly Endowment was the largest charitable endowment in the world. Today it tops out at \$9.96 billion. Because the Lilly Endowment is intentionally inclusive and ecumenical in its support of various religious traditions, parsing out its support of Evangelical efforts requires sifting through three large funding initiatives that reached far beyond Evangelical organizations. In two programs the concept of “vocation” was front and center: the Lilly Endowment integrates the dual priorities of helping draw people toward both full-time clergy work as well as the more broad “theological exploration of vocation.” Both programs also targeted higher education.

An early initiative in 1999 named the Program for Theological Exploration of Vocation (PTEV) funded vocational programming in religious-oriented schools, in this case all schools affiliated with the Christian faith. Grants were awarded directly to colleges to design their own programming related to vocation. Over its eight-year existence the program awarded over \$225 million to eighty-eight different schools, twenty of which were affiliated with

Evangelical denominations (Clydesdale 2015). After the initial years of the program, private non-religious schools were also admitted to the program, grafted in under an intentionally underdefined conceptualization of vocation.<sup>34</sup> The rationale posted on a website tied the funding to the Endowment's interest in the vitality of religious congregational life: "In order to keep these important religious communities strong and vibrant, a new generation of talented, energetic, creative, and committed pastors and religiously informed lay leaders is needed."<sup>35</sup> Clydesdale's (2015) assessment of the PTEV initiative (funded by Lilly) found grantees used the funding in various ways, funding curriculum, internships, service learning, themed residence halls, mentorship, seminary semesters, faculty and staff development, retreats, personality assessments, campus events, and mini-grants handed off to smaller initiatives. Clydesdale highlights "Pullman College," a pseudonym for one of the Evangelical schools receiving funding. Pullman dedicated the Lilly Endowment funding to the addition of a new major in nonprofit management, an "urban semester" away from the university, a collaborative symposia on social justice with a local Catholic university, the addition of new academic minors, and a few new faculty hires. Perhaps most wide-reaching in the student body were efforts to insert "vocational theology" and efforts to "nurture a wider awareness of the world's pressing needs" in programming for first-year students--orientation week, first-year seminars, residential halls, and retreats (Clydesdale 2015:67).

In 2009 the program formally ended, but a new initiative funded by the Lilly Endowment pulled together nearly all of the PTEV recipients in a new networking organization: the Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education (NetVUE). NetVUE is formally an initiative of the Council of Independent Colleges that receives support from the Lilly Endowment. NetVUE claims 223 members, including most of the eighty-eight PTEV funding recipients. Their mission is to "enrich the theological and intellectual exploration of vocation among undergraduate students." While NetVUE in some ways replicates PTEV in injecting funding into locally controlled college programs related to vocation, its primary purpose is a membership organization focused on sharing resources, best practices, and

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<sup>34</sup> An internal assessment report funded by the Endowment recounts the initial gatherings of grantees intentionally provided little guidance on the nature of funding. The Endowment's Vice President for Religion told the attendees at the events, "The 'theological exploration of vocation' is meant, first of all, to be an honest inquiry. What does Lilly mean by the 'theological exploration of vocation'? The honest answer is this: we don't exactly know. That is what we hope you will help us figure out." Report accessed online at: [http://www.resourcingchristianity.org/sites/default/files/transcripts/research\\_article/DavidCunningham\\_A\\_Plentiful\\_Harvest\\_Essay.pdf](http://www.resourcingchristianity.org/sites/default/files/transcripts/research_article/DavidCunningham_A_Plentiful_Harvest_Essay.pdf)

<sup>35</sup> [http://lillyendowment.org/religion\\_ptev.html](http://lillyendowment.org/religion_ptev.html)

providing gathering opportunities for college administrators. Like PTEV and the program that followed, Evangelical colleges and programming are just one of many different perspectives involved in the initiative, at times overshadowed by a broader inclusiveness. However, both NetVUE and PTEV saw as part of their mission drawing together and promoting the sorts of faith and work books outlined earlier.

Finally, in 2012 the Lilly Endowment piloted funding support for five campus ministries at larger state schools. Called the Campus Ministry Theological Exploration of Vocation (CMTEV), this program brought vocational programming to a new population of students attending publicly funded universities. The 2015 call for proposals reveals over fifty-two different ministries have been supported by this endeavor, out of which several dozen are affiliated Evangelical denominations or parachurch organizations. According to the call for proposals, this program reinforced the dual commitment of earlier programs to both full-time clerical vocations and non-religious vocations, observing that an increasing number of college students “want to make a difference in the world and are considering careers in public service and the helping professions” before adding that some of these students are “finding their way to seminary because they sense that the church may be an avenue for living out their call to service.”<sup>36</sup> The CMTEV materials celebrate the diversity of the programs established, reporting that some recipients focus on mentorship and internships while others draw students to seminary courses and specialized Bible studies on vocation. This program’s funding totaled \$4 million from its start to 2015.

## **The Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty**

The Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty was founded in 1990 and predates much of the activity in the faith and work space. The Acton Institute’s stated mission follows the perspective of their namesake Lord John Emerich Edward Dalberg Acton in promoting classical liberalism and exploring the “religious underpinnings of a free market and free society.” While many think tanks located in Washington, D.C. are more focused on producing policy briefs, the work of the Acton Institute focuses far more on popularizing free market ideas through seminars, summer conferences, white papers, book publications, and production of *The Journal of Markets and Morality*, a

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<sup>36</sup> [http://www.lei.org/religion/campusministry/Lilly\\_Endowment\\_CMTEV\\_Letters\\_of\\_Interest.pdf](http://www.lei.org/religion/campusministry/Lilly_Endowment_CMTEV_Letters_of_Interest.pdf)

scholarly journal. A central part of their stated mission is “educating religious leaders of all denominations, business executives, entrepreneurs, university professors, and academic researchers in economic principles.” As discussed in the next chapter, the Acton Institute has since 2010 ramped up its production of materials directly targeting congregations and individuals. Several efforts specifically develop theologies of work that align with the organization’s overarching economic principles, including the publications of five “primers” on theologies of work, commissioned to be written by thinkers from different theological traditions. A film series curriculum designed for churches and small groups also outlines theological teachings on work. But beyond their own production of materials, the Acton Institute has served as a sponsor and supporter of various conferences and gatherings, showing a remarkable ability to integrate itself with one-time events, organizations, and seminaries active in this space. While public tax forms do not disclose the amount of the Institute’s contributions to faith and work events, their recurring sponsorship attests to their vested interest in this space. Two events received support from (and in turn provided booth space and sponsor recognition to) from the Acton Institute: the 2016 Faith and Work Summit and the 2014 Jubilee Professional Conference. The 2016 Faith and Work Summit dedicated one of its evenings to a special showing of an Acton-produced documentary on global poverty, which was promoted throughout the day by the event coordinators.

## **Kern Family Foundation**

No foundation has been more active in the Evangelical faith and work space than the Kern Family Foundation. Founded in 1998 in Waukesha, Wisconsin by Robert and Patricia Kern, the foundation came into existence when the Kerns sold a division of their very successful home-powered generator company, Generac Power Systems. In 2006 the Kerns added to their foundation by selling the remaining shares of their company and depositing significant portion of the profits in the foundation. The Kern Family Foundation reported assets of \$671 million in 2014. The group prioritizes four funding areas: STEM education at the K-12 level, character education at the K-12 level, engineering and entrepreneurial skills at the college level, and “faith, work, and economics.” The foundation employs two program directors and a program coordinator to manage their faith, work, and economics program. As discussed in the next chapter, the Kern Family Foundation partners closely with economically conservative

organizations like the Acton Institute (mentioned above) and the American Enterprise Institute and shares many of the same political commitments.

The number of Evangelical groups receiving support from the Kern Family Foundation far exceeds any other single supporter. In 2015--the last year for which numbers are publicly available--the foundation handed out multiple grants of over one million dollars to parachurch organizations, seminaries and other faith and work groups. The total amount of faith and work giving alone for the year was \$11.46 million. Significantly, Kern Family Foundation funding has enabled organizations to create new events and gatherings from scratch, drawing in previously uninvolved faculty members, pastors, and business leaders to faith and work events around the country. Yet perhaps the strongest influence of the foundation has been demonstrated in two influential spin-off organizations active in the space. The first is the Made to Flourish Network, an umbrella organization dedicated to building a network of pastors and "city networks" around faith and work resources.<sup>37</sup> Made to Flourish has launched twenty different city networks of collaborating congregations and has five hundred pastors total in its network. The second is the Oikonomia Network, an organization that partners with twenty different Evangelical seminaries and colleges to produce new curriculum, majors, and events around the idea of the integration of faith and work.<sup>38</sup> Both organizations strategically target their respective institutions--churches and seminaries--as avenues to promote new frameworks to pastors and religious leaders, who can then take the frameworks to the wider audiences of their congregations.

Kern's influence permeates this space. All of the conferences attended for observation in this study featured speakers promoting either Kern's work, the Oikonomia Network, or the Made to Flourish Network. While Kern's political commitments--discussed in the next chapter--were not always visible at these events, attendees who took up the invitation to get more involved in various arms of Kern's operations would almost certainly encounter the underlying political vision in the promoted events.

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<sup>37</sup> See <https://www.madetoflourish.org>

<sup>38</sup> See <http://oikonomianetwork.org/about/>

## **Freedom Partners and the Koch Brothers**

Finally, in the late 2000s a new form of support began entering into the faith and work arena: conservative lobbying dollars. Unlike the Kern Family Foundation outlined above, this trail of money appears to be fairly concentrated around a few players, though their ideas certainly diffuse widely in the movement. Mapping out these players requires first understanding a particular organization in this space, the Institute for Faith, Work, and Economics, cleverly abbreviated to IFWE in many of their materials in reference to “we” the laity. In 2011 Hugh Whelchel, after growing discontent with the lack of faith and work thinking at a Christian seminary he led, set out to start a new organization--IFWE. The group started small but from the get-go had a number of well-connected intellectuals in the conservative Washington, D.C. think-tank world. According to Whelchel, the organization saw its mission as being a content provider for “gaps” they observed in the faith and work movement at the time. Their aspiration was to provide high-level content to other organizations active in this space, filling these gaps. After three years of research production, the organization shifted away from scholarly work toward more public speaking engagement for its top scholars. IFWE sponsors many of the national events mentioned below and also contributes to the Theology of Work project, an organization producing new faith and work commentaries for every book of the Bible.

## **Basic Attributes of the Movement: Leaders and Participants**

### **Who are the Movement Leaders?**

Because of the faith and work movement’s decentralized and democratic form, the movement does not provide a straightforward way to determine who holds the most power or who “speaks for” the movement. Much of this is due to the entrepreneurial, de-centered, and open-entry ethos of the field: anyone can write a book on faith and work or start an organization that speaks to the themes of faith and work. And indeed, as outlined in the previous sections, many have. To locate leaders for this project I drew upon a method of measuring conference-speaking appearances as an important gauge of an individual’s centrality in the field. Conference speaking was selected over other measures because conference appearances hold symbolic meaning as a limited-access “rivalrous” resource. Unlike book production and organization creation, national conference lineups are not accessible to all actors, and

those selecting lineups are acting as subcultural power brokers in many ways. That said, the decentralized nature of the movement allows any actor to establish a faith and work conference, even actors on the periphery or outside the movement. However, establishing a conference with staying power beyond two years seems to be a challenge that few actors have pulled off. A far greater challenge is establishing a conference that is permitted symbolic entrance into the universe as an established as part of the movement, an informal status that I found is signaled when a conference draws from and contributes to the wider pool of speakers. Thus the method used here--outlined in greater detail in Appendix A--evaluates influence and leadership in the movement by tracing out a pecking order of number of conference appearances.

To make this evaluation, a list of sixty national faith and work conferences was generated alongside names of speakers publicized for the conference. These sixty conferences drew on a total of 386 different speakers and averaged six speakers each. The core “thought leaders” of the movement were defined as those who had spoken at the most of these sixty national conferences. A natural cut-off emerged separating those who had spoken at three conferences or more, which created a list of the top twenty-nine conference speakers. All interviewees were asked to fill out a basic follow-up questionnaire gauging demographic information and key political views. All of this information was used to supplement the following findings on the movement.

### **Demographic Breakdown of Leaders**

Little research has been done on the demographics of those who lead or affiliate with the movement’s ideas and resources. Like many movements, the Faith and Work movement has various levels of activists whose affiliation and identity range from general awareness to regular attendance at events and dedication of resources to support the movement. Here the collected data can shine light on the innermost rings of participants: the thought leaders who frequently speak at conferences and shape the types of cultural frameworks promoted at these gatherings. For the thought leaders who agreed to be interviewed, a post-interview questionnaire was distributed to those who participated in the interview, and from this sample (n=24) we can get a basic profile of the leading conference speakers in the movement. These numbers can be compared to a general breakdown of the U.S. population and a general breakdown of Evangelicalism as a whole (Table 5).



This comparison suggests thought leaders at the center of the movement are disproportionately older, whiter, more educated, and more male than the U.S. population, and significantly more male and educated than the general Evangelical population. This pattern persists if the list of “thought leaders” is expanded to include all leaders who have spoken at two or more national conferences, what is labeled the “second rung” of leaders. This expansion provides a list of seventy-seven individuals (Table 5, farthest right column). Here the gender imbalance is sixty men to seventeen women, while educational over-representation persists (racial demographics and age were not collected).

These disproportional representations at the most influential levels of leadership are likely multi-causal, and many of the factors may be exogenous to the faith and work movement itself. Regarding race, many of the white leaders emerged from seminaries and denominational structures that have historically been predominately white. It is unclear how black Protestant leaders--which many scholars see as theologically distinct from white Evangelicals--come to enter this space, though some leaders I interviewed had made this entrance without reporting much challenge. On gender, Evangelicals lag behind the U.S. population both in rates of women working outside the home and views of women working outside the home. Many denominations active in this space subscribe to gender complementarianism (Putnam & Campbell 2010), which does not permit women to serve in particular leadership roles in the church. A previous study of Evangelical elites (defined as leaders in various sectors across society) (Lindsay 2007) that relied on actor referrals (“leapfrog sampling”) for recommending other interviewees arrived at roughly the same gender imbalance among its sample of Evangelical elites sample as found here (though remarkably, that study admits to over-sampling for females at times). Notably, female Evangelicals have not lagged behind in the educational gains Evangelicals have made in recent decades, suggesting this gap is not a product of qualifications (Putnam & Campbell 2010). For both racial and gender under-representations, the Faith and Work movement seems to passively reproduce the imbalances of Evangelical leadership that characterize the larger subculture.

Taking these factors into consideration does nothing to offset the fact that faith and work thought leaders speak from a very particular perspective within the modern postindustrial capitalism social order. The leaders reflect a hierarchical structure that may drown out some voices from the Evangelical working world while elevating others. One slightly promising dimension for change in the future may be the skewed age of the leaders: aging baby boomers (sixteen of which make up the thought leader sample) will soon hand off their power to a far more diverse leadership cohort on their heels. Yet it is likely Evangelical elites will always lag behind societal elites in diversity regarding race, education, and gender. This is made more remarkable by studies of non-religious societal elites, which is already a population revealing disproportional underrepresentation of non-male, non-white voices.

Finally, we can shift our focus from the leaders to the “activists” who attend conferences. A 2016 survey revealed the general demographic breakdown of attendees at the Faith and Work Summit, which is again presented alongside U.S. Population and Evangelical population breakdowns (Table 6). While this summit is likely one of the largest faith and work conferences in history, this obviously only provides one brief snapshot of a particular gathering. However, one can easily see a heavy skew toward male and higher education among the attendees, while white representation and age hover roughly around the wider Evangelical proportions. This suggests the Evangelical faith and work movement fails to be representative of either the US population or the wider Evangelical demographic. Compared to the wider U.S. population, leaders and activists have a significant overrepresentation of males, whites, baby boomers, and highly educated individuals. Compared to the wider Evangelical demographic, leaders and activists come closer to representing the Evangelical demographic on age and race but are still significantly overrepresented for males and higher education. As discussed above, this disproportionate representation is likely constructed by both factors internal to and exogenous to the movement itself, with the homogenous nature of American Evangelical leadership--itself predominantly white, male, older, and more educated--offering the strongest force for shaping the faith and work leadership space.

## **How Big? Tracing Diffusion of Cultural Frameworks Related to the Movement**

There is no straightforward way to gauge how many people “belong” to the faith and work movement, both due to conceptual ambiguity of what belonging designates as well as limitations of existing data. Wuthnow (1988) also finds many special purpose groups do not hold “membership growth” as a salient goal, making numbers difficult to find for many groups. While the movement exhibits remarkable growth in organizational and cultural resources, there could very well be a limited group of activists, consumers, and adherents disproportionately consuming these resources. Unfortunately there is no survey data available on whether an individual has attended a faith and work conference, read a faith and work book, or views faith and work leaders favorably. There are, however, two national surveys that together produce a very tentative outline of how the movement’s ideas align with the views of larger Evangelicalism and perhaps a speculative evaluation of the scope of idea diffusion. The 1992 Economic Values Survey polled a representative sample (n=5,019) of adults age eighteen and older in the active labor force living in the continental United States (Wuthnow 1994), while the 2010 Baylor Religion Survey, Wave III polled a representative sample (n=1,712) of all adults age eighteen and older living in the continental United States (Baylor University 2010).

As Table 7 demonstrates, Evangelicals in 1992 showed moderate differentiation from the general population regarding the integration of religious thinking with their work. By and large, however, Evangelicals did not buy into some very basic ideas of the faith and work movement (outlined more in the next chapter): the universality of callings and vocations, the flattening of the vocational hierarchy between the “value” of clergy and laity work, the relevance of religious teaching to work, and the belief that God cares about our work. Several elements of church practices advocated by the faith and work movement--sermons on faith and work, faith groups in the workplace, working to ensure laity feel their work is understood and appreciated by their clergy--also did not get high marks. Robert Wuthnow’s assessment of this entire survey’s findings--which generalizes all faith traditions in the U.S--positioned faith as playing a relatively minor role in shaping tangible work behaviors. Religious commitments “still exert a significant influence...but that its influence is often mixed, leading to more ambivalence than to informed ethical decisions or to distinct patterns of life” (Wuthnow 1994:5). Wuthnow concludes faith plays primarily a therapeutic role in how persons of faith feel about their work; in regard to tangible action people of faith “go about their lives pretty much the same as those who have no faith at all” (ibid:5)

Putting this 1992 survey beside the 2011 nationally representative survey (Table 8) reveals, at least on most measures, Evangelicals as a population do not model a distinct orientation toward faith and work. Of all respondents, 14.6 percent reported participating in a discussion group about faith in the workplace in the last month, with 19.6 percent of Evangelicals reporting they had. Regarding the “vocational hierarchy,” 88.1 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that “people who go into careers like nursing, teaching, or ministry should be admired for that career choice,” while 88.9 percent of Evangelicals agreed or strongly agreed.<sup>39</sup> Perhaps the most helpful indication of affirming faith and work ideas is how respondents evaluated the statement “I view my work as a mission from God.” While 40.4 percent of all respondents felt this applied to them “always” or “sometimes,” 50.9 percent of Evangelicals responded in the same manner.

The variance in sampling procedures, survey form, and question wording between the two surveys leaves plenty of room for doubt: this is far from the silver bullet of longitudinal data one would need to make a confident assessment about a movement’s idea or frame diffusion. However, there is certainly room for plausible interpretation that no observable portion of American Evangelicalism warmed up to the ideas of the faith and work movement between the 1992 survey and the 2011 survey. This is admittedly a high bar for evaluating diffusion, and the wide surge in organizational expansion, event expansion, and culture-production related to the movement suggests that—at least somewhere in American society—there is a demand for these things. Ultimately more survey data would be needed to assess what impact—if any—the movement growth has had on the views of American Evangelicals as a whole.

## **Summary: Fast Growth and Resource Mobilization, Slow Outreach to Broader Populations, Little Frame Diffusion**

The Evangelical faith and work movement saw drastic changes in size, scope, and reach over the last decades of the 20th century and into the 21st century. Whether assessing book production, conference creation, foundational

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<sup>39</sup> As shown in the next chapter, a vocational hierarchy that values some vocations over others is universally criticized in the faith and work movement, so less support for this belief would represent greater diffusion of faith and work movement thinking.

funding, the faith and work conversation went from nearly invisible to a central player in the Evangelical landscape in the span of a few decades. This evolution and lineage was not always linear: as the two waves of national conferences suggest, different organizations and efforts at times set out on far different paths with different visions of how the Evangelical faith and daily work intersect. As we will see in the next chapter, despite consensus that compartmentalization of faith and work should be overcome, leaders had different visions of what the integration and influence of faith meant for work. The institutional backdrop to these developments played a critical role in this evolution: because Evangelicalism has historically provided both entrepreneurial impulses for innovation and a cultural-organizational space to innovate, faith and work movement leaders could largely create, innovate, expand, and employ existing resources with little obstruction from existing hierarchies or authorities. Successful innovators in this space established themselves as self-made authorities and benefited from existing networks of influential leaders, foundational funding, and an existing infrastructure of conferences that eagerly opened its doors (and infrastructure) to the faith and work world.

While growth came quickly, diffusion to wider audiences and populations did not. As evidenced in the names and mission statements of early-20th to mid-century organizations, the early movement efforts associated “work” with a very narrow demographic and economic identity: the male business executive. Because of demographic realities, this established a not-so-invisible sorting mechanism for early movement leadership: the male business executive tended to be a white, middle to upper-middle-class, and college educated. To the extent that this same demographic profile matched the Evangelical clergy of the time, the mobilization of business executives around the framework of work in some ways represents one swath of white, college-educated males pulling themselves even with a group that mirrored their own demographic--their pastors. Drawing on the idea of *their* work as equally valuable to God as professional clergy--the “re-sacralize cultural framework” analyzed in the next chapter--business executives could for the first time position themselves on equal footing with their pastors in the Evangelical hierarchy. This move may not have flattened the “vocational hierarchy” as much as just allowing more space at the top of the hierarchy for a specific type of worker.

While this may be how the faith and work movement began, since at least the mid-2000s there have been various cultural and institutional pushes to expand the notion of “work” to a wider understanding of professions, resulting in slow but steady growth among both leaders and participants beyond the white, educated, middle-aged male executive figure. Leaders themselves are able to articulate the movement’s early shortcomings, and many can identify steps to include more diverse voices. Conference sessions at the 2016 Faith & Work Summit laid out a vision of “Faith & Work 201” that would go “wider” to engage new populations, identifying the problem of being “too male and too pale” as well as making little inroads into non-white-collar work.

Independent of the accounts and intentions of leaders, the movement will likely continue to be shaped by exogenous forces related to social and labor market trends, as it has in the past. Put differently, the incorporation of the “creative class,” startup culture, and perhaps even the entrance of “gig economy” freelancers have likely been products of larger trends in the workforce, not programmatic decisions of current leaders. However, these reactionary shifts may be slowed--if not directly contested--by the homogenous profile of leadership in the movement, which anchors the movement to certain perspectives and experiences of a narrow demographic of worker. This insulates the movement the infusion of new work experiences and perspectives in the movement, as the homogenous group of leaders largely brings with them the same cultural and working background. There is also the unquestionable influence of the exogenous funding sources outlined above: the organizations and actors have not generally made it a priority to challenge the homogeneity of the movement leadership.

Finally, regarding the size and reach of the movement, surveys indicate Evangelicals demonstrate only slight to negligible adherence to faith and work beliefs than the wider religious landscape. There are plenty of reasons to question whether these survey results capture the full extent of the scope and diffusion. The most recent data available also comes at only the beginning of the second wave of conferences. There are also limitations to the sample size that do not allow controlling for religious attendance or education level to determine if perhaps diffusion has made more inroads in particular populations. Nevertheless, it appears the faith and work movement’s explosion of resource mobilization and organizational growth failed to produce a vast shift in the thinking of Evangelicals, either comparing longitudinally to the 1992 measures of attitudes or in comparison to the

wider religious landscape. As Chapter Six suggests, the central actors of the movement are working to change these trends.

Table 1: Growth of Evangelical Faith and Work Organizations, 1930-2016

Era	Year Founded	Name	Mission	Misc. Info
1930-1949 (1 Org)	1930	Christian Businessmen Connection	to evangelize and disciple business and professional men for Christ.	in 70 countries

1950-1969 (2 Orgs)	1951	Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International	To witness to God's presence and power in the world today through the message of the total Gospel for the total man, and by this to reach men for Jesus Christ, especially those having the same social, cultural or business interests as the person doing the witnessing.	In 160 countries
	1961	Laity Lodge	To serve God by creating opportunities for people to encounter God for the transformation of daily life, work, and our world	
1970s (3 Orgs)	1977	Fellowship of Companies for Christ International	...united by a vision that the Lord can transform people, business, cultures, and nations through how we do business.	In 62 countries, today, also branded Christ@Work
	1977	Needle's Eye Ministries	Connecting business and professional men and women to life-changing faith in Jesus – encouraging them to impact our community with His values, ethics, and love.	
	1978	Pittsburgh Leadership Forum	to equip, connect and mobilize leaders to serve that business in every sphere of influence in our city.	business and other "leaders"
1980s (3 Orgs)	1983	MBA Ministry (InterVarsity)*	...raising up Christian leaders who seek God in their professional and private lives.	22 chapters, Believers in Business Conference
	1984	Marketplace Ministries	...to share God's love through chaplains in the workplace providing a personalized and proactive Employee Care Service for client companies.	unique chaplain model
	1985	International Christian Chamber of Commerce	...to encourage and equip Christians to experience in a release into a new dimension of Faith, Hope, Love, and Freedom in their business and working lives and to better understand our time.	
1990s (8 Orgs)	1991	International Fellowship of Christian Businessmen*	...designed to bring Christians together to change the world and the workplace.	7 chapters
	1992	C12 Group*	...helping Christian leaders achieve excellence through best-practice professional development, peer sharpening, consistent accountability, and learning with the eternal perspective in mind.	for-profit consulting firm
	1993	Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship in America	To reach men everywhere for Jesus Christ, taking particular note that in many instances men can reach others of their same social, cultural or business interests more readily than anyone else.	Pentecostal, 60+ chapters, national conference
	1994	Mockler Center for Faith and Ethics in the Workplace	to explore and promote biblical Christian ethics, values, and insights for today's workplaces -- and to bring helpful insights and experiences from workplace laity to the church and its leadership.	
	1995	CEO Forum (Focus on the Family)	...to develop spiritual statesmen among senior executives of major corporations, and through them, advance the Kingdom of God and impact the business and social cultures of America.	
	1995	Pinnacle Forum	to build a network of leaders committed to personal and cultural transformation centered on the values of Jesus.	business and other "leaders"



	1996	Convene Now	To connect, equip, and inspire Christian CEOs and business owners to grow exceptional businesses, become higher-impact leaders, and honor God.	for-profit consulting firm
	1996	Marketplace Leaders	...to create tools that inspire, teach, and connect Christian believers to resources and relationships in order to manifest the life of Christ in their workplace call.	
2000s (14 Orgs)	2001	Kiros	...to connect, encourage, and equip Christian business people in the marketplace.	3 chapters
	2001	Life Chasers LLC	...equipped, inspired and encouraged Christians who were leaders in the marketplace to live out their faith with purpose, passion and commitment and to be a greater influence in our culture.	disbanded in 2009
	2001	Center for Integrity in Business	...to serve, inspire, and equip business leaders for positive impact, by being an accelerator of business and faith integration.	
	2002	Kingdom Companies	To challenge, equip, and encourage followers of Christ to impact their personal and professional arenas of influence in business as together we “seek first His Kingdom.	Author-centric
	2002	Global Think Tank for Business as Mission	To champion the role of business in God’s plan for the world	affiliated with Lausanne
	2002	Center for Faith and Work (Redeemer Presbyterian, NYC)	...to foster, shepherd, and empower the church as it is scattered, not the church as it is gathered. That is to say, our focus is with the church body as it lives and works out in the world, beyond the walls of any one place of worship.	“cultural renewal” focus
	2003	Marketplace Institute (Regent College)	...to provide and embody fresh, reliable, and well-informed expressions of the gospel that reveal its truth, necessity, and relevance to all spheres of public life.	originally built around Paul Stevens
	2005	Workplace Ministries	...made up of individuals who have a call to encourage, support, and train Christians in the workplace, so that they may enjoy God's grace while at work as well as in all other facets of their lives.	
	2005	Transforming Business	...analyzes and catalyzes the contribution of Christianity and entrepreneurship to human and environmental well-being.	Cambridge University Research Institute
	2005	Washington Institute for Vocation and Culture	...to advancing the idea that vocation is integral, not incidental, to the mission of God in the world.	author-centric
	2007	Theology of Work Project	To help people explore what the Bible and the Christian faith can contribute to ordinary work.	oversaw new Bible commentary
	2007	WorkLife*	To collaborate with God to empower people to thrive at work.	author-centric
	2008	Made to Matter*	...to introduce people to the great love of God by translating His truths and His Word into the language of the layperson.	
	2009	Oikonomia Network	...to equip pastors to connect biblical wisdom, sound theology, and good stewardship to work and the economy.	funded by Kern Family Foundation

2010-2016 (7 Orgs)	2010	Praxis Academy	...equipping and resourcing a growing portfolio of faith-motivated entrepreneurs who have committed their lives to cultural and social impact, renewing the spirit of our age one organization at a time.	
	2010	Work as Worship*	...helping people realize that there isn't a divide between the sacred and secular parts of our lives and that working with our God-given skills can be an act of worship.	coordinates Work as Worship conference
	2011	4Words	To connect, lead, and support women in the workplace to achieve their God-given potential.	women focused
	2011	Institute for Faith Work & Economics*	...promoting biblical and economic principles that help individuals find fulfillment in their work and contribute to a free and flourishing society.	
	2011	Center for Faith and Work at LeTourneau University	...to help Christians understand how their work matters to God and His kingdom and experience Christ's transforming presence and power in every workplace in every nation.	
	2012	Denver Institute for Faith and Works	to help men and women understand their work in light of the Christian faith and better serve others in their organizations, communities and professions.	
	2012	Reintegrate	...equips God's people to reintegrate the Christian faith with vocation so that they can participate in God's mission on earth.	

\*Indicates founding year was taken from first public tax filing.

Table 2: Christian Faith and Work Books, National Database of Library Books

(Listed Subject Matter: Work--Religious Aspects of--Christianity)

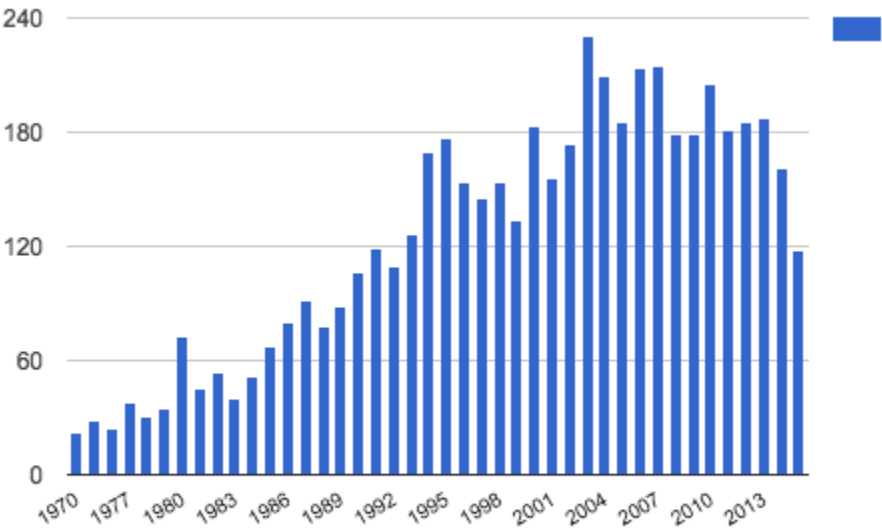


Table 3: Book Publication Years in Curated Faith and Work Book Collection

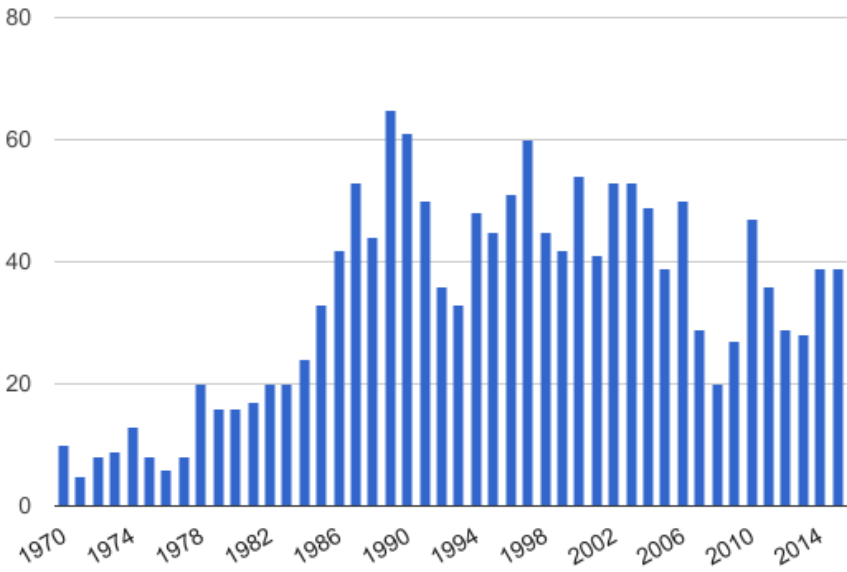


Table 4: Book Publication Years in Curated Faith and Work Book Collection, Evangelical Presses

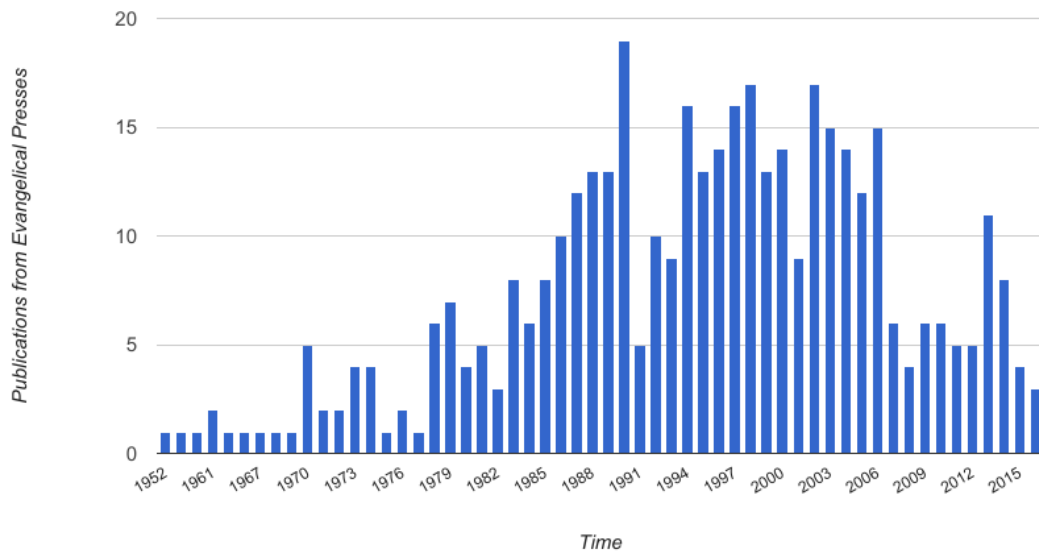


Table 5: Demographics of Faith and Work Thought Leaders

Proportion of Total Population that is...	US Population	Evangelicals	F&W Thought Leaders (n=24)	F&W Thought Leaders, 1st & 2nd Rung (n=77)
Male	49.2	42.9	91.7	77.9
White (Not Other)	73.8	73.7	68.8	not collected
Holds Bachelor Degree	27.3	20.5	100.0	97.4
Holds Advanced Degree	12.4	7.0	93.8	76.1
Baby-Boomer or Older (Born before 1965)	32.9	51.0	43.8	not collected

Table 6: Demographics of Faith and Work Conference Attendees

Proportion of Total Population that is...	US Population	Evangelicals	F&W Conf Attendees (n=272)
Male	49.2	42.9	75.3
White (Not Other)	73.8	73.7	81.4
Holds Bachelor Degree	27.3	20.5	93.6
Holds Advanced Degree	12.4	7.0	71.3
Baby-Boomer or Older (Born before 1965)	32.9	51.0	49.2

Table 7: 1992 National Survey on Faith and Work Views

All Respondents	All Religiously Affiliated	Evangelicals Only	Question
14.4	-	-	Identify “trying to obey God” as most important consideration in moral work decision
14.7	25.4	22.9	Had spent “a great deal” of time thinking about the link between faith and work
27.2	40.2	37.5	Heard a sermon that inspired them to work harder.
4.2	4.6	6.1	Participated in religious group that meets in the workplace
30.1	28.7	24.9*	“Mostly true” that members of the clergy have very little understanding of what it is like in the real workday world
40.3	42.0	41.6*	“Mostly true” that clergy are doing more God’s work than the rest of us
29.6	31.8	37.1	“Mostly Agreed” that “I feel God has called me to the particular line of work I am in.”
13.2	14.1	23.5	Had spent “a great deal” of time thinking about what the Bible teaches about work.

Data source: 1992 Economic Values Survey (n=5019).

\*Indicate a lower number would suggest wider adoption of basic Evangelical faith and work theology.

Table 8: 2011 National Survey on Faith and Work Views

All Respondents	All Religiously Affiliated	Evangelicals Only	Question
14.6	17.1	19.6	Participated in a discussion group on faith in the workplace in the past month
47.8	55.8	55.3	"Sometimes," "often," or "always" view my work as a partnership with God.
47.5	55.9	58.3	"Sometimes," "Often," or "Always" see connections between my worship and work.
40.4	47.1	50.9	"Sometimes," "often," or "always" view my work as a mission from God.
51.7	60.1	60.1	"Sometimes," "often," or "always" view my work as part of God's plan to care for the needs of people.
52.1	60.7	62.2	"Sometimes," "often," or "always" pursue excellence in my work because of my faith.
88.1	90.0	88.9*	"Agree" or "strongly agree" that people who go into careers like nursing, teaching, or ministry should be admired for that career choice.

Data source: 2010 Baylor Religion Survey Wave III (n=1732).

\*Indicate a lower number would suggest wider adoption of basic Evangelical faith and work theology.

## Chapter 5

### **Making Your Work Matter to God, Part Two: Remedial Theology for the Protestant Ethic in the 20th Century**

While Max Weber's work has cemented the idea of a "Protestant work ethic" in many scholars' minds, the phrase can obscure the significant changes and variation Protestant theology has undergone in relating faith to the economic realm. This chapter historicizes the contemporary Evangelical faith and work movement by situating it within a longer history of American Protestantism. After beginning with a first-hand account of contemporary Evangelical Protestants "reprogramming" their views on work, this chapter attempts to lay out the theoretical framework for probing the relationship between economic activity and religion. This theory then provides the basis to move to a comparison case of two periods of history relevant to the contemporary faith and work movement: 1880 to 1929 and 1930 to 1979. Both of these eras were evaluated with assistance from a very recent surge of historiographical works on the relationship between American conservative religion and business interests, including Phillips-Fein (2009), Tallman (2010), Hammond (2011), Gloege (2015), Kruse (2015), and Grem (2016).

Building from these historical accounts, the present chapter incorporates a culture-production lens to undertake an interpretive study of the cultural frameworks promoted by lay-focused faith and work texts from each respective era. The disparity in book production between these two eras required a variation in constructing samples: for the earlier era, archives of bookseller catalogs for two major presses associated with conservative Protestantism were scanned for any texts that could possibly relate to day-to-day life of the laity. A total of approximately twenty texts were examined. For the later era, the expansion and growth of religious publishing required additional parameters: the texts selected for the sample not only appeared on an Evangelical-affiliated publisher but also have been retroactively recognized as a "faith and work book" on any of several Evangelical-constructed bibliographies. For this era approximately forty texts were examined. More details about the method employed can be found in Appendix A.

Drawing on a grounded theory approach, texts were coded for organically emerging themes related to the relationship between economics and religion. The early era largely lacked a strong consensus on work other than deprioritizing work in various ways. I have labeled this the “silent” era for faith and work. The later era produced four major frameworks, of which the latter two frameworks were much more common. This in-depth empirical study draws on Durkheimian insights that suggest study of these frameworks’ development in their incipient form—in the era immediately after economic retreatism—provides greater insight on their formation and influence through time (Durkheim 1961, cf. Hunter 2000). While a fuller sociological account of why the sharp evolution occurred over the 20th century appears in the next chapter, this chapter concludes with reflection on social theories of modernity and the place of religion in modern settings.

## **Reprogramming Understandings of the Holy**

The syllabus had been handed out, attendance had been taken, and everyone in the class had completed a conversationally generative icebreaker: share the meaning and significance of your name. I was sitting through the first day of a week-long course “Taking Your Soul to Work,” a summer course offered at an Evangelical seminary for three hours every morning one week in July. While a handful of apparent graduate student-appearing students—judging by their MacBook Air laptops, stylish messenger bags, and relatively young age—sat near the back of the classroom, the rest of the forty adults sitting around me seemed far outside their normal routines. While the enrollees were likely somewhat homogenous in all having previous college course experience, the icebreaker question—perhaps intentionally—drew attention to various cultural backgrounds and countries of origin represented, with approximately one-third of students coming from places other than the U.S. I noted that cultures other than my own seem to provide far more interesting fodder for selecting names, having needed to quickly consult Google for my own name’s meaning.

For several decades this seminary has offered week-long summer courses for lay people interested in engaging in the academic side of the Evangelical faith. Likely due to the location in a relatively mild summer climate in the Pacific Northwest, the program has no trouble attracting a who’s-who of top Evangelical scholars to teach the courses, drawing from Evangelical colleges and seminaries, as well as larger research universities like Duke and



Notre Dame. The six different three-hour-a-day courses offered each week, as well as a daily chapel service, evening lectures, and film showings, all take place in a large three-story building with a spacious open-air atrium, creating a unique summer-camp feel for attendees. A centrally located religious bookstore—well-stocked with both academic and more popular titles—provided immediate reference resources or a place for mindless browsing during downtime. Casual conversations with classmates, scholars, visiting lecturers, and seminary professors happen throughout the entire day and often spill out into the local restaurants and bar scene after the evening lecture concludes, with attendees taking advantage of the long summer daylight hours. Though the seminary is located in the midst of a much larger public campus, the building itself offers a bit of a subcultural enclave. The barista working the morning coffee rush figured out she and I share mutual acquaintances in my university's religious studies program (several thousand miles away), while the bookstore workers frequently shared their (rather sophisticated) thoughts on the books I purchased. While the summer program stretches across three months, most courses go only a week and administrators make an effort to “reset” the experience each week as new participants arrive for their courses. This seemed to cater to attendees' limited availability to step away from their regular lives for a week to be part of the program.

As part of the first day's icebreaker, the enrolled students of “Taking Your Soul to Work” were asked to share their occupations. I found I was surrounded by a variety of occupations: school teachers taking advantage of summer flexibility, retirees RVing around the country, pastors looking for fresh ideas for their churches, as well as occupations like nurse practitioner, a financial asset manager, and an international consultant, all clearly dedicating vacation time to be here. The occupational diversity was appropriate for the subject matter: work. The lecturer—a near retired professor of the seminary—drew on the character of Jacob in the Old Testament book of Genesis to pose the question, “Whose work matters to God?” Jacob, best remembered in the Biblical narrative for his place in the lineage of early Israel's patriarchs, is held up as the worker *par excellence*. His efforts as a shepherd tending to his father-in-law's goats are deemed significant to God due to the manner in which Jacob carried out his labor. Jacob's work is labeled “kingdom work” (advancing God's kingdom) because it was done out of the virtues of faith, hope, and love—not, it was noted clearly because his work had an inherently “religious character.”

“What makes work ‘Christian’ is not its religious character but faith, hope, and love,” the lecturer concluded this section of the class. Giving us little time to respond to this point, the lecturer moved on to some more substantively ethical dimensions. A slide with the label “Can God call his people to work here?” appears as the lecturer cues up a bulleted list: work in a nail salon, lead a company that makes \$30 million, serve a corrupt prime minister, work to legalize the gaming industry, develop Islamic smartphone apps for Muslims. The tone of the lecturer takes on a relaxed open-handedness here: rather than pronouncing clear answers to these questions, the lecturer moves into an explanation of why these questions are so complicated. Taking your soul to work was apparently not as straightforward as simply keeping the previously mentioned virtues.

Modern work, the class is told, is “divided.” While these divisions are later directly connected to the theological concept of sin, the list presented here would be at home in any business ethics course: an “ecological divide” that facilitates overconsumption beyond the rate of sustainability, an “ownership divide” that overuses scarce resources, a “leadership divide” of political and economic elites creating undesirable outcomes, and an “income divide” framed by statistics on the vast inequality of wealth between the world’s richest and poorest populations. The message for the class seemed to be that modern work is “fallen” and complicated and, against what was implied earlier, “taking your soul to work” would require more than cursory applications of moral lessons from ancient texts.

At this point the second lecturer of the course--a younger scholar whose expertise seemed to bridge Christian theology and practical organizational management--jumped up to present his portion of the lecture. His less-senior status combined with a slightly less formal lecture style moved the class to a more participatory mode. Supplementing the earlier divisions listed, the lecturer warned of another deep division that was making “one billion people in this world very sick.” This division was the “divided self.” To get the class more involved, the lecturer requested we react to the two words that appear on the screen and pronounce which one is “holier.” We were instructed to shout out our reaction “from our gut instinct” rather than reflect on the answer. The pairs of words were each organized into two columns, forming an easily recognizable dichotomy after all the words appeared. The class complied with the directions and began pronouncing their views on relative holiness on the

following pairs: “Sunday service or Monday meeting,” “congregations or colleagues,” “pastor or politician,” “Sunday school or school,” “church choir or house chores,” “missionaries or managers,” “prayer or work,” “tithing or taxes,” “bread for communion or bread for breakfast,” “sermon or speech,” “ministers in the church or ministers in a cabinet,” “ministry or management,” “seminary or business school,” “church or city,” “worship or work,” and “Bible study or case study.” The first few pairs produced instantaneous and unanimous judgments as the students followed their gut instincts: church-related activities were holier than work-related activities. As the pairs went on, slightly more reluctance began to trickle through the chorus of answers. The didactical motivations for the exercise became clearer, and perhaps as well the earlier lecture points came back into people’s minds. On reaching the bottom of the list the lecturer took a more irresolute tone, pointing to the right-hand column of words, “You know, the Bible actually has a lot of things to say about these things: taxes, management...lots of insights, and yet...” (pointing now to the left-hand column) “...somehow we value these parts more.” He posed a question to the class: Why was it so easy to pronounce the church-related activity as “holier”?

After a moment of silence the class reverted back to the open, comfortable environment established in the icebreaker. Answers tended to be carefully deliberated, non-theological, and almost always tied to personal self-reflection. A woman toward the front of the class volunteered the first reaction: “The intention of the right-hand column is not as clear. It’s like the difference between a box company and a church: we know more about the church’s intentions.” Another woman added, “And it may also come down to what we think God cares about more.” A male pastor attending the class provided his reflection: “And also, who gets the glory out of the work that we do? For some things, God is getting the glory,” as he nodded at the left-handed column. “For others, God is in the periphery.” A younger male added, “To follow that, we often forget whose work it is. On the left side, we assume that’s God’s work. But on the right side we assume that’s our work.” Another moment of silence followed before someone from the far side of the class added “I just think our intuitive answers are how we have been trained.” The lecturer used this observation to transition to his next point: “What is the first moment at which we are programmed to think on left and right sides?” Instead of answering the question, the lecturer referenced to his own development of these views by referring to his father, a very pious person who “carried the Bible everywhere he went.” “My father thought business was bad and church was good,” he said. Shifting to a more theological

orientation, the lecturer observes that our notion of holiness has traditionally tended to equate the sacred with place, persons, or positions. This is what seemed to obstruct the alternative view, the view that all work can be holy.

Throughout this course (and a course on vocation I attended the week prior), I was able to hear Evangelical lay people process these sorts of ideas. The responses tended to follow the ambivalence expressed above: a reflective openness to being convinced “all work matters to God” alongside a recognition that this idea represented something novel to the Evangelical world. Something seemed both comfortable and alien about this framework. The self-selection of the group certainly affected who I witnessed processing these ideas: without question, more theologically literate and religiously engaged lay people were more likely to dedicate resources and time to attend these courses. The summer program itself also embodies a certain ethos of valuing the lay people--and not just their pastors--as active, thoughtful parts of the faith. There is reason, then, to suspect these ideas may not be radical or disruptive to those encountering them through this program: perhaps, to draw on the religious cliché, this seminary is preaching to the choir. And yet, the program devoted three courses to vocation or theology of work the summer I attended. All of these courses saw reason to directly tackle problematic beliefs related to Evangelicals and work.

One near-retirement couple I talked to during a class break-out session confessed this was “a new theology” for them. “We’re still getting our minds around it,” the woman explained to me and others in our group. “At our home church, the concern is ‘are you there every Sunday?’ If you’re not there every Sunday, you’re a problem.” The couple admitted they themselves had been on the wrong end of this heuristic, even for missing church to travel to the seminary program. The message they felt their church instilled was: church first, everything else second. “Maybe it comes down to which comes first: life or the Christian life?” posed the husband. It was not clear that they had an answer to this question: to them, the prioritization of the “Christian life” threatened to affirm church activity as more valuable than all other “life” activities, but not making that prioritization seemed perilous. Another student was also hesitant to accept the conclusion of the exercise outlined above: “I experience God much

stronger in the activities on the left column over the right column.” Several agreeing nods suggested this view was not unique in the room.

## **Religion and Economics: Cultural Frameworks Related to the Meaning of Work**

The seminary course outlined above illuminates out a central dimension of the intersection of religion and economics in the contemporary Evangelical faith and work movement. Before looking at the specific movement, it is worth mapping out why and how religion intersects with economic activity. How such questions are framed depends very much on particular cultural and historic settings in which they are examined. This is due not only to vast historic variation of the intersection but the nature of the terms themselves, both of which are generally perceived to be non-real analytical concepts employed to perform similar taxonomic functions for analysis (see Sahlins 1960 for economy, Smith 1998 for religion). If, as economic historian Karl Polanyi (1957) argues, not all societies even have a separate sphere of activity that can be labeled “economic,” discussions of economic spheres are bounded to particular social settings. Identical arguments have been made for the concept of “religion,” which has a relatively short genealogy and often has limited use in more holistically integrated premodern cultures. Any discussion of the intersection of economics and religion, then, requires location within a certain set of assumptions regarding the relative relationship between the two concepts.

The majority of thinking in social theory around religion and economics is attentive to processes and societal configurations that date back to the origins of modernity. Both Weber (1946) and Parsons (1964) provide accounts of structural differentiation as societies increase in complexity beyond what can be coordinated around one main axis, moving toward institutionalized agencies that take up their own norms and goals. Overarching authorities are lost as “various spheres of values, internal and external, as well as religious and secular” begin to follow their own “internal and lawful autonomy” (Weber 1946:328). It is from this starting point of differentiated spheres that the interrelationship between economics and religion can be conceptualized and explored. Weber identifies in religious systems certain “practical impulses for action which are founded in the psychological and pragmatic contexts of religions” (Weber 1946:267) that effectively bleed out of the religious sphere into the economic sphere. Robert Wuthnow (1995), writing more broadly about the relationship between the material and spiritual,

argues religious systems provide any one of three relationships with the realm of the economic: compartmented, harmonious, or conflicted. Weber was skillfully attuned to all three possibilities. Through most of his work he positions the autonomous norms and rationalities of the economic sphere as particularly prone to conflict. Various antagonisms are conceived between the economic and non-economic considerations of “acosmic brotherliness,” “extraordinary ends,” or “devotion to exceptional sanctity, heroism, or saintly character.” Religion is positioned as one of the chief recipients of this tension. In “Religious Rejections of the World and Their Directions,” Weber (1946b) introduces the section on the economic sphere with the observation that this sphere is responsible for the most obvious tensions between “brotherly religion” and the world.

Yet in other places Weber joins other historically oriented theorists--Karl Polanyi and R.H. Tawney--in exploring the harmonization between religious thought and economic behavior. His most famous contribution to this question is the “Protestant ethic” thesis, which roots the origins of capitalist enterprise within the rationalizing impulses of certain forms of Calvinism. In this thesis the economic realm becomes an arena in which one’s religious identity and personal pursuit of salvation play out, motivated by a “this-worldly asceticism” that connected religious belief to daily activity. Provided that this economic arena provides the necessary requirements of free markets and the technological capacities to rationalize production and earnings, the religious ethos and economic ethos (the “spirit of capitalism”) can not only coexist but pursue mutually shared ends. Tawney’s (1926) history of capitalism draws attention to the institutional interweaving of the economic and religious spheres at the end of the Middle Ages, as ecclesiastical courts held authority to enforce contracts, punish those making usurious loans, and dole out justice for “covetous merchants” and “covetous landowners.” Polanyi’s work (1944) draws attention to economic settings where exchanges are embedded in social relationships and institutions such as religion, which inject their own governing norms over economic conduct, rather than yielding to norms of the market.

Harmonization and conflict are joined by the possibility of compartmentalization, analyzed in greater detail below in the case of American Protestantism at the beginning of the 20th century. Weber observes certain religious systems offer little moral prescription for this world, instead drawing adherents toward “world-rejecting asceticism” or “world-flying mysticism.” Both ideal types provide means to remove adherents from any “inner-

worldly rationalization” because their salvation and hope reside elsewhere. Weber contrasts inner-worldly religions to “contemplative, orgiastic, or apathetic ecstasies” located in Asia that produced “outlets for the yearning to escape from the meaninglessness of inner worldly work” (Weber 1946a:328). These forms of religion, whether Buddhism, Brahmanism, Christian aestheticism, religious pilgrims, or orders vowing celibacy, oppose the world “by resisting the temptation to take the ways of the world seriously” (Weber 1946:326). Thus activity in the economic sphere loses significance, falling to the background of other means of salvation, ethical behavior, or ritualist forms.

These various frameworks provide the means to make sense of the historical-theological narrative contained within the contemporary faith and work movement. While actors themselves express varying interest in or knowledge of this narrative, clearly a particular historical trajectory emerges in the discourse, both in writings and in interviews with current movement leaders. This narrative recognizes a “before” configuration where Evangelical faith was compartmentalized away from work, indifferent to the economic behavior of laypeople. The “after” configuration unanimously rejects this compartmentalization, though with varying understandings of *how* Evangelical thought moved beyond that earlier configuration. Put differently, there is consensus that “your work matters to God,” but there are different understandings as to why this belief is now valid, as most leaders and adherents recognize this as a new development in their faith system. Certainly narratives related to group identities carry out important functions independent of correspondence with historical validity: identity formation, boundary making, ethical orientations, or symbolic meanings may only tangentially relate to (and depend on) history (see Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983, Olick & Robbins 1998, Davis 2002, for religion see Hervieu-Leger 2000). However, analysis of cultural usages of history does not preclude linking the accounts of actors to the accounts of historians in order to probe intersections, tensions, and correspondences. The recent surge of historiographical work on this subject suggests rising interest and significance in the same historical narrative that now animates the contemporary movement. Thus, the below section walks through historical developments that lend legitimacy to the narrative provided by the actors: Evangelicalism, while once entrenched with moral frameworks related to

economic activity, lost those frameworks around the turn of the century, opening the way for a new set of Evangelical leaders to recover those frameworks during the second half of the 20th century.<sup>40</sup>

## Losing Luther and the Protestant Ethic: The Economic Retreatism of Revivalist Protestantism

Weber and other historians locate a long history of Protestant religious teaching related to economic activity from the 17th to 19th century. Abend (2014) locates in this discourse the antecedents of modern business ethics, as pastors and writers show great concern for the moral behaviors of those in professions related to finance, banking, and trade. Many of the Puritan figures from the early colonial era--John Cotton, Cotton Mather, Richard Baxter, Richard Sibbes--had no shortage of moral pronouncements related to economic and day-to-day activity. Weber connects these teachings back to the thought of Martin Luther, though the mediating influence of John Calvin becomes equally influential. Luther injected a radical break with the Catholic doctrine on vocation (*beruf*) by applying the word to nonclerical positions, thereby flattening any vocational hierarchy regarding the value of work. Because all positions on earth can equally "participate in God's creating and sustaining activity on earth," Luther proposed a radical equality in the "offices" in which Christians serve: "...the works of monks and priests, be they ever so holy and arduous, differ not a whit in the sight of God from the works of the farmer toiling in the field or the woman going about her household tasks...[Indeed] the menial housework of a maidservant or manservant is

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<sup>40</sup> My use of terms and categories attempts to merge sometimes inconsistent historical terminology regarding the interweavings of American Protestant groups, identities, and supra-denominational associations. The historical trajectory outlined here attempts to stay close to the following terminology: "American Protestantism" broadly encompasses all non-Catholic forms of Christianity in the U.S. and, used here, is generally applied to the American faith landscape up to the mid-19th century. Beginning around the 1850s to 1870s "revivalists"--on the heels of the Second Great Awakening--began splitting off from the "Mainline Protestant" denominations that had played a greater role in the previous centuries (Congregationalist, Lutheran, Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian). Marsden (2001) maps this transformation onto a period between the 1870s to 1920s. By the end of this era many of the "revivalists" had begun self-identifying as "fundamentalists," drawing their identity from the publication of a series of theological treatises called *The Fundamentals* in the 1920s. Out of the fundamentalist movement emerged the "neo-Evangelicals" of the post-war years: leaders like Carl Henry and Billy Graham who began distancing themselves from the more separatist tendencies of fundamentalists in order to begin building new institutions and forming broader ecumenical coalitions (Smith 1998). Modern "Evangelicalism" flows out of these neo-Evangelical efforts. Thus, while trying to be sensitive to the nomenclature of the particular era in discussion, *this narrative posits a theological, cultural, and institutional lineage from late 19th century revivalists to fundamentalists to neo-Evangelicals to modern Evangelicals*. Despite support by many central historians of religion (Noll 1994, Marsden 2006), there are many historical nuances lost in positing this era-spanning lineage. Dayton (1976) has effectively drawn attention to the various African-American traditions, charismatic groups, Wesleyan groups, and Holiness Movement churches (e.g. The Salvation Army) that, while rooted in late 19th century revivalism, were far more committed to social reform (and at times, postmillennialism as opposed to the far gloomier premillennialism) than the "fundamentalist" characterization allows. Due to the subject of interest--20th century Evangelical parachurch activity--I have deferred evaluation of many churches and traditions to a combination of sociological definitions of "Evangelical" denominations (Steenland et al. 2000) and denominational affiliation with the National Association of Evangelicals. Both of these analytical heuristics end up favoring historically white denominations as "Evangelical" denominations over historically African-American "Black Protestant" denominations. This analytical exclusiveness seems to correspond to the empirical case of study: the seminaries, book publishers, denominations, denominationally affiliated clergy, and racial-ethnic identities of the actors surveyed were largely associated with historically white traditions. One other important note: many historians characterize a larger swatch of 19th century Protestants "Evangelical," a term I prefer to keep closer to the sociological usage that limits it to certain 20th century conservative denominations (non-Mainline groups) and their theological-institutional antecedents.



often more acceptable to God than all the fasting and other works of a monk or a priest, because the latter lacks faith!" (Luther 1915:241). The early American Puritans incorporated into this affirmation of work the "rationalized" ethical teaching of Calvin, who commands Christians to enter into "worldly avocations in a right way when our hope depends exclusively on God" (Calvin 1849:107). Early American Puritan pastors, following these sentiments, filled their sermons with moral instruction to ensure economic activity was conducted in the way deemed proper by Scripture.

While American Protestant clergy continue this form of preaching into the 20th century, the notable story relevant to contemporary Evangelicalism is the far less documented off-ramp from economic thinking pursued by many conservative Protestants at the end of the 19th century. Beginning in the 1870s, particularly in response to the social effects of industrialization, the rift between conservative and "social" Protestant Christianity begins to emerge. Abend's history (2014) draws together a number of clergy from Mainline denominations from the 1880s to the 1890s—Episcopalian ministers Rev. R. Heber Newton and Phillips Brooks, Unitarian minister Charles Fletcher Dole, Methodist scholar J.W. Mendenhall—that maintained a thick account of Christian responsibilities to avoid the pitfalls and dangers of "mammonism." The social effects of 19<sup>th</sup>-century industrialization also concurrently spurred a new wave of Protestant "social gospel" and "social Christianity" that directly responded to the ways far more workers became incorporated into labor markets and labor processes grounded outside their own local communities (see Rodgers 1974, Thomas 1989). Yet a growing number of Protestants opted out of these trajectories and moved in the opposite direction. Here historians have traced out two theological trends in late 19th century revivalist Protestantism that I argue contributed to the movement away from the inner-worldly asceticism that famously characterized both earlier American Protestantism and continued to guide most Mainline Protestant denominations into the 20th century. These two trends, I argue below, contribute to gutting turn-of-the-century revivalist Protestantism of the moral resources necessary to preserve either inner-worldly asceticism or Christian frameworks for imputing meaning upon economic activity. The majority of 20<sup>th</sup>-century Evangelical "theology of work," then, is self-consciously battling the enduring consequences of these trends in order to reconnect American Evangelicalism with both its theological forerunners and its contemporary Mainline (and Catholic) counterparts.

The first trend is the rise of premillennialism among more conservative Evangelicals. Spurred partially from gradual disillusionment with the social conditions of the mid-19th century, Evangelicals began seeing the present age as too corrupt to be reformed or saved: only the imminent return of Christ warranted hope. This premillennialism was not initially part of the Evangelicalism of the early-19th century, which held to a postmillennialist view that could entail optimism for societal reformation (Marsden 2006). However, the darker premillennialism began to take hold within mid and late-century revivalism, led by evangelists like Dwight L. Moody and promoted widely by the establishment of “Bible institutes” that promoted the newer form of eschatology. This apocalyptic orientation shifted understandings of ethics and social reform movements. Though Evangelicals were eclipsed by the more confident millennialism of other 19<sup>th</sup>-century faiths that posited dates for the end of the world (Millerites, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventist, Christian Scientists), Evangelical premillennialism lacked no confidence that a pending return of Christ and resulting judgment would result in the complete destruction of existing society. Investing in societal interventions and political efforts, then, came under suspicion and was often viewed as a poor investment of resources. Moody’s account of his calling confirmed this turn away from the world: in a 1877 sermon he reported having a vision of God showing him that “this world is a wrecked vessel...God has given me a lifeboat and said ‘Moody, save all you can’” (quoted in Strong 1997). This infusion of apocalypticism, in Weberian terms, shifted revivalist Protestantism away from the earlier Puritan inner-worldly asceticism toward Weber’s category of world-flying mysticism.

The second trend is the turn away from social and structural conditions toward moral individualism. Moody’s “lifeboat theology” (emphasizing being pulled out and “saved” from the world) did not eradicate activism and concern for others but drastically rechanneled its form. Evangelicalism continued to invest in voluntary societies and programs aimed to help the newly emerging demographic of the urban poor of the era, but this concern was channeled more and more toward personal morality, particularly in promoting behaviors like abstaining from drinking, dancing, playing cards, and attending the theater (Strong 1997). Reform efforts moved more in the direction of morally regenerating the urban poor rather than addressing the underlying social conditions. Williams (2008) pinpoints the 1870s as the crucial decade for the fate of individualistic Protestantism which, having had

little effective response to prevalent political corruption, economic instability, and anxieties toward immigration, lost credibility for many adherents. Many of the social gospel forerunners--Walter Rauschenbusch, Washington Gladden, Josiah Strong, Lyman Abbott--begin gaining popularity immediately after in the 1880s. This emerging rift at times created tensions that played out within voluntary organizations, as revivalists active in relief agencies--many times backed by economic elite board members--shifted their support away from worker activism and trade unions toward Bible studies and prohibition (Fones-Wolf 1989).

Moody's lifeboat theology left a lasting imprint on early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Protestantism through the establishment of the Moody Bible Institute and several publications edited by early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Protestant leaders John Gray and R.A. Torrey (see Marsden 2006, Gloege 2015), as well as the establishment of several publishing companies.

Moody in many ways represented a transitional Evangelical revivalist, at times incorporating the pragmatic social concerns of this world while also turning a blind eye to many emerging political tensions (Gloege 2015). Charles G. Finney (1792-1895) who came before him more directly appended social concerns of slavery abolition, temperance, and social transformation onto his revivalist message. Billy Sunday (1862-1935), identified by historians as Moody's heir apparent (Strong 1997), was far more devoted to individual salvation and confidently told one audience "we've had enough of this godless social service nonsense." A 1914 summer revival in Philadelphia brought Sunday directly in conflict with industrial relations politics: the industrial elite that coordinated and financed the revival celebrated that Sunday "[made] people look to the salvation of their souls" rather than "agitating for a raise in wages," (quoted in McLoughlin 1955), while local unions and Social Gospel congregations preemptively denounced the event for its affiliation with nativism and usage of non-union labor.

These theological changes did not occur in a vacuum: there are unquestionable sociological component to these shifts. Weber's famous works "The Social Psychology of the World Religions" (1946a) and "Religious Rejections of the World and Their Directions" (1946b) are both attentive to the way particular social strata "strongly influenced the practical ethic of their respective religion" while resisting single causal, "functional" understandings of religious ethics. Here, for the particular case, there is much debate about late 19<sup>th</sup>-century revivalism and its relationship to social class and the interests of the industrial elites. Two class-oriented theses have been thoroughly debated by

historians: first, that revivalist and more world-denying forms of religious faith prevailed among those alienated by the social order of industrializing America, and secondly, that this form of faith aligned with the interests of the industrial elites in creating a more docile and disciplined labor force. While the topic at hand does not permit a full evaluation of the validity of these claims, the analysis below lends tentative support to the first thesis but only complicates the second.<sup>41</sup> Weber's systematization provides a relatively straightforward explanation of why economic frameworks remained central to some forms of Protestantism but not others. For the relatively elite, well-educated New England Mainline Protestant clergy and their equally resourced congregants, there was a continued need for maintaining the previous century's inner-worldly asceticism and valorization of work. World-escaping asceticism (what he later calls mysticism) was hardly a temptation. On a broader scale, late 19<sup>th</sup>-century Protestantism across urban settings had become predominantly entrenched in middle-class interests: economic frameworks here, if salient, tended to individualize working-class strife and legitimate *laissez-faire* capitalism (McLoughlin 1956, Smith 1980, Gloege 2015). The social strata in which revivalist (and nascent fundamentalist) Protestantism took hold was far closer to where Weber located more religious "mysticism." Mysticism, for Weber, focused on "contemplative possession of the holy" over action in the world: action comes to appear as "endangering the absolutely irrational and other-worldly religious state (Weber 1946b:325); Thomas's (1989) empirical investigation of where revivalist denominations saw the largest memberships in 1890 (looking at counties in Maine, New York, Ohio and Iowa) reveals the greatest penetration in areas with smaller immigration populations, less capital invested in the manufacturing sector, and more workers involved in small-scale farming operations.<sup>42</sup> As Hunter (1983) observes of fundamentalists, "their nearly exclusive orientation toward spiritual

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<sup>41</sup> Space does not permit engaging the expansive historical research on the linkage between elite interests and revivalism (see Smith 1957, Johnson 1978). However, two premises of the argument in favor of revivalism serving class interests require further examination. The first is that revivalism instills additional economic virtues--industriousness, responsibility, discipline, sobriety--above and beyond the preexisting virtues instilled by 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-century Puritanism, Methodism, or other forms of Protestantism. Other historians have observed that these earlier forms were instilling these virtues on their own, requiring no such intervention by 19th century revivalist movements (see Hobsbawn 1959). It is not clear that late 19th century revivalism "sweetened the deal" for elites. As an alternative explanation, revivalism of the late 19th century, with its individualizing impulse and the prioritization of personal piety, may very well have loosened workers' commitments to external forms of control and submission to *any* authorities (see Thomas 1989). Additionally, Moody's theology later in his career may very well be read as a concession that he could not do anything regarding the challenges of industrialization (see McLoughlin 1956), turning his attention *away* from instilling discipline in the masses. Secondly, it is difficult to see that the turn-of-the-century apocalypticism, prioritization of faith vocations over secular vocations, and elevation of spiritual concerns over material activity would do any favors for the ruling elites: "economic retreatism" likely encouraged workers to subordinate their day-to-day work to "religious" work and thereby invest greater energy and time in extra-work activities. It is actually later 20th century theologies of work discussed below--not turn-of-the-century economic retreatism--that deserve far more scrutiny for their alignment with ruling elites' interests.

<sup>42</sup> This rural aspect of revivalism is challenged by Watt's (2014) observation that many fundamentalists at the turn of the century lived in cities, with Chicago and many northern cities serving as the central hubs of the movement. These urban centers may have functioned as centers of

salvation proved adaptive to the deprivation they experienced as well. Personal salvation and the variable degrees of holiness attainable by the believer served as compensations for the privileges denied him in the social and economic sphere” (1983:39). Thus, the differences in these social conditions point to a clear economic and social component regarding which forms of Protestantism discarded the inner-worldly asceticism of the previous century.

## **Revivalist Protestantism Goes Silent on Work: 1880-1929**

As revivalist Evangelicalism gave way to the fundamentalism of the 1910s, 1920s, and 1930s, the previous century's Protestant consensus had decisively divided into two camps (Marty 1970, Marsden 2006).<sup>43</sup> Many histories of Protestant theology of work or economics stay fairly close to the Mainline Protestant camp for the early 20th century (e.g. Miller 2007), sometimes omitting conservative and fundamentalists altogether (e.g. Bennett 1982, Williams 1982, Abend 2014). There is good reason for this: the first half of the century saw a surge in Mainline Protestant activity. Ecumenical gatherings (Stockholm in 1925, Oxford in 1937) devoted to themes of “Life and Work” and the “strategic importance of the laity as an expression of the Church and its calling and function in the world” carved out space for thinking through secular work (Miller 2007). These ecumenical efforts give way to the formation of the World Council of Churches in 1948. Mainline thinkers like Hendrik Kraemer, Hans-Ruedi Weber, and Elton Trueblood begin producing fairly developed theologies of work in that time, emphasizing the religious callings of laity to live out their faith. While these developments offer important milestones in the wider Christian history of faith and work, this Mainline activity can easily overshadow the far more interesting story from the “other camp” of American Protestantism: a nearly complete void of any organizational activity,

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institutions like Bible camps and seminaries and culture-producing organizations that then diffused their cultural wares out into more rural areas (see Gloege 2015).

<sup>43</sup> There is a growing literature on historians challenging the “two camps” heuristic of 20th century American Protestantism. Exemplary works making this challenge are Dayton (1976), Wacker (1985), Strong (1997). Most chip away at the divide from both sides, bringing out both the overlooked social reform aspects of conservative-fundamentalist figures (Finney, Moody, Torrey, etc.) and the individualistic aspect of some social reform figures, particularly Walter Rauschenbusch. Perhaps the most significant challenge is more developed scholarship on African-American traditions, Wesleyans, and Holiness Church groups that preserved both individual and social aspects of their mission. Various low-church Evangelicals--the “Primitive Methodists” of Western England in the 1810s (Hobsbawm 1959), Salvation Army leaders in the 1890s (Murdoch 1996), Holiness churches in North Carolina in the 1920s (Pope 1942)--allied with worker interests amidst labor conflicts and deplored labor conditions produced by *laissez-faire* capitalism. A 1930 resolution by the Southern Baptist Convention--which overall experienced the social ills of industrialism far later than Northern Baptists (McGee 2001)--provided tempered support for the efforts of organized labor and their demands for shorter workdays, fair wages, and protections from child labor (Cavalcanti 1998). Many of these efforts were born from firsthand experience with populations whose “spiritual” conditions could not be so easily disentangled from their material and social conditions (see Marsden 1991).

publishing, and systematic thought related to work and economics. Examining each of the two camps preserves this fuller story: Mainline Protestantism, in maintaining the previous century's inner worldly asceticism and care for ethical conduct in economic affairs, drew upon both new energy surrounding Social Gospel Christianity as well as concerted efforts to fight laity underengagement in order to ride a surge of theologies of work through the first half of the 20th century. In sharp contrast, over the same time period, fundamentalists largely went silent on faith and work for the reasons mentioned above. Hunter (1983) observes this silence reflects the privatization of personal salvation combined with rigorous attention to private behavioral morality, both of which moved the "indexes of divine favor" away from the public arena of economic behaviors. Work no longer mattered as much, if at all. As expressed in the accounts below, this silence had long-term consequences for the theological and cultural progeny of fundamentalism, as neo-Evangelicals in the middle of the century found themselves tasked with steering the ship back on course.

Between 1880 to 1929 texts dedicated to faith and work are virtually nonexistent for fundamentalists. Catalogs from Moody Bible Institute's two major presses--Bible Institute Colportage Association and Fleming H. Revell Company--reveal no titles related to work, career, economics, commerce, or any other sort of applied ethical thinking to a secular occupation.<sup>44</sup> Many of the books written for lay Christians focus entirely on one's devotional, prayer, evangelistic efforts, and thought life with no reference to any material or social context that might shape one's day-to-day experience. An 1896 book called *Money: Thoughts for God's Stewards*, written by a South African missionary, manages to discuss the benefits of generosity and supporting Christian missions for ninety-nine pages with virtually no reference to how Christians might find themselves in possession of money. In the rare case reference to work was made, money-making was associated with worldliness: "Many men have to be continually engaged in making money--by nature the heart dragged down and bound to earth in dealing with what is the very life of the world. It is faith that can give a continual victory over this temptation" (Murray 1896:17-18). Asserting

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<sup>44</sup> While scanning archival listings of early Evangelical books, one book entitled "Faith at Work," written by Gertrude S. Trowbridge, in 1924, jumped out as being perhaps the earliest produced Evangelical faith and work book. As it turned out (on acquiring the book from a used bookseller), the book rather surprisingly had nothing to do with work. The phrase "faith at work" during that era, as it became obvious on reading the book, could also signify an active or efficacious faith, as the phrase "your tax dollars at work" signifies. Perhaps due to the arguments outlined above, the publisher and author at the time of publishing were not concerned a book with this title might be misidentified as relevant to one's "work life," a mistake reserved for the plight of a future researcher.

the Protestant Reformation may have gone too far in negating callings to poverty, the author praises the poverty of Christ and his inner circle of followers who set aside labor for ministry, holding them up as an example for the “inner-most children of God” today.

Another book for the laity written by R.A. Torrey--called *Personal Work: How to Work for Christ* (1901)--goes into great detail in providing guidance for the layperson's calling to evangelize others. Yet again the book manages to almost completely neglect the workplace. This is because the “Christian work” the title refers to is not economic (or informal) labor but the work of evangelism. In a chapter entitled “Where to do Personal Work” (referring to person-to-person evangelism as one’s personal work), the author considers five other places evangelism might be conducted before getting to the sixth item in the list: “At the place of business.” The account of Jesus calling the disciple Levi while he was “sitting at the receipt of custom” (more modern translations say “at the tax booth”) is held up as exemplary for the reader, though Torrey immediately qualifies: “Of course we ought not to interrupt men and hinder their proper performance of their business duties. Many a work-man has rare opportunities to speak with his fellow workmen, sometimes during work hours, sometimes during the noon rest.” The author adds even more reason for skepticism of workplace evangelism in the following paragraph: “As already said, it will not do to interrupt a man at his business, neither will it do generally to deal with him when others are around and listening, nor should he be taken at an hour when he is in a bad temper; but one who has that discretion that God is so ready to give (James 1:5) will find many opportunities for doing the Master's work. It is quite possible oftentimes to drop a word or even to have a little talk, when there is not a great pressure of business, with the clerk who sells us goods, or with the barber who shaves us, or with the boy who blacks our shoes. These are the five marks of a good opportunity; when one is alone, unoccupied, in good humor, communicative and in a serious mood.” There are several remarkable things about this text: first, that “at the place of business” is somehow sixth on the list of places to evangelize (right before “On [Train] Cars and Boats,” coming in at seventh); later writers quite adamantly point out that lay persons spend most of their lives at the workplace. Second, the author sees the workplace only rarely providing suitable conditions for evangelism. Thirdly, the passage has lumped together opportunities to speak to “fellow workmen” alongside general marketplace interactions with other businesses, not even granting our own “place of business” primacy over any other as a potential evangelism site. A later passage in

the book considers the possibility of evangelizing in prisons, jails, and hospitals and, almost in passing, recognizes "nurses in hospitals have a rare opportunity of doing personal work in the institutions where they are employed...A very unusual opportunity is also open to the Christian physician. Indeed a true Christian physician will oftentimes find opportunities for doing personal work that even the minister of the Gospel cannot find." Importantly, this is not so much a reflection on how nurses and physicians serve God through their professions (which would become a common refrain in later writing) as much as it is an auxiliary observation while discussing the "mission field" of the hospital.

A book on personal evangelism--*Quiet Talks on Service*, published in 1906 and written by Samuel Dickey Gordon--articulates how central missions are to the lay Christian life. Gordon, a popular lay minister and lecturer who worked for the Young Men's Christian Association for much of his life, identifies as "highly favored in privilege" three vocations that respond to the imperative to live an "active life of aggressive earnestness in winning men": those that can give "full strength and time" (professional missionaries), those that go to city slum, and those that go to foreign land. Gordon then moves on to the "great majority" who are "absorbed for most of the waking hours of the day in earning something to eat, and something to wear, and somewhere to sleep" (ibid:45). Though judging this group does not warrant the "high favor" of privilege, Gordon is confident they too can locate "some bit of spare time, with planning, that can be used in direct service in church, or school, or mission" (ibid:45). However, looking at this "great majority," Gordon recounts a deep concern of "some new versions" of the last words of Jesus he sees gaining popularity: he finds them not "in the common print, but printed in lives, the lives of men" (ibid:46). Two "revisions" are articulated by Gordon:

"All power hath been given unto Me, therefore go ye, and make--coins of gold--oh, belong to church of course--that is proper and has many advantages--and give too. There are advantages about that--give freely, or make it seem freely--give to missions at home and abroad. That is regarded as a sure sign of a liberal spirit. But be careful about the *proportion* of your giving. For the real thing that counts at the year's



end is how much you have added to the stock of dollars in your grasp. These other things are good, but--merely incidental. This thing of getting gold is the main drive" (ibid:46).<sup>45</sup>

"Make a place for yourself, in your profession, in society. Make a comfortable living;--with a wide margin of meaning to that word 'comfortable'--belong to the church, become a pillar, or at least move in the pillar's circle, give of course, even freely in appearance, but remember these are the dust in the scale, the other is the thing that weighs. All of one's energies must be centered on the main thing" (ibid:47).

Gordon's response to these "revisions" is a call to return to the commands of Jesus: "May I ask you to listen very quietly, while I repeat the Master's own words over very softly and clearly, so that they may get into the inner cockles of our hearts anew? 'All power hath been given unto Me; therefore go ye, and *make disciples of all nations.*' These other translations are wrong. They are misleading. *The one main thing is influencing men for Jesus*" (ibid:47, italics in original).

Another text from this time period captures the prioritization of regulating moral behavior over work issues: in this case work receives secondary attention in order to make a larger point on the dangers of modern vices. *Popular Amusements and the Christian Life*, written by Perry Wayland Sinks, appeared on the Bible Institute Colportage Association press in 1896. The book spends most of its time lamenting the moral dangers posed by "modern dance," "the card table," gambling, and theater. However, in the final chapter the author takes time to respond to the question possibly posed in response to the hundred-page diatribe against so many recreational activities: "What amusement is left us, if these are given up?" (Sinks 1896:104). After summoning an impressive degree of consternation and dismay toward this hypothetical inquisitor, Sinks provides a cursory outline of a work ethic. However, the complete lack of detail on the tangible activities related to work, labor, or occupations suggests the notion of work is being engaged primarily for a secondary function: to suppress energy devoted to vice-laden amusements. "There will be preserved, in all reasonable and right amusements, a due relation between work and

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<sup>45</sup> Setting aside the final sentences about pursuing wealth as its own end, Gordon's "false" message of Jesus resembles the "re-sacralizers" framework discussed later in the chapter: seek lots of wealth as long as you support good causes. This draws out the sharp contrast between the economic retreatism promoted by this earlier era compared to the more engaged faith and work of the later era.

diversion--between the time devoted to pleasures and that taken up in duties. Christian ethics lay an abiding obligation to work upon every person capable of work...We recognize the pleasure side of our nature; we must recognize the duty side as well. Diversion is a demand of our natures but diversion must be in relation with labor" (ibid:110). Amusements, according to Sinks, should be sought after so that "we may be better fitted thereby for the work of life" (ibid:111). Sinks goes on to quote a "Dr. Dale" on proper amusements which send one home at night in "restful slumber" to prepare for the next day of labor: "The object of all recreation is to increase our capacity for work, to keep the blood pure, and the brain bright, and the temper kindly and sweet" (ibid:111). Interestingly, while the ends of recreation appear to be recharging one's body for labor, the reader is never told the ends of work itself, or why such ends would warrant subordinating recreation to them.

Finally, a few works in this era discussed work in relation to heaven. The "eternal rest" of heaven is spoken of as the stark opposite to the "worldly toils" of work, a motif that imbues little value or spiritual significance to work. D.L. Moody's work *One Thousand and One Thoughts from My Library* (1898) pulls together two quotations that capture this sharp dichotomy between worldly toils and spiritual rest. The first comes from an 1855 sermon delivered by Charles Spurgeon:

"O weary sons and daughters of Adam! you will not have to drive the ploughshare into the unthankful soil in heaven; you will not need to rise to daily toils before the sun hath risen, and labor still when the sun hath long ago gone to his rest: but ye shall be still, ye shall be quiet, ye shall rest yourselves. Toil, trouble, travail, and labor are words that cannot be spelled in heaven: they have no such things there; for they always rest" (Moody 1898:337).<sup>46</sup>

The second also pronounces the awaiting rest in heaven, positioning the afterlife as a "weekend" to our days spent working:

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<sup>46</sup> The passage immediately preceding this quotation, from the original 1855 Spurgeon sermon: "To my mind, one of the best views of heaven is, that it is a land of rest—especially to the working man. Those who have not had to work hard, think they will love heaven as a place of service. That is very true. But to the working man, to the man who toils with his brain or with his hands, it must ever be a sweet thought that there is a land where we shall rest. Soon, this voice will never be strained again; soon, these lungs will never have to exert themselves beyond their power; soon, this brain shall not be racked for thought; but I shall sit at the banquet-table of God; yea, I shall recline on the bosom of Abraham, and be at ease for ever." While I do not have the space here to explore the evolution of views on heaven and work, leaders in the contemporary faith and work movement argue our earthly vocations and projects *will carry into the afterlife*: the "heavenly city will be cultivated and maintained by workers whose callings find their ultimate fulfillment in eternity (see Keller 2014). Much of the contemporary view consciously responds to and corrects a disembodied, immaterial, and overly-spiritualized vision of heaven which is accredited to a spiritual-material dualism judged antithetical to visions of redeeming work and recognizing its innate dignity (see Sherman & Hendricks 1987).

“[Commentary on Hebrews 4:9] How sweet the music of this first heavenly chime floating across the waters of death from the towers of the new Jerusalem! *Pilgrim*, faint under thy long and arduous pilgrimage, hear it! It is REST. *Soldier*, carrying still upon thee the blood and dust of battle, hear it! It is REST. *Voyager*, tossed on the waves of sin and sorrow, driven hither and thither on the world’s heaving ocean of vicissitude, hear it! The haven is in sight; the very waves that are breaking on the shore seem to murmur--*So giveth He His beloved* REST. It is the long-drawn sigh of existence at last answered. The toil and travail of earth’s protracted week is at an end. The calm of its unbroken Sabbath is begun. Man, weary man, has found at last the long sought-for *rest* in the bosom of his God” (Moody 1898:337, italics in original).

There were some exceptions to this “silence” on work and economics. However, interestingly, the passages from this era that included more explicit theological reflection on work almost always appeared in a specific genre or form. When writers and pastors of the era published verse-by-verse Scripture commentaries, they occasionally reached for positive affirmation of work, labor, and occupation. For example:

“[Daily scripture readings for July 31st, 1899, commentary on Matthew 13:55] How Christ honors manual labor! For thirty years He labored with His hands, sharing in the support of the little Nazareth home. It is thus that He is able to sympathize with us, not only in our great trials and disappointments, but also in all the little annoying and petty trials of daily life. If He who came to earth to accomplish the redemption of the human race could afford to spend so long a time in the Nazareth workshop, let no man despise any labor to which He is called. Some of the grandest ministries have been accomplished by men and women who have undertaken the commonest drudgeries and most menial work as a sacredly entrusted commission for doing good; and from some humble workshop or remote cottage on the mountain-side have emanated influences that have been felt the world over. Oh, the possibilities of a mother’s consecrated labors, however commonplace they may be. Thank God for the lessons of the workshop of Nazareth!” (Moody 1899:300).

While the mention of “grandest ministries” accomplished through menial work is somewhat ambiguous, the appeal to Jesus’s identity as a worker becomes a common theme in the post-1930 era. Another passage celebrates

the “redemption” of all trades and work by appealing, again, to Jesus’s time as a worker. In this view worldly toil is now sanctified:

“See how our whole life is redeemed, so that it may all be lived unto God and for eternity, and none of it be lost. He entered the kingdom of toil and subdued it to Himself for our salvation, so that toil is no more a curse to the Christian workman. The build, as he lays brick on brick, may be building a heavenly temple; the carpenter, as he planes the wood, may thereby by refining his own character and that of others around him; the merchant, as he buys and sells, may be buying the pearl of great price; the statesman may be directing the affairs of an eternal kingdom; the householder may be setting her house in order for the coming of her Lord. As the blood of the sacrifice was put, not only upon the ear, but upon the toe, of Aaron and his sons, so our Lord, when by entering it, He sanctified human life, sanctified its meanest and most secular things, spending His holy and divine life mostly in the workshop. Brethren, whatever our station, we may live a holy, god-like, useful life” (Moody 1899:708).

As demonstrated in the next section, these themes resemble the cultural frameworks that become more dominant in the later historical era. However, in stark contrast to the later era, these points never warranted their own books or publications in the earlier era, showing up only deep within a “Bible Reading with Notes” column of a monthly periodical. Two additional qualifiers might also be made: one, these selected passages were interspersed with other Scriptural commentary that, in discussing work and labor in Scripture, connected it with “spiritualized” work of evangelism or even acts of personal piety, comparable to the “personal work” theme analyzed above. And this leads to the second point: it appears commentary writers were afforded wide leeway on what “labor” represents in Scripture. As an example of an alternative interpretation that neither redeems secular work nor spiritualizes it, one commentator embraces occupation, work, and trade as a valuable site of evangelism--the first cultural framework taken up in the next section--and even extends “occupation” beyond formal paid work:

“[From a longer commentary on the book of Luke] Luke v. 3 *And he entered into one of the ships which was Simon’s*. Do you envy this fisherman who lent his boat to Jesus? He offers us the same honor; He begs us to do Him the same favor; He comes to each of us and asks us to let Him have *our daily occupation* as His preaching place--the office and workshop, the counter, the desk, the mother’s work in the home, the

servants work in the house--this is the pulpit He seeks. *Will you let Him have it to-day?*" (qtd in Moody 1898:200, italics in original).

## **Making Your Work Matter to God: The Four Evangelical Theologies of Work, 1930-1980**

While turn-of-the-century revivalist and fundamentalist Protestantism may have been on the cultural margins, the central challenge its adherents confront at the beginning of the century was not peripheral to the time. At nearly the same time that American fundamentalism adherents find themselves navigating the modern world sans economic frameworks, social theorists of the time period were providing directly applicable diagnoses related to the unique plight of the self within modernity. Here there is an uncanny congruence: turn-of-the-century observers begin to recognize the modern self is increasingly challenged by the fragmentation and compartmentalization of modern life. Of course these observers are likely not eyeing the plight of anti-modern, culturally marginalized American Protestants,<sup>47</sup> but injecting the modern self-diagnoses here provides a means of better understanding what fundamentalism found itself up against. To generalize broadly and somewhat speculatively, American fundamentalism had reduced its *supply* of moral and religious frameworks related to work and economic behaviors at the same time that the sphere differentiation of modernity had increased the *demand* for such frameworks.<sup>48</sup>

Weber's work, highlighted above, best expresses the demands that modern sphere differentiation puts on the self.

While observing that "salvation religions" have always come into conflict with "the orders and values of this world," Weber argues the split between the two has grown wider as the "various spheres of values" have become

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<sup>47</sup> Weber, however, comes fairly close to surveying revivalist (and nascent fundamentalist) churches while surveying the integration of faith and commerce in the smaller towns of Ohio and North Carolina in 1904, as described in the essay "The Protestant Sects and the Spirit of Capitalism" (Weber 1946). The majority of the essay focuses on how membership in Protestant churches functions as a testimony to honorable and honest personal conduct, a stand-in for more aristocratic social clubs or "good breeding" in Europe. The examples of business-elite religiosity he cites suggest the religious denominations he saw up close may have been slightly higher in the socioeconomic status hierarchy than the more revivalist-leaning churches of the time.

<sup>48</sup> William Jewett Tucker, President of Dartmouth College from 1893 to 1909 and critic of conservative Protestantism, articulates this in his 1919 autobiography. Looking back on the "Progressive Movement in Theology," Tucker observes of "non-progressive" Christianity, "The religion of the previous generation had become largely introspective. The proof of its reality rested in certain experiences. It sent the religious man to his closet...but it did not send him into the shop or the factory. It was not the type of religion fitted to understand or to meet the problems involved in the rise of industrialism...It was bold to the highest degree of sacrificial courage in its missionary zeal, but it shrank from contact with the growing material power of the modern world" (Tucker 1919:97).

increasingly rationalized and sublimated to their own values. These spheres have then drifted into tension. Should the modern self commit to carrying out the “ethic of brotherliness” in a sphere not oriented around those values, Weber observes those action will be condemned as irrational. A dark prognosis of modernity follows: “In the midst of a culture that is rationally organized for a vocational workaday life, there is hardly any room for the cultivation of acosmic brotherliness, unless it is among the strata who are economically carefree. Under the technical and social conditions of a rational culture, an imitation of the life of Buddha, Jesus, or Francis seems condemned to failure for purely external reasons” (Weber 1946b:357). Charles Cooley makes a similar assessment of modernity in 1918: “The modern world makes distracting claims upon us. Shall we go with our family and class, or break away in pursuit of a larger humanitarian ideal? Is it better to ‘mind our own business’ and go in for technical excellence, or to try for culture? Shall we follow the morals of our church or those of our profession?...So long as we are conscious only of our country, our family, our class, or our business, we may make a kind of god of that, but conflicting ideals force us to seek a larger unity” (Cooley 1918:254). The well-known sociological study of “Middletown” provided empirical support for this phenomena: “In theory, religious beliefs dominate all other activities in Middletown [in 1929]; actually, large regions of Middletown’s life appear uncontrolled by them” (Lynd & Lynd 1929, quoted in Hunter 1983).

Efforts to build an Evangelical theology of work, then, *are all at their core attempts to consciously take on the challenge of modernity: to bridge the division of the religious sphere and the work and economic sphere*. Remedial theologies were explicitly pursued to take on this challenge. Though the theological origins of the challenge faced by Evangelicals are outlined above, particular social-cultural processes bore equal responsibility: industrialization’s relocation of work outside the home, the de-localization of control over production and labor forces, combined with industrialization’s pull of workers toward less cohesive, more pluralistic urban settings, which came to replace older forms of community with strong shared religious beliefs (MacIntyre 1967, Thompson 1971). The result of these processes was the institutional segmentation described by a variety of scholars over the 20th century, many of whom linked this configuration to the eventual secularization of modern societies (Berger & Luckmann 1966, Luckmann 1967, Gehlen 1980, Hunter 1987). As will become evident again and again, the configuration of modern compartmentalization occupies a central dimension in these frameworks, as both a morally charged antithesis to

faith-work integration as well as many times the presumed default arrangement. This modern compartmentalization has, in many frameworks, come to represent its own “fall from grace” in moving the world away from its intended design. Thus, the four Evangelical “theologies of work” in the 20th century all represent unique strategies to overcome the serious threat modernity poses for what is believed to be a genuine, holistic expression of practicing one’s faith in the modern world.

## **The Re-Commissioners: Faith and Work as Workplace Evangelism**

While these four strategies cannot be easily separated or placed along a chronological timeline, the first framework engaged here was likely the first to appear on the scene in the twentieth century. Of the very sparse historical work on pre-war revivalist beliefs on work, efforts for workplace evangelism generally dominate the narrative. This is largely due to the establishment of the first faith and work organization in the 20th century: the Christian Business Men’s Connection, established in 1930 “to evangelize and disciple business and professional men for Christ.” According to the organization’s website, the first gathering was born out of prayer meetings by a Mennonite pastor in Chicago. True to the form of turn-of-the century revivalism, what emerged from the prayer meeting was a six-week “evangelistic crusade” held in an 800-seat Chicago theater. By 1947 the organization had founded a yearly national convention and over forty local chapters of businessmen, all working to “take the spiritual battle to the world of American business.” The organization’s website, which claims a presence in over seventy different countries today, recounts the organization’s success primarily in terms of the number of professions of faith generated by its many ministries. Spiritual growth and discipleship is emphasized, but, as a testimonial video on their website reveals, evangelism is still central: “CBMC taught me how to use my workplace as a platform to demonstrate to coworkers and business associates the person of Jesus Christ and how they too can know him as their personal Lord and Savior.”<sup>49</sup>

A similar organization, the Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship International, was founded in 1951 by Demos Shakarian, a Californian dairy farmer, commercial real estate developer, and Pentecostal evangelist. Shakarian was

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<sup>49</sup> Video accessed online: <https://vimeo.com/4147479>

already heavily networked with Pentecostal leaders of the era, and his business fellowship came directly out of a conversation with evangelist Oral Roberts (Tallman 2010). Personal evangelism toward businessmen was the central focus of the organization's work--with distribution of the organization's publication *Voice* to various offices and workplaces providing a medium to reach more people. The Pentecostal notion of "baptism in the Holy Spirit" (generally signaled by speaking in tongues) certainly shaped the group's understanding of personal conversion, but Shakarian's theological approach was also rooted in the popular Evangelism of the time, having early in his life assisted with Billy Graham crusades and maintained contact with Graham's network. This organization, like the Christian Business Men's Connection, also maintains a significant footprint in the world today, with a presence in over 142 countries and 7,000 chapters.

These organizations were driven by the conversion impulse of early-century fundamentalism: in Moody's language they were trying to "save all you can." The underlying theology of work in these early organizations remained salient for the rest of the century: a vision of the workplace as a "mission field" and site for evangelism. The "Great Commission"--found in the Gospel of Matthew--provides the blueprint for these efforts: "Go and make disciples of all nations..." This charge is positioned as central for organizations like Christian Business Men's Connection: the organization's mission today is to "Present Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord to professional men; and to develop Christian business and professional men to carry out the Great Commission." Thus, I have identified the central theology of work for this framework as "re-commissioning" lay workers to see their jobs as sites of personal evangelism. This perspective effectively crosses the barriers of the religion-work divide that compartmentalization posits, though as we observe below, this theology of work stands out from other strategies for keeping many elements of early 20<sup>th</sup>-century fundamentalism in place.

Only a handful of Evangelical books published between 1930 and 1980 draw on this call to evangelize in the workplace. Alfred James Marshall (1911-1994), a medical missionary to China, identified workplace evangelism as the central form of lay action in his 1965 book *Time for Action: Christian Responsibility in a Non-Christian World*, published on Intervarsity Press. Marshall calls on lay people to "wake up, think, and act" for "when daylight lasts we must carry on the work of him who sent me; night comes, when no one can work" (John 9:4). The world's



“Godless state” and its coming judgement demand action, a call to evangelize the world, according to Marshall. Christians, then, must recover their “missionary passion” and remember the “unchanging commission.” Clearly lay people in their respective positions are called to take up the same missionary calling Marshall took up in his. Marshall’s skepticism toward “world changing efforts” make him stand out among later faith and work advocates: “Social service with no spiritual motive is complimented by the title [of calling], but so called ‘evangelism by friendship,’ by digging artesian wells or improving livestock for the people, is in danger of being just a trick of speech. It can be ‘pre-evangelism,’ if the presentation of the gospel is its ultimate aim, but ‘evangelism without words, without a message, is a contradiction’...a missionary is one with a message. Much that passes as missionary work but which is a social service and little more should not take the term.”

This theology of work is by far the easiest to tack onto early-century revivalist Protestantism. Moody’s commission to “save all you can” is largely left intact, as “soul saving” is the driving impetus of these efforts. The ethical imperative instilled by these efforts was primarily about making more converts, though in the case of the Christian Business Men Connection, many members are encouraged to join discipleship groups and maintain fellowship with other believers in their workplace. Interestingly, because work itself picks up only marginal value or sacredness in this framework, this framework does the least work to overcome the effects of modernity and the earlier economic retreatism.<sup>50</sup> Against Weber’s understanding of separatist mysticism, workers become charged with a religious task to carry out in their economic callings, so their actions in this sphere are no longer meaningless. However, this task largely instructs them to pull others back toward their other-worldly religious sphere, not draw deeper into the work world itself. As a result, the vocational hierarchy is not directly threatened by this framework, as pastors, evangelists, and missionaries enjoy the luxuries (and likely the greater fruits) of evangelizing full-time

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<sup>50</sup> Evangelical ethicist and Christianity Today co-founder Carl Henry recognized the shortcomings of “fundamentalist” efforts related to work as early as 1964: “It must be granted that the fundamentalist movement sought to impart spiritual overtones to occupational activity. Every believer was to identify himself as a Christian by refraining from morally questionable work—such as the liquor traffic and gambling enterprises (even if permitted by law). Certain tasks such as public school teaching were singled out as offering fuller scope for indirect witness or secondary service to the Church. If possible, moreover, Christians were to find fellowship as workers in organizations like the Christian Business Men’s Committee, to the Christian Business and Professional Women’s Club, and so on. They should bear glad witness about the forgiveness of sins to be found through Jesus Christ; they should avoid laziness on the job, and shoddy business ethics; they should maintain a reputation for integrity, punctuality, courtesy, co-operation, dependability, and diligence...[citations of several Scripture references]...Still, fundamentalism did not comprehend all work as divine vocation, as spiritual service to God and man. The subject of ‘divine vocation’ was table talk only in the parsonage or at missionary society headquarters” (Henry 1964:40). Henry goes on to promote a mix of “re-enchanting” and “re-embedding” frameworks.

without distraction, while other workers can only incorporate the Great Commission when their work duties allow them to do so. Secular work vocations, then, are redeemed, but are only redeemed to the extent to which they come to resemble religious vocations. This alters the Sunday-Monday gap while perhaps not completely closing it: Sunday religious services are still the central activity that others are now being invited to join.

## **The Re-Sacralizers:<sup>51</sup> Faith and Work as a Theology of Wealth**

While workplace evangelism efforts made their mark with early organizational growth, another framework worked through the vehicle of several successful business leaders who put their revivalist faith front and center in their public image. This framework was best enshrined in several mid-century books written by a series of more conservative Protestants sharing their personal stories of success and faith. Titles and authors include: *Breakfast Table Autocrat: The Life Story of Henry Parsons Crowell* (1946) by Richard Ellsworth Day, *Fifty Years with the Golden Rule: A Spiritual Autobiography* (1950) by James Cash (J.C.) Penney, *Mover of Mountains and Men* (1960) by R.G. LeTourneau, and *God Owns My Business* (1969) and *Every Christian a Soul Winner* (1975) by Stanley Tam. These works revolve around a cohort of mid-century figures who could be roughly identified as the select few American fundamentalists who had climbed into industrial capitalism's upper-class elites.<sup>52</sup> While Protestant faith identities were not foreign to that realm--John D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie being the most famous examples from a generation earlier--the cohort above all manifested a far more fundamentalist-Evangelical faith, all recounting conversion experiences and a strong sense of responsibility to convert others. In many ways these individuals seemed tasked to serve as the test cases of fundamentalist-Evangelical faith grappling for the first time with social-economic status.

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<sup>51</sup> This category's name is a work in progress.

<sup>52</sup> To provide a rough outline of faith affiliations and individual journeys: Henry Parsons Crowell grew up Presbyterian but had a life-altering religious experience at a D.L. Moody revival service. His faith affiliation after that experience is not clear, as Moody Bible Institute--for which he was chairman of the board--was formally non-denominational. James Cash Penney was raised in a Primitive Baptist home. Though not an active member of a church most of his life, he did not allow his employees to smoke or drink and built his business around the "golden rule." Dobson (2007) identifies him as a fundamentalist Christian in his encyclopedia of American business concepts and leaders. R.G. LeTourneau was raised in the Plymouth Brethren Church but switched to the Christian and Missionary Alliance on moving to California. Stanley Tam had a number of religious experiences in his life--including one cued up by reading a book by Charles Finney--but his denominational affiliation is unclear. Other business figures of the time period identified as fundamentalist include John M. Studebaker and Milton and Lyman Stewart (see Watt 2014).

The framework that emerges from these books provides a means of imputing significance on the business successes, but in a distinct manner in comparison to other frameworks. Several quotes demonstrate how faith creates an invigorated sense of responsibility for these individuals. Crowell recounts his reaction to attending a revival by D.L. Moody:

“Moody’s words were the words of the Lord to me. I saw now that the wrecking of my school plans didn’t really matter. God didn’t need his men educated, or brilliant, or anything else! All God needed was just a man! Well by the grace of God, I would be God’s man! To be sure, I would never preach like Moody. But I could make money and help support the labors of men like Moody. Then I resolved, ‘Oh God, if you will allow me to make money to be used in Your service I will keep my name out of it so You will have the glory’ (Day 1946:59).

The biographer is not shy about recognizing Crowell’s fulfillment of this calling, writing in an earlier passage that historical literature has “bypassed the men who valorously rode the money tides and created great estates. The reason may largely arise from a distrust of money-making. But the strength and continuity of American life cannot be fully known without the careers of her factory builders” (ibid:6). Citing the title of the book, Day observes “The world must have autocrats to get things done. And autocracy is sublimated if not tempered to the will of God” (ibid:6).

One finds a similar realization in the writings of R.G. LeTourneau. LeTourneau owned a leading construction equipment company and gained particular prominence in this era, largely due to LeTourneau’s ties to Billy Graham and his widely publicized efforts to spread Christianity (and his bulldozing equipment) to African countries during the Cold War (Grem 2016). While LeTourneau (1967) recounts being saved at sixteen in response to a week-long revival crusade in Portland, his imagination for the calling of a “Christian businessman” was formed when he was thirty. At that time he had become involved in a Christian and Missionary Alliance church with a strong emphasis on evangelism, which had led to LeTourneau joining a street corner “gospel singers” band and teaching a young men’s Bible study. LeTourneau recounts feeling deeply unfulfilled with his calling as a businessman and wanting to

commit more to his faith: “To me service to the Lord, to which I had just dedicated my life, meant the ministry or missionary work.” After seeking out guidance from his pastor, LeTourneau recounts his pastor telling him, “You know, Brother LeTourneau, God needs businessmen as well as preachers and missionaries.” LeTourneau credits that moment with showing him “a layman could serve the Lord as well as a preacher.”

The wider “remedial theology” is on full display in both of these accounts, but for Crowell, LeTourneau, and others, their theology of work takes on a supplemental function: valorizing wealth and personal success. As Miller (2007) observes of these and other lay writers, these works stake out a “biblical hermeneutic of the business world” grounded in the day-to-day experience of the business executive. This is in many ways similar to frameworks that “re-enchant” work experience with spiritual meaning and significance, explored more below. However, the frameworks promoted by these business executives and many who follow them have a certain inflection to them regarding the “special vocation” of business leadership. In contrast to more democratizing theologies of work that flatten the vocational hierarchy by declaring all work equally valuable to God, this framework in many ways elevates the business leader “up” to the clergy as a special calling.<sup>53</sup> For the cases of Crowell and LeTourneau, this meant positioning their own callings as equally significant with those of prominent “soul savers” of their respective eras: D.L. Moody and Billy Graham. In some ways this valorization of a status hierarchy is not entirely intentional but a byproduct of overcoming a sharp business-religion antagonism, perhaps to the point of overcorrection (see Nash & McLennan 2001). Lost in the shadow of mending this divide are nonbusiness secular vocations and callings which fail to receive the same valorization as the “called” business leader.

This framework “resacralizes” in a number of ways. For one, the managerial tasks of business owner or executive within modern industrial or postindustrial capitalism are granted a particular moral sanctioning by this framework.

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<sup>53</sup> Hammond (2011) sees LeTourneau as elevating business leaders beyond equal to superior status to clergy: “Clergy-lay collaboration contained seeds of tension, as did the Christian Business Men’s Committee International, the Business Men’s Evangelistic Clubs, and the Gideons, organizations that saw a providential role for business men in the church. ‘Just as God called the men of old to do certain things, I believe He is today making that call more especially to commercial men to witness that the Gospel is still the power of God unto salvation,’ he told the Gideons. ‘We commercial men have no conflict with preachers,’ but ‘when we laymen who rub shoulders with people in the world every day tell them that Jesus Christ is the solution to all our problems...they can’t say of us as they sometimes say of the preachers: They get paid for it.’ On one blow, Letourneau dismissed ministers as out of touch with ordinary men and women and positioned business men as evangelicalism’s envoys to ‘the world.’ Even though, in practice, pew and pulpit worked together to save souls, LeTourneau and his cohort held fast to the expectation of lay-led revival” (Hammond 2011:508-509).

This is not so much the results of the framework itself carrying pro-system or pro-capitalist tendencies—although many times it did (see Grem 2010)—but the outcome of casting a religious significance over more influential positions of power in the modern economy. Telling workers with little autonomy, agency, or means of change that their work “matters to God” may leave room for moral ambiguity regarding the moral status of the system as a whole. Telling the same message to those whose job it is to manage and control those workers leaves less room for ambiguity. Religious frameworks drawn upon in this manner can fulfill what Bourdieu (1991) identifies as a “consecrating” function: they assume an “ideological function, a practical and political function of absolutization of the relative and legitimation of the arbitrary” (Bourdieu 1991:14). Thus this framework, in identifying the faithful industrialist or manager so closely with the faithful church leader, provides a substantial endorsement for the existing economic system and its various roles as part of the sacred order or “sacred canopy” that gives order to reality (Berger & Luckmann 1967, see Nash & McLennan 2001 for a similar notion of “re-sacralizing” as connecting business to a restored sacred canopy). Closely related to this consecrating function is the sacralizing of a particular vocational ranking, mentioned earlier. While Luther argued that all “offices” were equal in God’s eyes to take part in his “creating and sustaining activity on earth,” the imperatives of revivalist Protestantism--soul-saving--inject a new criteria by which vocations can be evaluated: how many nonbelievers can be “reached” through a person’s work? With this criteria in place, business leaders rightly recognize that their own resources--whether a large workforce of potential converts, a wide reach in customer base, public recognition as an inspirational figure, or even just philanthropic dollars--exceeded that of the average Evangelical worker. It seems God “needs” successful businessmen in a unique way, according to many of these writings.

A theology of wealth provides the means to impute significance and meaning on economic behaviors, thus crossing the religion-economic divide. The concept of “stewardship” appears often in the context within this framework. Business leaders are called to steward their wealth and recognize God’s ownership of all things.<sup>54</sup> The business

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<sup>54</sup> From Day’s writing on Crowell: “The teachings of the Rush Street Bible Class on the subjects of person and property were in sharp conflict with ideas which Mr. Crowell had for years entertained. He always felt that believers were under obligation to *live* as Christians; but when it came to such things as time and treasure, these were his *personal* possessions. The class summarily blasted this view; not only are you as a Christian under obligation to *live* unto God, but everything you have *belongs* to God. Nothing is excepted! Bank accounts, stocks, bonds, real estate--even the Belek China in one’s home is the property of the Lord, and the Christian does not own a single thing in fee simple absolute. Even his time is bought and paid for! The believer is utterly impoverished; he is simply a trustee for Deity in all that he is and has. The whole case is summed up in the Bible term ‘steward’” (Day 1946:183, emphasis in original).

they own becomes “God’s business” (Tam 1969) or one in which God has entered as a business partner (LeTourneau 1967, see Hammond 2011), providing ample reason to reconnect work with the transcendent values that Weber saw missing in modern work. Stewardship, for some writers in this era, opened the door to justifying financial success as part of God’s plan: “...the gangrene of money possession is totally negated for the man who holds wealth as a stewardship. On this thesis, [another Christian businessman] Russell H. Conwell fired the hearts of thousands who today are commercial leaders with the ambition to ‘get rich for the glory of God!’” (Day 1946:203). This framework is not void of ethical parameters for pursuing wealth: the major autobiographical works are filled with anecdotes of deviating from the normal mode of doing business, frequently after either feeling great conviction of conscience or hearing from God directly. Some of this conviction led to basic restructuring of the workplace: LeTourneau’s factories incorporated chapels that regularly brought in preachers, choirs, traveling evangelists, and Gideon representatives, providing at least one chapel service a week for his employees (Grem 2016). For plastics manufacturer Stanley Tam (1969), the focus of faith was more outward than inward; he included religious tracts in shipments and informed customers of the faith-driven motivations behind certain decisions. Many of these same leaders also take part in many of the “re-enchanting” behaviors described in the next framework: the two modes are not at all sealed off from one another. Most re-enchanting frameworks, however, have a far wider application to various vocations and roles in the social-economic order; theologies of wealth and “success,” in contrast, have limited applicability to those not seen to possess those particular attributes.

## **The Re-Enchanters: Faith and Work as a Christian Life Integration Effort**

By far the largest and most commonly voiced Evangelical vision of faith and work is a vision to make work “matter” to God through integrating one’s faith life *into* work. Of all the frameworks outlined, this one links most closely to the classical Lutheran framework related to vocation: work of any variety can matter to God because, when understood properly, work inherently serves God. At the center of this framework is extending Evangelical piety into the workplace, a consciously employed effort that generally spans thought and action. This framework is exceptionally articulate about the challenge of sphere differentiation in the modern world. While references to

Weber (or any social theorist) are virtually nonexistent, many writers in this realm are consciously fighting the disenchantment of modern work, reconnecting it with transcendent values. As described below, the highly individualized form of piety that characterizes postfundamentalist Evangelicalism leaves a distinct mark on the re-enchanting process, pulling the re-enchanted work away from the more communitarian Puritanism that Weber had observed.

The earliest text promoting this framework is British novelist Dorothy Sayers' 1941 radio lecture "Why Work?".<sup>55</sup> Sayers' institutional, theological, and geographic location (in relation to American Evangelicalism) give good reason to be skeptical of any immediate or direct influence of this work. However, many Evangelical writers of the 1960s and 1970s clearly demonstrate familiarity and agreement with the lecture, and its footprint on the movement continues to be felt today.<sup>56</sup> Sayers lays out a criticism of how the church has come to view work, a criticism that others will later apply to the American context: "In nothing has the Church so lost her hold on reality as in her failure to understand and respect the secular vocation. She has allowed work and religion to become separate departments, and is astonished to find that, as a result, the secular work of the world is turned to purely selfish and destructive ends, and that the greater part of the world's intelligent workers have become irreligious, or at least, uninterested in religion." The cause, according to Sayer, is what will become known in many works as the "Sunday-Monday gap": "How can anyone remain interested in a religion which seems to have no concern with nine-tenths of his life?" Individualistic moralism is singled out as reason for the failure: "The Church's approach to an intelligent carpenter is usually confined to exhorting him not to be drunk and disorderly in his leisure hours, and to come to church on Sundays. What the Church should be telling him is this: that the very first demand that is religion makes upon him is that he should make good tables." Baptist Pastor Luther Joe Thompson makes this point even more direct in his 1961 work, appropriately titled *Monday Morning Religion*: "This book is written to protest of the heresy of compartmentalizing life: the assumption that certain days and things belong to God and other days and things belong to the world. Why can't men learn the fundamental New Testament truth that with

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<sup>55</sup> Sayers' essay is out of print and difficult to acquire in print form: I have omitted page numbers due to relying on a PDF of the essay. The essay can be accessed here: <http://tnl.org/wp-content/uploads/Why-Work-Dorothy-Sayers.pdf>

<sup>56</sup> Evaluated on both direct citations and in the dissemination of her ideas through others, Dorothy Sayers' perspective probably came to shape the 20<sup>th</sup>-century Evangelical faith and work movement more than any other individual.

God there are no arbitrary divisions? All days are God's days" (Thompson 1961:7). As evidenced by numerous titles of books written after 1980, this diagnosis of the Sunday-Monday gap is seen as one of the central dimensions in re-enchanting work.<sup>57</sup>

This diagnosis opens up the theological question: If religion should speak to one's Monday activities, what should religion be saying? Here there is a great variety of prescriptions for how Sunday can be connected with Monday. Most fit somewhere on a spectrum, one extreme being focusing inward--expanding the subjective meaning and cognitive understandings of work's spiritual meaning--and the other extreme embodying efforts that endorse specific outward behaviors. All of the books surveyed for this research began formulating their re-enchanting framework around introducing new understandings of work: what, essentially, is work? And many times: what should work *not* be? From here, some works move on to specific activities or outward behaviors born out of these new understandings; others merely endorse the new subjective meaning without specific application.

For many these understandings began with identifying the act of work and labor as closer to the actions and nature of God. Sayers in both her fiction and the early faith and work books analyzed here draws attention to the connection between creating and God the creator: "...work is the natural exercise and function of man--the creature who is made in the image of his Creator" (Sayers 1941). Marquette professor of sociology David Moberg makes a similar argument in 1965: "The very first picture of God is that of a worker busy at the task of creation" (Moberg 1965:147). Writing in 1974, Evangelical theologian Udo Middelmann draws a parallel between God's creation to our calling to be creative: "Just as God expressed himself and his character in his creation and in his

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<sup>57</sup> Sample of titles of more contemporary books addressing the Sunday-Monday gap: *Starting on Monday: Christian Living in the Workplace* (1987), *First Thing Monday Morning: Reminders for Keeping God in Your Work Week* (1988), *The Monday Connection: A Spirituality of Competence, Affirmation, and Support in the Workplace* (1991), *God on Monday* (1996), *God's Week Has Seven Days: Monday Musings for Marketplace Christians* (1998), *Loving Monday: Succeeding in Business Without Selling Your Soul* (1998), *First Thing Monday Morning* (1998), *The Other Six Days: Vocation, Work, and Ministry in Biblical Perspective* (2000), *Church on Sunday, Work on Monday: The Challenge of Fusing Christian Values with Business Life* (2001), *Seven Days of Faith: Every Day Alive with God* (2001), *Where's God on Monday?: Integrating Faith and Work Every Day of the Week* (2003), *After Sunday: A Theology of Work* (2004), *Mastering Monday: A Guide to Integrating Faith and Work* (2006), *Work Matters: Connecting Sunday Worship to Monday Work* (2011), *The Monday Connection: On Being an Authentic Christian in a Weekday World* (2012), *Monday Morning Atheist: Why We Switch Off God at Work and How to Fix It* (2012), *Monday Matters: Finding God in Your Workplace* (2012). There are at least nine Christian faith and work books with identical titles: *Thank God It's Monday* (1982), *Thank God It's Monday* (1990), *Thank God It's Monday: Making Business Your Ministry* (1996), *Thank God It's Monday!: A Toolkit for Aligning Your Life Vision and Your Life Work* (1998), *Thank God It's Monday: Ministry in the Workplace* (2001), *Thank God It's Monday: Celebrating Your Purpose at Work* (2003), *Thank God It's Monday: How to Take God to Work With You* (2004), *Thank God It's Monday: Everyday Evangelism for Everyday People* (2014), *Thank God It's Monday: Sunday's Not Enough* (2015).



revelation to man, so the image of God in man must be expressed, must be externalized (Middelmann 1974:21). Contending with an argument that work is inherently tainted by the effects of “the Fall” recorded in Genesis, Middelmann roots work in a pre-fall configuration: “In Genesis 2:15 before the Fall we find this statement: ‘The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.’ That was creative work. It was not merely a matter of man’s survival. It was part of man’s original purpose. It tied in with his being creative and imaginative with his being God’s vice-regent...work is intimately linked with the question of who God is and who man is” (ibid:22). Work then provides the opportunity to “externalize the identity we have as men made in the image of God. This then is the true basis for work” (ibid:36). Hans Rookmaaker, an art theorist who ran in the same circles as Middelmann, expressed a similar idea about work and identity in 1978: “We should remind ourselves that Christ did not come to make us Christians or to save our souls only but that he came to redeem us that we might be human in the full sense of the word...to be a Christian means that one has humanity, the freedom to work in God’s creation and to use the talents God has given to each of us, to his glory and to the benefit of our neighbors” (Rookmaaker 1978:20). As a book on secular vocations from 1978 observes, “The God of the Bible is a God who works” (Field & Stephenson 1978:14).

Sayers and a handful of others also draw a connection between labor and Jesus’ time on spent on earth. Making the case that Christian work must be high quality (discussed below), Sayers quips, “No crooked table legs or ill-fitting drawers ever, I dare swear, came out of the carpenter’s shop at Nazareth. Nor, if they did, could anyone believe that they were made by the same hand that made Heaven and earth” (Sayers 1941). Field and Stephenson’s book of interviews with various Christians on their vocations provides this quote: “...it was in his muscle-building trade that Jesus spent all but three years of his working life. The hands which held the whip that drove the crooked money-changers from the temple in Jerusalem had been hardened by years of work with an axe, a saw, and a hammer. Tough, physical labour was not beneath the dignity of the Son of God” (Field & Stephenson 1978:15).

An alternative way of making this case was appealing to the concept of dominion from the book of Genesis.<sup>58</sup> Two academics involved in science fields were the first to register this view. Malcolm Jeeves, a cognitive psychologist writing in 1969, championed carrying out scientific endeavors as “sons of God, who created and sustains the natural order which he has given them to study, to enjoy, and subdue. This means that scientific activities are properly regarded as one aspect of the fulfillment of the command given to mankind to subdue the earth (Gen 1:28)” (Jeeves 1969:14). Oliver Barclay, a zoologist who later got involved in the organization Intervarsity Fellowship, wrote in 1970, “The tasks of advancing knowledge and of subduing the earth been enthusiastically pursued by Christians all down the ages, if their thinking has been truly biblical...it is part of the work given to mankind to do” (Triton 1970:44-45). Citing the growth in education that opens fields like science, art, and literature, Barclay declares “all these things are good, because they are the fruits of subduing the earth as God originally commanded us to do” (ibid 1970:45). Anglican bishop John Gladwin, writing in 1979, articulates a similar line of thinking: “Work is an aspect of human life as God created it. In Genesis man is given domination in the world and told to fill and subdue the earth. Adam is the tiller of the garden. Work, therefore, is an expression of our nature as people to whom power is entrusted. It is a vocation which fits the Creator’s pattern for human life” (Gladwin 1979:166). Work must not be seen as merely paid employment, as such reductionism would “miss the biblical point about our vocation to order and subdue the earth and to express the creativity which God gave us at creation” (ibid:166). Instead, a properly balanced Christian life recognizes the “high value of his work in God’s calling” (ibid:166).

These meanings all instill work with a new dignity, one not developed in the previous two frameworks. Notably, this is not the classic Protestant work ethic Weber identified with earlier Puritans. Workers are not finding assurance of salvation or indexes of divine blessing in economic activity. Instead, work is repositioned as part of God’s vision for his creation and the people he created: work thus inherits divine meaning and significance. Much

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<sup>58</sup> More contemporary workers label this the “creation mandate,” grounded in God’s command to “subdue” the earth, given in Genesis 1:28. Many contemporary writers connect the creation mandate to the theological thinking of late 19<sup>th</sup>-century Dutch theologian Abraham Kuyper, discussed in the next chapter.

like soul-saving revivalism elevated personal evangelism and foreign mission efforts to the highest plane of spiritual value, the re-enchanters assigned the highest spiritual value to secular work.

One direct consequence of this valorization is an explicit move toward flattening the vocational hierarchy. If secular work is just as valuable to God as religious work, the moral and spiritual status of secular workers becomes equivalent with the status of professional and full-time ministers. The following passages capture those efforts of flattening:

“Let the Church remember this: that every maker and worker is called to serve God in his profession or trade--not outside it...The official Church wastes time and energy, and moreover, commits sacrilege, in demanding that secular workers should neglect their proper vocation in order to do Christian work--by which She means ecclesiastical work. The only Christian work is good work well done. Let the Church see to it that the workers are Christian people and do their work well, as to God: then all the work will be Christian work, whether it is church embroidery, or sewage farming” (Sayers 1941).

“Every Christian layman is in this sense a minister of Christ; this ministry is his basic 'other vocation.'...What happens in church buildings during weekends is important but it is far less important to the Kingdom of God than that which occurs on the working days of the week” (Mosberg 1965:148).

"[interview with layperson] Way out the top of the list come those who have 'vocations'--including no doubt, missionaries and clergy, followed at a short distance by RE teachers, doctors and nurses. Halfway down, we meet those with 'ordinary jobs' (such as work for Christian organizations). Then, right at bottom and in serious danger of relegation, are those involved in much more dubious pursuits--pop musicians...and barmaids. This division of jobs into vocations and 'others' is quite foreign to Scripture" (Field & Stephenson 1978:19).

Some writers were not shy about drawing a firm line between their re-enchanting framework and theologies of work that merely promoted evangelism, the re-commissioning framework described above. Sayers is most notable here, drawing attention to a passage in the New Testament (specifically the book of Acts) where early church leaders delegated benevolence work to others to preserve their own callings: “The Apostles complained rightly when they said it was not meant they should leave the word of God and serve tables; their vocation was to preach the word. But the person whose vocation is to prepare the meals beautifully might with equal justice protest: It is not meant for us to leave the service of tables to preach the word (Sayers 1941). As an even more direct example, a biographer of Hans Rookmaaker (a figure quoted above) recounts the famous Evangelical art theorist directly criticizing the elevation of evangelism above vocation. In a lecture at Oxford described as controversial and heated, Rookmaaker created a stir among Evangelical students with the following assertion: “Why should you spend your life evangelising? There are more important things to do in the world...I have done twenty-five years thinking, relating Biblical principles to art. You should be willing to do the same in your areas of life and work” (Martin 1979: 150).

Finally, re-enchanting frameworks vary greatly in where they land on the spectrum of inward-meaning and outward-behavioral approaches to addressing the Sunday-Monday gap. Some re-enchant and dignify work without providing description of much tangible consequence regarding specific activities, ethics, or attitudes. Re-enchanting becomes a new vision or perspective on work, primarily internal to the worker without much articulated concern regarding outward consequence. Many texts, however, see the consequence to be *how* one works. High standards become a moral imperative:

“What the Church should be telling [the carpenter] is this: that the very first demand that his religion makes upon him is that he should make good tables. Church by all means, and decent forms of amusement, certainly--but what use is all that if in the very center of his life and occupation he is insulting God with bad carpentry? No crooked table legs or ill-fitting drawers, ever, I dare swear, came out of the carpenter’s shop at Nazareth” (Sayers 1941).

“Even monotonous daily routines become avenues of joyful service to those who have heard God’s call. They no longer perform them as meaningless and empty drudgeries, perfunctorily, carelessly, and as quickly as possible, for they know their contributions promote the work God and the good of mankind” (Moberg 1965:146)

“Plumbers who give great evangelistic talks but let the water leak are not doing their jobs. They are bad plumbers. It becomes clear that they do not love their neighbor. The meaning of the job is in the love for God and neighbor” (Rookmaaker 1978:39)

“To be a vice-regent of God over God’s creation means to work creatively and to enjoy it” (Middelmann 1974:36).

“In a word, he will seek to carry out his scientific endeavors efficiently, to increase his knowledge and control of the created order and to do this in such a way that he is able to use this knowledge to serve his neighbors more effectively” (Jeeves 1969:24).

“The scientist who is Christian can engage in his works enthusiastically and with an attitude of enjoyment, that of a son enjoying the inheritance given to him by his Father” (Jeeves 1969:26).

A later author (Sherman 2011) labels this form of faith-work integration “adverbial”: the primary focus is on *how* one does work, with the prescriptive imperative being a laudable adverb (creatively, enthusiastically, diligently, excellently, wholeheartedly, etc.) shaping one’s effort to fulfill their role. This mode of re-enchanting is very much related to the classical notion of “work ethic,” as religious identities are primarily channeled as a motivator for taking one’s work more seriously and dedicating more energy toward it.

Other re-enchanters connect their frameworks with new ends and objectives born out of the new understanding. For some, these ends and objectives are tied to larger coherent moral or political frameworks--social justice,

sustainability, overcoming economic divisions, overcoming fallenness. These frameworks will be discussed in the next section as “re-embedding” frameworks. Other re-enchanting perspectives inject familiar practices of Evangelical spirituality and devotional life into the workplace. These often entail acts of piety like engaging in prayer, holding company Bible studies, tithing profits, or, more broadly, practicing “neighborliness” by showing love for others, whether coworkers, clients and customers, or even competitors (see Roels 2001 for greater discussion of workplace piety). For example, Fish and Shelly (1978), writing specifically for Christian nurses in the workplace, encourages nurses to offer spiritual consolation and pray with patients. Middelmann (1978), in advocating for a variety of ways to practice creativity on the job, concedes some settings such as assembly lines allow little freedom; the solution for him is to form deeper relationships with others during break times. Lay activist William Stringfellow, while at times advocating more of a re-embedding framework, envisions lay people in the marketplace committed to “loving another human being in a way which represents to him the care of God for his particular life” (Stringfellow 1962:60).

No matter where these frameworks fall on the inward-focusing to outward-behavioral spectrum, re-enchanting frameworks provided ample resources to overcome the religion-economics divide. The new understandings provided allow workers to enter the economic sphere--their “Monday lives”--with understandings of their work as being in some way dignified: perhaps it is spiritual, sacred, part of a providential plan for creation, a charged task for taking dominion, or simply significant to God by its own nature. While these frameworks are not linked to questions of eternal salvation as they were for the Puritans, they still elevate work as one of the central aspects of the lay Christian’s life. Seen through the lens of Weber’s concerns for modern work, these frameworks provided the means to tie one’s modern calling to the “highest spiritual and cultural values,” even in modern settings compartmentalized by bureaucratic norms of efficiency and the institutional fragmentation of modernity.

### **The Re-Embedders: Faith and Work as Visions of New Ends for Economic Behavior**

Finally, the last framework accentuates moral dimension of faith-grounded work that are downplayed by the previous three frameworks. While many of Weber’s concerns are certainly captured by the loss of transcendent meanings and callings in modern economic systems, his larger concern for work in modern settings also portray

moral tensions and conflicts like to occur. As laid out earlier in his prognosis of the “modern workaday existence,” Weber posits workers attempting to manifest ethics of “acosmic brotherliness” --those trying to imitate the ethics of Jesus, Buddha, or Saint Francis--are destined for conflict with the economic realm and its immanent laws. Thus, this final framework in many ways supplements the re-enchanted framework with the missing ethical content Weber presumes religious systems impute on workers. Re-embedding frameworks all posit ethical standards, ends, or norms that stand outside (and likely against) the workplace norms workers likely encounter. The framework I am drawing on here ties to Karl Polanyi’s (1944) observation that market societies tend to disembed economic relationships and exchanges from wider social norms and institutions: in this case faith and work seeks to re-embed the processes and behaviors of one’s work life within a wider moral vision with its own noneconomic norms and ends. Evangelical faith, then, provides workers with “extra-organizational commitments”<sup>59</sup> that then require negotiating with workplaces where these commitments are not naturally at home. As Herbert J. Taylor, a former president of Rotary International, wrote in 1968, the first job of a Christian business is “to set policies for the company that would reflect the high ethics and morals God would want in any business” (1968:40).

Several texts offer visions of workers being sent out to, in their words, “infiltrate” particular industries or vocations. The ethical vision these infiltrators will promote--the extra-organizational commitments they would bring to their job--are not always clearly articulated, but one would presume “infiltrators” bring something previously not present in the workplace setting. Political journalist Wesley Pippert, in his largely political-oriented book *Memo for 1976*, lays out a vision for Evangelicals to be “effective infiltrators” in the “Kingdom of Man.” Quoting another Christian ethicist’s vision for relating “the gospel” to the social order “in a faithful and saving fashion,” Pippert advocates infiltrating society through “the *individual* Christian leavening society, as an independent man of faith bringing a redemptive life style and Word to the family, a particular vocation, social groups and, in a sense, self-consciously infiltrating the PTAs, the YMCAs, corporate structures, governmental

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<sup>59</sup> I have borrowed this term from studies of organizational whistleblowers. That literature is particularly attuned to when a moral framework brings one into tension with his or her workplace. The re-embedding framework attempts to illuminate similar situations, though conflict is not a foregone conclusion: one may also be successful in reforming the workplace.

processes and other social units. The Church in this case becomes a kind of strategic center sending out agents to help reform the world” (Pippert 1976:31-32).

David Moberg and John Gladwin flesh out how this leavening might work: “Our calling is also to be critical of our times. Christians are called to speak prophetically. To hunger and thirst for righteousness means that we shall never just defend the established order of the day...Christians should never be conservative simply for the sake of conformity, of conserving the established order for its own sake. We must be critical....We must be constantly aware of any growing lack of freedom, of the authoritarianism of petty bureaucracy which treats people as things, of any forces which dehumanize... never accept the status quo because this the easiest thing to do or seems inevitable. To take this and to respond to our calling today means that we shall not be afraid to show that we are Christians; not only in saying that we have been saved by Christ, but also in our stand, in our way of life, in our prophetic analysis of the situation” (Moberg 1965:249). Arguing nothing is neutral about daily work, Moberg calls Christians to defend their daily activity against the “new spirits of the age” (ibid:249). Gladwin sees Christian workers tasked to ask larger questions concerning their roles: “Once more, we are bound to ask the question, Does what we are encouraged to do at work help us to learn the patterns of human life in which we serve our neighbor? The question must lead us to criticize the divisive patterns in working life today” (Gladwin 1979:169). This need for questioning also extends to the wider operations of the company: “Christians will be interested more than the internal operation of a place of work. There must also be concern for what an entire company or business does in service to the wider community. Not all that is offered as a ‘service’ to the public is genuine service. The way in which a company engages in economic activity in the world market can be either a help or a positive hindrance to the development of needy and poorer communities” (ibid:169).

While Weber’s work--both his theoretical discussions of various economic systems and his sociology of religion discussions--generally posits religious systems imputing work with both significance (enchantment) and ethical imperatives (what I am calling re-embedding), Evangelical theologies of work do not always so tightly integrate these two aspects. Dorothy Sayers’ work, which advances a groundbreaking re-enchanting framework for Evangelicals, articulates a strong opposition to additional ethical requirements being placed on workers:



“This brings me to my third proposition; and this may sound to you the most revolutionary of all. It is this: the worker’s first duty is to serve the work. The popular catchphrase of today is that it is everybody’s duty to serve the community, but there *is* a catch in it. It is the old catch about the two great commandments. ‘Love God--and your neighbor: on those two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.’ The catch in it, which nowadays the world has largely forgotten, is that the second commandment depends upon the first, and without the first, it is a delusion and a snare. Much of our present trouble and disillusionment have come from putting the second commandment before the first. If we put our neighbor first, we are putting man above God, and that is what we have been doing ever since we began to worship humanity and make man the measure of all things” (Sayers 1941).

Sayers drives home her point even more by citing an unsourced quote concerning the judiciary: “I expect the judiciary to understand that the nation does not exist for their convenience, but that justice exists to serve the nation.” Sayers uses the quote to provoke her reader:

“That [quote] was Hitler yesterday--and that is what becomes of ‘service,’ when the community, and not the work, becomes its idol. There is, in fact, a paradox about working to serve the community, and it is this: that to aim directly at serving the community is to falsify the work; the only way to serve the community is to forget the community and serve the work” (Sayers 1941).

To some extent this divide can be linked to theological antecedents from the Protestant Reformation. Martin Luther’s theology, with its radical turn against formal religious offices and holy “works” of righteousness, was often translated by his followers into a more inward-focused pietistic mode of faith. Combined with a certain mode of realism regarding the “orders” that make up the “kingdom of this world,” Lutheran piety can often be read as detaching itself from concerns of reforming the current orders. This creates space for an enchanted form of work that does not necessarily offer significant ethical content for the worker. John Calvin’s theology, on the other hand, frequently was tied to a far more reformist (or revolutionary, see Walzer 1982, Gorski 2002) understanding of

faith. In this vision, not only were all vocations endowed with the equal sacredness of the priest but also the political-ethical imperatives of the prince. Grounded in this insight, the Puritans' more communitarian understandings of calling--working for the "common good," as 16th century Puritan William Perkins advocated--also had a significant mark on American culture. Mid-century Evangelicalism began to draw on "neo-Calvinism," which further developed the reformist impulses of Calvin. Importantly, the re-embedding category here also includes much broader thinking than Calvinist or neo-Calvinist social ethics. Additionally, pious behaviors--Lutheran or not--can certainly still create tensions and conflict in the workplace: pious behaviors extract time and energy from other functions and can very well incite conflict in settings of religious pluralism.

## **Conclusion: The De-Privatization of Evangelical Faith and Work in the 20th Century**

This history provides greater illumination regarding the challenges and uncertainties of "taking your soul to work," the topic explored in the seminary class described at the beginning of this chapter. While multiple frameworks for overcoming the religion-economic divide have been produced since at least the 1940s, the seminary class enrollees may have still been feeling the effects of the "fundamentalist hangover" of economic retreatism. The class seemed able to quickly warm up to notions of a flattened vocational hierarchy and the sacredness of "Monday," but these ideas were not intuitive to how their religious tradition had approached work in the past. Thus, although the Evangelical tradition includes the work-affirming ideas of Martin Luther, John Calvin, Dorothy Sayers, and a host of mid-century thinkers, the influence of turn-of-the-century fundamentalism lives on.

The next chapter will provide two important addendums to the story laid out above. The first is a proposed sociological explanation--drawing on sociology of knowledge and a production approach to culture--of why the 20th century saw this rapid shift in theology--"remedial theology"--in the lineage from 19th-century conservative revivalism to late 20th-century Evangelicalism. The second will bring the story up to the present, with an overview of the current thought leaders at the helm of the contemporary Evangelical faith and work movement. These leaders' perspectives, beliefs, and motivations not only illuminate the ways in which this remedial theology effort

was continued from the 1980s forward but also provide a more concise explanation of how current leaders position themselves within the lineage laid out above.

The historical narrative outlined above provides an up-close look at the cultural frameworks within mid-century Evangelical popular texts that assisted in navigating the separation of modern spheres. I have argued faith and work emerges within American Protestant fundamentalism-Neo-Evangelicalism due to a mismatch between earlier fundamentalism's discarding of frameworks related to work and modernity's greater need for making sense of modern work. The four frameworks mapped out from Evangelical texts provide different routes of navigating that challenge. All of them are "remedial theology" in that they correct an earlier indifference to work; though they often bleed together in different thinkers and works, they ultimately represent four strategies to overcome this divide. Figure 1 attempts to provide a summary overview of the frameworks, bringing out dimensions they do and do not share.

Framework	(Approximate) First Exemplar Text on Evangelical Press	Injects Religious Concerns into One's Work Life (Denies Compartmentalization)	Valorizes "Special" Vocations Outside of Clergy	Flattens Vocational Hierarchy (Equalizes All Work)	Confronts Work Sphere with Extra-Organizational Ends
Re-Commissioning	Broomhall 1969	YES	--	--	--
Re-Sacralizing	Day 1946	YES	YES	--	--
Re-Enchanting	Sayers 1941	YES	YES	YES	--
Re-Embedding	Moberg 1965	YES	YES	YES	YES

The method used here--analysis of produced texts--does not permit evaluation of when particular frameworks gained recognition and acceptance over the 20th century, if they ever did. Only snapshots of framework diffusion can be captured through the emergence of particular organizations and figures at particular moments: Evangelical business groups in the 1930s, for example, clearly embodied the re-commissioner framework. Because of this chronological ambiguity, ordering frameworks conceptually rather than chronologically provides far more insight for analysis. To some extent, these frameworks may be interpreted as nesting in others, with more complexity being added at each level. However, two caveats must be made here. First, this nesting arrangement does not mean frameworks higher on the list are subsets of those lower on the list. It can be quite the opposite, as re-

enchanters assertively distance themselves from re-commissioners (Dorothy Sayers in particular), while re-embedders occasionally articulate shortcomings of re-enchanters. Secondly, this arrangement also takes advantage of some intentional ambiguity in the column titles, as these attributes are not referring to the same properties in each framework. For instance, while all frameworks inject religious concerns into the economic sphere, the religious concerns of the re-embedding framework are notably not the same as those of the re-commissioning framework. Likewise, while the bottom three frameworks valorize vocations other than clergy, the re-sacralizers uniquely extend valoration to some but not all vocations. The latter two frameworks largely valorize all vocations as equally special.<sup>60</sup>

Because of the variation in frameworks, more simplistic causal explanations are problematic. Had a single, uniform theology of work emerged, a single, uniform sociological explanation could likely be constructed to explain it. This question will be taken on more directly in the next chapter. However, in setting aside these important variations, one finds an underlying shared consensus: these frameworks all make work meaningful in relation to one's religious identity. Whether this means evangelizing in the workplace or supplying one's work with new ends of social justice, these frameworks share in rejecting a compartmentalized religious identity that leaves religious beliefs and behaviors at the door of the workplace. This shared consensus serves as the "remedial" theology project undertaken by all these frameworks: making work matter to God. Thus, all of these frameworks counteract a central thesis of mid-century secularization theory explored by Peter Berger, Thomas Luckmann, and many other

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<sup>60</sup> If, as I am suggesting above, the modern faith and work movement has tasked itself to "right the ship" of turn-of-the-century fundamentalism, each of these frameworks could be interpreted as incrementally discarding different aspects of the "economic retreatism" of turn-of-the-century fundamentalism. The re-commissioning framework removes the basic irrelevance of non-religious "worldly" activity that characterizes mystical and apocalyptic-oriented religious faiths. Though in a very provisional way, "Monday" is redeemed: there is a religious task to carry out. The re-sacralizing framework maintains fundamentalism's priority of personal conversionism but redeems this-worldly success and long-term projects like building factories, supply lines, and international companies. The significance is easy to miss here: Sutton (2014) recounts the initial refusal of premillennialist college founders to invest in any building projects in 1913 out of certainty for Christ's imminent return to earth. This possibility does not slow down mid-century industrialists. In the re-enchanting framework one sees early rejection of the spiritual-material and sacred-profane dualism that had come to characterize turn-of-the-century fundamentalism. Material activities with no direct religious character are deemed sacred. Finally, re-embedding frameworks have made peace with the this-worldly focus of social gospel reform efforts and moved away from "save all you can" eschatology. Social ethics comes back into view after long being eclipsed by personal piety. While all these developments could certainly be interpreted as a modernization-driven secularization narrative, the better explanation is likely found in Weber: religious orientations developed in one particular socioeconomic setting--culturally marginalized, anti-modernized areas where fundamentalism took hold--lose their elective affinity to environment should they find themselves operating within other socioeconomic settings. Rising mobility of fundamentalists--alongside larger changes in the labor market--threw adherents into an economic-cultural milieu for which their religious orientations were unprepared. This creates what Bourdieu (1977) labels a "hysteresis effect" as a discrepancy emerges between the subjective frameworks (or habituses) of actors and the structures of the field in which they now operate. Processes of "cognitive bargaining" (Hunter 1983) become necessary to close the structural lag. In this case, religious frameworks, rather than being discarded, were adapted to those more appropriate for the setting, in many cases moving "backward" toward the insights of Luther and Calvin, and Puritan teaching on social ethics.

theorists: religion in the modern world is constrained to one's private life as a result of sphere differentiation (see Berger & Luckmann 1966, Luckmann 1967, Gehlen 1980). Casanova (1994) provides the helpful language of the "deprivatization" of religion. Though speaking primarily of the political-public sphere, Casanova identifies three conditions where deprivatization occurs: conditions where religion enters the public sphere to protect its own rights, conditions where religion enters the public sphere to contest the claims to autonomy of other secular spheres, and conditions where religion enters to "protect the traditional life-world from administrative or juridical state penetration" (Casanova 1994:58). While these conditions are primarily oriented around the entrance of religion into the political sphere, for the case of religion entering the economic sphere, both of the latter two conditions have relevance here and can be adapted to the particular case. Mirroring the third condition, re-enchanting frameworks, in expressing deep concern with cultural understandings of mid-century industrial work, directly contest institutional differentiation and its effects in producing a "Sunday-Monday" divide. Re-enchanting allows workers to push back the penetration of compartmentalization by "taking religion to work," aggressively countering the economic sphere's constraint placed on the lifeworld. Mirroring the second condition, re-embedding frameworks find themselves disproving of the autonomous norms and immanent laws of the economic sphere: their efforts confront those elements head on with their norms and laws. Both cases demonstrate the surprising salience and energy of modern religion to defy privatization. As Casanova observes of the cases he indexes, "...above all, social scientists need to recognize that, despite all the structural forces, the legitimate pressures, and the many valid reasons pushing religion in the modern secular world into the private sphere, religion continues to have and will likely continue to have a public dimension" (Casanova 1994:66).

Where Casanova's analysis moves more broadly to take on all modern spheres, he channels Weber's basic insights: religions tend to run into sphere conflicts. Yet in challenging default assumptions of the "secular" Enlightenment, Casanova makes the case confrontations today may reveal the two contending forces have switched roles: "Religious traditions are now confronting the differentiated secular spheres, challenging them to face their own obscurantist, ideological, and inauthentic claims. In many of the confrontations, it is religion which, as often as not, appears to be on the side of human enlightenment" (Casanova 1994:234). Such a generalization is far too broad to evaluate here: which frameworks, which religions, and which secular sphere claims are being challenged would all

need further exploration to make such a statement plausible. Religious pluralism likely also comes under threat in many cases of deprivatization. Setting aside these unanswered questions, Casanova's framework provides a means of making sense of modern religious frameworks defying theories of modernity by injecting themselves directly into nonreligious spheres.

## Chapter 6

### **Making Your Work Matter to God, Part Three: Modern Circuit Riders of the Faith and Work Movement**

#### **Making Extraordinary Workers**

“Are you headed to the work event?”

I had just parked my car a few blocks from my destination, an older historic church located in a dense residential neighborhood. The registration email for the faith and work event had warned of limited parking and requested we be considerate of the church’s residential neighbors. Trying to comply with their request, I had located a spot at a nearby school a few blocks away. Before I could even close my car door, a woman driving by spotted me and apparently judged me to be non-local. When I confirmed that she had guessed correctly, she responded with excitement that we could walk together from our remote parking place. I waited for her to park her car and then joined her on the sidewalk. We worked through small talk and introductions as we obediently followed her phone’s GPS directions to the church. A younger African-American woman with a friendly smile, she had heard of the event on a local Christian radio station and knew she “had to come.” She was the payroll manager at a small local company and was enthusiastic about the idea of incorporating her faith with her job. Upon asking if she was familiar with any of the event’s fairly well-known speakers, I found she was entirely drawn—perhaps somewhat impulsively—by the topic itself rather than the speakers. Since all the previous conferences I had attended were located in large cities (usually in upper scale hotels) and tended to pull in the “business class” city-hopping professional crowd, this encounter adjusted my expectations for the evening. For one, previous events, with one exception noted below, had attracted predominantly white, college-educated Evangelicals, rarely if ever reflecting the diversity of the event location. But more significantly, payroll administrators generally do not find their way to

these gatherings, which tend to favor small business owners, aspiring entrepreneurs, and an abundance of ministry leaders.<sup>61</sup> As it turned out, this event did diverge from others, but not in the ways this initial encounter suggested.

We entered the church at the basement level, greeted by about twenty volunteers, young adults wearing matching t-shirts branded with the event's logo. Modern rock music blared from somewhere in the building. The church was an early 20th century building with the smell and feel only older churches can have: the green square tiled floor, the slight musty smell, and wood paneling that marks a previous era's interior decor. Volunteers channeled me to the sanctuary--I somehow lost my walking companion through this process--where I found very few seating options were still available. There were probably five available seats in the decently-sized sanctuary of approximately three hundred people. I ended up in the balcony. Since the balcony wrapped completely around the church in a full U-shape, the remaining seats were above the stage, giving me a good view of the band playing and nearly a birds-eye view of every row of attendees on the first level. We had been handed a brown paper lunch bag on the way as part of our registration process, and that, combined with the t-shirt-clad workers, suggested this was going to be a far more casual event than my previous observation sites. What grabbed my attention more than anything else, however, was the presence of a band playing loud contemporary worship music at the front of the sanctuary. A bearded acoustic guitarist in stylish clothes led the band through several songs while the congregation sang along, aided by lyrics being projected on a large screen at the front of the room. I suddenly realized: this was more of an Evangelical church service than a conference. Setting down my pen and notepad, I stood with the rest of the attendees through several songs, led by younger, stylish musicians on stage. Since I was only familiar with one of the older hymns, the unexpected music opening gave me time to survey the other attendees. I had guessed wrongly about diverse demographics: the room was probably ninety-five percent white, including the entire band on stage and the front row of keynote speakers. Just as the band wrapped up their final song, I spotted my newly made friend on the far side of the sanctuary. As the band closed out their set with a prayer, a group of college students made their way over to my section and began sitting in the open spots on the floor around me, filling the room beyond capacity.

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<sup>61</sup> According to a poll of participants at the 2016 Faith and Work Summit.



The event coordinator took the stage. After thanking the band, he began to shift the conversation toward faith and work. Looking out on the packed church, the speaker began to name professions one-by-one and asked us to stand when we heard our respective identifier. The intended objective was quickly accomplished, as we all got a sense of who alongside us had given up their Friday night for a faith and work event. The first three professions named--healthcare, education, and finance--were each represented by 20-25 people in the room. Slightly more than that stood for the technology industry. For industrial and manufacturing, the number dropped to six. Ten stood up for sales and marketing. Around thirty "students" stood up, myself included. When thirty people stood up for the "ministry or non-profit" identifier, the rhythm of the exercise was disrupted by a seemingly spontaneous round of applause for those standing. This flowed into the next category: military and civil services. This was also deemed applause-worthy. Finally, the speaker got to hospitality or retail: a handful of people stood, one of them unabashedly letting out a proud cheer for their small number. Likely not wanting to break the pattern, the crowd applauded politely. Finally, the speaker asked for those working in administration to stand. As luck would have it, I had met the room's single payroll manager while parking. She too received polite applause as the exercise concluded.

"As you can see, we have a very diverse group of people, and I am so thankful for that," the event coordinator said. "Our professions may make our 9-to-5 lives very different, but we're all brought here by the same question." The coordinator then handed the platform off to the first keynote speaker: "He will come deliver the word of God to us." As nearly everyone around me pulled out their Bibles, I again realized how much this event was shaped like an Evangelical church service. The good-humored stand-and-be-recognized exercise had served as a light interlude between the emotionally intense music and a sermon requiring focused concentration. As the first keynote speaker took the stage with Bible in hand, the attendees around me assumed the posture of attentive congregants, many joining me now with pens and notepads open, poised to record the insights provided. It may have been a Friday night, but we were going into Sunday morning mode.

The first speaker laid out the basic outline of the story of Joseph from the book of Genesis. Joseph, as the narrative revealed, was a favorite of his father's and seemingly destined for greatness early in life. However, he hit rock-bottom early in the story when his brothers, seized with jealousy for his favored status, dumped him into a well and then sold him to Egyptian slave traders. Yet Joseph persevered and rose in the ranks of servants in Egypt to eventually manage the household of Pharaoh's captain of the guard. After being falsely accused of sexual assault, Joseph finds himself back in prison, where he again rises in the ranks when his dream interpretation skills gain him an audience with Pharaoh. Joseph's life, we are told, is a rags to riches story, but the main character in this story is not actually Joseph but God, who divinely coordinated these events. "Whatever the circumstances of your job," the speaker tells us, "whether you like it or not, remember that God has a purpose for it all. And this has relevance to every single fact of your life."

The sermon emphasized the classical Calvinist theme of God's sovereignty over all: "God is sovereign over every detail of your life, including your job." Even in cases where it appears our lives are afflicted with trials, God is still working, just as he worked through Joseph even in prison. We may have assurance in the face of evil and pain that God is ultimately intending to bring about the outcomes that he wants: quoting a line Joseph said to his brothers, years later in his life, "What you intended for evil God intended for good." With this confident explanation in place, the sermon delivered repeated assurances about struggles in one's workplace: "Whatever circumstances you find yourself in, remember that you are working ultimately for your God"; "Just as God needed Joseph to be in prison, God needs you to be there [at your job] right now"; "If you have a job or employment, it's because God has deployed you to it"; "What matters is not your perfect job but faithful service to the king." The sermon concluded with a confident statement about what ultimately matters: "God is sovereign over every detail of your life and you don't know how it will work out. It doesn't matter because it all ends up at the feet of Jesus anyway. At the end we will say to the Lord, 'To you belongs all the glory, honor, and praise.'" This was not a self-help sermon, nor was it the rosy vision offered by the prosperity gospel that promises all blessings and no suffering for Christians. The constant returning to themes of God's sovereignty and control and the necessity of relying on eternal rewards--and not one's own efforts or understanding--tied the sermon closely to Reformation themes of the significant

limits placed on human abilities. Struggles and challenges in life were not downplayed. This was not quite “your best life now,” to draw on a phrase of another popular Evangelical figure.

The second sermon was clearly shaped to supplement the first by drawing on far more distinctly Evangelical theology. “I want to show you how the gospel turns upside down our work and sees it as a component in God’s gospel,” the speaker told us before laying out central Evangelical themes of “faith in Christ” and the sufficiency of Christ as a substitutionary offering to secure salvation. Proverbial takeaways concerning work were sprinkled through the teaching, linked closely to major theological themes of God’s character, humankind’s depravity, and God’s redemption of the world. God delights in work, the speaker tells us, and he himself enjoys working. To make the point that God works through our work, the speaker turned to a quote by Martin Luther: “God milks the cows through the milkmaid.” This high view of work was connected to similar takeaways as the first talk: “Work is a mark of human dignity, and many people in the church work only as a necessary evil, in order to make money in order to get by. This type of thing is unbiblical.” Perhaps inching toward the more well-known “Protestant ethic,” the speaker made his case for working hard by ending on the “urgency of eternity.” “We’re living down for the sake of eternity. So how do we approach work from an eternal perspective?” Yet here the focus was not on working hard to work out one’s salvation but to express the truth of “the gospel” to others: “If you’re the lazy one, unpleasant, first to complain, then you aren’t ordaining the gospel. Work hard to ordain the gospel. Work strategically to advance the gospel.” It is evidently not the worker’s salvation that is on the line in this vision, but the public presentation of the gospel. Yet, paralleling the Weber-observed anxiety-driven Calvinism, the takeaway is a message of the classic push toward industriousness, discipline, and a sober dedication to mundane activities in everyday life.

Why were these Evangelicals gathered in this setting? Conservative Protestantism has in recent decades come to emphasize the impact of faith on one’s private life, particularly in speaking to topics like family (Christiano 2000), child-raising (Ammerman 1987), gender ideologies (Bartkoski 1997), and the pursuit of self-realization (Hunter 1987). Previous studies relying on national surveys of Evangelicals (Hunter 1987) suggest signs of “vocational asceticism” are still faintly visible, but this element has been eclipsed by (and perhaps channeled into) the moral

asceticism of concern surrounding personal moral behaviors. Two large-scale surveys of Evangelicals from the 1980s and 1990s (Hunter 1987, Wuthnow 1992) suggest Evangelicals do not distinguish themselves from other religious adherents or their secular counterparts in the workplace. As Hunter's survey reveals, Evangelical college students are more likely than their secular counterparts to derive satisfaction from the private realm of "friends, family, and hobbies" rather than their work. This loss of a distinctive work orientation parallels the far greater attention religious denominations and larger Evangelical organizations grant to "family values" or "moral values" in their public discourse: rarely is there discussion of "economic values." To the extent that workplace issues have been present in broader Evangelical discourse, the focus tends to be on religious liberties and questions at the forefront of the ongoing "culture war": the rights of employees to practice their religion in the workplace, employer obligations to provide access to contraceptives, or questions of rights surrounding providing services to LGBT populations.

The two-day conference described here worked to change this sequestering of faith away from one's economic behaviors. The first page of the conference program explained the purpose of the conference: "to help Christians live extraordinary gospel-centered lives in their workplaces." Practical breakout sessions took on more specific topics relevant to the working Evangelical: workplace evangelism, Jesus-style leadership, handling workplace stress, entrepreneurship, and careers in the arts. Despite the event integrating itself within the particular locality--drawing on a massive pool of volunteers, incorporating a local band to lead congregational singing, and tapping local workplace leaders and pastors as speakers--this was not a one-time production or the product of a creative church committee. Paralleling a traveling tent revival or crusade, this event was one of thirteen near-identical events coordinated by a national organization in cities all over the U.S. While my field work brought me to six different national faith and work conferences (though no other events sponsored by this particular organization), this particular event stood out in a number of ways. For one, as opposed to the disproportionate numbers of full-time-ministers at other gatherings, most of the people I met at this conference were part of the "secular" workforce, holding down 9-to-5 jobs in settings where co-workers did not likely share their faith commitments. Likely due to the headlining "celebrity authors" in the speaking lineup, this event seemed to effectively draw the "average Joe" Evangelical. Groups of adults showed up together in church vans from near-by churches. Dress was

extremely casual. A few attendees seemed quite taken by close encounters with the “star” speakers. There was also the unquestionable aesthetic power of the physical space of a church, with the speakers taking on the role of traveling pastors, attendees taking on the role of congregants, and even the casual refreshments embodying a certain Sunday morning simplicity: small styrofoam cups of coffee, large bowls of Halloween type-candy distributed throughout the lobby, and boxes of donuts set out for the second day’s breakfast offerings. Amidst the emotionally intense singing of modern music and prayers that dotted each session, the speakers even managed to incite a few impromptu “Amen!” affirmations from their audience. This was clearly an Evangelical event.

“We’re about helping pastors and churches think about this topic,” the founder, a younger technology entrepreneur, explained to me in an interview a few weeks later. “Our end goal is that every church makes this part of what they do--thinking about the workplace and how the gospel intercepts it.” Though many of the core people involved in these events also worked for a national missions organization, the founder emphasized that the conferences were run largely independently. The initial founding had followed the writing of a well-received faith and work book: the founder and his co-author began putting on events that promoted the same ideas of the book. Clearly, the packed-full sanctuary I experienced was not a fluke, as there seems to be a great demand for the traveling event. It was not clear to me whether the endeavor was intended to produce significant profits, as the registration fee was notably low, and all attendees received the original book in their registration packets. Perhaps the effort could be framed as a multi-year publicity tour for the authors and their ideas, though certainly partnership with other speakers and local church members was a big part of the expressed goals. Yet regardless of motivations, these authors had joined a group of other speakers, theologians, pastors, writers and business executives in the modern faith and work conference circuit.

## **Assessing the Modern Evangelical Faith and Work Movement**

The two previous chapters have laid out the historical antecedents to the contemporary conversation on Evangelical work as well as the substantial growth in this field since the 1980s. Here, I turn to the on-the-ground efforts of actors and organizations shaping the conversation today. While these voices are institutionalized in many ways as the movement’s “organic intellectuals” (discussed below), this analysis stays close to the lived experiences of actors constructing and navigating cultural frameworks related to work and theology, not only for themselves

but also for others. Thus, in incorporating a cultural approach this analysis looks beyond abstract or scholarly “systems” of theology to probe the less systematic “mental maps,” vocabularies, symbols, narratives, and values that these actors draw upon. While these actors at times draw deeply from more systematic thought--Lutheran understandings of vocation, Calvinist understandings of God’s sovereignty, as well as economic understandings of market mechanisms--this account only references these larger systems of thought in places where they better illuminate the cultural meanings posited by the actors. Thus, the analysis here is meant to produce a highly contextualized vision of faith and work “on the ground,” which shapes not only actors’ discourse but also their basic and more tacit sense of social reality.

The cultural frameworks examined here are rich with not only perceptive and symbolic content but also normative content. They serve to bestow particular actions with meaning and purpose through drawing upon “powerful symbols that motivate and guide our actions from within” (Illouz 2003:7). They also impute upon activities and objects particular value and legitimacy, grounding these evaluative judgments both in the aspects of the object itself but also in the wider ontological order or underlying background understanding of reality (see Thomas 1989, Abend 2014). Studying the cultural frameworks of a movement’s intellectuals provides two additional insights: first, as discussed below, these frameworks can represent the purest form of ideas in the movement at large. But secondly, these frameworks are deployed by leaders within a particular social space in an attempt to contend for legitimacy with competing frameworks, seeking to gain cultural and symbolic legitimacy as they diffuse through a wider community or subculture (Rochen 2000). They seek to alter not only definitions and understandings of social entities and practices (Diani 1995) but also to confirm and transform the larger “vision of the world and, thereby, action on the world” (Bourdieu 1994:170). As discussed at the end of this chapter, the particular location and content of these cultural frameworks--understandings of work--makes them fraught with not only normative but also political and ideological power in how they orient workers toward and within the economic system.

Princeton theologian David Miller (2007), in writing the history of modern faith and work efforts, categorizes this growing surge of actors, resources, and discourse a social movement. Miller’s analysis, however, reaches broadly across Evangelical, Mainline Protestant, and Catholic organizations and actors, creating a much broader narrative

of different traditions moving at different paces as they navigate different institutional and theological spaces. The present analysis, while certainly attentive to the wider American religious context in which this movement operates, attempts to capture more nuance in the particular cultural frameworks produced by Evangelical leaders. This not only allows greater attention to the seemingly radical theological developments taking place in this movement--all to make “your work matter to God”--but also the particular social factors of social class, class mobility, and status and place within the labor market that are unique to modern American Evangelicalism. Therefore, this story stays close to a specific religious tradition and its fleet of thought leaders and resource controllers who are largely operating within the same cultural space to navigate the enduring faith-work and faith-economic question.

## **Thought Leaders as De-Institutionalized Moral Entrepreneurs**

The thought leaders I interviewed come from different levels of work experience, ministry experience, denominational affiliation, and life stages. As the demographics provided in Chapter Four reveal, they are united in being highly educated, with nearly all of them having an advanced degree. The key to gaining entrance to this core group of leaders is almost certainly writing a successful faith and work book: twenty of the twenty-four individuals interviewed have one or more faith and work books on their resume. The four that are not authors are either successful business leaders or part of national ministry organizations. The other dimension that unites these thought leaders is availability: traveling across the country to faith and work conferences regularly places great demands on these actors’ time. The measure of “national conference” appearances used in this study would almost certainly be dwarfed by actual speaking commitments and travel, which would include not just public conferences in my own count (see Appendix A) but local church events, college chapel services, private retreats, consulting opportunities, working group gatherings, organizational board meetings, speaking gigs on other topics, and many other events. Thus while the very precisely defined measure of national conference appearances suggests these leaders have spoken at somewhere between three and twelve national events, it is likely that several thought leaders have spoken on faith and work over one hundred times over their professional lives and may travel to several events a month.

These thought leaders can be labeled moral entrepreneurs in three different senses, all of which illuminate the liminal, self-defined, and highly autonomous role they hold in the larger field of Evangelical culture. At the most basic level, some thought leaders are self-employed entrepreneurs, having ridden the success of a book or a previous occupation to build expertise that they are able to offer as a for-pay service. Several organizations in this space serve primarily to provide affiliation status (and perhaps nonprofit tax exemption) to successful authors. Alternatively, many have jobs at churches, universities, national ministry organizations, or secular places of work: their delving into the faith and work space--whether speaking, writing, or consulting--may still play out as an entrepreneurial free lancing for their careers. In another sense, they are moral entrepreneurs in relationship to authority structures, power brokers, and gatekeepers in the Evangelical subculture. In this sense they are "institutional entrepreneurs" working outside set institutions to transpose new values into established institutional settings (see DiMaggio 1982, Battilana 2006). Much of this entails convincing existing institutions their expertise is of value. As discussed in Chapter Four, since 2010 the faith and work movement has had incredible success importing topics about faith and work into the "mega-conferences" of Evangelicalism, perpetuating the demands for thought leaders and expertise. Finally, in a third sense, these leaders play the role of moral entrepreneurs identified by Becker (1963) in reacting to a moral evil and crusading for reform. In this case, the moral evil is a particular situational crisis: day-to-day work being detached from one's faith. This is a crisis that only particular actors in the Evangelical subculture recognize: if these actors were not sounding the alarm of this problem, Evangelicalism as a whole would likely continue to function out of the economic retreatism paradigm that it adopted around the turn of the century. Thus, as Becker observes, it falls upon the moral entrepreneurs to undertake enterprises and initiatives that overcome apathy and indifference.

This concept of moral entrepreneurs can be applied to various types of knowledge workers operating within postindustrial capitalism. Hunter and Fessenden (1992) observe the rise of actors within the knowledge economy who "derive their livelihood from the production and distribution of new ways of thinking and acting morally" (Hunter & Fessenden 1992:161). The thought leaders of the faith and work movement produce and distribute what could be identified as "symbolic wares" (Hunter & Fessenden) or "symbolic repertoires"--whether cognitive, normative, or expressive (Spillman 2012)--that allow actors to impute meaning and significance on economic



activity that moves beyond self-interest. That these symbolic products have a particular transcendent or religious dimension in many ways reflects the same sort of modern phenomenon observed by Luckmann (1966): an emerging “supermarket” of “ultimate meanings” from which individuals can assemble and construct their private “packages of meaning.” Of course, faith and work thought leaders may provide resources to denominational authorities or encourage the implementation of workplace groups that hold some authority over behaviors. However, in the wider cultural space of Evangelicalism faith and work thought leaders function as “soft” religious authorities. Rather than a traditionalized form of religion providing an “order of things to be obeyed” and inciting obedience and deference, these voices largely work through the language of “advice, guidance, facilitation, of being provided with opportunities, possibilities or challenges, of sharing and supporting” (Heelas & Woodhead 2001). While far more institutionalized religious traditions today have adapted their own forms of soft authority rather than “harder” forms of religion, the thought leaders’ location outside any institutional structures--the magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church or denominational leadership in the Southern Baptist Church, for instance--positions them squarely in a realm where access is shaped more by individual preference and tastes. As will be discussed later, the norms of this realm generally preclude any power to override individual preference.

It might be tempting, then, to write off de-institutionalized thought leaders as side-show “lifestyle consultants” operating at the margins of American religion. In most cases, after all, they stand outside any denominational structures, which are arguably vested with more authority, enmeshed in wider networks, and embedded within deeper lineages of tradition. Some might believe that denominations, the favored units of sociological study and historical analysis, might be seen as where the real action is for American Evangelicalism. Such a move would neglect the vast historical evidence that entrepreneurial actors have stirred major transformations, revivals, and theological evolutions in American Protestantism over the last three centuries. Whether the Methodist circuit riders of the First Great Awakening, the camp meeting revivalists of the Second Great Awakening, traveling modern revivalists like Billy Sunday and Billy Graham, or the early radio and TV broadcasters of the 20th century, actors within American Protestantism operating outside of formal structures have consistently been able to accumulate resources, generate followers, and spur transformation. Finke and Stark’s historical analysis of church-sect theory (2000) draws attention to the long enduring effects upstart sects of adherents have had in American

religion. Previous research (Fligstein 1997) suggests the potential for strategic action is greater in fields with high levels of uncertainty at the institutional order. This would certainly be true for many phases of American Protestantism (see Hatch 1989, Thomas 1989, Hoge et al. 1994 for examples from three different eras) where individual authority and volition has been prioritized over authority from “on high.” There is also good reason to take seriously the specific institutional infiltration potential for the faith and work movement. As Chapter Four suggests, the faith and work movement has already demonstrated a track record of importing their theological concerns and expertise into existing structures and organizations.

Thus, the argument here stays close to the second sense in which faith and work thought leaders are entrepreneurial: as actors coming from the “outside,” they are contending to transform existing institutions and import a foreign institutional logic into the dominant institutional structures (Battilana 2006). Previous research on institutional entrepreneurs suggests that for these efforts to be successful they must mobilize established allies, develop coalitions, engage key constituents such as highly embedded agents with a priori power, and draw on the authority of recognized professionals and experts (Leca et. al 2008). While there are strong structural and resource oriented dimensions to this task--as is also evident by previous institutional entrepreneurs within American Protestantism, discursive strategies play a central role, not only in gaining legitimacy in the eyes of resource controllers and potential allies (Battilana & Leca 2009), but also in contending with other actors to institute and legitimate their own vision of the wider cultural order (see Thomas 1989). Thus, while Chapter Four focused on the acquisition and mobilization of resources for the Evangelical faith and work movement, this chapter turns to the discourse of the movement: the cultural frameworks presently promoted by thought leaders that seek to shape the beliefs, attitudes, and ontological order of contemporary Evangelicalism.

My approach here prioritizes the institutional approach to culture (Wuthnow 1989, e.g. Hunter 1991) for multiple reasons. First, conceptually, the voices of various authors, organizational leaders, and conference speakers represent the movement’s ideology in its purest form, thus focusing on those who fulfill the sociocultural role of “organic intellectuals” within the movement, following Gramsci (1971). These actors, in providing the intellectual elaboration of the movement, enhance the movement’s homogeneity and provide “an awareness of its own

function not only in the economic but also the social and political field” (1971:5). Secondly, existing research has provided a fairly comprehensive--if now slightly dated--account of Evangelical business leaders (Nash & McLennan 2001), Evangelicals working in knowledge economy jobs (Schmalzbauer 2003), and Evangelical elites navigating positions of power (Lindsey 2007). While these studies effectively capture the varied landscape of American Evangelicalism, they are methodologically limited in their capacity to capture contending movements vying for resources within the realm of American Evangelical subculture (cf. Markofski 2015). Thus, while Nash and McClellan’s (1997) book, based on interviews with business leaders navigating their faith, provides a compelling spectrum of the various views on faith-work integration (comparable to the one laid out in Chapter Five), their analysis is not able to historicize or contextualize how this variation formed over time, nor probe why some views have taken greater hold than others. That said, in the present study, the organic intellectuals and the institutional side of culture production is supplemented in various ways by insights on how “activists” and other Evangelical workers have responded to movement ideas, beliefs, and frameworks. National surveys engaged below are able to trace basic trends regarding the diffusion of ideas and beliefs promoted by the thought leaders. Additionally, ethnographic participant observation at events provides insights on how activists and attendees respond to and negotiate with the ideas presented by conference speakers. On top of this, during my field work I monitored online activities of around ninety organizations and leaders involved in the movement by following them on twitter. This exposed me to the ongoing conversations and debates occurring among interviewees and those in their network. Frequently this stream of activity would bring to my attention recordings of events I was not able to attend: from this I watched approximately twenty-five recorded conference sessions to supplement my field work. As exhibited in the discussion below, assembling these various data sources side by side with interviews of thought leaders complicates any simplistic understanding of how the faith and work movement influences the wider Evangelical subculture.

## **Re-Enchanting the Modern Work World**

The previous chapter drew on popular Evangelical books to plot out the rise of Evangelical faith and work discourse over the 20th century. An analysis of faith and work books published between 1930 and 1980 reveals the

emergence of four major “theologies of work” cultural frameworks. Those four frameworks are: re-commissioning work (promoting workplace evangelism), re-sacralizing work (valorizing the “businessman” vocation), re-enchanting work (imbuing work with sacred and God-ordained significance), and re-embedding work (reorienting work toward larger moral frameworks). Since this chapter now jumps to the present and moves from written texts to the discourse of contemporary leaders, there is certainly the possibility that the discourse examined requires new frameworks for analysis. However, in study of contemporary leaders and discourse, I found significant convergence between the current movement and two of the frameworks from the last chapter: re-enchanting and re-embedding work.

“Whatever circumstances you find yourself in, remember that you are working ultimately for your God.” This statement, from the speaker of the earlier event recounted, sums up the central re-enchanting impulse of the present movement. Just as the books of the earlier era laid out, work is deeply connected to God. While enchanted frameworks may lean toward “subjective” orientations of thinking about work--what Wuthnow (1994) called psychological or therapeutic--most subjective orientations still make an ontological claim about reality related to God. Whether it is God’s nature and image, God’s act of creation, God’s act of redemption, or--in the case of the event recounted above--God’s sovereignty over everything in the world, God holds an ontological existence in most enchanted frameworks and holds causally efficacious powers. This makes enchanted frameworks a subjective orientation but also not one prone to self-actualization or a complete turn “inward” to the needs of the self, a common trait of modern spirituality (Heelas & Woodhead 2005, see Bellah et. al 1985). One interviewee, a senior portfolio manager at an investment firm and thus one of the few thought leaders with a completely separate line of work, drew out the connection to the image of God:

Interviewee: I start by: we’re created in the image of God and God is a worker. And therefore work is something that we’re imitating God when we do it. And as a result our work is not a separate part of our life but an integrated part of our life. And I would say further that work has redeeming characteristics, I [generally] develop a line of thinking that work is worship, and our ultimate boss is God himself. There are lots of ways to talk about how these things get integrated.

Positing God as one's boss may or may not have specific ethical content: it can very well result in the "adverbial" faith and work theology (Sherman 2011) discussed earlier--adding to the imperative of work a particular Scriptural adverb (wholeheartedly, joyfully, earnestly, etc.). This interviewee's vision also maintains traces of the Romantic ethos mapped out by Taylor (1989) in modern notions of enchantment: meaningful work represents securing a harmonious union. This interviewee made this point in an interesting way by sharing that he at one point commuted from Princeton, New Jersey to New York City for work: "There was a barrier between my life and work called the train." When he later took a job closer to his home he "no longer lived in two different worlds." He credits this physical union with initiating thought about greater integration between faith and work. His conceptual bridging between the material world and "spiritual" realities in many ways embodied the very point he was making here.

Another interviewee blended together re-enchanting and re-embedding cultural frameworks:

Interviewee: I find the image of God to be the most helpful organizing category: this idea that we're in the world to reflect the creator and steward creation in the name of the creator....If we live in a material world as image bearers then the actual physical stuff, like I'm making a table, I'm tending to a human body through medicine--I don't have to have a conceptual layer for that 'to count.' I can just be doing the good--myself in a body, using extensions of the body through tools and technologies to care for the embodied world. And that is image-bearing. And then I can ask: am I doing this in a way that tends toward the flourishing of this creation, of this creature that's before me, or this social system that I'm involved in?

This interviewee here has elements of the Sayer's vision of "just good table-making" explored in the earlier chapter. His writing on faith and work articulates a very aesthetic-grounded orientation toward the tasks of Evangelicals related to culture that appeals to transcendent ends like beauty and goodness. However, in the interview he also links this re-enchanting with a re-embedding framework. "Flourishing" provides a criteria or end--a value-rationality in Weber's sense--against which work can be held up. This interviewee went on to bring this down to a "practical" level, citing research on fast food workers who were able to create surprising meaning in their work. This meaning, according to the interviewee, grew out of the thick relationships they shared with co-

workers. This interviewee pointed to these relationships as part of the “image of God” that can be reflected in work.

This particular interviewee’s writing directly criticizes more conflictual orientations toward culture--the culture war--as well as less sophisticated modes of “cultural engagement,” a discourse he finds to be too thin and lacking in any substance in Evangelical thought. His most well-known book in this space is a popular citation and reference point for many other thought leaders. In a modification of Gramscian terms, this interviewee in some ways represents the organic intellectual’s intellectual. Positioning his call to a cultural stewardship orientation requires a wider probing of Evangelicalism’s view of culture, which serves as an important underlying premise of the contemporary movement. This is the task taken up in the next section.

## **Evangelicalism’s Evolving Cultural Engagement Orientations: Cultural Withdrawal, Cultural Warring, Cultural Mandate**

An insightful finding of my foray into the faith and work world is how faith and work leaders seem to occupy such a different space than the far better known “Christian Right” face of the Evangelical subculture. Most of my field work took place at a time of significant political upheaval at the national level: interviewees would have plenty of fodder from national headlines and well publicized disputes to draw from as I guided them through questions related to faith in the realm of work and economics. This was roughly the time period of several nationally known cases involving workplace organizations and faith triggering drawn out legal battles. *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc.* settled whether for-profit corporations could, on grounds of religious conviction, fail to provide contraceptions for female employees. A cake business in Oregon was found guilty of violating a state nondiscrimination ordinance in their refusal, again on grounds of religious conviction, to make a cake for a lesbian couple. The infamous Religious Freedom Restoration Act--defending business owners’ rights to deny services in cases where religious convictions were violated--was also passed in Indiana during this time. Most of my fieldwork and interviews also took place at a time when conservative Evangelicals were grappling with the supercharged rhetoric of the 2016 Republican primary. To my surprise, none of my interviewees made reference to any of these cases or the

Presidential election, despite discussing faith and work for on average forty-five minutes.<sup>62</sup> The roughly one hundred hours of field work proved to be largely the same story: though I found a 35-page pamphlet entitled “An Employer’s Guide to Faith in the Workplace: Legal Protections for Christians Who Own a Business” in my registration packet at a faith and work national conference, its content was not mentioned in any of the sessions I attended. To borrow the terminology of Smith (1998), the Evangelicals I studied expressed surprisingly little sentiment of being “embattled,” a longstanding cultural orientation of American Evangelicalism. The question of why Evangelical faith and work leaders managed to sidestep this embattlement mentality helps locate their efforts in the larger American Evangelical landscape.

Answering this question requires delving into the cultural and historical location in which the contemporary movement operates. One here finds three different orientations to culture—though far from offering tidy categorization for all of 20<sup>th</sup>-century Evangelicalism—helps provide a basic map of orientations from which different actors locate themselves. These three orientations can be simplified as: cultural withdrawing, cultural warring, and cultural stewardship, which I link below to the “culture mandate.” Since the mid-1970s the cultural and social engagement of American Evangelicalism has largely become associated with conservative partisan politics and cultural warring. This narrative of this phenomenon’s origins ties to the story of post-fundamentalism outlined in Chapter Five: while in the early decades of the 20th century fundamentalists primarily emphasized their separation, purity, and withdrawal from the culture at large, this disengagement orientation began to change in the 1940s. Setting aside some of this inter-group hostility, a group of leaders labeled “neo-Evangelicals” began building networks and organizations that crossed denominational lines, creating a parallel cultural world to that of mainstream culture. Two figures played a dominant role in this shift, at times working together. First, Biblical scholar Carl Henry’s 1947 landmark book *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* echoed observations

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<sup>62</sup> With the exception of an interview immediately after the election I never discussed the Presidential election with interviewees. However, tracking all the faith and work leaders I could locate on Twitter allowed me to keep up with any public political views the thought leaders shared. A number of those interviewed—on blogs, in open letters, or in Christian publications—publicly denounced Trump’s candidacy during the run-up to the election, and an even greater number have signed open letters from Evangelical leaders denouncing various policies after the election. I did interview one theologian and writer who openly and publicly supported Donald Trump before the election: Wayne Grudem. While Grudem is an influential systematic theologian in conservative circles, he was not technically part of my “thought leader” sample because he does not speak frequently about faith and work, nor is he invited to national faith and work conferences. Despite this, his two books on work and economics frequently show up on bibliographies of important faith and work works. Both these works and his interview represented some of the most explicit endorsements and promotions of conservative economic policies under the guise of faith and work. Agendas such as these are discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

that the practical and humanitarian dimensions of the Christian faith had all but “evaporated” for Evangelicals.<sup>63</sup>

Henry lamented the reduction of both sin and moral regeneration to the level of the individual, a vision which leaves no place for systematic engagement with economic issues. Henry and other observers saw in this deficit an inability to engage “the political-cultural and sociological context of modern life,” instead paralyzing itself over obsession with “personal morality.” Henry partnered with other neo-evangelical leaders to help found Fuller Theological Seminary in 1947, an institution envisioned to refute fundamentalism and its corresponding anti-intellectualism. One of the other leaders to help found Fuller Theological Seminary was Billy Graham, the second figure who played a dominant role in this era. Graham, better well-known for his mass revival preaching services and pastoral relationships with Presidents from Eisenhower to Obama, was instrumental in founding several institutions of the 1950s, including *Christianity Today*, a conservative magazine intended to counter the more liberal *Christian Century*. Smith (1998) labels this activity “engaged orthodoxy,” as neo-Evangelicals begin to establish an assortment of bible institutes, liberal arts colleges, missions organizations, media outlets, and summer camps that spanned denominations. The cornerstone organization within this space is the National Association of Evangelicals, founded in 1942 by a group of leaders seeking to overcome the fundamentalist-modernist debate that had created undesirable separatism within conservative religious denominations.

The establishment of these networks, organizations, and media infrastructure laid the groundwork for the emergence of a far more partisan form of Evangelical activism in the 1970s. While *Christianity Today* and other mid-century institutions had close relationships with corporate funders and their largely conservative economic interests, Evangelicals more assertively entered “secular” politics in the 1970s. Scholars typically recognize an assortment of social issues that initiated this activism, all reactionary: Evangelicals began organizing around anti-feminist ideas (Diamond 1995), anti-gay anxieties (Fetner 2008), anti-abortion legalization (Luker 1985), and anti-school integration efforts (Balmer 2007). Though beginning at the grassroots levels, these local protests began to

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<sup>63</sup> Henry laid out a theology of work in a book on social ethics in 1964 that was ahead of its time in comprehensiveness. Surprisingly, despite Henry’s influence and visibility in neo-evangelicalism, his theology of works appears to have received only one citation in any of the materials I analyzed: Sherman and Hendricks (1987) remark the world of “work and the world of religion might look much different today” had these thoughts moved beyond a single book chapter that few seemed to read. The existing historical accounts of the faith and work movement also do not cite Henry’s work, instead highlighting Mainline Protestants producing similar thoughts in this era. It could be that Henry, writing as an academic in a book that likely generated attention from other academics, overlooked how valuable a theology of work would be to new lay-directed organizations by the end of the century.



“go national” in the 1970s led by what has become known as the Christian Right. It was at this point that many cultural and private morality issues began taking on politicized meanings, providing a means of mobilization for new organizations emerging in conservative politics. While organizational leaders would on the surface have good reason to ally themselves with Democratic President and openly “born again” Evangelical Jimmy Carter in the late 1970s, many leaders grew discontent with Carter’s lack of opposition to abortion and the equal rights amendment. Two organizations took the lead in this era: the Moral Majority, founded in 1979 by Baptist minister Jerry Falwell, and the Christian Coalition, founded in 1989 by Christian broadcaster Pat Robertson after a failed presidential run in 1988. These actors were joined by Focus on the Family, a group established earlier that advocated for prayer in schools, abstinence education, and creationism, while opposing LGBT rights, divorce, abortion, and feminism. Focus on the Family began planting Family Policy Council groups at the state level in the 1980s, creating grassroots political organizations to mobilize around particular social issues at the state level.

The Christian Right gained visibility and prominence through the 1980s and 1990s, celebrating Republican Presidential victories in 1980, 1984, 1988. Its power and influence within the Republican Party is generally seen to have peaked in 1988, with the unsuccessful presidential bid of Pat Robertson. However, the infrastructure and network were very much part of President George W. Bush’s electoral strategies in 2000 and 2004.<sup>64</sup>

Often overlooked in accounts of these efforts is that the Christian Right, as an embodiment of “public theology” (i.e. Kim 2017), always entailed far more than traditional political behaviors and attitudes relevant to political polling. The Christian Right encompassed a cultural and social orientation regarding faith’s implications for various spheres--public, civil society, economics, the arts, etc. One can find an extensive body of literature both critiquing prominent leaders’ strategies and advocating alternative ways of engagement, sometimes with an ambivalence

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<sup>64</sup> Importantly, during this era a variety of far less prominent institutional voices and organizations also continued to function that did not embrace the Christian Right’s partisan public face. A smaller but enduring “Christian Left” was visible in the activities of a few organizations (Swartz 2012): progressive-Christian magazine called *Sojourners*, founded in 1971 by Jim Wallis, and Evangelicals for Social Action, founded by Ron Sider in 1973. While both media and popular scholarship frequently provide accounts of the “rise of the religious left,” these efforts--at least in their most explicitly partisan forms of providing the Democratic version of the Christian Right--have always been in the minority. As Putnam and Campbell (2010) index, a very dependable “God gap” emerged in voting patterns during the Nixon administration: regular church attenders across religious traditions have been far more likely to vote Republican than Democratic in national elections for decades. Through the 2016 election this gap has remained strong. In places and settings where Evangelical theology is merged with partisan issues and electoral politics and candidates, the connection almost always favors Republicans.

toward the electoral politics for which the Christian Right was better known.<sup>65</sup> In the 1980s and 1990s, handfuls of subculturally influential Evangelicals publicly criticized the more prominent Christian Right leaders (see Perkins 1993, Dobson 1996, Yancey 1997 for examples). Though rarely moving to fully embrace the opposing party's platform, these voices began to both challenge the "public face" of Evangelicalism and slowly broaden the Evangelical social consciousness (Elisha 2011). Here it is more accurate to transition to the term "cultural engagement orientations" to avoid narrowing these alternative ways of engagement to voting patterns or support for nationally significant political-moral issues. Turning to cultural engagement orientations does not necessarily provide any escape from reactionary, inflammatory, or combative perspectives that characterize many forms of religious dogmatism: Evangelicals can easily repackage their combative political engagement into a wider cultural orientation. But thinking through cultural engagement orientations provides a more holistic vision of where faith and work fits into the American Evangelical landscape.

Probing the cultural engagement orientations of American Evangelicals requires analysis of both the theological and cultural sources as well as the settings in which these cultural resources are drawn upon for particular tasks. Williams (1999) uncovers a plurality of perspectives in his empirical analysis of visions of the "good society" within religious discourse. Cultural engagement orientations also show the consequences of an at-times rushed ecumenism across the 20th century, as various denominational doctrines, theological thinkers, and church traditions may have been hastily crafted together to counter a shared enemy, whether fundamentalism, modernism, "secular humanism," theological liberalism, or more progressive views on social issues. Regarding the latter case, this shoving together took on the term "ecumenism of the trenches" by the Christian Right: the belief was that distinctive theological elements could be set aside in the interest of rallying a joint political charge against a shared enemy. For cultural engagement orientations this 20th ecumenism deposited enduring tensions deep within the heart of Evangelicalism. For instance, early 20th century Evangelicals fully subscribed to a gloomier premillennialism that presumed wider society was lost and unreachable: mobilizing these same denominations to

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<sup>65</sup> The collection of faith and work books analyzed for Chapter Five captured a significant amount of works written before the rise of the Christian Right that laid out Evangelical social and political visions far different than what came to be in the 1970s. See Gasaway 2014.

engage in electoral fights over social issues requires overcoming an initial quietistic skepticism regarding the “efforts of man” (see Marsden 2006). As Elisha (2011) observes,

“The ideological contours of conservative Protestantism are constantly in flux. A history of continuous ebbs and flows, with progressive and reactionary styles of engagement competing, as it were, to direct currents of social engagement, has produced lingering tensions...contemporary Evangelicals are far from monolithic in their political orientations. At the local church level, Evangelical pastors and churchgoers wrestle with ambiguities they have inherited from a mixed legacy of engagement and retrenchment, of worldly accommodations and renunciations. Evangelical skepticism about the politics of social reform stands in conflict with an abiding ‘optimism about the perfectibility of society’ (Shibley 1996:101). Sectarian impulses to withdraw from affairs of ‘the world’ routinely clash with the imperative toward worldly activism, one of modern Evangelicalism’s defining characteristics (Bebbington 1989)” (Elisha 2008:17-18).

In many ways this opens the door to Evangelicals constructing a spiritual bricolage of cultural orientations, a concept well theorized by both sociologists of religion (Wuthnow 2007) as well as cultural sociologists (Swidler 2001). The argument presented here positions faith and work as part of an alternative cultural engagement orientation that, while eclipsed by the well-known combative and partisan orientation of the Christian Right, has taken up residence among an influential population of professional and highly-educated Evangelicals.

As Carl Henry captures in the *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*, the earlier cultural engagement orientation of fundamentalism left adherents unable to speak on or think through a variety of mid-century ethical and political issues that had gained salience at the middle of the century. Henry’s discomfort of this orientation can be attributed at least partially to his education: he and many other leaders of the neo-evangelical movement had escaped the anti-intellectualism of 20th century fundamentalism to earn advanced degrees, many times from prestigious European or American universities. Henry’s resulting demand for “Scriptural” ways to think through previously disengaged disciplinary subjects becomes an important entry point for a variety of “thicker” moral sources that form the basic foundations to the faith and work movement. Drawing from the four frameworks outlined in Chapter Five, re-enchanting and re-embedding frameworks become dependent upon Henry and other

educated Evangelicals taking up the task of solving the “uneasy conscience” problem. The resources selected for this task enable Evangelicals to steer their cultural engagement orientations away from fundamentalism toward a more communitarian, world-embracing (rather than world-condemning), and inner-worldly ascetic frameworks that come to characterize the re-enchanters and re-embedders.

My interviews with faith and work leaders captured a certain openness and enthusiasm for engaging cultural and social institutions. “From a Biblical perspective, God is as present in your workplace--as present in Google--as he is your church,” David Kim stated in his interview. Kim is an influential pastor at Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Manhattan and director of the Center for Faith and Work, an organization that serves not only that congregation but plays an influential role in the larger faith and work landscape. A year before our interview, I had seen Kim lecture on these themes at a faith and work conference on the theme of innovation. Kim had not been shy to cite his influences: part of his talk included laying out the theological framework known as “sphere sovereignty,” an idea developed by Dutch Calvinist thinker Abraham Kuyper in an 1880 lecture. Drawing several circles on the board with the names of various institutions in them, Kim lectured the conference attendees on the importance of these spheres being oriented toward certain essences that express God’s sovereignty in this realm. “If the spheres don’t provide these things, they collapse,” Kim said. Our activities in these spheres, then, are infused with significance: through our engagement with these various aspects of society we express God’s manifold glory. In our interview Kim explained in more detail how work becomes a response to an invitation: “[Faith and work] is part of God’s larger orchestration. As we look at Scripture, God invites his people to participate in this larger work of renewal. What that looks like in each industry and office--there’s no prescription for that. So how do you begin to give people the eyes to see the invitation that God gives us throughout the day that for the most part we ignore or can’t perceive.”

Kim is one of many thinkers in this movement who ties his cultural and social engagement orientation back to Abraham Kuyper’s work. Referred to in places as Kuyperianism or Neo-Calvinism, Kuyper’s thought quite effectively fills the void of “conscience” or ethics identified by Henry. This is no coincidence, as Henry himself and many of the neo-Evangelical leaders in the 1940s and 1950s had encountered this world-embracing branch of

Calvinism that caused them to lament how poorly early-century fundamentalism stacked up against it. Though rarely engaged by academic theology, Kuyper is identified by many historians of Evangelicalism as providing an important lifeboat out of culture-condemning, world-denying fundamentalism (Turner 1999, Bolt 2001, Carpenter 2002). His ideas get picked up and filtered through a variety of key subcultural figures, including Francis Schaeffer, James Sire, and Charles Colson. Various aspects of Kuyper's thought were present in the thinking of faith and work leaders. As Chapter Five lays out, much of faith and work theology is built upon the "cultural mandate," an interpretation of Genesis 1:28 promoted by Abraham Kuyper and several other Dutch Calvinists (Bratt 2013). This mandate sees the creation narrated in Genesis as God handing over to humans the duty to "fill the earth" by participating in our own creative acts, to create and cultivate culture. In contrast to the sharp dichotomous thinking that shaped American fundamentalism, Kuyper held that no aspect of culture and society is inherently profane or beyond redemption; instead, humans are called to bring the orders of society "under Christ's sovereignty." While some very theocratic thinkers were inspired by Kuyper to take this up as a call to dominate and control various aspects of society, most Kuyperian thinkers maintain that bringing the orders of society under Christ's sovereignty means to bring them toward their intended creational design: "not to destroy it or simply impose another structure alongside it, but to unlock the power that lies hidden within it" (Kuyper 1898). While this framework seems somewhat underdeveloped ethically, many Evangelical thinkers throughout the 20th century employ it to build various cultural engagement orientations. The world is no longer secular, profane, fallen, impure, or "worldly" but has eternal and redemptive purposes. The tasks and duties of Christians, then, expands far beyond the "saving souls" impulse of revivalism toward a wide variety of cultural, social, and political causes, many of which Kuyper himself developed further in his writings and lectures. Several of the authors quoted in the last chapter—such as Hans Rookmaaker, Udo Middelmann—drank deeply from the Kuyperian stream of thinking, often accessing his thought through the work of Francis Schaeffer, an important popular author and organizational leader in mid-century Evangelicalism.

Carpenter (2002) and Turner (1999) both narrate the establishment and diffusion of Kuyperian thought primarily through the establishment of Calvinist-grounded Reformed seminaries and colleges that promoted the concept of forming a Christian "worldview" on the various subjects and spheres of life. This worldview orientation slowly

spread to other denominations and traditions as the dominant framework for Christian higher education. Kuyperianism possesses numerous ideas and concepts that seem highly malleable to various political orientations. Some concepts were picked up by the more conservative and theocratic wings of Evangelical cultural orientations. This concept of worldviews comes to serve many early Christian Right thinkers who declared war against a “secular humanist” worldview embattling their own worldview (Lindsay 2007). Advocates of “theonomy”--a vision of installing Old Testament laws as contemporary societal laws--also produced “worldview treatises” in the 1980s, blueprints on how every sphere of society could be “Christianized” (Diamond 1989). Other ideas generated far less politicization and attention. The cultural mandate, for instance, never drew the publicity of the culture war. This was likely due to its very limited relevance to anyone outside of a small pocket of Evangelicals struggling to come to terms with engaging ethics, arts, culture, and literature. Yet it is this strand of Kuyperianism that allow leaders like Kim and many others I interviewed to construct a theological framework that grants work meaning and significance.

Previous research on educated and elite Evangelicals suggest Evangelicals needing to navigate higher prestige institutions and social sectors have turned away from the militaristic culture war toward more cultural-embracing orientations (Schmalzbauer 2003, Lindsay 2007), often reaching toward Kuyperian-inspired options. This explanation would be supported by my own field work, which I believe pushes this assessment even further: the higher-educated faith and work movement has very much embraced a far different cultural orientation strategy than “populist Evangelicalism.” Michael Lindsay (2007) laid out a somewhat similar divide as he surveyed Evangelical elites: those he interviewed (“cosmopolitan Evangelicals”) spoke with an open and seemingly conspicuous disdain for the larger “populist” Evangelical culture of megachurches, apocalyptic novels, and mass-marketed Evangelical music. The thought leaders I interviewed--selected more for theological expertise than social elite status--very much support a similar divide but not in the same location as Lindsay. Lindsay defines the divide as marked by involvement or uninvolved within the subcultural institutions of Evangelicalism: the elites effectively turn their noses up at the “alternative institutions” of the Evangelical world (Hunter 2010), preferring mainstream institutions. However, nearly my entire sample of thought leaders are at the forefront of subcultural institutions in some manner while also manifesting a culture-embracing mentality. Included in this would be both

the current and a former editor of Christianity Today, a national leader in Intervarsity (a national parachurch campus ministry organization), and the president of an Evangelical college (ironically, Michael Lindsay himself, who took the post four years after publishing the work cited here). Turning to another scholar, Wuthnow's more dated (1988) study of Evangelicals also finds a divide but locates it along education lines: "As growing educational levels increased, a growing segment of the evangelical elite began to move toward the left on political and social issues, while the majority of evangelicals with lower levels of education remained solidly conservative" (Wuthnow 1988:89). I believe this prognosis offers a more likely explanation: seeing that my sample's educational attainment was very high relative to the wider Evangelical population--93.8 percent holding advanced degrees compared to 7 percent in the wider Evangelical population--the culture-embracing attitude could be linked to educational attainment, which, following Schmalzbauer (2003), in many ways forces personal de-ghettoization in both educational and professional settings. Yet Wuthnow places traditional left-right labels on this divide, writing, "The 'new breed' of evangelical liberals came mainly from the seminaries, from evangelical colleges, and from evangelical students in secular universities" (ibid:89). Here my own survey data challenges this political interpretation in showing the thought leaders have not jumped the fence toward liberalism: the percentage of thought leaders who identify as "very conservative" and "conservative" is virtually identical to the wider Evangelical population (43.5 compared to 44 percent, respectively). Thus, my findings suggest alterations to both Wuthnow and Lindsay's conclusions: while agreeing with both scholars that there is a divide in Evangelicalism, my findings shift both the *location* and the *nature* of the divide. It is likely grounded in education, as Wuthnow observes, rather than in cultural elite status or involvement in subcultural institutions, as Lindsay argues. But the divide I trace does not relate to traditional left-right conservative-liberal political orientations, as Wuthnow observes. Rather, higher-educated Evangelicals demonstrate a less embattled orientation due to a de-escalation of culture warring and a turn to culture-stewarding. This divide may also reflect other recent works that capture a growing divide in American culture around similar measures of education (Bishop 2009, Putnam 2016).

There are, however, limitations to my sample's representativeness for higher-educated Evangelicals as a whole: this cultural stewarding orientation could also merely be a reflection of those drawn to faith and work theology. In this case, the movement may very well draw Evangelicals who, echoing the basic instincts of Lindsey and

Schmalzbauer, find themselves seeking out alternative cultural orientation strategies to better “fit” with their social location as college-educated professional workers. This very well complements the argument in Chapter Five that a “remedial theology” was necessary to address the significant theological and cultural shortcomings of early 20<sup>th</sup>-century American fundamentalism. At some point, a “remedial cultural engagement strategy” may have also drawn higher-educated Evangelicals down a more Kuyperian-guided path.

Importantly, with the 2016 Presidential election now serving as an interesting checkpoint for Evangelical attitudes, it is very possible my field work, interviews, and analyzed discourses were all located inside a subcultural echo-chamber of American Evangelicalism. Certainly not all Evangelicals have come along on this faith and work remedial theology journey over the last several decades. Survey data of Evangelicals analyzed from the 1980s up to today do not capture all that much subcultural diffusion regarding the core beliefs of the remedial theology of work, as Chapter Four shows. In order to hold these low diffusion rates compatible with the rapidly rising levels of event coordination, book production, and financial backing, it is possible that the faith and work movement may be completely residing at the college-educated level of the wider Evangelical world. While avoiding sociological reductionist explanations, it is certainly possible that the demand for remedial theology and cultural mandate orientations is ultimately fairly small in the wider Evangelical population.<sup>66</sup>

## **Whose Work Matters? Getting Left Behind by the Faith and Work Movement**

As demonstrated by the above account of the conference, the faith and work movement rarely engages all forms of work equally. There are a wide variety of social, theological, and demographic factors that contribute to this, likely rooted in disproportionate representations of populations at the movement’s leadership level. As Chapter Four laid out, the demographics of the thought leaders are fairly homogenous—mostly white, middle-aged males

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<sup>66</sup> More research would have to be done here to provide definitive evidence for both where this educational divide is located and how closely it aligns with political orientations. A 2016 Yahoo News article published during the Republican primary suggested Evangelicals may be culturally splitting between older, more nationalist and Christian-Right friendly “Falwell Evangelicals” who support Ted Cruz and younger, more Christian-Right skeptical “Keller Evangelicals,” named after New York City pastor Tim Keller, drawn more to Marco Rubio. The lack of embattlement and culture war mentality in my sample suggests it more likely leans toward the latter camp, particularly with Keller’s own work being so influential in this space. This is mostly speculation however; far more work will need to be done to evaluate where these divides lie. But particularly as other research indicates a growing split between college- and non-college-educated populations in relation to lifestyles, education, life outcomes, and involvement in various institutions, more research is likely needed on how those divides are felt within Evangelicalism.



with advanced degrees. This gender imbalance is also present in other facets. Even expanding out the top seventy-seven most frequent conference speakers, one still finds only seventeen women appearing among sixty men. Those who attend the conferences also tend to skew this way: seventy-five percent of the 2016 Faith and Work Summit attendees were male. Some voices in the movement are very cognizant of this homogeneity. One of the female attendees I spoke with recounted that faith and work conferences may be the only place where there is a long line for the men's restroom rather than the women's. A major programmatic goal of the 2016 Faith and Work Summit was to address this homogeneity. As one speaker at the conference articulated it, "We are too male and too pale."

There may very well be unexplored dynamics related to the labor that shapes this imbalance. Importantly, a question that does not seem to be asked in this space may illuminate more invisible sorting mechanisms: what does the faith and work conversation mean by "work"? And who counts as workers? These questions are never explicitly or systematically taken on: at no point did any speaker or interviewee roll out a typology of the diverse repertoire of labor practices in contemporary societies (cf. Williams 2014). Concepts and boundaries around the concept of work are far more latent in the movement. The historical development of the movement provides the most helpful indication of *whose* work generated the most attention. As outlined in Chapter Five, the first faith and work movement leaders on the scene in the 20th century are male business executives, both coordinating workplace evangelism groups as well as subjectively grappling with their own positions of power and influence in the social realm. In this case, work was very much male-dominated, very much paid labor, very much white-collar, and very much associated with fields related to commerce (management, company ownership, etc). This very exclusive understanding of work was expanded by the "Second Wave" of faith and work conferences, which expanded notions of significant callings to all secular work. However, I found this exclusive understanding of work still haunted the movement in various ways. For one, it is never explicitly acknowledged how exclusive and limited the early faith and work concepts were. Quite the opposite: early organizations and leaders are grafted into the contemporary movement either without comment or with explicit praise. The 2014 and 2016 Faith and Work Summit both dedicated several sessions to honoring "pioneers" of the movement. Among them, several thinkers--R.G. LeTourneau, Howard Butt, Pete Hammond, and Bill Pollard--were early promoters of a faith and work

integration that was predominately more “faith and business” than “faith and work.” The Fellowship of Christian Companies International--which explicitly wrote its faith statement for the CEO and “his” company--is also grafted into the contemporary movement without comment, its leader appearing in the Washington Times special faith-and-work-themed-insert (described below) alongside many thought leaders. While several Evangelical CEO and “leadership” groups have in recent decades splintered into their own organizations (which fell outside my field work observation and interviews), the male business executive archetype still holds a dominant place in the imagination of the movement.

Another way exclusive forms of work haunt the movement is the basic framing of what problem faith and work is needed to respond to. The “Sunday-Monday” gap and “bringing God into the workplace” were always frameworks that unquestionably favored paid, formal work outside the home. While Luther’s efforts to flatten the vocational hierarchy had no problem extending valorization to the parent tending to a child as a “holy office” serving God, the initial frameworks of the faith and work movement can never quite pull off this egalitarian push. The main conversation revolves around the basic assumptions of paid formal labor and the needs encountered in such settings. This is not to say unpaid labor and family labor was disregarded completely: the conference described at the beginning of this chapter had a session on “finding peace and contentment in ‘staying home’ or in working behind the scenes without pay.” The session was led by an English PhD student whose short bio reveals she had initially envisioned a career in academia before she shifted to a variety of part-time, off-the-clock, and non-work arrangements. Her bio concludes with the sentence, “She continues to be open to the variety of ways God can use her for Kingdom work...but sometimes still wonders, ‘Should I get a real job?’” The 2016 Faith and Work Summit did not offer any option like this in their breakout sessions. During one session they channeled all attendees to any of six “breakout sessions” on the topic of “bridging the church-workplace gap to make whole-life disciples.” In another breakout session they divided attendees by sector: commerce, technology and science, law, government, education, and arts and media. This narrowing of work may in some ways reflect a parachurch ministry “division of labor,” as certainly those doing unpaid and familial labor--both men and women--could attend other conferences dedicated specifically to these tasks. But relevant to the discussion here, that division of labor then implies only paid formal labor constitutes what should be discussed at a faith and work event.

Finally, in evaluating what “work” is in this conversation, I began to notice a particular datedness to much of the discourse. Some of this is due to my location within sociology of work conversations, which provided a natural comparison point. To generalize, the faith and work conversation largely resides in a space where work takes on particular traditional forms and fits within a traditional “breadwinner” vision of industrialized societies. While newer work studies have moved on to the emergence of the “new economy” (Smith 2001, Kallenberg 2011) of the American labor market, the faith and work conversation is largely focused on navigating the “old economy.” This is best illustrated by the absence of any conversation around a variety of topics that scholars of work have made the bread and butter of their field: rising labor market insecurities, increasing financialization of modern corporations, the bifurcation of work experiences and labor markets, decreasing stability and benefits-granting work, the rise of the “gig” economy, changes in traditional managerial structures, hybrid and nontraditional forms of work-home configuration, the rise of homecare work, the rise of care work, the effects of globalization on supply chains and competition, and the fluidity of modern labor resulting in new developments in immigrant labor. In contrast, the “trends” that are being discussed in the faith and work movement--generating specific conference sessions and books--are largely phenomena dating back to at least the 1970s: session titles include “Gender Challenges in the Workplace” and “Rethinking Urban Poverty,” the latter of which largely prescribes individual efforts to attend to social problems. The 2016 Faith and Work Summit’s central theme was to move the conversation forward to “Faith and Work 201,” but even the list of “new” social trends to address betrayed a certain dated understanding of the world of work: “In various ways the movement needs to move decisively forward with respect to: women, African-Americans, global voices, the unemployed and badly employed, pre-career youth, post-career ‘retired,’ specific industries and professions, specific topics, and workplace insights for churchplace.” This limited view of the contemporary labor force most certainly reflects the leadership of the movement, and perhaps conference attendees also self-select to align with older, traditional understandings of work. Various films and media resources often break out of this more traditional mode of thinking about work--particularly in highlighting the role of work and entrepreneurship in the developing world--but the work and workplace environment of the average conference attendee is presumed to still remain in a fairly traditional, defined form.

## Weber's Ghost: The Enduring Struggle of Re-Embedding Work in Modern Capitalism

While popular faith and work books generally focus on Scriptural exegesis to develop theologies of work, they occasionally delve into sociology, economics, and even social theory at times. As a sociologist studying the field, I was surprised to find two of the most frequently cited books in this field initiated their discussions with quotations from sociologist Robert Bellah. Both works--the near-canonized 1987 book *Your Work Matters to God* by Doug Sherman and William Hendricks and the more recent (2014) *Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God's Work* by Tim Keller--drew sympathetically on Robert Bellah and his coauthors' observation that modern society had lost a sense of shared vocation. Keller quotes the classic 1985 sociological text *Habits of the Heart*, "To make a real difference...[there would have to be] a reappropriation of the idea of vocation or calling, a return in a new way to the idea of work as contribution to the good of all and not merely as a means to one's own advancement." Keller observes on the first page of his book, "But if we are to 'reappropriate' an older idea, we must look at that idea's origin. In this case, the source of the idea of work as vocation is the Christian Scriptures. And so, taking our cue from Bellah's challenge, in this book we will do what we can to help illuminate the transformative and revolutionary connection between Christian faith and the workplace" (Keller 2014:2). Keller is likely the most cited contemporary thinker on faith and work; my field work suggests his ideas seem to have a particular scalability and transferability that allow them to transverse organizational and denominational lines. With Sherman and Hendrik's book likely exerting a similar influence on the field for the decades prior, it seems fair to ask the question: have Evangelicals taken the Bellah-ian charge to restore vocation? Though certainly not the direct intellectual heirs of the 1980s and 1990s "communitarian movement" (embodied by Robert Bellah, Michael Sandel, Amitai Etzioni, and Philip Selznick), perhaps these faith and work authors have captured a shared affinity between these intellectuals and their own theology regarding a restoration of more socially-oriented vocations.

At least in the movement's own self-presentation, there seems to be many communitarian ideas flowing through the new cultural orientation described above. Emerging from the more conflict-driven and militant culture war orientation, Evangelical cultural engagement has taken a sharp turn toward language of the common good. While

the common good tradition is frequently associated with Catholic Social Thought, dating back as far as 12<sup>th</sup>-century theologian Thomas Aquinas, one also finds enduring references to shared goods of community in early American Puritanism. Writing in 1631, William Perkins, an influential Puritan whose ideas would go on to shape early American religious culture, defined calling and vocation as “a certain kind of life, ordained and imposed on a man by God for the common good” (excerpt appearing in Placher 2005:262). Both Bellah et. al’s *Habits of the Heart* and Robert Wuthnow’s (1996) *Poor Richard’s Principle: Recovering the American Dream through the Moral Dimension of Work, Business, and Money* both trace out remnants of this moral tradition within contemporary culture, Bellah framing it as an example of a Biblically grounded “second language” to ground common life while Wuthnow frames it as a tradition of “ascetic moralism” that subordinated self-interest to other interests.

Perhaps no thought leader better embodies this mode of thinking than Dr. Amy Sherman, author of the 2011 book *Kingdom Calling: Vocational Stewardship for the Common Good*. Building from the theological vision of Tim Keller, another leader in this study, Sherman posits a high bar for responsibilities of “vocational stewardship”: “A central premise of this book is that the average middle-class (or wealthier) Christian in America has been blessed with much from God—skills wealth, opportunity, vocational position, education, influence, networks. We are, in short, prospering. The purpose of all these blessings is simple to state and difficult to live: we are blessed to be a blessing” (Sherman 2011:45). At a national conference I attended, I heard another speaker remark on how Sherman is perceived as the person who “does the social justice thing” in the movement. Sherman may keep the busiest travel schedule of any thought leader in the movement; she is involved in multiple organizations, is formally employed by a think tank in a different state than her own, speaks frequently at private ministry retreats, and even appears as a featured talking head in a professionally-produced film series created by the Acton Institute. However, much to my surprise and great advantage, I discovered Sherman and I lived in the same city and--amazingly--less than a mile apart. However, staying true to the travel-heavy and event-hopping nature of this world, we first crossed paths at a conference facility several hundred miles from our respective homes. Sherman was kind enough to invite me to her home to conduct an interview soon after our meeting.

Sherman did not waste time identifying her motivation to be in the space:

Sherman: I'm a community development person. I think what happened to me was coming to the recognition that if we really want to see significant structural transformation in our communities, that is only going to happen if believers aren't just sort of volunteering their time as a hobby to kind of help out on the margins of tackling this or that social issue. Instead they would need to advance the flourishing of the city in and through their daily work and vocations. So for me, the motivation for getting involved in the faith and work movement has been less about 'Oh let's help people find deep meaning in their work,' although I do want that for people. It's been much more practical, about 'I want to see cities change, I want to see justice advanced, I want to see critical social problems addressed effectively by the church. And that's not going to happen until bankers, architects, engineers, and everybody else actually see their vocation as an avenue through which they can advance kingdom foretastes like justice and health and wholeness and beauty.

Sherman is clearly operating in what I have labeled the re-embedding framework: work is framed as having ends wider than the worker's or the organization's own success. It becomes imbued with some wider ends within society. Sherman's ethical vision for this wider ends builds from Biblical notions of justice and shalom, a Hebrew word designating "universal flourishing, wholeness, and delight." Sherman's book works through the Bible to locate three components of justice: rescuing the poor, innocent, and helpless from grim realities, establishing equitable and fair relationships among the weak and strong, and restoring wrongdoers to the wider community. Sherman's concept of shalom also draws out four dimensions: peace with God, peace with self, peace with others, and peace with creation. *Kingdom Calling* provides some illustrative examples of how these concepts come to bear on specific community challenges, with particular emphases on how individuals stewarding their vocations to seek out these ends. Though Sherman's work falls far short of a systematic political treatise, this basic "social ethic" allows Sherman to be far more articulate in how vocations serve the common good. She is also able to provide one of the most ethics-centric re-embedding responses to my most basic question of faith-work integration.

Lynn: How can a person integrate faith with their work?

Sherman: Well, in two basic ways, they can integrate it with the kind of worker they are, so obviously Scripture calls us to pursue Christlikeness in our character, and so part of what it means to live out your faith at work is to be a person of love, to be a person of integrity to be a person of kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control, patience, peacefulness. To be a reconciler. To be a peacemaker. To be a servant-leader. So it's to bear the character of Christ in the workplace. It is to work with an intentional and consistent prayerfulness, to live into the truth where Christ says in John 15, "Apart from me you can do nothing, but if you abide in me you can bear much fruit." So half of what it means to live out your faith at work is to be a certain kind of person in the workplace, a person that is humble and reliant on the Spirit of God, a person who is living into the principles of God's word and a person who is seeking by the power of the Spirit to display the character of Christ.

On the surface, this appears to be a re-enchanting framework: there are many virtues and descriptors here that easily convert into an adverbial faith and work theology (Sherman's own term, though she uses it critically): work gently, faithfully, patiently, prayerfully, etc. However, this first half of the response is already signaling extra-economic ends and virtues, which Sherman grounds in the character of Christ. In other words, while re-enchanting frameworks generally preserve the inherent ends of an organization, Sherman encourages peacemaking, reconciling, and servant-leadership, which are likely inherently present in few work settings. But the ethical content of the first half of the response is eclipsed by the re-embedding impulse of the second half:

Sherman: But then the second way we live out our faith in our work is through how we think about the work itself and how we do the work. And so that has to do with the goals that we set in the work and our thoughtfulness about the nature of the work itself, asking questions about what were God's original designs for work and the particular sphere that we are working in? And how can our work, how can we affirm that which is shalom-enhancing in our sector. How do we identify and resist that which is shalom-decaying or resisting? So we have to--we bring our faith to work in a sense of challenging ourselves to have a rigorous theological framework to think through the sector that we're in...and then out of that robust understanding of God's design for that sector, out of that understanding of what does it mean that

God is renewing all things, and that means that God is renewing the sector that we are in? How do we participate in that renewal? What can that renewal look like in the now-but-not-yet of the kingdom? And all of those things I think can initially sound a little abstract, but I think they become very concrete when we put it into the language that I try to use which is the language of vocational stewardship.

Sherman's book is full of examples of what this looks like: a house-cleaning firm working to provide more accommodating hours for workers, a dance studio owner putting on performances highlighting conflict in Uganda, an inner city business owner trying to employ the unemployed in his church, a fashion designer who incorporates eco-friendly materials, a farmer who raised safety standards on his farm. These efforts all encompass a sort of hybrid economic-civil society effort to address social issues in reach of the business owners. Davis and Robinson (2012) index a number of traditional religious groups that manifest similar strategies as those seen here: groups with traditional beliefs at times seek to "bypass the state" to "capture civil society." By bypassing the state, these groups build "vast networks of alternative religious, cultural, and economic institutions at the grassroots level" that can expose new people to their faith while addressing local concerns (Davis & Robinson 2012:31). Thus, Sherman paints a vision of vocation that bridges one's work with wider responsibilities of transforming society toward greater justice and flourishing.

Tim Keller is also known throughout the movement for this more optimistic vision of transformative and reformatory work. His book, *Every Good Endeavor*, referenced above, makes one of the more explicit attempts to carry out both the re-enchanting and re-embedding frameworks at the same time. "The Christian gospel decidedly furnishes us with the resources for more inspired realistic, satisfying, and faithful work," claims Keller in his book. Keller posits four different ways this is done: by providing an alternative storyline, by providing a richer understanding of work as part of God's care for the world, by providing a new moral compass, and by providing new motives for work. Keller in a footnote ties each of these things to a different Protestant tradition: Reformed, Lutheran, Mainline, and Evangelical, respectively. In my interview with him, Keller was open to these different modes not being equally relevant to all workers in all settings: he uses a pipe fitter as an example of a place where "just doing good work" may be more appropriate. "If you're a pipe-fitter, what's the Christian way to fit a pipe?"



And the answer is: really really well. But there's no other Christian way to fit a pipe, I mean, as opposed to a Muslim way." But he turns to what he calls the "mainline social justice tradition" for other settings. Keller shared a concern toward the "Evangelistic" language used in many books and many Christian business groups that spend most of their time working through "how do I personally get strength from my faith to handle the problems of my job?" It was the prevalence of single-mode works that motivated Keller to write his book: "Every single book I ever read and every single organization I ever saw that said 'Here's how you integrate faith and work,' were very reductionist, myopic, and just had one of those perspectives, and everything was run through one perspective." Keller was skeptical any one mode was adequate: he had witnessed that blue collar workers simply do not connect with some modes. But he also saw a neglect for basic justice in many of these existing works and groups: "A lot of the individualistic stuff--the charismatic, pietistic stuff--very often I saw some of those organizations giving people a lot of inner joy and peace to do their jobs but they were doing their jobs in ways that were very exploitative. They weren't asking the bigger questions, like 'Is this a product that's good for human beings? I know it makes money and creates jobs but is it good for jobs, but is it really good for human beings?' The pietists don't ask those questions."

As noted above, Keller is likely the most quoted person across faith and work settings, and Sherman may have the fullest travel schedule of anyone in the movement. These are major players with great amounts of influence, not peripheral actors. I have labeled their frameworks re-embedding due to the way they share a diagnosis prominent in the thought of economic historian Karl Polanyi regarding the need for extra-economic frameworks to guide and constrain economic activity. Though his historical narrative has been challenged by many, Polanyi observes the 19<sup>th</sup>-century economic sphere effectively "disembedded" itself from the wider society in which it took place. "It is motivationally distinct, for it receives its impulses from the urge of monetary gain. It is institutionally separated from the political and governmental center. It attains to an autonomy that invests it with laws of its own" (Polanyi 1968:82). A disembedded economic sphere contrasts with earlier economic exchanges "embedded in non-economic institutions, the economic process itself being instituted through kinship, marriage, age-groups, secret societies, totemic associations, and public solemnities," (ibid:84) in other places identified as "familial, political, or religious order" (ibid:85). Polanyi draws directly on Weber in places, and the two frameworks clearly share

particular elements. Weber sees in modern economic settings the prevalence of “formal rationality” of economic action that orders the “provision of needs” as expressed in numerical, calculable terms. This formal rationality is at times portrayed as seemingly “disembedded” in comparison to “substantive rationalities.” The latter applies “certain criteria of ultimate ends, whether they be ethical, political, utilitarian, hedonistic, feudal, egalitarian or whatever, and measure the results of the economic action...against these scales of ‘value rationality’ or the ‘substantive goal rationality’” (Weber 1978:202). Keller, Sherman, and others seem to advance substantive rationalities that work against the disembedding mentalities of many modern economic settings. In protest to conceding economic activity to utilitarian self-interest, calculable ends, and “economic laws,” they and other thought leaders are advocating wider extra-economic ends in professional and economic conduct, an aspiration shared by communitarians such as Robert Bellah and Amitai Etzioni.

Yet as I went from conference to conference and completed more interviews, I began to find reasons to doubt the Evangelical faith and work movement was in a position to effectively implement such a vision. For a variety of reasons it became clear much of the energy in this space is not dedicated to bring about sweeping reforms and structural transformation working for justice and shalom. Nor would the communitarian vision of “restoring vocation” against an a-vocational culture likely come to pass. Perhaps my main indication of this was that, despite fairly widespread endorsement of this transformation language, the prescriptions and platitudes far eclipsing actual examples of Evangelical workers doing anything like this. Setting aside Sherman’s book, the discourse of the movement by and large discusses re-embedding themes in a fairly abstract way while not pointing to many specific cases of successful examples. I asked everyone I interviewed to identify some “go-to examples of faith-work integration,” and many of the responses I got stayed well within the individualistic and re-enchanting register and failed to appeal to a particular case.

“To me, the best examples would be those who have kind of a settled heart and a peace about what they’re doing, are doing their work with excellence, and are doing it with an open hand.”

“(long pause)...well, every Christian I know. I’m in a home fellowship group with five other couples, and a lot of the prayer time has to do with the concerns that come up at work in people’s work activities, and they’re seeking to be faithful to God and honor him in how they act and pray concerning relationships with employees, or if they’re in a supervisor position, relationships with those who report to them. It’s a major part of our lives.”

“...I would argue I wrote the book because I did not see a lot of those examples...I didn’t see a lot of examples of people who would say ‘I work for the king so I have to take my job really seriously, but it’s not ultimate, so I don’t kill myself or overly stress over it.’...[after a long explanation of misunderstandings about faith-work integration]...I would say to me the best examples are going to be those who have a settled heart and a peace about what they’re doing, are doing their work with excellence under the kingdom but doing it with an open hand.”

“Whewwww....you know, I rarely talk about people. I talk about principles, I talk about things I’ve done—some successful some mistakes....ummm...(laughs). Nope, you got me. I’m gonna make a note; I need to develop some good examples. I’m sure there are tons out there; I just haven’t given it much thought.”

Granted, there were occasional examples provided by some interviewees and sometimes quite compelling ones. Generally these were workers who observed a negative effect or outcome of their job, company, or field and took action to reform it. By and large, however, my interviews and the talks I heard were strong on theological principles, Biblical exegesis, anecdotes of God providing strength or guidance, and perhaps basic moral imperatives, but not examples of people turning their entire companies against the shalom-decaying impulses of their industry, to draw from Sherman’s language. Re-enchanting was by far the favored story and framework of the movement; re-embedding received admiration in most places but was left largely undefined beyond abstract theological principles.

Two leaders I interviewed pushed back against the “redemptive” language of Keller, leading me to believe the events they coordinate likely avoid any reference to re-embedding frameworks altogether:

“It’s just not pastorally helpful for most people...So much of this redeeming culture stuff comes from Keller. I love Keller. But I think his whole redeeming culture thing was a pastoral application to his congregation, many of whom are those super high performers, who are asking themselves: How does being an investment banker make sense? And he’s saying you can redeem culture through anything that you’re doing. I think the problem is, as it’s become a term that all the other kind of do-gooder Christians have adopted, it’s that we’re not thinking about the fact that it’s a very niche group of Christians who even have the means and capability of ‘redeeming culture’ in all the ways that we usually describe redeeming culture as.”

The conference described at the beginning of this chapter seemed unsure of where to land their faith-work integration, perhaps reflecting this ambivalence toward “redeeming culture.” Though the conference promised to “help you think and live differently in the workplace” and think through the question “how does the gospel change my work?” the talks never quite reached a transformative tone. Instead, a re-commissioning framework slowly took over the conclusion of the talk: “We’re living now for the sake of eternity...let us work hard to show the gospel as attractive, work hard to ordain the gospel, work hard to advance the gospel.” Stories were then told of business owners and nurses who recognized they could import their businesses into other countries as vehicles for evangelism: countries could shut their doors to missionaries but not workers. While the conference program seemed to pitch a new moral vision for work as inherently God-ordained and significant, the actual moral imperatives, where speakers tried to make their lessons applicable, drifted back toward ordaining workplace evangelism.

Three dominant factors set a low ceiling on the faith and work movement’s potential for instilling transformative, redemptive, shalom-restoring, justice-seeking work. First, despite Carl Henry’s call to develop social ethics for Evangelicals, and despite his own contributions to doing that in the following decades, Evangelicals as a whole still

have a large void where other traditions have developed social ethics. Catholic and Mainline Protestant teaching on social ethics maps out developed visions of economic justice, capitalism, free markets, the dignity owed to workers, the relationship between the market and the state, as well as practical dimensions like living wages and unbridled consumption (see Cortright & Naughton 2002). Islamic moral teaching has a tradition of resisting particular capitalist values and institutions in favor of preserving a traditional social order (Tripp 2006). Evangelical denominations and parachurch organizations, in contrast, have few economic, social justice, or social ethic documents or developed principles for faith and work leaders to draw upon. Particularly in contemporary faith and work books (post-1980), the capitalist system that shapes much of the work they engage in is in many ways perceived to be part of the natural order, free of moral content or effects, and lacking any cultural, political, or historical contingencies. While Henry (1964) took up the question of industrial relations between owners and worker in his chapter on work theology, these sorts of questions today are not part of the “remedial theology” program in most cases. The influential book, *Your Work Matters to God*, mentioned earlier dismisses bigger economic questions with a surprising frankness:

“The right question is not which economic system would be the closest to a biblical ideal. That’s an interesting question, but is really a problem of economic theory. Economics enters into this discussion, but economics deals with problems as they exist in an overall system, whereas most of us are trying to deal with problems at our own individual levels, in our own lifestyle. Economics bears on our situation, but what we need is a practical approach to lifestyle” (Sherman & Hendricks 1987:178).

As described below in detail, several central voices *have* steered the conversation directly into economic theory, but these thinkers are largely working against the transformative vision of re-embedding capitalism in extra-economic moral frameworks.

This touches on the second reason for a low ceiling: the movement unreflectively occupies various mediums that very effectively serve the ends of a more pietistic re-enchanting framework while not so effectively serving re-embedding frameworks. Evangelicals have long been coordinating conferences, writing popular books, and promoting authoritative celebrity-experts on various topics: financial planning, parenting, marriage, dieting,

prayer, evangelism, Bible reading, educating children, leading small groups, etc. Resources around these topics largely work to inculcate technologies of the self in the Foucauldian sense: skills, techniques, and attitudes that reform one's behavior and redirect them toward new ends and goals. Thus, as Evangelicals have slid work and economic activity into the existing spaces where other lifestyle and religious topics are engaged, there seems to be a strong isomorphism that happens to what faith and work can *do*. The faith and work conferences are one-time events that largely draw individuals or small pockets of people traveling from great distances to take part in an event largely geared for the spectator-learner, to come internalize new knowledge and techniques. This likely would not worry many in the movement, but it does seem to inhibit those who want theologies of work to expand beyond subjective experience or personal knowledge. Over time, as I realized a far greater amount of the movement than I anticipated was doing little beyond promoting re-enchanting frameworks, I began to realize the movement's form and mediums subtly filtered out frameworks that were not primarily geared toward the individualistic needs of workers. The best metaphor for understanding this limitation might be a Weight Watchers club or Alcoholics Anonymous meeting: it is reasonable to expect that these forms could do great things for individuals seeking to overcome individual problems, but it is unlikely that discussions in those settings would do much to take on the structural or economic dimensions of how those conditions develop within particular cultural and social settings. Likewise, vocation-centric Bible studies or one-time faith and work events, by form alone, tend to shift the remedial theology promoted toward re-enchanting over re-embedding.

Finally, several works (Smith 1998, Emerson & Smith 2000, Hunter 2010, Elisha 2011) have extensively explored what could be called the Evangelical social ontology that shapes their social reform efforts. I found that vision of reality very much at work in my interviews and framework. Evangelical social ontology places individual transformation and the "personal influence strategy" at the core of social reform efforts. Positing society as a mere aggregation of individual actors, this vision then promotes the call to win "hearts and minds" to faith, presuming wider social change would follow as more and more individuals then exercise their free will to bring about particular goods (Hunter 2010). Thus, this vision is individualistic on several levels: there is a voluntaristic understanding of agency (downplaying social structures), an atomized understanding of social reality that precludes any supra-individual entities, and--combining these two elements--a metaphysical criteria that only

individual acts and volition are perceived as causally efficacious to bring about social change. As Smith observes, these commitments render Evangelicals “largely incapable of seeing supraindividual social structures, collective processes, and institutional systems that profoundly pattern and influence human consciousness, experience, and life-chances” (Smith 1998:189). If we return to the Weight Watchers analogy, the Evangelical social ontology presents no challenge to the hopes of atomistic individuals incorporating techniques to regulate and control their weight, just as it presents no challenge to helping Christian workers and leaders incorporate new thinking and techniques into their jobs. It does, however, wall off social or political strategies that move beyond individual, voluntaristic ethical projects. Thus, while individuals may be awakened to the wider political and social responsibilities of their roles in the economic sector, additional efforts would be required to build (or rebuild, as Bellah frames it) sector-wide or community-wide normative standards that offer a shared telos and system of ethical accountability, within which individual firm activity (and individual worker activity) would be embedded. Such additional steps are not envisioned by faith and work leaders. In contrast, visions of transformative work in the faith and work movement many times come to resemble the “thousand points of light” mental image commonly imposed on the voluntary sector: disconnected, voluntaristic “do-gooder efforts” popping up unsystematically across the economic realm. To fulfill its more communitarian and justice-oriented aspirations, the faith and work movement would likely need to develop far more complex localized networks, forms of solidarity within and across firms, and accountability systems in which economic activity could be embedded.

A Baptist historian, surveying the efforts for business ethics among Baptists, provides a far simpler and more cultural reason why re-embedding efforts may come up empty. If the Protestant ethic was what gave way to capitalism, from where would it draw the resources to critique and transform it? As David Sapp observes of his own religious tradition,

“Southern Baptists, along with other religious groups, might be expected to have difficulty in critiquing economic values, since they actually have fostered many of the values which undergird capitalism. A basic emphasis of Max Weber’s classic study *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* was that modern capitalism is a social expression of the Calvinist doctrine of ‘calling.’ This doctrine grew in the ‘work

ethic' which had strong influence in Southern Baptist life. As one result of this emphasis, the acquisition of inordinate amounts of money and the practice of piety have come to be seen by some Southern Baptists as natural partners. Those who would fault the churches for their lack of a prophetic voice on economic issues must remember that the churches helped teach Americans that diligence was pleasing to God and that prosperity was his blessing. Those same churches may find it hard to sound another note from the gospel which says that hard work is narcotically addictive and that too much wealth is a powerful temptation to idolatry" (Sapp 1981).

This would again favor the re-embedding frameworks that give far less ammunition and resources toward re-embedding work and economic activity within an extra-economic framework.

## **Why Evangelicals Made Work Matter: Relocations, Needs, Reform**

The close of this chapter brings together the findings, insights, and analysis from the last three chapters to answer the question posed at the beginning of Chapter Four: What explains the explosion of American Evangelicalism discourse and resources surrounding meaningful work at the end of the 20th century? What explains the remedial theology of the faith and work movement? Following Casanova's framework of deprivatization, my findings suggest the institutional segmentation and sphere separation of faith from economic life has been self-reflexively challenged by many Evangelicals since the mid-century. Not content with the compartmentalization and "Sunday-Monday" gap of their faith, Evangelicals began to promote faith and work theologies that freed their faith from the confines of Sunday to hold considerable impact on everyday behaviors. The means by which faith could speak to "Monday" were diverse and developed by different groups over time. An early mode of thinking framed workplaces as sites where personal evangelism and "soul-saving" could take place, thus sustaining Evangelicalism's commitment to conversionism and responding to the Great Commission to "go and make disciples." While the re-commissioning framework largely left intact the priority for spiritual work over material work, Evangelicals soon developed understandings of material work that elevated it to equal footing with the "soul-saving" pursued by professional and full-time clergy. Re-sacralizers saw their work as valuable to God as a means to afford resources toward the purpose of the church; they resisted pulls of conscience toward full-time ministry in the interest of



becoming “God’s business men,” a generally gender-exclusive form of theology that reflected disproportionate male representation in the business owner and executive populations in the mid to late 20th century. Re-enchanters were committed to flattening the vocational hierarchy and fully redeeming material and “secular” work as sacred. They provided visions of working wholeheartedly at one’s job as a “co-creator” with God the creator, as honoring the dignity instilled within work and culture as part of God’s design for the world. Finally, re-embedders saw work as a means to redeem and reorder fallen institutions and structures, bringing the work experience, the organization, and the industry closer in alignment with the order of God’s kingdom or shalom. All four of these frameworks resist the unchecked reign of the economic sphere’s immanent laws and logics, injecting extra-economic motivations, energies, or ends into one’s work.

Throughout these chapters I have provided small glimpses of possible explanations for why these frameworks not only emerge but conscript a significant amount of resources toward the end of the 20th century and into the 21st century. This evolution happened rapidly though not at all evenly. As outlined in Chapter Five, it seems unlikely Evangelicals in the 1950s would be able to envision a “theology of work,” a phrase barely in existence within any American major religion. By the 1990s they would have access to hundreds of texts on this subject, but at this point a “faith and work conference” or gathering that mobilized lay people around the meaning of their worklives would likely still be imaginable. Today, on the other hand, it is likely Evangelicals attending national conferences aimed at lay people would not be able to avoid theology of work. A similar story can be told for Evangelical seminaries, as intentional investment of funds has led to the emergence of programs, curriculum, and degrees in faith and work that only two decades ago did not exist. The timespan of these developments should not be reduced to one uniform surge, as various elements seemed to emerge progressively: the first Evangelical books in the 1960s, the biggest surge of books in the 1990s, the first national conferences in the 2000s, and the greatest surges of outside investment around roughly the same time. Thus historical explanations must keep in mind both this long progression of development as well as the cultural variation regarding frameworks.<sup>67</sup> Here I provide three

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<sup>67</sup> This is largely why, while the significant amounts of money poured into the movement in recent years, have equipped organizations, seminaries, and congregations with far more resources than ever before, the movement’s emergence and growth is not easily attributed merely to the deep pockets of the “capitalism war organizations” raining down money on the leaders. The book explosion in the 1990s--which still continues today--is evidence a significant shift in faith and work thinking was well underway long before this surge in resources.

major explanations for the uptick in faith and work resources and attention over the last half of the 20th century and into 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**De-Ghettoization and Upward Mobility of American Evangelicalism.** This is by far the most plausible explanation for the development of the faith and work movement over the last half century. Both evidence of the historical advancements of education within the Evangelical population and evidence from those participating in events today suggest this movement was predicated upon the emergence and growth of a college-educated, professionally minded sector of American Evangelicalism. As Chapter Five outlines, the revivalism and fundamentalism of the early 20th century took hold among working-class populations and areas where industrialization had taken less of a hold (Thomas 1989). In many ways several traditions that gained momentum out of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Third Great Awakening were reactionary sects to the embourgeoisement of Methodism and other established Protestant denominations (Dayton 1980). Many of these groups--the Holiness, Pentecostal, and Keswick movement--particularly took hold among the working class. Marsden (2006) traces how this socioeconomic marginalization may have joined with an increasing sense of displacement as 19th century conservative groups strove to make sense of modern changes of the early 20<sup>th</sup>-century. Reacting to increasing distance from the dominant cultural ethos, fundamentalists began to harden lines between their own subculture and the mainstream culture in the 1910s. The 1925 Scopes Monkey Trial is frequently cited as the pivotal moment when fundamentalism becomes associated in the public mind with rural backwardness, as a rift opened between rural and small-town religion and religious traditions that had more easily accommodated theological modernism. By the end of the 1930s, fundamentalism had come to embrace a doctrinal purity that made it largely defensive and reclusive toward modern culture (Smith 1998). With this insularity came a retreat from educational institutions and an open embrace of anti-intellectualism, perceiving higher education as a threat to traditional faith. This insular retreat--combined with the lower class settings in which turn of the century revivalism and later fundamentalism took hold—leaves a significant educational gap within early 20th century Evangelicals. Wuthnow (1988) locates a pronounced gap between Evangelicals and the general population by the 1950s. As Noll (1994) narrates, the retreat from educational institutions in the early part of the century was accompanied by a retreat from intellectualism, the arts, politics, and cultural affairs.

Building on the arguments of Chapter Five, my analysis posits that as this cultural insularity begins to break down in the 1940s and 1950s, the need for theologies of work begin to increase. This is largely because the sphere of differentiation and its resulting compartmentalization becomes a more salient problem for fundamentalists amidst their own social mobility across the 20th century. Schmalzbauer (2003) has labeled the 1960s forward as the “de-ghettoization” of American Evangelicalism. Breaking free of their “ghetto institutions that isolated them from mainstream culture” earlier in the century, American Evangelicals have “climbed the socioeconomic ladder into the professional middle class” (Schmalzbauer 2003:30). One study captures this shift from 1960--when only 13 percent of Evangelicals thought of themselves as “middle class”--to 1972, when that number rose to 37 percent (Wuthnow 1988). New and explicitly anti-fundamentalist theology eased this transition, oiling the gears of social ascension. Lindsay (2007) traces out the relatively tension-free existence many Evangelicals experience even among the highest elites in corporate, political, media, and educational institutions, having “entered the halls of power” with relatively little difficulty. Two additional demographic factors lifted Evangelicalism up the socioeconomic ladder: first, while not true of the prior decade, younger college educated Evangelicals of the 1970s and 1980s retained their faith post-college, which boosted the educational footprint of Evangelicalism as a whole. Secondly, the same era saw the beginnings of a trend in the non-college educated population reducing their religious attendance, with about 30 percent of the non-college-educated population attending church weekly in 1970 compared to 20 percent currently (Putnam & Campbell 2010). These two factors boost the average educational attainment within American Evangelicalism: as Nancy Ammerman (1991) writes, the working-class early 20<sup>th</sup>-century fundamentalists gave birth to their middle-class mid-century Evangelical children. By the 1980s the educational gap between Evangelicals and the rest of the population had become negligible (Wuthnow 1993).

This timeline of socioeconomic ascendancy roughly corresponds with the emergence of faith and work discourse. Thus, in a Weberian interpretation of the movement, Evangelical attention to work can be seen as the re-embourgeoisement of forms of faith previously marginalized from middle class and mainstream values. In effect, mid-century neo-Evangelicalism moved to shed the mysticism adopted by early 20th century fundamentalism: action in the world is no longer perceived as “endangering the absolutely irrational and other-worldly religious

state” of which more apocalyptic and world-denying forms of fundamentalism sought possession (Weber 1946b:325). Instead, Evangelicalism reorients its moral resources to take its place along Mainline Protestantism and some Catholics in promoting the “bourgeois capitalist business ethos among the broad strata of the middle class,” a function of socially ascendant religious groups that Weber diagnosed during his 1904 visit to America. Particularly as non-college-educated Evangelicals begin to exit Evangelicalism, elements of the faith that are incongruent with the professional middle-class lifestyle become open to reflexive examination: many times this leads to their elimination. In a sense the elective affinity that turn-of-the-century conservative American Protestantism could share with its own socio-economic environment is lost the moment American Evangelicalism de-ghettoization begins. Responding to this situation, the thought leaders of the modern faith and work movement--particularly the early popular book writers but continuing today with remedial theology proponents--have tasked themselves to “right the ship” of conservative American Protestantism, discard those elements that supported “economic retreatism,” and reorient the faith toward the spiritual needs of a population now ensconced in the middle class. While I have largely focused on the larger macro story of this change, individual biographies also manifest this de-ghettoization-spurred discontentment: the shared characteristic of both the neo-Evangelical leaders like Henry and the “Christian businessmen” groups is that both pioneer this social stratum relocation, arriving into a new socio-cultural realm (highly educated and material wealth, respectively) before the rest of the subculture and finding their faith would require new resources to “settle” there.

This narrative provides a baseline explanation for a significant portion of what I have attempted to explain here. Yet for both specific empirical and broader theoretical reasons, a crudely reductionist interpretation of faith and work as the fruit of 20<sup>th</sup>-century Evangelical de-ghettoization and re-embourgeoisement should be rejected. By far the most salient reason for doing so is the diverging frameworks that emerge throughout the movement, both evidenced in the study of 1960s and 1970s popular texts as well as the expression of Evangelical faith and work theology today. Perhaps the re-sacralization framework--in both its content and social origins--fits most tightly with a functional social strata explanation. As fundamentalism saw its first adherents rise up to the wealthy elite status, new theological frameworks were urgently needed: their “worldly” high status could not translate into their religious system, which still afforded religious virtuoso status to soul-saving revivalists, not globe-trotting

industrialists. Forming long-term companies and business endeavors also ran up against the other-worldly urgency of apocalypticism, which pulled one's focus away from the "things of this world." The re-sacralizing framework, on cue, provided a means to "adjust the revelation to the needs," in the words of Weber (1946:270). Had the rest of American Evangelicalism, on climbing its own socioeconomic ladder, followed the trajectory of these businessmen and adopted a uniform framework, reducing their theology to its social determinants would be far more plausible. However, not only had four different frameworks emerged before 1980, but even after the socioeconomic gap between Evangelicals and the general population closes in the 1980s (at least measured by educational attainment), one still finds shifts, variation, and complexity in faith and work frameworks. Additionally, based on the account of the events attended and thought leaders interviewed, the needs for continuing to proclaim the message of remedial theology has persisted and shows no signs of letting up, as national surveys suggest limited diffusion even amidst social mobility. Thus, a great amount of variance is left unexplained by a monocausal social class interpretation. Two additional causes attempt to explain some but not all remaining variance.

**Adjusting to the Pastoral Needs of Knowledge Economy Workers.** While the first explanation broadly delineates the outer contours of a macro-historical explanation, this second explanation narrows in on sociological understanding of the contemporary actors. Based on much of my field work and interviews with leaders, the faith and work movement seems to make its home among a particular cultural archetype that simply did not exist within previous eras. While boundaries between this group and wider Evangelicalism are porous, the emergence of this type is critical to steer resources around the faith and work movement. Two key characteristics seemed to be shared by both the leaders and the many movement participants that I spoke with. First, those involved in the faith and work movement are predominately located within "knowledge work" professions. As was partially illustrated in the first part of this chapter, those working in sectors related to health-care, education, commerce, the arts, and media dominate the faith and work space. This creates a movement not representative of the larger American labor market: according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the most widely represented jobs in the U.S. are retail salespersons, cashiers, food preparation and serving workers, office clerks, registered nurses, and customer service representatives. The types of occupations that tend to be attracted to this conversation--with the possible

exception of healthcare--work in sectors devoted to knowledge creation, information processing, and symbolic communication--"knowledge work" that is uniquely valuable in the postindustrial economy (Castells & Himanen 2002). While knowledge work can suffer from the same sorts of deskilling as other work, many workers in these sectors enjoy spaces of creativity, flexibility, and self-managed autonomy in their work, creating a workplace experience far different from standardized industrial production or postindustrial service economy work like customer service representatives (see Leidner 1993). Many workplaces also structure processes around capacities related to emotions, affectual bonds, cooperation, and communication (Illouz 2007). This work culture has also permitted--if not invited--the injection of spiritual and holistic self-understandings and identities (see Ashforth & Pratt 2010). While workplace spirituality efforts are not always quick to embrace more traditional religious forms (see Miller 2007), the knowledge economy workplace provides far fewer obstacles to bring one's faith or spiritual identity to work.

The second characteristic of many movement participants is a general orientation toward their work and careers. Many of the fields in which these participants work clock long hours and blur work-home distinctions with continuous connectivity to co-workers and projects beyond the 9-to-5 window, embodying high status "flexible work" (see Kalleberg 2011, Snyder 2016). Many of those invested in discussions around meaningful work, then, are in positions where work already innately resists compartmentalization. This is perhaps the most common shared characteristic of lay people involved in the movement earlier in the 20th century, whether those writing the earliest lay-written books or attending the earliest conferences: a salient worker identity has come to define the self. This explanation provides insights into why the early re-commissioning and re-sacralizing efforts were led by relatively successful business executives: the biographies of these leaders reveal they began to think of themselves in terms of their business success and faced difficulty merging this identity with their less meaningful role in local congregations. Faith and work allowed them to overcome this tension. Put more colloquially, those whose work matters to themselves are most likely to pursue questions of how their work matters to God.

The primary salience of one's worker identity is in many but not all cases the result of institutional reconfiguration. The framework of "greedy institutions" is helpful to narrate this reconfiguration, drawing from Coser's (1974)

work. Coser perceives individuals at the intersection of competing organizations and groups vying for energy and time--they “seek exclusive and undivided attention” and “attempt to reduce the claims of competing roles and status positions.” Workers within “greedy” jobs, organizations, and industries make excellent fits for the faith and work movement. While explanations such as this one drift toward functionalist explanations of institutions, one can certainly envision the “demand” for meaningful work being far different for different types of workers. The worker who is embedded within both immediate and extended family relationships, volunteers regularly for a local political party, holds season tickets for a sports team, and leads a women’s group at a church centered around a minority ethnic identity likely needs far less from her job than the single, relatively detached, civically uninvolved worker needs. In the latter case--with no other greedy institutions able to provide identity, social location, or systems of meaning--a greedy job that can provide all those other functions will all the better serve this person. Re-enchanting frameworks provide the means to make this institutional reconfiguration “work.” When I first entered my field work, I hypothesized that many of the people involved in the movement would in fact be single, career-driven, young professionals, likely not bounded by relationships, place, or extra-work commitments. Their undivided loyalty to work could only be helped by new frameworks that bless this configuration and charge it with a sense of sacred duty. I was essentially on the lookout for what Arlie Hochschild calls “zero-drag workers”: workers who are “unattached and unobligated” and can “take on extra assignments, respond to emergency calls, or relocate at any time” (Hochschild 2001:xix). However, I found these types of workers only in select places, for example, the conference I attended in downtown Manhattan that had been marketed to creative types and entrepreneurs. I also observed that many faith and work thought leaders tend to speak more frequently at churches with larger populations of young, urban, college-educated, single workers, perhaps suggesting these congregations recognized the “demand” I hypothesized. Overall, however, the zero-drag adherents of the movement are eclipsed and overpowered by the mid-career, baby-boomer, family-touting leadership, who still very much set the movement’s agenda.

This of course is not all that surprising: Evangelical culture is by and large familistic and more conservative than the mainstream culture on a variety of views related to gender and family (Putnam & Campbell 2010). And as noted in Chapter Four, the movement leadership is largely a homogenous group of white, middle-aged, moderate-to-

conservative males; many of them seemed to fit squarely in this familistic Evangelical culture. However, I did get the sense that the older mid-to-late-career leadership and the younger zero-drag worker share a similar institutional configuration in that they take their work and careers seriously (for the leaders, indicated by traveling frequently away from congregations, families, and civic commitments) and permit the greedy institution of work significant sovereignty over their life. And as Hochschild points out, mid-career “familistic” workers *could* in fact be zero-drag workers if their partners take on a greater role in childcare and housework, a strong possibility for men residing within the gender-conservative world of Evangelical subculture. Thus, while I would resist locating the entire movement within the rise of “post-familistic” economic hubs where young, place-detached, career-driven workers shun relational ties for God-ordained professional lives, there is a certain and subtle sense in which the movement is traditional religion’s attempt to decouple itself from the strong familism-religion linkage of mid-century America (see Putnam & Campbell 2010) and upgrade its symbolic wares and meaning systems for the 21st century. Of course, this is largely happening below the surface of the actors’ own perceptions, and movement leaders may not be fully cognizant of this congruence between their offerings and the growing number of workers outside traditional familistic settings. But there are indications this change is felt.<sup>68</sup> A conference session on “shepherding workers” featured several pastors who discussed how much they had learned from the “workers” (seemingly limited to knowledge workers) in their congregation. They prescribed “bringing the conversation to them” through weekly lunches and small groups in the workplace. One pastor observed in passing “Home visits aren’t common anymore, so we do work visits.” Another chapel session devoted to faith and work at an Evangelical college promoted the idea of a “take your pastor to work day.” These sorts of initiatives lend support to the idea that workplaces have pulled even with home and familial life as important places of pastoral work and care.

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<sup>68</sup> The strongest evidence for this is, again, the location of Keller’s church at the epicenter of the movement. In Keller and Alsdorf’s *Every Good Endeavor* (2014), the epilogue provides a rough blueprint and report on his church’s faith and work ministry. Among the information they had derived from a survey of more than 1,500 people involved in the ministry over its nine year existence was basic demographics: “Most are seriously career-minded--seeking careers in fields such as law, arts, finance, business, education, health-care, technology, government, architecture, or advertising. They are also young (average age is thirty-three), 70 percent are single, and they are early career” (Keller & Alsdorf 2014:244). Keller also confirmed in our interview his church has the highest proportion of single persons that a church consulting firm they employ reported having ever seen.



**Traditional Religion Adjusting to Postmaterialist Environments.** For a variety of reasons explored above, the faith and work movement favors the re-enchanting frameworks over others, preferring theological teaching that infuses work with dignity, meaning, and eternal significance. This is likely related to a congruence between this framework and the postmaterialist settings in which this framework has taken hold. Historical insights help illustrate this point. As previous chapters illuminated, the modern faith and work movement in many ways restores particular elements lost in the past. If modernity segmented and compartmentalized religious values and logics from the economic realm, faith and work frameworks brought the two back together. If late 19<sup>th</sup>-century revivalism lost its inner-worldly asceticism to spiritual-material dualism and a spiritualized apocalypticism, faith and work frameworks reestablished reasons to care about and invest in day to day activities. Yet, viewed historically, these sorts of restorative adjustments did not actually recreate the forms of integration previously established in history. Solving the Sunday-Monday gap did not mean reestablishing ecclesial courts to try unjust money lenders and property owners for violating religious principles, as indexed by R.H. Tawney (1926). Likewise, the inner-worldly asceticism built from the cultural mandate and a vision of being “co-creators” with God hardly resembles 17<sup>th</sup> century Puritan preaching on the potential vices of commerce and trade (see Abend 2014). One could also compare the above mentioned “take your pastor to work day” with the 16<sup>th</sup> century Mennonite decree that “no brother shall engage in buying or building or entering into any other large financial undertaking” without the counsel and prior consent of the “brotherhood and elders” (quoted in Redekop 2000). The purpose of comparing these past forms of religion-economic integration with the Evangelical movement today is to bring attention to the unique aspects demonstrated by the contemporary configuration.

My findings fundamentally suggest the modern faith and work movement, as it played out in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, is a “lay reform movement,” comparable to earlier such efforts, though with a particular post-materialist orientation. Charles Taylor’s *A Secular Age* narrates several “Reform” efforts of Christianity that work to “purify” Christianity: top-down efforts to “purify” the mass laity of Christians through drawing them closer to the religiosity of the dedicated few. Taylor’s cases are scattered across the history of Christianity, both before, amidst, and after the better known Protestant Reformation: “Briefly summed up, Reform demanded that everyone be a *real 100 percent* Christian. Reform not only disenchant but disciplines and re-orders life and society. Along with civility, this makes

for a notion of moral order which gives a new sense of Christianity and the demands of faith. This collapses the distance of faith from Christendom” (Taylor 2007:774). My own research finds a similar “collapsing of distance,” though highly contextualized to the contemporary cultural milieu. At a conference on Christian entrepreneurship efforts in New York City, Katherine Alsdorf spoke in terms of “disrupting” various divides, borrowing the conference’s main theme: “We have disrupted Sunday morning church versus everyday life. We have disrupted the hierarchy of vocations. We have disrupted in how much theology enters into everything we do.” All of these claims point to aspirations to draw the mundane “secular” life of laypersons deeper into religious life. Though the young, professional start-up-dreaming New Yorker listening to this may spend most of his or her waking hours deep within nonreligious settings of design meetings, funding pitches, and networking events, this person receives the message that this lifestyle is spiritually eligible and institutionally compatible with a highly religious life. Presuming the hierarchy of vocations is completely collapsed, this person is--more remarkably--receiving the message they could live the *highest* religious life available in their faith tradition.

Yet “religious life” here takes a particular form not seen in other lay reform efforts, as the earlier historical examples suggest. It is important here not to hold up the vocational life of the young 80-hours-a-week entrepreneur with that of a monk of the Middle Ages in order to dismiss one as simply more syncretized and secularized than the other. Rather, a richer approach would apply a “lived religion” approach to all forms of religious life equally that grants primary attention to “what people *do* with religious idioms, how they use them, what they make of themselves and their words with them, and how, in turn, men, women, and children are fundamentally shaped by the worlds they are making” (Orsi 2003:172). This approach illuminates the ways in which, for the young entrepreneur (or small business owner or corporate CEO or healthcare consultant), the modern faith and work movement provides symbolic wares and repertoires that translate into their particular cultural setting. That cultural setting, I suggest, is “acting back” in exerting particular priorities and form on the reform movement. The central message of these offerings has an unquestionable congruence with what Inglehart (2008) and others identify as “post-materialist values”: that is, a set of values related to “higher” ends such as valuing self-expression, aesthetics, and self-esteem. Many studies of postmaterialist values use measures of “often thinking about meaning and purpose in life” as their central variable. Though at times distancing itself from

Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs, postmaterialist studies essentially posit these matters take more priority in settings of prosperity and non-scarcity, where basic needs--Maslow's lower needs-- have already been taken care of. Notably, Inglehart argues religious and spiritual meaning systems change in postmaterialist societies, moving away from supporting traditional views on sexual permissiveness, homosexuality, abortion, and gender roles. But there is also a general move away from authority in general: postmaterialist cultures do not approve of cultural, religious, or governmental authorities, instead opting for freedom and self-expression.

The inner-worldly asceticism that Evangelical faith and work "recovers" from earlier forms of Protestantism has very much been sifted through the cultural parameters of postmaterialist settings. An early interviewee saw the faith and work conversation only engaging a particular type of worker in the modern economy:

"My impression [of the movement's focus] has fundamentally been a white middle- or upper-middle-class...uhhh...problem. Like you know, you talk about first-world problems. Well, that's a first-world problem in a way. Now that's maybe a little too negative. I think it's getting at a real issue, which is this sacred-secular divide in its various manifestations, but for the most part I would say the conversation has been either academic--and so largely theoretical--and to the extent that it's been practical, it's been kind of angst about people who are making a bunch of money and spending a lot of time at work worrying about the how they are responsible then. To their families and their churches and to that sort of thing."

There's good evidence this ties closely with the previous point: middle-class and white-collar workers are more likely than the working class to prioritize postmaterialist values (Scarborough 1995). If the interviewee above is correct that the conversation is primarily driven by the angst of successful Christian workers, this may suggest the faith and work movement is a lay reform effort among those who are victims of their own success in postindustrial capitalism. Having no uncertainty about either their imminent or eternal security, these workers instead turn inward to the higher needs of purpose and significance. The faith and work movement channels its resources toward addressing these pastoral needs, as suggested above. Thus, frameworks of re-enchantment become the primary repertoire or offering that postmaterialist workers are drawn to: not just your work but *your existence*

matters to God. While previous lay reform efforts might pull the laity toward distinctively religious institutions and practices such as confession, this lay reform effort “redistributes” the sacredness of religious institutions outward toward the laity, to where they are in their economic roles. As Kim argued, God is just as present at Google as he is at church. This is not completely new: similar notions of “democratizing” callings and holiness can be found in both Luther and the Second Vatican Council, as Taylor (2007) narrates. But the faith and work movement, unlike these other efforts, largely complies with the cultural setting of postmaterialism in primarily appealing to internal and individualistic projects of the self rather than establishing firm external criteria of moral behavior and authoritative structures that might coerce compliance with particular religious teachings or values.

Thus, my analysis suggests the faith and work movement offers “soft” cultural frameworks toward workers within modern capitalism, attending to “the subjective life, emotional well-being, and intimacy” (Kellner & Heuberger 1992) of the modern work experience. In many ways, this is not traditional religion warring with the secularizing forces of modernity, the older story of secularization paradigms (see Berger & Luckmann 1966, Luckmann 1967, Casanova 1994, Bruce 2002), but traditional religion thriving in the “soft capitalism” and life-embracing aspects of postmodernity. As Heelas and Woodhead (2001) observe, “Certainly much less is heard these days about the ‘problem of work’ as it was diagnosed by Berger (1964) and others through the 1960s and 1970s. Problems, of course, remain...but Berger’s (1964) claim--‘they do not live where they work’ (p. 217)--has been severely undermined by the dynamics of ‘bringing life back to work’” (Heelas & Woodhead 2001:59). My own research suggests the faith and work movement joins with a variety of other “soft capitalism” efforts that have effectively injected meaning and significance into these economic settings. The invitation is not only to “live where you work” but “worship where you work.” To the extent that these efforts have been successful, the iron cage of modernity’s compartmentalization configuration have largely given way to these explicit theological agenda to “disrupt” this arrangement and re-enchant an Evangelical’s work life, grounded in the reassuring claim that *work matters to God*.

**Table 1: Faith and Work Thought Leaders vs. Wider Populations**

All U.S. Respondents	All Evangelicals	F&W Leaders (n=24)	Question
35.1	44.0	43.5	Would describe political views as “Very Conservative” or “Conservative”
36.5	30.0	0.0	“Economic downturn was just a natural part of how our economy works” responsible for 2007 Recession
9.2	9.8	4.3	“Individuals who were careless and borrowed more money than they could afford” responsible for 2007 Recession
36.5	35.2	34.8	“Completely Agree” or “Mostly Agree” Most businesses would act ethically on their own, without regulation from government.
36.4	38.7	47.8	“Capitalism and the free market system are consistent with Christian values” comes closer to one’s own views.

Data sources: First question from 2010 Baylor Religion Survey Wave III (n=1732). Rest from 2011 Public Religion Research Institute/Religion News Service (n=1,110)

## Chapter 7

### Toward a Critical Theory of Purposeful Work: Three Stories of the Purpose Industry in Post-industrial Capitalism

“The industrial, technological-scientific mode of production, in which intellectual labor becomes an essential factor, engenders in the producers (the “collective worker”) qualities, skills, forms of imagination, and capacities for activity and enjoyment that are stifled or perverted in capitalist and repressive noncapitalist societies. These press beyond their inhuman realization toward a truly human one. In the subjectivity of [late capitalism’s] surplus consciousness, compensatory and emancipatory interests are forced together into a unity.”

-Herbert Marcuse, “Protosocialism and Late Capitalism: Toward a Theoretical Synthesis Based on Bahro’s Analysis”

“In this sense, it is not so much that capitalism has actively alienated labor, it is rather that, capitalism has never succeeded in synthesizing labor. The capitalist, however, needs synthesized labor so he is driven to break out of his own conceptual system. The agent for the pursuit of productivity and profit, the manager, probably sees this contradiction more clearly than the entrepreneur. In any case, as his function concerns the control and co-ordination of subordinates, it appears to the manager as a special problem in his work...alienation is a managerial problem.”

-P.D. Anthony, *The Ideology of Work*

“Advanced capitalist societies do not normally call upon their citizens to believe very much, as long as they roll out of bed and do their work...The [United] States is peculiar because it is, on the one hand, the most rampantly capitalist society in history and, on the other, deeply, deeply metaphysical. Markets are relativizing, pragmatizing, and secularizing. But to prop them up, to defend them, and to legitimate them, you may need some much more absolute values. That may be why there are a lot of psycho-spiritual stockbrokers around.”

-Terry Eagleton, “Religion for Radicals: An Interview with Terry Eagleton”

“Businessmen are our only metaphysicians, but the trouble is, they are only one-track metaphysicians.”

-Walker Percy, *The Moviegoer*

### On Comparing and Not Comparing Two Cases

The previous chapters have attempted to map out two major production points of an emerging conversation surrounding meaningful work and modern callings within postindustrial capitalism. As Chapter One argues, these

two movements share similarities in both form and function. Both intersect with established institutions and larger organizational forms while largely occupying a non-institutionalized space that I have described as the world of “thought leaders.” Both speak to the unmet cultural needs of understanding and interpreting economic activity. And as the previous chapters demonstrate, both primarily contribute to economic activity by providing cultural frameworks of enchanting work in deeper meaning and embedding work in wider moral frameworks. Thus, the antagonistic mode of work challenged by both movements is one of disenchanting economic activity, of a job being “just a job,” work performed merely for material needs, and—in the case of the consultants, economic entities constructing identities and purposes solely around economic ends.

Despite these similarities, the faith and work movement and the purpose consultants present several good reasons to avoid comparison across cases. The most obvious reason is a fundamental asymmetry regarding respective institutional locations. The purpose consultants, while not bounded within a particular organization, never stray far from their role as consultants in improving organizational functionality. While this can certainly be broadly defined and may move beyond narrower economic performance objectives, the consultants are ultimately legitimating themselves as solving organizational problems, particularly problems related to employee engagement. This is not to say that they speak *only* to organizational leaders or only in those leaders’ language, as many purpose consultants simultaneously peddle their symbolic wares to the masses, particularly those actors booking near-weekly keynote speeches delivered before a variety of audiences. Many of them also inject their ideas into popular discourse through writing in popular media like Huffington Post and other websites. However, the purpose consultant world fundamentally channels these authors and popular speakers toward organizational consulting, credentialing their expertise toward problem-diagnosing and problem-solving issues related to organizational functionality.

The faith and work movement, on the other hand, is not as much solving organizational problems but theological problems and, more specifically, theological problems of everyday life. Rising social mobility combined with the shift toward knowledge work, all happening within an increasingly postmaterialist culture, all contribute to the emergence of greater challenges for incorporating orthodox faith in Evangelicals’ day-to-day lives. Yet the

institutions shaping both the diagnosis of this shift and assembling the solutions are predominantly operating outside the economic sphere, thereby steering interests away from economic or organizational ends. Put another way, it was not the Evangelical's boss but the Evangelical's pastor that desired to see him or her connect faith with work. This shapes the cultural frameworks and remedial theology far differently than if workplaces and bosses had generated the concerns that mobilized the faith and work movement. Centrally, the faith and work discourse provides some reasons to cap efforts in workplaces. Most faith and work books and conferences have some warning against work becoming an idol: the possibility that work seizes the highest priority within the institutional hierarchy and thereby generates ultimate loyalties and devotion. Religious leaders recognize that this arrangement holds not only immanent resource-allocation consequences (lower church involvement) but also eternal-theological consequences (the consequences of idolatry). This is a contrast to the purpose consultants: unless perhaps drawing on empirical study of diminishing returns on overwork, the purpose consultants do not draw moral discourses that establish ceilings on employees' loyalties and energy. As another example the faith and work movement in nearly all its forms advocates for extra-organizational, extra-economic practices and forms of piety, such as slowing down to invest in co-worker relationships, conducting Bible studies in the workplace, or proselytizing in the workplace. Faith and work cultural frameworks of enchanting and embedding, then, in comparison to those advanced by purpose consultants, are *more* likely to avoid perfect congruence with organizational ends and goals.

The institutional location asymmetry then effectively compromises the ability to make evaluations across the two cases, particularly related to potentialities of ideological functioning or perhaps motivational "robustness" of religious versus non-religious moral frameworks. For the latter, the type of comparison that could *not* be made would resemble that made by religion and civil society scholars who posit religion offers social movement activity unique cultural and organizational resources that are lacking in other settings (e.g. Smith 1996). Significant speculative and imaginative work would need to be undertaken to make such a comparison here. Better comparisons could be made if the faith and work movement could be held up to a non-religious "meaning and work" movement somehow grounded in an institutional sphere with interests, resources, and forms of legitimation independent to that of economic-organizational settings. Inversely, the purpose consultants would be



more aptly compared to faith-professing performance consultants--perhaps workplace chaplains with organizational theory backgrounds--who advertise and legitimate their services through solving employee disengagement problems. The lack of these more symmetrical comparison cases negates the ability to undertake a one-to-one, apples-to-apples comparison of these movements.

What is more valuable in the present analysis is recognizing both movements are responding to and responding within a broadly shared cultural and socioeconomic setting. Both speak predominantly to college-educated members of the paid, formal labor force. Both draw far more attention from managerial, creative, commerce-related, and knowledge working professionals over the rest of the labor force. Both have generated a massive amount of resources in recent decades, revealing vast interest in these frameworks and investment from well-funded groups, foundations, and individuals. Both produce and sell a large number of books. Both, in serving as carrier groups have injected their frameworks within the wider cultural conversation surrounding meaningful work. Both have battled for legitimacy against those frameworks occupying the wider cultural space concerning purposeful work or less purposeful work. Thus, despite not being directly comparable, the two movements have many shared sociological characteristics that open the possibility of being structurally and culturally equivalent.

It is here, then, that we can turn to the larger question of *why*: Why is the production of frameworks related to enchanted and embedded work on the rise? As I studied these two movements, I realized this question is answered in radically different ways depending on one's starting point, and even within the sociological study of work and modern capitalism, there are multiple starting points available. Empirical study has revealed these actors are advancing a discourse that enchants and embeds economic activity at three different levels: at the level of the individual, at the level of the organization, and at the level of the economic order. To focus on any of these levels produces a unique--though at times overlapping--story of what the Purpose Industry does. These stories in a nutshell are: the Purpose Industry humanizes individual labor, optimizes organizational performance, and legitimates the modern economic system. Of course these three stories are not mutually exclusive, but each does need to be engaged at its own sociological level to fully evaluate and assess the story.

In what follows I take on these three different levels as three different stories of the Purpose Industry. Following other examples of understanding culture through central metaphors and narratives (e.g. Smith 2003, Hochschild 2016, see Lakoff & Johnson 2003), I have attempted to construct particular narratives of what the Purpose Industry does, using the self-accounts and ideas of the actors while at times enhancing these accounts with sociological insights and support. The first two stories closely follow the actors' own accounts of what the movements do, while the third story--grounded more in theories of culture and capitalism--is largely independent of first order accounts. Following each story I draw upon sociological insights and theory to assess each story in the wider context of modern work. Part of this assessment for each story entails critique. My attempt in moving from the story to sociological insights to critique follows Boltanski's "pragmatist sociology of critique," which "makes use of the point of view of the actors" and their own sense of the world in a way that helps illuminate "discrepancy between the social world as it is and as it should be in order to satisfy people's moral expectations" (Boltanski 2011:30). The end of this chapter provides an overview of a tentative "critical theory" of "purposeful work" in the modern economy, which I argue provides a more ambivalent setting for "purposeful work" than what the purposeful work discourse recognizes.

## **The Purpose Industry as Humanizing Individual Labor**

The first story comes closest to the accounts and understandings of the actors themselves, particularly in the faith and work movement but also dispersed throughout the purpose consultants movement:

*While global capitalism has produced economic growth in many parts of the world, the quality of jobs has not kept up with the quantity of jobs. While contemporary sociologists of work are attuned to the job quality at the middle and lower levels, knowledge workers at the middle to upper levels now also confront challenges: meeting the need for meaningful and fulfilling work that serves particular existentialist and postmaterialist needs. This deficit has created a meaning crisis. The causes of this challenge are well documented by two centuries of social theory related to the economic activity: the subordination of worker experience and conditions to external market forces (Polanyi 1944, Marx 1971), the cold*

*bureaucratization of instrumental logic-driven modern workplaces (Weber 1946), the deskillingization of modern Taylorist and Fordist labor processes (Braverman 1979), inner-workplace techniques of co-opting consent against workers' own interests (Burawoy 1979), the cultural effects of increasingly economic-grounded discourses now reshaping the modern self (Foucault 1979), the effects of capitalism on the self's moral character (Bell 1976, Sennett 1999), all happening against a backdrop of declining availability of "meaning systems" from outside the economic order that workers can draw upon to insulate themselves from these effects (Fromm 1941, Berger et. al 1974). The results of all these processes create a meaning vacuum across the workforce that deprives workers of the resources needed to construct meaningful or purpose-filled notions of what a great portion of their day-to-day lives revolve around. The Purpose Industry joins other efforts in providing solutions to this crisis. By mobilizing cultural frameworks that enchant and embed work within wider systems of meaning and moral agency, both workers and employers can together once again integrate economic activity with wider meaning. Thus, efforts to make work more meaningful can be seen as interventions to make the iron cage more "humanized" (Kellner & Berger 1992), "soft," (Ray & Sayer 1999) and inculcated with emotions and personal affect (Biggart 1989, Illouz 2003). This not only humanizes modern work but imbues it with its own dignity and valorization, thereby overcoming (either by offsetting, obstructing, or perhaps completely eradicating) the dehumanizing forces that threaten to alienate work.*

While certainly on its surface this narrative seems overly focused on what one interviewee called "first world problems," there are a wide variety of thinkers who would, on a more general level, lend credence to the observation that modern economic settings exert moral harm on workers through a subjective degradation of work. These concerns over the "subjective effects" of work have a developed theoretical history. Adam Smith saw these harms already in the division of labor present in his own time, lamenting that workers tasked with only "a few simple operations" would generally become "stupid and ignorant" (Smith 1776). Marx was particularly attuned to the alienating tendencies of work within early industrialism, describing the alienation of labor as

"work [that] is external to the worker, that is not part of his nature; and that, consequently, he does not fulfill himself in his work but denies himself, has a feeling of misery rather than well-being, does not

develop freely his mental and physical energies but is physically exhausted and mentally debased. The worker, therefore, feels himself at home only during his leisure time, whereas at work he feels homeless” (Marx 1971:127).

Marx in many places paralleled the Romantic protests against the subjectively harmful dehumanization of labor by industrialism: it is only by the “objectively unfolded wealth of human nature can the wealth of subjective human sensitivity--a musical ear, an eye for the beauty of form, in short, senses capable of human gratification--be either cultivated or created” (Marx 1964:353). In Marx’s visions, only work that can escape the “despotism of abstract need”--through abolishing the capitalist division of labor--would allow the worker’s “subjective human sensitivity” to flourish (Eagleton 1990:202). Romantic thinkers joined in these denunciations of the dehumanizing economic world emerging in Europe: Thomas Carlyle pegged London’s industrialism as a “mechanical age” where mechanical forces manages not just external conditions but the “internal and spiritual”: “Men are grown mechanical in head and in heart, as well as in hand” (Carlyle 1829). Victorian literary figures William Morris and John Ruskin shared Carlyle’s read of the severe harms inflicted on labor and work by industrialization: modern work, in the “degradation of the operative into the machine” gives workers “no pleasure in the work by which they make their bread,” the result being workers now “look to wealth as the only means of pleasure” (Ruskin 1892:20). Both Bell (1976) and Boltanski and Chiapello (2005) argue that 19th century romantic-aesthetic criticisms served as important forerunners for 20<sup>th</sup>-century criticisms of capitalism (see also Taylor 1989). While the *social* critiques of Marxism--focused on inequality, oppression, and class conflict--continued to animate worker movements, it was more the *artistic* critique of capitalism that was taken up by middle-class and bohemian subcultures in the mid-century. Here, too, the harmful effects of modern work take center stage: writing of the new left and student movements of 1968, Boltanski maps the shift in attention away from social class toward the “oppression in the capitalist world (the domination of the market, the discipline of the factory), the uniformity of mass society, and the commodification of everything” (Boltanski 2002:6). The problem of capitalism, then, becomes its threat to creative and autonomous activity, particularly within organizational settings. Marcuse’s (1964) critiques of modern society--memorably criticized as “Marxism without the proletariat” by Leszek Kolakowski--work within a similar aesthetic space, as affirmed by his popularity among the 1960s student movements (Roberts 2011). Marcuse foresaw that the forces of advanced industrial society not only sublimate and repress freedom and desire but also

swallow up and digest the “modes of protest and transcendence” levied against it: the persistence of God, spirituality and “beat ways of life” are in Marcuse’s view “no longer contradictory to the status quo.” The harmful effects inflicted by capitalism in this critique allow those who may otherwise benefit from the economic system to see themselves as victims rather than perpetrators of the system.

The Purpose Industry, of course, is primarily about *solving* the diagnosis of modern work, but before evaluating their interventions and solutions, it is useful to place its own criticisms in this wider context. Though rarely theoretically advanced or historically grounded, many thought leaders in the Purpose Industry are making an “artistic” critique of the dehumanization of modern work that bears similarities to other forms of criticizing capitalism. As both Bell and Boltanski observed, these sorts of critiques typically take hold in classes occupying positions that make autonomy and dependence from the market and class structure impossible. As a result, impulses and desires perhaps previously “revolutionary” become channeled toward the liberation of individual autonomy and creativity within the production process. Boltanski and Chiapello (2005) argue the youth of 1968 internalized this artistic critique as values that subsequently altered the modern managerial paradigm:

“Hailing from leftism, and especially the self-management movement, they stress continuity between the commitments of their youth and the activities that they pursued in firms, following the political turning-point of 1983, with a view of making working conditions appealing, improving productivity, developing quality, and increasing profits” (2005:97).

Managerial organization of the postindustrial workplace, then, paradoxically embraces the antagonisms of the artistic critique of capitalism: the values celebrated, promoted, and judged valuable to success are “taken directly from the repertoire of 1968.” Boltanski and Chiapello provide a valuable list of what qualities have come to shape the “new spirit of capitalism”:

“Autonomy, spontaneity, rhizomorphous capacity, multitasking (in contrast to the narrow specialization of the old division of labor), conviviality, openness to others and novelty, availability, creativity, visionary intuition, sensitivity to differences, listening to lived experiences and receptiveness to a whole range of experiences, being attracted to informality and the search for interpersonal contacts” (Boltanski & Chiapello 2005:97).

This list could very well be dropped into a human management resources PowerPoint on employee engagement strategies. “Business as usual,” mindless routine, and engaging work a “transactional” are common culprits blamed for high levels of employee disengagement: the Purpose Industry has a repertoire of solutions that very well embody the “new spirit” regime that Boltanski and Chiapello find within managerial literature. Perhaps the only modification needed is the Purpose Industry’s semi-Weberian philosophical anthropology, which presumes a voluntaristic individualism and “Kantian ethicization” (Milbank 1991:95), around which a menu of enchanted and embedded solutions is shaped. “Purpose-filled” and “purpose-driven” frameworks provide to every autonomy-seeking worker an inner-subjective calling that in many ways preserves Luther’s own use of the term (*beruf*), connecting it with station, office, and duty (Anderson 2006). The central cultural offering of the Purpose Industry operative--whether religious or non-religious--is a framework that reconstructs a symbolic edifice within which one’s work has a “station” from which it derives extra-economic significance. Yet both the religious and non-religious proponents largely ground this edifice in the autonomous self, the religious proponent able to deploy a Lutheran-inspired piety that isolates the state of the worker’s soul from social institutions or worldly authority (Tawney 1926). While this limits (and rechannels) the potentiality of the more critical or reform-oriented dimensions of this discourse, the Purpose Industry, placed in this tradition of social theory, remains a relatively “effective” artistic critique of work that is “paradoxically embraced” by the structures of capitalism to offset dehumanizing tendencies (see Boltanski & Chiapello 2005 for discussion on capitalism’s embrace of critiques).

While sociologists of work have typically granted far more attention to the objective conditions of work over the subjective components of work, it is illuminating to draw out several voices that have connected the humanizing effects of “meaningful” work with the dignity of work.<sup>69</sup> Hodson (2001), working toward a “theory of dignity” in his book *Dignity at Work*, argues taking pride in one’s work serves as a core strategy in building and safeguarding dignity in work. In a passage virtually indiscernible from many ideas of the Purpose Industry, Hodson writes

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<sup>69</sup> Though too broad to survey here, psychologists also tie the dignity of work to personal meaning, particularly psychologists influenced by positive psychology. The 2001 book *Good Work*, produced as a collaboration between three well-known psychologists, posits “good work” as that which “allows the full expression of what is best in us, something we experience as rewarding and enjoyable” (Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi, & Damon 2001:5).

“Human beings value themselves and they value their own growth. They want to see themselves as effective players who are *getting somewhere in life* as a result of their own efforts. Hence, they seek activities and relationships that affirm their sense of self-worth and allow them to develop their potential. Activities that create pride and enhance growth and maturation are highly prized. One of the most important sources of pride and personal development for many is work (Marcuse 1991)...Workers are deeply affected and energized by the meaning of their work. Few satisfactions are greater in life than those derived from the self-directed completion of worthwhile tasks (Kohn and Schooler 1983)” (Hodson 2001:44-45, italics in original).

Building from this observation, Hodson sees the struggle for this sort of personal meaning orientation as a key component in preserving dignified working conditions. Stud Terkel’s classic text *Working: People Talk About What They Do All Day and How They Feel About What They Do*--frequently cited by work scholars--also narrows in on the importance of meaning. The introduction expands the notion of work to “a search, too, for daily meaning as well as daily bread, for recognition as well as cash, for astonishment rather than torpor; in short, for a sort of life rather than a Monday through Friday sort of dying” (Terkel 1972:xi). Leidner’s (1993) study of the insurance sales industry broadly takes on the question of meaning and routinization, exploring the effects of routinization on worker identities and authenticity. Ultimately, Leidner argues, in contrast to labor process theorists, that workers do not experience their rationalized work as an “‘iron cage’ drained of meaning” (Leidner 1993:224). Two religious-grounded voices also link dignity to meaning. Martin Luther King, Jr., in a 1968 speech to striking city workers in Memphis, pronounces dignity in work as stemming from the social meaning of work: “So often we overlook the work and the significance of those who are not in professional jobs, of those who are not in the so-called big jobs. But let me say to you tonight, that whenever you are engaged in work that serves humanity and is for the building of humanity, it has dignity, and it has worth” (King 2011:172). Pope John Paul II, in the 1981 social encyclical *Laborem exercens*, built a Biblical case that the work process, independent of its objective content, is primarily tasked to see that the worker’s activities “must all serve to realize his humanity, to fulfil the calling to be a person that is his by reason of his very humanity” (*Laborem exercens* par 6). Against understandings of work that posit value being determined by the *kind* of work being done, John Paul II states the “sources of the dignity of work” are to be sought “primarily in the subjective dimension, not the objective one” (*Laborem exercens* par 6). Of course, as

made clear from the larger contexts for these statements, for neither King nor John Paul II do these statements diminish the critical importance of objective standards by which dignity-honoring jobs might be evaluated.

Having now outlined similarities between the contemporary purposeful work discourse and wider thinking on work, the latter can now offer a constructive critique to the narrative summarized above that links the Purpose Industry to humanizing efforts. From the wider literature and thinkers drawn on above, one can make a case that infusing work with meaning *can* contribute to humanizing and even granting dignity to it. Efforts along those lines may very well be responding to authentic needs within modern work, diagnosed from Adam Smith forward. The contemporary purposeful work discourse that this project examines, however, has three crucial blind spots or underdeveloped shortcomings that lessen its capacity to lead the charge in humanizing or dignifying work. Thus, while the above narrative presents a more positive take on the purposeful work discourse and its proponents, the following moves toward three central shortcomings embedded within this narrative.

The first is the inherent exclusivity entailed in humanizing and dignifying particular types of labor and work while not applying this same valorization to other types of labor in work. In my study of the faith and work movement, I found Evangelicals never reflected on the types of work that, in the frequently used phrase, “matter to God.” As discussed in the previous chapter, the movement very much internalized the Sunday-Monday compartmentalization that was born out of modernity’s extraction of paid work from the household. This was the core problem needing to be addressed with “remedial” faith and work theology. Likewise, the purpose consultants, with little reflection, champion a variety of work roles that fall within the paid formal economy: here too, the “Purpose Economy” has inherited many understandings of work built into its antecedent, the information or knowledge economy (Hurst 2014). Thus in all these visions those types of work not central to the discourse are either only tangentially imbued with purpose or are excluded from the conversation altogether. Examples of these other types would be the many forms of labor identified by Williams (2014) falling outside the formal paid work economy: informal paid work, formal non-monetized labor, informal non-monetized labor in organizations, one-to-one non-monetized labor, or non-exchanged labor such as labor provided within familial settings. Rates of participation within these various types of work are shaped by various historical inequalities and social structures:



this results in disproportionate exclusion from the types of work that the purposeful work discourse valorizes. A large disproportionately underrepresented population is women, many of whom strike “patriarchal bargains” to secure support for caring labor and individual security (Kandiyoti 1988). Workers from developing countries are also more likely to be part of the informal economy, whether in their own countries (Portes & Haller 2005) or filling the gaps of the care economy in developed countries (Hochschild 2000). Inner workplace dynamics can also filter out those with children or familial dependents that make them less than the “ideal worker type” (Hochschild 2000, Cooper 2000, Blair-Loy 2003). Finally, a variety of factors perpetuate persisting racial inequalities both in the workforce as a whole and in the higher status jobs that receive the greatest blessings of the purposeful work discourse’s efforts (see Pager 2003). Valorizing and humanizing types of work to which many groups lack equal access can foster a discourse that rations out meaning, purpose, and dignity to a very particular and limited portion of those residing within the global economic order. Particularly with workforce non-participation in the U.S. at historically high rates--and for many reasons likely increasing in the coming decades (Chandler 2015, Avent 2016)--the purposeful work discourse may merely reproduce the existing economic and social systems of disprivilege by granting those with privilege further symbolic and cultural status of possessing “meaningful work.”

The second shortcoming or oversight in the purposeful work discourse is the frequent decoupling of the phenomenological experience of “purposeful work” from the social, economic, and cultural conditions that shape the objective conditions of that work. The sources of these shortcomings reflect the cultural and institutional settings in which this discourse is formulated. For Evangelicals, faith and work theology in many forms is deeply embedded within theological notions personal piety and individual ethics: following this, the theological discourse primarily equips individual workers with cultural frameworks to re-enchant personal work and improve upon its experiential and personally enriching elements. Likewise, purposeful work consultants have no problem promoting purpose as a substitute good for improved working conditions, also losing sight of objective conditions of work. Two central thought leaders see this as a viable and hopeful tradeoff in the current economy. As Chapter Two demonstrates, managerial thinkers from Mayo forward recognized subjective experiences of meaning could be major drivers of employee commitment and productivity even when this “meaning” is abstracted from the objective conditions of the workplace. This decoupling grants purposeful work discourses ideological power to

relocate the experience of “dignified work” from the outward conditions of labor and organizational life to the inward interpretative schemas of their employees’ mind. Perhaps the greatest indication of this is the dominant place psychologists now play in this space (see Illouz 2007, Ehrenreich 2009, Diaz & Illouz 2016), pointing to the centrality of psychological tactics to make work better. There is no greater example of this than the 2010 Harvard Business Review article highlighted in Chapter Three that prescribes “a simple visual framework” to “Turn the Job You Have into the Job You Want” (Wrzesniewski, Berg, & Dutton 2010).

One interviewee shared a story that captures this potential of humanizing work. Speaking to me in his high-end corporate office space in the Washington D.C. suburbs of Northern Virginia, this interviewee prefaced this anecdote by framing it as the “perfect example” that shows how “powerful” the message of faith and work is:

“I was asked to go to Mizzou, Montana...[there are] four Evangelical churches in the whole city. So they get together every six months and bring in a speaker, and one of them had read my book and asked me to come and do it so I did it. So I did a conference Friday night, Saturday morning, and then preached at one of the churches on Sunday morning and another one Sunday night. I think it was Sunday morning, this guy comes up to me after I preached and says, ‘I was at your conference, and I want you to know, I’m fifty-seven years old, I wash dishes for a living.’ And he said, ‘I heard everything you said...I became a Christian about ten years ago and I thought the best that I could do was occasionally witness to somebody about my faith at work, but I’m back in the back of the kitchen, it’s hot, no one comes back there. But what you’re telling me is that there’s...there’s an importance to everything I do to God. And every dish I wash for the glory of God, in ways I don’t completely understand, fits with things other people are doing, and that brings flourishing to my community...’ I mean, tears were rolling down his cheeks. He said, ‘If that’s true, that makes all the difference.’ I said, ‘Brother, that’s true, that’s why I’m here, to get that message out.’”

This *is* undoubtedly a powerful message, as the interviewee recognizes: it plays as well in Mizzou as it does in McLean. But it is also one that leaves unexamined--or perhaps even obscures--conditions of work and labor. The anecdote leaves unsaid any objective dimensions of the dishwasher’s work conditions--wages, benefits, job security, safety, health accommodations, the distribution of earnings within the firm, wider labor market

dynamics. This obscuration is not likely accidental but a direct byproduct of the prioritization of worker subjectivities: there is no place in this discourse *for* such details to appear.<sup>70</sup> Importantly, recognizing the absence of these details does not deny the dignity of the dishwasher's work or somehow "debunk" the worker's expanding understanding of his labor's importance; it merely demonstrates where this discourse may lack the space needed for important political components, components necessary to resist ideological appropriation. As a counter-example, King's claim that "all labor has dignity" not only imbues personal-theological significance on labor but provides space for connecting this claim to objective conditions and evaluations of said conditions: the dignity of work can fit within a political call to action relevant to the conditions under which this dignified work occurs. His "all labor has dignity" speech embodies this in calling for a general workers strike in its final passage.

Finally, the third shortcoming is the lack of probing the relationship between purposeful work discourses and the wider economization of modern culture and modern lifeworlds. On both an individual and cultural level there is good reason to suspect purposeful work discourse complies with--if not further expands--particular economizing trends within modern societies. On the individual level, both faith and work and the purpose consultants can at times demonstrate a rather laissez-faire attitude regarding the hours modern workers find themselves working. For faith and work leaders, this traces back to Dorothy Sayer's harsh criticism toward religion that fails to speak to "nine-tenths" of the religious adherent's lives. This fraction can easily be left unexamined--I did not see anyone challenge it in the discourse--but if one calculates out the work-life balance embedded within Sayers' social vision, a worker possessing sixteen non-sleeping hours a day is presumed to work on average approximately 14.5 of those hour a day *seven days a week*. Yet the time breakdown itself is not as important as the naturalizing function this form of logic can inject within purposeful work conversations: *seeing that workers appropriate x amount of time and energy to their jobs, it only makes sense to undertake actions y to bring about outcome z*. One interviewee highlighted in Chapter Three who lamented this economization and "despises" the overwork culture of Amazon still holds up the idealized "romantic worker" as one who:

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<sup>70</sup> Yale theologian Miroslav Volf wrote an early faith and work book (1991) that specifically criticized approaches to faith and work that "ennoble dehumanizing work" at the expense of calls for altering structures producing such work. A handful of other works have picked up this critique as well.

“look[s] back on your work life--where you spend seventy to eighty percent of your waking hours--and you say ‘Okay, you know I really showed up at work, I brought my full self at work, I had a meaningful experience at work, I was challenged, it was intense.’ Whereas I feel the other [non-romanticizing] worker will probably shut that out of the day-to-day work life and try to find that meaning elsewhere, which is, you know legitimate of course as well, but I just want to remind us of the fact that we spend so much time at work” (quote from interview).

These numbers would indicate a worker who puts in *twelve hours a day seven days a week*, not quite the workplace overachiever in Sayer’s vision, but likely a person with few other commitments in life. There is a sense, then, in which, at the individual level, purposeful work discourses provide a moral justifications for what has in the past been labeled workaholicism or overwork (Schor 1993, Sharone 2002). Here the faith and work movement possesses more frameworks that would contend against workaholicism: many actors lecture against the “idolization” of work and several thought leaders I interviewed shifted the “faith and work” framework to “whole life discipleship” that does not so easily valorize work at the expense of all non-work life functions--church, community, family, etc. Nevertheless, as discussed in Chapter Six, faith and work also has an arsenal of resources--callings to do work with particular energy and dedication, visions of saving souls in the workplace, a call to transforming unjust social structures--that can easily turn overwork into an irreproachable vocation and personal duty.

At the cultural level, humanizing and dignifying work can lend to economization by valorizing formal workforce participation at the expense of all other status-granting or honorable activities. Wuthnow (1989) has observed modern societies have already shifted in this direction: “In the past, military service, kinship obligations, religion, and philanthropy provided ways of demonstrating that one was a morally upright individual. Although these activities continue to fulfill this function in limited ways, the marketplace has come increasingly to play a major role in our efforts to demonstrate to ourselves and to others that we are moral persons” (Wuthnow 1989:85) Wuthnow’s argument, however, may require further development: the purpose consultants and faith and work conferences would eagerly take under their umbrella the activities listed above. Positive psychology consultants have already worked with the military (e.g. Reivich et al. 2011), and purpose consultants are likely close behind.

Meanwhile, faith and work conferences offer tracks for philanthropy workers and are dominated by those working in professional ministry organizations. There may be sufficient “purposeful work talk” to go around, even to status systems outside the traditional market system.

This raises several normative issues. Repeating the argument above, if certain forms of work--forms that are not accessible to all--are the primary beneficiaries of the purposeful work discourse, this likely closes off honor-granting systems to those already privileged in the economic order. This also has important political dimensions in an age of increasingly transnational labor: one's dignity and humanity may become more centered around participation in formal paid work rather than national citizenship or universal human rights, an arrangement that would leave many marginalized populations even more excluded. Yet there are also other issues to be raised regarding economization related to populations that--due to life phase--previously had been granted their own domains of worth, significance, and meaningful activities, independent of labor market participation. This would include childhood, a life phase that, at least in the modern era, has been set apart from formal labor participation (Zelizer 1994). Motherhood, as a practice resistant to the logics of capitalism, may also be devalued (Hays 1994). Tightly coupling dignity with work may also exert particularly harmful effects on the elderly and retired. Moral philosopher Margaret Urban Walker observes how these harmful effects are already playing out:

“In a society that views the life course as a kind of ‘career,’ retirement without designated role, activity, or development, signifies the end of the life course, even if there's a lot of life left. And if the ideal of self is the career self, the enterprising self busy at its career, the retired person surrenders not only a job, but eligibility for a centrally valued moral and social identity. The robust ideal of autonomy that pictures life as a career is inherently unkind to those growing older: they must compete in an arena where many are eventually destined to lose out to those younger, or they must retire into a state of ‘post-adulthood.’ ...We must either continue our life-careers or do the only thing left when they are over: reminisce about and document them: to prove to ourselves and to others that at least we were socially acceptable people before our adulthood expired” (Walker 2003:196).

Moving from life phases to cultural spheres, the economization embedded within purposeful work discourses can also negate the value and existence of all activities and values that fall outside economic and work world. As Horkheimer and Adorno (2002) observe of the “culture industry,” “industry is interested in human beings only as its customers and employees and has in fact reduced humanity as a whole, like each of its elements, to this exhaustive formula” (2002:118). The purpose industry may perform a similar function in reducing the modern human experience to that of work. Perhaps nothing captures this better than the shift from Culture Wars to Capitalism Wars among American Evangelicals. Previously it was the sacredness of various institutions--the law, education, family, marriage, the arts--that Evangelicals saw worthy of the contending for, contending to be put in right order according to some transcendental standard. Today the “Corporate Right’s” agenda is largely working to relocate zealous efforts *into* the marketplace and away from these other institutions. This move likely does little for improving polarized and dogmatic religious-political discourse, which shows no signs of slowing down. But Evangelicalism’s capacity to make peace with the interests of the Corporate Right reflects a contentment with inner-market concerns over extra-market concerns, the very sort of reducing that Horkheimer and Adorno identify above. If work matters to God, perhaps it is becoming all that matters. Provided sufficient transcendence can be located in the economic and day-to-day workaday life, other cultural and metaphysical realities become less significant. Novelist Marilynne Robinson makes a relevant observation in her introduction to a book of cultural essays, suggesting perhaps this shift reflects an increasing reliance on economics to provide ontological order to the world:

“Economics, the great model among us now, indulges and deprives, builds and abandons, threatens and promises. Its imperium is manifest, irrefragable--as in fact it has been since antiquity. Yet suddenly we act as if the reality of economics were reality itself, the one Truth to which everything must refer. It can only suggest that terror at complexity has driven us back on this very crude monism. We have reached a point where cosmology permits us to say that everything might in fact be made of nothing, so we cling desperately to the idea that something is real and necessary, and we have chosen, oddly enough, competition and market forces, taking refuge from the wild epic of cosmic ontogeny by hiding our head in a ledger” (Robinson 2005:4).

This may at first seem overstated: the Purpose Industry operatives do not seem interested in winning converts to the “immense cosmos” of the capitalist economy, to borrow Weber’s phrase. Many are in fact deeply invested in their own religious system. However, while operatives are not directly peddling immense cosmologies, they are very much working to reconfigure the greedy institutions in which immense cosmologies and sources of meaning are embedded. As Chapter Three demonstrated, purpose consultants are wary of those institutions that might provide workers with meaning outside their job. Once the desirable configuration of meaning-sources is reached, it is work that would provide the dominant categories and rules that order the cosmos (Thomas 1989), laying claim to its own “justificatory mystiques” previously found within alternative spheres (Bell 1956), and calling for its own sacrifices (Hochschild 2000). In this configuration the Capitalism War is far more at home than the earlier era’s Culture War, which averted worker’s attention toward institutions outside the economic sphere. What is yet to be seen is the long-term viability for both individuals and communities that have instilled the greedy institutions configuration that assigns such significance to economic activity.

## **The Purpose Industry as Optimizing Organizations**

This second story treads closely to the self-accounts of the actors within the purpose consultant movement. The narrative here stitches together the history of Chapter Two with a more explicitly normative spin on the outcome.

*As work in modern societies became more organized, the sites of production took new forms that required new modes of organization. Mills and factories in particular required new modes of coordination and decision-making, outgrowing the individualist entrepreneurial modes that dominated the 17th and early 18th century. Yet as organizational justifications shifted from religious to naturalistic to “scientific,” abilities to coordinate and motivate individuals became an enduring “work in progress.” Though various disciplines have taken their turn on this challenge--first engineers and later industrial psychologists, sociologists, organizational theorists, and humanistic psychologists--no discipline or approach has managed to produce a perfectly optimized human labor supply. In recent decades a new crisis has emerged: polls now show massive employee disengagement with their work, and millennial workers seem unresponsive to traditional sticks and carrots of employee retention and engagement. The Purpose*

*Industry represents an assortment of breakthrough new knowledge and insights for shoring up employee loyalties and commitments in the postindustrial society. Central to this knowledge is the unmatched potential that meaningful and purposeful work holds for overcoming modern employee engagement problems. Purpose, more than advancement opportunities or wage increases, offers the means to invigorate employees and make organizations more efficient.*

Somewhat similar to the first story, this story too allows Purpose Industry operatives to be placed within a theoretical tradition in which they may not naturally place themselves. Much of Chapter Two lays out that tradition: since the earliest “scientific” paradigms of organizations, the humanistic dimensions of workers have been “discovered” again and again. Each discovery lends to the further tweaking of managerial paradigms in a positivist-driven process of accumulating and perfecting “scientific” managerial knowledge. While such framing intuitively brings attention to the controlling (and, put more negatively, manipulating) aspects of managerialism, it would be easy to overlook the wider effects of organizational efficiencies on wider society. Ford’s production model--combining efficient production, higher wages, and lower purchasing costs for the vehicles--had a wide-ranging effect on American society across the 20th century. The grander story of the Industrial Revolution--with its many improvements in the production process--also deserves credit for rapidly improving standards of living and increasing life expectancy rates while generating middle-class affluence. Thus, optimizing organizational productivity on massive scales can very well have wide societal effects, far wider than increasing a particular company’s bottom line.

One interviewee provided an example of what difference “purpose” made for workers. The two examples he gave brought out the far-reaching effects of greater employee engagement:

“We encounter it every day. There are...let’s say you call Verizon and there’s a call-center agent, and there’s a palpable sense of love, of passion, of exuberance, of wanting to assist. And you’re like ‘Damn it, this is the best thing that ever happened to me, thank god for that enlightening conversation, that I’m not talking to a robot but someone who actually gives a shit.’ The counter to that is...you know, go to...you’re in Virginia, go to New York, have you ever taken a cab, and said you want to pay by credit card? And the



angst, frustration and absolute despondency that comes over the cab driver? Like, it's that. It's like, it's just a credit card, you gotta put it in, it takes an extra fifteen seconds. It's that. And so that's sort of these polarity opposites of people in roles who shouldn't be there because they don't have it all together. They don't have the role with the place they're working with, and they clearly don't have it in life."

These two extremes may seem like more menial aspects of life, but one could easily envision far greater stakes on these interactions: perhaps the call-center agent determines the difference between inaccurate charges being corrected or being passed to a collection agency. For the customer already suffering the far-reaching effects of bad personal credit, this interviewee's touted purpose-saturated call-center agent could generate more than a burst of positive feeling, but also salvation from an otherwise consequential bureaucratic error. Since both public and commercialized bureaucracies must be navigated across our various life spheres--healthcare, education, personal finance, human resource management, law enforcement, etc.--the purpose-driven bureaucrat is likely an undervalued hero of modern life, lending credence to the value of purposeful work discourse to overcome bureaucratic and organizational ineptitude.

The narrative of optimizing organizations, however, in most forms suffers from two central deficiencies. The first is epistemological aspect of this narrative. In terms of Habermas's (1971) conceptualization of "knowledge-constitutive interests," the optimizing organizations narrative displays a "technical knowledge" interest that approaches nature and society as objects of potential knowledge that can be controlled and coordinated. Building theory and understandings of the organization of human activity from this technical approach garners criticism from many thinkers, not only Habermas but also Horkheimer (1976) and Adorno (2001). Social theorist Zygmunt Bauman (1991) wrote extensively about the controlling and cultivating ethos of bureaucratic thinking that served in organizing the Holocaust. His earlier work (1967) pinpointed the effects of granting primacy to knowledge serving the needs of the organization over that serving the needs of the individual: the latter produces accounts of reality related to "manipulating the human environment by enlarging the scope of information in human minds," while the former's interest is primarily in how to "manipulate human behavior by modifying the pattern of external situational pressures" (1967:7). The type of knowledge that tends to be produced by these organizational-optimizing perspectives, then, is what serves the needs of organizational "performativity." As Alvesson & Willmott

(1992) observe, this knowledge lends to a form of managerial practice that is “essentially a matter of grasping and manipulating elements of objective reality (such as structures or cultures) through efficiency-enhancing techniques” (Alvesson & Willmott 1992:12). While at its best this knowledge may concern itself with shaping settings that serve their occupants’ needs and modes of agency, the knowledge-constitutive interest maintains an orientation of abstraction and objectification regarding actors, often producing semi-behavioralist findings of control and coordination techniques related to stimulus-response principles. This of course presents a rather questionable foundation on which to construct an account of “making work meaningful.”

This first shortcoming is closely tied to the second shortcoming, which was discussed in Chapter Three: the contemporary purposeful work discourse suffers from an underdeveloped account of possible moral harms of instrumentalization. Part of this is due to a wider phenomenon within managerialism diagnosed by Boltanski and Chiapello (2005): the symbolic discarding of conventional and hierarchical forms of management since the 1960s has placed a far greater reliance on self-management and inducing people to “do what one wants them to do by themselves, as if under the influence of a voluntary, autonomous decision” (2005:459). Employee engagement programs that somehow openly rely on this “voluntary” self-motivation while also coming pre-packaged with proven ROI measures should rightfully invite suspicions of manipulative techniques. Additionally, there seems to be little built-in space within these programs for concern pertaining to the wellbeing of those actors being “optimized.” Like the culture industry, the purpose industry--when it contributes to managerial knowledge--tends to abstract and objectify the pieces of social reality it oversees. This is supported and legitimated by an “engineering” discourse within economics (Sen 1987) that can also be drawn upon to warrant particular decisions and techniques instituted in economic organizations. Thus, while, as Boltanski and Chiapello argue, the visible managerial impulse to “get something done” likely incites tensions with “grammars of authenticity,” the purposeful work discourse itself is largely incapable of reflecting on these tensions and perhaps contributes to obscuring such tensions altogether.

Injecting a vision of organizational life that possesses this missing component of the purpose industry--a moral account of instrumentalization--illuminates these hidden tensions. Sociologist Andrew Sayer provides just such an

account in a book chapter entitled, “Organizational Life: Good, Bad, and Instrumental” (2006). Sayer observes, “Organizations as workplaces are inherently instrumental institutions, structured and oriented to meeting their goals, be they making profit, as in the case of capitalist organizations, or pursuing what might be termed use-value ends, such as education or sport, in the case of nonprofit making organizations” (2006:203). This instrumental aspect becomes more activated in the settings of competitive pressures, tight budgets, and uncertainties: organizations tend to “purify activities under their control so that labor power is used efficiently in the pursuit of their goals and ‘idle’ time or time spent on other activities is minimized” (ibid:204). But as Sayer points out, these tendencies quickly run into trouble: the tendencies of human beings. “Employees are not like machines or materials but have multiple needs, interests, and concerns, which cannot be kept at bay for long...Thus, workers may socialize, seek fulfillment, respect and esteem, get distracted or inspired, become ill, get pregnant, and generally allow life to intrude on work” (ibid:204). From the epistemic perspective that makes up the organizational optimization view, these tendencies either cannot be “seen” or, perhaps more harmful, are seen as inputs to be channeled toward organizational ends. Neither option is inherently honoring toward the dignity of workers or to what Sayer calls the “internal goods” of the worker, those goods that have standards of excellence internal to their practices. These internal goods--architectural design or medicine, for example--become compromised when instrumentalized. This does not mean good practice of medicine cannot be financially compensated; Sayers is getting at an Aristotelian point that, should “good” medicine become governed by (and made subordinated) to *only* financial incentives and external recognition, good medicine likely becomes bad medicine. In effect this provides a way to think about human goods that, if instrumentalized for the ends of a human resource management program, will undermine and compromise those goods. Importantly, standards of “effectiveness” then become irrelevant or secondary due to their indifference to the status of human goods.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Sayer’s vision is built from the Aristotelian theory of internal and external goods developed by philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre (1981). MacIntyre’s work in several places brings the obscured tensions of workplaces--obsured by the metaphysics and form of managerial knowledge--to the foreground, not just as a key component of work but a core dimension of the modern age (see Lynn 2017). Regarding appeals to managerial effectiveness, MacIntyre provides the counter observation that, in cases where managerial apologists seek to “disarm philosophical criticism” of its methodology by “asserting of methodology that it ‘works,’ he misses the point. It works all too well” (MacIntyre 1979:57).

A sacred sense of duty and calling to one's work is almost certainly one of these goods. This creates a moral danger in attempts to create, engineer, cultivate, disseminate, control, incentivize, or otherwise manipulate personal callings. Sayer is quick to argue incentives like pay or recognition will never *not* be part of workplaces, nor is that the desirable configuration for work. The question from Sayer's perspective becomes: will the internal goods of callings survive the implemented techniques of the well-intended manager or purpose consultant? For example, the "calling" orientation that Amy Wrzesniewski discovers among custodial staff in a hospital--personal bonds with patients, intrinsic satisfaction with exerting extra efforts, a sense of self-worth from one's role--could all be compromised by a poorly implemented employee engagement program. Tying these actions to performance pay or conspicuous employee recognition measures will likely make actors shift their motivations from the internal goods of care to these external rewards: in Adam Smith's terms, the pursuit of praise (or profit) becomes elevated above the pursuit of praiseworthy acts (qtd in Sayer 2006). Rewards can also breed cynicism and foster feelings of being controlled rather than being appreciated, which might actually demobilize the very employees who innately possessed this calling orientation. The program may end up altering not (merely) actions but also the moral character of the relevant actors. As a second example, Aaron Hurst's vision of purpose is notable for its long reach outside the workplace to instrumentalize one's wider life commitments. In the opening remarks at the Social Innovation Summit in 2016, Hurst announces employers can now optimize their employees' volunteering choices to make them "better people":

"We've actually been able to decode the psychology of purpose. We've been able to actually determine for any individual, what is it that is going to give them a sense of meaning versus the person sitting next to them. What fundamentally distinguishes their psychology from the person sitting next to them, so that we can predict what type of volunteering is actually going to be most meaningful to them. We can predict which organizations are going to be most meaningful to that person. Not just so they're inspired, but so that when they go back to the office, it will help them become a better person."

This is a good exemplar case of where the purpose industry lacks an account of instrumentalization. What Hurst is saying is likely true; his system, measured on the ends designated to be of interest, is likely effective. The unanswered question is whether the worker and the worker's benevolent efforts are harmed in this process, a question not easily answered from the framework of the purpose industry itself.

## The Purpose Industry as Legitimizing the Economic Order

Finally, this third story is entirely detached from the accounts of Purpose Industry actors and instead moves to a second-order interpretation of their activities, largely grounded in social theories related to capitalist societies:

*While capitalistic forms, mentalities, and institutions have come to dominate the global order, capitalism as an economic system has always operated from a cultural deficit. That is, the system places high demands on mobilizing a very large number of people whose prospects of profit are low while simultaneously providing a very low supply of justificatory reasons to commit to this system (Boltanski & Chiapello 2005). In advanced capitalist societies this deficit has been exasperated by number of reason: shared meaning systems providing forms of asceticism--whether religious or non-religious-- have rescinded even further from public life, the "American dream" mythology has suffered from decreasing economic mobility, new technologies and global competition have drawn down earnings for most workers in the global economy, labor markets are increasingly less predictable and stable, and the ethical costs of global capitalism have become more visible with new technologies. Since capitalism by form has always been parasitic on moral resources outside itself, the inability to locate needed justifications can incite a "motivational crisis," a condition in which the socio-cultural system fails align with the needs of the economic system (Habermas 1975). The Purpose Industry represents self-mobilized economic actors working to address this crisis. Recognizing institutional shifts related to family, religion, and other non-economic institutes have created a "scarcity of meaning" among knowledge workers, the Purpose Industry works to shore up loyalties and commitments to the production process through dealing out the "nomic worlds" for those otherwise lost in economic anomie. In order to gain legitimation from the wider individual expressivist mythos of the "Age of Authenticity," these callings, purposes, and meaning systems are now primarily grounded in the postmaterialist values of creativity, autonomy, self-actualization, and self-transcendence. Their "softening" and spiritualizing function provide a means to conceal the ever persisting "hard" edges of capitalism--competition, creative destruction, accumulation, profit-*

*maximization, unsustainable consumptive patterns, class tensions--through reframing capitalism within the mythos-sanctified concept of purpose.*

While the previous two stories garner support from Purpose Industry actors, this one, not surprisingly, finds little affirmation. Perhaps the closest elements ones can find in the purposeful work discourse are within the incredibly reflexive insights of the purpose consultants that purpose may be (and, in their minds, should be) the substitute good of dependable and secure employment in the modern economy: seeing that fewer jobs can offer stability, long-term security, and benefits, the purpose consultants have “hope” their counter-offer of purpose and meaning can offset this loss. Thus they in some sense recognize that workers have become, in Marx’s words, controlled by “an objective power above us, growing out of our control, thwarting our expectations” (Marx 1972:53) and they recognize their role in producing frameworks through which actors might construct more expectations more fitting to the roles in which they find themselves. However, the purpose consultants would likely not perceive this task as quite so critical in propping up the particular economic regime of advanced capitalism: the threat of the Gallup-measured disengaged worker, while certainly stoking the worst fears of human resource managers, is not imagined to be the seedbed of system-wide “motivational crisis” that poses a basic threat to the persistence of capitalism.

This lack of conscious awareness, however, does nothing to undermine the ideological functioning that managerial discourse can play for the wider economic system. In Chapter One I drew upon social movement theory to label the Purpose Industry a group of social-intellectual movement actors working to create and legitimate new cultural frameworks within specific institutions. For purpose consultants, the aspiration to push managerial elites toward their own cultural frameworks of purpose certainly represents an effort to wrestle for greater influence on the “cultural circuit of capital,” a global network of “useful knowledge” related to managerial expertise (Thrift 2005). As both Anthony’s (1977) *The Ideology of Work* and Boltanski and Chiapello’s (2005) *The New Spirit of Capitalism* recognize, managers fulfill not only the role of coordinating labor but also serving as the wider spokespeople for the system as a whole. According to Boltanski and Chiapello, some of this ideological functioning is necessary purely at the personal level, as managerial “cadres” require a more developed understanding of capitalism as a

whole in order to justify their very particular role in coordinating it. As the second story on organizational optimization showed, the purpose-driven managers would secede a long line of performance optimizers for workers within organizational settings, and this function from early industrialism onwards has involved conjuring up the necessary justificatory mystiques (Bell 1954) and work ethic motivations (Rodgers 1973, Guillén 1994) to keep the system functioning. Thus, to *not* locate the purpose consultants within this ideological role would require simultaneously dismissing their own stated aspirations of influence and also ignoring their energetic efforts to implant themselves within the networks and structures of managerial knowledge production.

Positioning the Purpose Industry as a central player in the “discursive apparatus of the cultural circuit of capital” (Thrift 2005) or, in the more classical Marxist language, as “professionals of ideology” (Marx) ensuring “the subjection to the ruling ideology” (Althusser 1970) certainly provides a viable explanation for its relatively sudden emergence within the managerial knowledge space. The embedding and enchanting frameworks offered to both workers and organizations fit tightly with the “environmental myth” (Thomas 1989) of a Romantic-grounded individual expressivism that arose in the 1960s among countercultural movements before passing into the wider cultural ethos (Boltanski & Chiapello 2005, Taylor 2007). The purposeful work discourse allows its proponents to provide a needed cosmetic upgrade to the underlying “ideologies of bureaucratic control” that govern managerialism since Frederick Taylor (see MacIntyre 1979). “Purpose” in this interpretation exemplifies capitalism’s ability to embrace and make room for not only justificatory frameworks but also those of critique—an anti-profit-maximization sentiment, for instance—by instituting and promoting such frameworks side-by-side with little threat to its core activities. Building on Marcuse (from the epigraph above), even those frameworks with emancipatory aspirations—the “artistic critique of capitalism” outlined earlier—get stifled by—and become uniform with—compensatory interests served by the economic system. Disrupting the system then comes to be in no actor’s interests: it is the system, after all, that provides embedded and enchanted frameworks of meaning for workers. Thus, just as the “culture industry” shored up commitments to a uniform, mass consumption lifestyle needed by mid-century capitalism, the “purpose industry” has now come to the service of shoring up the commitments of labor in 21st century knowledge economy.

The two identifiable shortcomings of this story could in many ways also be read as not discrediting this interpretation but rather refining it, in the interest of better aligning it the empirical findings of the present study. One may also notice this story has less to say about faith and work leaders advocating purposeful work discourse, aside from perhaps casting them as another “ideological apparatus” propagating ruling class ideology. Adjusting and refining this story allows a more sophisticated incorporation of the faith-backed efforts in promoting purposeful work discourse. As the first identifiable shortcoming, the “deficit” view of worker motivations within capitalism, while a staple of classical theory going back to Weber, often falters when confronted with empirical investigation. Both Habermas (1975) and Boltanski and Chiapello (2005) exemplify this deficit view, positing a certain fragility (though perhaps with built-in autopoietic capacities) that then directs their focus toward the vitality of extra-capitalist moral sources (cf. Bell 1972, Hirsch 1977, Hobsbawm 1994). An alternative view, articulated most succinctly by Abercrombie et. al’s *The Dominant Ideology Thesis* (1980) posits this fragility conception largely implausible, instead arguing, with Marx, that the “dull compulsion of economic relations” faces little obstacle in its task to “complete the subjection of the laborer to the capitalist” (Marx 1970). Abercrombie et. al draw on Mann’s (1970) findings that while *some* workers may adhere to “normative acceptance” of the economic system, thereby professing its corresponding work ethic and justificatory frameworks, many also get by on “pragmatic acceptance” orientations that respond to the “coercive quality of everyday life and of the routines to sustain it” (Abercrombie et. al 1980:166). This pragmatic acceptance of their jobs, born from all subjects’ construction of everyday life (cf. Berger & Luckmann 1967), perfectly serves the ideological needs of the system. Eagleton goes even further than Abercrombie et al. in positing not only do most workers not subscribe to deeper ideological justifications for their involvement in the economic system, but the economic system itself may not even ask as much of its occupants: “Advanced capitalist societies do not normally call upon their citizens to believe very much, as long as they roll out of bed and do their work...Markets are relativizing, pragmatizing, and secularizing” (Eagleton 2009:2). Eagleton recognizes the persistence of metaphysics-pitching “psycho-spiritual stockbrokers”—a possible job title not yet claimed in the consulting world—providing wider legitimation for capitalism, but the prevalence of these actors may represent the cultural hangover of exceptionally high American religiosity rather than an essential characteristic of capitalism.



Eagleton (2009) and Anthony (1977) provides the means to move to a more refined understanding of a potential motivational tensions within modern economic activity. While Habermas and others may envision an overarching meaning systems that, in crisis, would dramatically crumble down upon economic actors previously sheltered by it, capitalism's meaning deficits and meaning needs may be far more contingent, conditional, and varied than what this vision implies. For many actors, the dull compulsions of economic relations provide adequate motivations for participating in economic roles one sees as "natural" and a taken-for-granted part of reality. Purposeful work discourse, whether coming from their boss, their professional conference, their pastor, or the newest self-help book, is likely of no interest to these actors. Pragmatic acceptance keeps these workers showing up on time: while they may not report to Gallup that they find their work particularly engaging, their normative adherence to any understanding of work as significant and meaningful is not necessary for either their own psyche's survival or their organization's continued economic existence. While a long history of research certainly attests work has more-than-materialist ends for workers related to their personal identities (Gans 1995, Pugh 2015), workers seem to exhibit surprising robustness to acquire these ends in a wide variety of settings and conditions. Belgian socialist Hendrik de Man observed as early as 1927 that Marx's dehumanizing account of deskilling was failing to find empirical support regarding incompatibility with meaning-making:

"...we must recognize that in practice it is psychologically impossible to deprive any kind of work of all its positive emotional elements. Complete subjugation of the worker by the machine is no more than a conceptual extreme, which is never realized in the world of fact. The human being refuses to accept so absolute a subordination. He clings to the possibility of a last remnant of joy in his work, without which he would pine away. All activity, however much brutalized by mechanization, offers a certain scope for initiative which can satisfy after a fashion the instinct for play and the creative impulse" (De Man 1985:80).

Such insights have been verified by Leidner (1993) regarding routinized service work, and there are certainly ways to make such empirical findings compatible with more critical understandings of capitalist workplaces (cf. Burawoy 1979). Deficit views, on the whole however, generally fail to account for the synthesizing powers of capitalism's "dull compulsions," the wide conditions under which workers construct meaningful work, and the relative robustness and resilience of workers to bring creative and meaning-filled frameworks into the "iron cage"

settings.<sup>72</sup> This is also reflected in surveys of the U.S. working population in which, as Wuthnow recounts, “virtually everyone claims their work is a major source of personal fulfillment,” (1996:31) with consistent numbers across professional and working class workers.

This points not to the negation of this interpretation but a refinement: while a wide-sweeping motivational crisis runs into empirical trouble, a localized and particular motivational crisis is almost certainly part of the Purpose Industry story. While the movement certainly entails global aspirations to influence the wider capitalist system through its injection into managerial knowledge, it has to date not earned an equal audience across the global workforce. As Chapter Six argued, there is clear *institutional configuration* story regarding where current purposeful work discourse seems to be taking hold. Particularly for the faith and work case, its ideas have primarily taken hold within a particular social strata.. Diagnosing this as a cultural-institutional phenomenon in some ways shifts the “legitimation story” away from Marx and Western Marxism back to Weber, though in this case Weber is most helpfully interpreted through modern critical perspectives on work. P. D. Anthony observes capitalism may be engaged in a continual and always incomplete task of synthesizing labor and overcoming alienation. However, in refining this argument, Anthony suggests “work ethics” are themselves complicit in producing this alienation: the alienation of capitalism is not so much a function of capitalist labor in and of itself but, in Anthony’s words, “a pathological state of affairs produced in work as the result of an over-emphasis on work ethic and work-based values. It becomes possible to speak of man alienated by his work *only when he is asked to take work very seriously*” (Anthony 1977:141, emphasis added). Repositioning alienation as the “mirror image” of particular work ethics or ideologies (ibid:145) allows one to preserve the Habermasian insight that the sociocultural system is dialectically related to the motivational needs of the economic system while also opening up a greater possibility that motivational misalignments may play out in different ways in different places across the labor force as capitalism continues its ongoing task of synthesizing labor.

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<sup>72</sup> Of course, these very points, when they appear in the purposeful work discourse, take on ideological functions relative to political economy and structures of modern work, something the present analysis aspires to avoid.

Importantly, this understanding of alienation positions motivational crises as the product of two different forces: the level at which the work ethic or work ideology “demands” work to be taken seriously and central to one’s life, and the level at which work that can meet this standard is “supplied.” In settings where workers demand little from work, the supply of meaningful work can dwindle with little consequence. Where work becomes the central source of meaning, a failure in supply produces alienation, as workers suddenly feel unfulfilled from their work. Anthony describes this paradox in this way:

“The paradox of alienation, like all the best paradoxes, is therefore inescapable, because it resembles a logical loop. It illuminates the unreality and the unreasonableness regarding work as *the* essential and characteristic activity. The consequence of exaggerating the importance of work is that it magnifies, in the process, the de-humanizing characteristics which have always accompanied it and the magnification requires a further exaggeration of the importance of work, which leads to still greater emphasis on its alienating features” (Anthony 1977:145).

This explanation can localize alienation and motivational mismatches to particular sociocultural environments or, following the argument of Chapter Six, particular institutional configurations. The postindustrial economy may for a variety of reasons expose particular pockets of workers to alienation and the need for new ideological legitimations through exactly the process Anthony described: positioning work as *the* essential and characteristic activity of one’s life while not providing work that corresponds with these demands. Anthony perceives this happening across the contemporary (the 1970s at his time of writing) labor force: “The paradox of the contemporary situation is that it embodies unrealistically high expectations of work and very low probabilities of fulfillment” (ibid:164). While to some degree this may be accurate, my findings suggest the Purpose Industry seems to specialize in producing cultural frameworks needed by a particular population. My argument is that *two factors have combined* to essentially open up an “ideological gap” or a *local* “scarcity of meaning,” in Habermasian terms. This ideological gap has called forth the need for “psycho-spiritual stockbrokers” to go to work providing missing frameworks of meaning.

The first factor was outlined in Chapter Six regarding the faith and work movement: institutional reconfiguration for many modern workers. While Coser (1974) perceives individuals at the intersection of competing organizations

and groups vying for energy and time, the “greedy institutions” now interpellating many modern workers may be reducing. Some of this can be traced to the macro trends of the second demographic transition (Lesthaeghe 1995) which places more workers in single-person households free of the competing institution of familial relationships. Changes and declines in traditional forms of civic engagement (Putnam 2000), the rise of the religiously unaffiliated (Putnam & Campbell 2010), the turn to “loose connections” with voluntary associations and social change efforts (Wuthnow 1998), and decline of long-term membership in neighborhoods and groups (Cerulo 2002) all also gently wipe away other greedy institutions from many workers’ lives. Swidler (2002) sees a wider cultural shift occurring even for those institutions that remain in place (here shifting specifically to middle-class populations): a “depletion” or emptying out of collectively defined meanings and purposes previously maintained by institutions that in the past offer fundamental “sources of nurture” for the self. The result of this “institutional divestment” in an era of economic uncertainty is selves that “try harder” at whatever institutions remain standing in an institutionally depleted world: “As the institution of marriage weakens, individuals respond by trying harder to make their own marriages successful” (2002:52). If work is for some workers the last greedy institution left standing, it will likely need to shoulder the burdens previously distributed across institutional settings, being conscripted in what Foucault identifies as the “full-time” work of constituting the modern subject (quoted in Swidler 2002). This channels loyalty and commitment to work, provided the work is “up to the task” of fulfilling this role. For those fields and industries where the Purpose Industry is most active--the higher end of flexible capitalism and knowledge work--these jobs *can* be retrofitted to the higher demand.<sup>73</sup> Thus, as Anthony argues, alienation comes to be seen as a “managerial problem” that purpose consultants are tasked to manage away.

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<sup>73</sup> The nature of certain forms of work may also be contributing to this reconfiguration. Postindustrial societies have seen the rise of professional and knowledge economy work in postindustrial economies (Bell 1976). These workers are employed in fields devoted to knowledge creation, information processing, technical expertise, and symbolic communication which in postindustrial economies become more critical (Castells & Himanen 2002). Inglehart (2008) and others have long recognized the rise of these types of jobs represent a critical step in modernization sequences of societies, as these types of jobs require certain “soft skills” that represent cultural values evolving away from more traditional society values: creativity, flexibility, self-management, reflexivity, and teamwork skills. There is some evidence available--supporting Berger et al. (1974)’s read of the rise of “soft” institutions--that white collar work plays an independent causal role in altering the self’s relation to society. A 2015 study of seventy-seven different countries since the 1970s demonstrated a society’s movement toward white-collar employment over blue-collar or agricultural jobs correlated with increasing levels of individualistic practices like living alone, valuing friends and family less, and valuing self-expression, even controlling for socioeconomic development (Santos, Varnum, & Grossmann Forthcoming). Though certainly more research would need to be done here, it may be that the soft skills instilled by certain workplaces move people toward more individualist institutional configurations that then ask work to bear more weight of providing meaning and purpose.

The second factor is the cultural backdrop of a shift toward postmaterialist values in Western societies. As outlined in the previous chapter, postmaterialist values are Maslow's "higher end" values of self-expression, aesthetics, and self-esteem. Postmaterial settings are also more likely to report "often thinking about meaning and purpose in life." White-collar and middle-class workers are more likely to subscribe to these values, (Scarborough 1995), providing the second half of an explanation of particular cultural location. This again raises the stakes of work: for postmaterialist workers work may be asked to cater to the individual's need for meaning. Soft capitalist workplaces, according to Heelas and Woodhead (2001) find such quests perfectly compatible with their organization: "Soft capitalism, especially in its exploratory mode, feeds off and doubles back on the cultural turn to live. This is not life as disciplined for God, or life subordinated to instrumental or corporate goals, but life explored and expressed at work" (2001:59). Thus, both faith and work leaders and purpose consultants share in this task of making work a place to live a "full life," with that demand shaped strongly by the need for meaning and significance. In a setting of institutional "recession" and institutional depletion, work can (re)gain enchanted frameworks, romance, sacredness, fullness, and new wider-than-profit social ends for those workers who find themselves needing such work. If familism ideology in the 19th and 20th century positioned the family as "the most important arena for fulfillment of individual needs for emotional expression, nurture, companionship, and meaning" (Wilcox 2004:36), the argument presented here is that a subset of postmaterialist, postindustrial workers have now slid work ideology into that role.

The argument essentially, then, posits the Purpose Industry is a product commissioned for "legitimation micro-crises." As opposed to a sweeping collapse in motivational systems across the economic system (Habermas 1975) or a widespread dearth of justificatory frameworks for capitalist participation (Boltanski & Chiapello), the new purposeful work discourse seems primarily focused on newly opened crevices within particular social stratum of advanced capitalism. One may still affirm, with Eagleton, that advanced capitalism asks very little belief-wise for modern workers and affirm, with empirical studies, that workers are surprisingly resourceful in making work meaningful. However, there remain sociocultural configurations that can open up "ideological gaps" needing attended to, and here the Purpose Industry and managerial elites may go to work mending up motivational systems and unmet needs for purpose and significance, in settings where expectations have exceeded work

experience. With psychologists at the helm of these efforts, the alterations to the objective conditions, structures, and practices of economic activity will likely be exceeded by the alterations in how work is perceived as purposeful and meaningful. That said, the ever present cultural frameworks for *embedding* economic activity in wider moral frameworks and social ends may also play a role in patching up these micro-crises. Both sets of frameworks, for both purpose consultants and the faith and work leaders, currently serve to overcome local crises of meaning.

## **Conclusion: Cathedral Building in the Uber Economy**

As outlined in Chapter One, the faith and work movement and purpose consultant movement are in many ways allies: both attempt to respond to rising interest in purpose and significance for work in the postindustrial knowledge-work economy. But they are also distinctly different in how they go about this. Noting this, while concurrently studying these two movements I occasionally observed crossover points: faith and work leaders citing employee engagement data or purpose consultant-favorite Viktor Frankl, purpose consultants mapping out a Sunday-Monday gap for personal meaning systems. These moments were somewhat rare, as by and large, the movements made their cases and undertook their enchanting and embedding projects in different ways. There was, however, an illustration that seemed to capture the imaginations and aspirations of both set thought leaders. It appeared in two of the purpose consultant texts cited in Chapter Three and was also recounted in the faith and work seminary class described in Chapter Five. Unfortunately I was not able to find the original source of the illustration, as it appears to show up in self-help literature and managerial books going back to at least the 1980s. I have attempted to provide the most common form of the illustration here:

A man came upon a construction site where three people were working. He asked the first, "What are you doing?" and the man replied: "I am laying bricks." He asked the second, "What are you doing?" and the man replied: "I am building a wall." As he approached the third, he heard him humming a tune as he worked, and asked, "What are you doing?" The man stood, looked up at the sky, and smiled, "I am building a cathedral!"

This illustration perhaps captures the shared aspirations of the two movements succinctly: the Purpose Industry, through any of several cultural frameworks, aspires to produce more of these “third workers.” Work would be part of a larger project or vision--perhaps a transcendent one--that can imbue meaning and significance back on any type of efforts that might make up day-to-day life. The third worker has avoided the Sunday-Monday gap, the spiritual-material dualism, the devaluation of secular vocations, the malaise of the meaning-demanding millennials, the lure of extra-work callings, the transactional-reductionist attitude toward work. Additionally, the third worker has been “activated” by the organization’s “core ideology” and purpose statement. They occupy the coveted thirty-percent engaged worker population. They have a “calling”-infused orientation that has pushed them to “jobcraft” their way to “the job they want.” They are in their purpose sweetspots, they are the purpose-driven cog, they have restored the romance of work. They would probably be available to work Thanksgiving day if needed, they probably voluntarily evangelize the company brand, and they almost certainly have a good retention rate.

Yet the deployment of this illustration embodies several culturally significant choices. Centrally, in romanticizing a trade likely as old as human civilization itself, the implicit vision of labor may be somewhat anachronistic to modern forms of work. There is admittedly a certain universality in this illustration: it could be told by the mill owners of the 18th century, the early industrialists of the 19th century, a Ford assembly line foreman in the 20th century, an Amway manager in the 1990s, or a startup tech company manager in the 2000s. However, there are also certainly many participants in the modern economy for whom this illustration raises serious question of relevance and applicability. Put succinctly, what portion of those occupying the modern global economy find themselves in settings where cathedral building is at all a plausible interpretation of their day-to-day lives?

Scholars who study work would likely answer: while many, particularly educated and skilled workers, still occupy such settings, more and more members of labor force find themselves in settings where this sort of job loyalty would be severely unreciprocated and out of place. Work scholars have been attentive to the “new economy” or “lean economy” since the 1970s, when a configuration of social, economic, and political forces disrupted the “age of security” economy, where long-term job security was far more common (Kalleberg 2011). In the wake of this

configuration--as the American economy began to shift away from its manufacturing base toward a service and knowledge economy--jobs with steady pay, benefits, and advancement opportunities became less common, particularly for relatively low-skill workers. A rising number of workers fell into jobs with unstable hours and greater likelihood of patching together multiple jobs (Golden 2016). Several economists have demonstrated that, despite regular post-2007 recession job growth, the labor market seems to be disproportionately adding low-wage jobs rather than replacing middle-class jobs, which may have been “structurally shedded” by the recession (Jaimovich & Siu 2012). According to one study, all the net employment growth in the U.S. job economy from 2005 to 2015 can be accredited to the growth of “alternative work arrangement” jobs, defined as independent contractors, on-call workers, temporary help, and firms that contract workers out to other places (Katz & Krueger 2016). One study predicts these trends will continue, with forty percent of the U.S. workforce being involved in some form of freelancing by 2020 (King & Ockels 2010). Economists, technologists, and “futurists” have now raised serious questions about the future of the postindustrial labor market. The recent year has also seen an unprecedented downsizing of brick-and-mortar retail employment, with 89,000 workers--disproportionately women--being laid off since October (Corkery 2017). The discourse around self-driving cars has also generated new uncertainties about the viability of transportation jobs, with some predicting truck driving to be the next industry to fall. This brief synopsis leaves unexplored incarcerated and ex-incarcerated populations, migrant workers, and systematically disprivileged populations for whom work insecurity, under-employment, and low participation rates have been common features for much longer than these recent trends.

Thus, within this context of a rapidly changing labor markets, the cathedral building illustration in many ways casts an anachronistic warm glow over much of the current work force. One response to the cathedral building aspiration may run parallel to the response generated by Foucault’s invitation in his writing to a more self-actualizing life orientation: “Couldn’t everyone’s life become a work of art?” A Marxist theorist responding to this invitation pointed grimly to the many personal realities shaped by the demands of labor: “To invite a hospital porter in Birmingham, a car-worker in Sao Paulo, a social security clerk in Chicago, or a street child in Bombay to make a work of art of their lives would be an insult” (Callinicos 1989:90-91). A similar response might be warranted to the lofty aspiration that everyone’s labor becoming a work of art. But here the occupations list must be updated



with Uber drivers, Taskrabbit freelancers, homecare workers, and independent contractors pitching energy drinks. To what cathedral or larger project has their employer invited them to contribute? Certainly these jobs at times provide space for human ingenuity and the development of warm bonds of affection, but their internalization of “market-mediated” and “precarious” employer relations (Kalleberg 2011) wars against the possibility of a cathedral-building mentality. The very opposite possibility to cathedral-building was provocatively suggested in 1973 by Peter Watson (quoted in Anthony 1977): if industrialization injected into capitalism the need for “wholesale commitment to [work’s] values,” perhaps the rise of erratic and unpredictable temporary work ushers it out, removing even the possibility that one’s life might be constructed around a consistent economic role. But of course such an outcome likely depends on the capacity of other institutions to shoulder the needs of purpose, identity, and day-to-day life fulfillment, capacities currently widely depleted, as noted above.

Some thought leaders in the Purpose Industry would likely not be ready to give up the cathedral-building dream so quickly. There would almost certainly be less than uniform opinion among leaders on which parts of the labor market can build cathedrals: most were tacit on labor market dynamics, and the ones who had the most to say (beyond the free-market advocating organizations) spoke quite critically about the structural imperfections of shareholder capitalism to tend to societal goods. Others criticized discourses that papered over unjust economic arrangements--the criticism of purpose-washing and faith-washing. Yet it may also need to be recognized that the purposeful work discourse possesses deeper cultural--or in this case, ideological--resources that would keep the cathedral building dream alive. Particularly among the purpose consultants, the enthusiastic embrace of psychologist Viktor Frankl as a central thinker in their movement provides an extraordinary resource to universalize a particularly resilient means of making meaning regardless of conditions. This resilience would be the pathway to convert capitalism into “purpose-driven capitalism” or the “purpose economy” regardless of what the future economy may look like.

Frankl’s conception of meaning makes a powerful addendum to the humanistic psychology that dominated human resource management in the 1960s (Illouz 2003). While Abraham Maslow’s theory held the higher needs would only be navigated after the base of material needs first were met, Frankl, in both his psychology scholarship and in

his own life narrative, embodied a strong challenge to this view. Meaning for Frankl was not the luxury good of a post-scarcity lifestyle but a desperate survival strategy for withstanding the dehumanizing and despairing conditions of a concentration camp. Frankl's critique of Maslow appears in his 1978 work *The Unheard Cry for Meaning: Psychotherapy and Humanism*: "The question is whether or not, if one wants to establish a good life he has only to settle the socioeconomic situation (so that he can afford a psychoanalysis in order to settle the psychodynamic situation). I believe not...Maslow's distinction between higher and lower needs does not take into account that when lower needs are *not* satisfied, a higher need, such as the will to meaning, may become the most urgent" (Frankl 1978:35-36). Interestingly, beyond this discrepancy, the two thinkers are offering fairly similar insights: meaning and purpose are basic needs within the human experience. It may be more than arbitrary intellectual faddishness, then, that in late capitalism Frankl has displaced Maslow in the managerial psychology toolkit. Maslow's theories, in his positing of self-actualization and transcendence as the higher goods that explored by individuals already possessing material security, offers a certain isomorphism with mid-century capitalism and its middle-class affluence, long-term employment, and stable institutional life. The fashionable existentialism of the 1960s and late 1960s new left ideologies provided engaging intellectual companions to navigate these questions. Frankl's theories offer a far more democratic vision of the need for meaning, locating the "meaning crisis" across the population in his writings in the 1950s to 1970s. Importantly, acquiring meaning is no longer a post-scarcity task undertaken from a place of security. Frankl's meaning can instead provide an anchoring point and consistency for a wide variety of selves. As the purpose consultants clearly recognize in their writings, those selves battered and buffeted by the stormy seas of neoliberal forces--and perhaps lack material needs--are not precluded from what Frankl offers. If Maslow could preach the need for meaning in the stable and secure environment of the Pax Americana old economy, Frankl has now been tapped to preach meaning in the grittier circumstances of the new economy.

While this analysis is meant to advance a suggestive read on the deep structures of a particular cultural-economic order, a particular quotation from Aaron Hurst demonstrates this ideological appropriation may not lurk all that deep below the surface. In a webinar entitled "Purpose Changes Everything: Find Meaning in Your Career," Hurst drew on Frankl in a particular way:

“The third myth is that purpose is a luxury. A lot of folks think that you need to have a certain amount of money to focus on purpose. That it’s only for the wealthy. And there’s no better example of why this is a myth is Viktor Frankl. Many of you might know his work. He had arguably what the worst job in history: he was a slave in a concentration camp in Nazi Germany. I mean, talk about a bad job. He was a slave in a concentration camp. And yet, he’s known for his experience creating meaning out of that. Somehow as a slave in a concentration camp he found meaning and purpose in that experience. So I say to people, ‘If your job is worse than being a slave in a concentration camp, I’m willing to talk about it.’ But otherwise, it’s not a luxury, it’s really up to you to create that for yourself. It’s not something that’s given to you, it’s not something you can buy. It’s something that you create through how you approach work.”

The focus on Frankl’s identity as a “slave” is certainly intentional: while he did serve as a slave for five months, Frankl’s writings on his time in concentration camps are almost completely focused on maintaining relationships with others, providing psychological care for other inmates, and basic survival. Even saying someone *worked* in a concentration camp--as if he held down a job that might show up on his resume later--is a peculiar detail to draw out of his history. Using the phrase “slave in a concentration camp” four times seems designed to turn Frankl’s experience into a tale of making undesirable employment purposeful, a sort of positive-thinking strategy that can take on any situation. Clearly such repositioning proves relevant to the thrust of Hurst’s argument: if Frankl can make meaning out of the concentration camp, surely you can do the same in your work.

If such symbolic repertoires were to become widely popular within the Purpose Industry, cathedral building orientations likely face no limits in a quest to take in all modern work and labor as the idealized third worker. What is challenging to gauge under what conditions workers truly benefit from this level of devotion. It is straightforward, however, to gauge the universal conditions in which employers benefit. Of the many things obscured in such a vision would be the possibilities of restoring a social contract between employees and employers--and the corresponding economic structures--that would make appeals to the resilience of Holocaust survivors an unnecessary motivational tactic for coping with modern conditions. There is no question both the faith and work movement and the purpose consultants each possess untapped reservoirs of resources, skills, and--

perhaps of most value here--deeply engaged passions to not only re-enchant individual work but re-embed economic institutions and practices within broader ethical frameworks that work toward economic justice. Central to what is needed within these frameworks would be a far more robust exploration of “good” and “bad” jobs, the roles and responsibilities that managerial elites play in shaping work conditions, and the degree to which top-down managerial strategies to “manage away” alienation may actively harm the workers and their moral agency. The energies produced by the legitimization “micro-crises” identified above should not be preemptively disregarded or dismissed from serious pursuit of these efforts: the incredible investment of resources--particularly the resource of time and travel to various gatherings--suggests managerial and knowledge economy elites, for the right principles, have the capacity to provisionally break the routines of the “modern workaday life.” Whether these energies might be channeled toward recovering concepts of vocation, establishing industry-wide commitments to dignified work, or restructuring power hierarchies within firms, these efforts would likely require fundamentally rerouting the “Romantic” spirits of creativity and innovation toward engaging the very features of the global economic system largely concealed by the purposeful work discourse. Pulling back this veil of purpose enchantment might be the first step to creating subversive economic modes and practices that democratize, dignify, as well as humanize the postindustrial iron cage.

## Appendix A: Research Methods

This study seeks to study the interaction of ideas with institutions, individuals, and resources that together propel a particular cultural conversation forward. At the center of this study is discursive and ideational content: the frameworks, shared moral meanings, moral vocabularies, metaphors, narratives, and beliefs surrounding purposeful and meaningful work for modern workers. Yet, drawing on the insights of cultural sociology and social movement theory, this cultural content does not exist in a vacuum, nor is it constructed ex nihilo in the minds of particularly creative individuals. It is instead created, refined, propagated, and legitimated through the vehicles of cultural institutions and movement actors. These actors and their supporting institutions are in various places identified as “carrier groups,” “organic intellectuals,” or “moral entrepreneurs.” Keeping all of these elements central to the analysis guided the following research method.

The following outlines the specific methodological challenges of studying the undertheorized phenomena of “thought leaders.” After building a tentative framework of what defines a thought leader, I turn to the reasoning behind selecting specific cases within the thought leader realm. An overview is then provided of the two dominant qualitative methods employed: interviews with thought leaders and participant observation at movement events. Following this I outline various measures of movement resources, including use of surveys, measuring financial resources and quantitative book production. The latter also spurred qualitative evaluation of book themes, described in the final section.

### Challenges in Conceptualizing and Studying the Thought Leader Space

Describing the social roles and occupations of the majority of actors involved in this study is made challenging by the lack of previous research on how actors of this type fit within the current social-economic order. For the sake of comparison, a study of CEOs, university professors, lobbyists, or religious clergy generally does not struggle to identify its population of interest because of the available definitions within previous research, as well as actors’ own self-identities and colloquial ways of understanding such populations. Explaining the notable absence of substantial study of thought leaders would require an entirely different study, but here I will lay out two

observations that may contribute to the neglect of study. In the first place, thought leaders make their living in the world of conferences and public speaking, a world that can easily hide between the cracks of more traditional institutions--work, family, political parties, clubs, recreational life, etc. This invisibility is likely accentuated by the dominant cultural milieu of the social scientist: I have found the world of coordinated gatherings around best-selling authors, respected corporate gurus, and energized online subcultures is largely foreign to the professional and personal life of academics. Nor do academics consume much of this produced material online. This personal under-engagement is supplemented by a second observation: the types of gatherings that *do* hold prominence and prestige within the cultural milieu of academics--the "trade" conferences and professional association gatherings--are in many ways a "substitutionary good" for the thought-leader world. Academic conferences typically take up their own variant of socially progressive or vaguely "do-gooder" themes, coordinate their own panels and breakout sessions with experts on the topic, and feature their own "state of the field" type speakers offering their own expertise assessment of a particular social issue. Thus, if, as one observer writes, the TED brand has successfully achieved the status of the cross-platform "moral ecosystem" status for a large swath of the educated elite, academics might be the outliers in having already settled on their own suitable product in the knowledge-producing conference universe. Of course this is only a cursory explanation of why so little literature exists, and more study would have to be undertaken to provide evidence academics have disproportionately under participated in what is otherwise an influential cultural phenomenon.

In attempting to position thought leaders in the wider cultural realm, I follow the lead of a diverse set of social theorists (Hunter & Fessenden 1992, Mestrovic 1997, Gorski 2006, Woodhead & Heelas 2006) who identify the emergence of a new space for authoritative cultural voices in modern, pluralistic societies. Disembedded from formal authoritative networks, these cultural voices speak directly to the culture at large on issues related to health, spirituality, meaning, transcendence, work-life balance, personal growth, and self-actualization. Mestrovic (1997) refers to these actors as the "authenticity industry," a conceptualization from which I have not strayed far. Importantly, these leaders may or may not have formal credentials and may or may not reside within the intellectual elite of a society: they may come close to Gramsci's "organic intellectuals" rather than formal intellectuals. They almost universally lack access to "hard power" related to coercion, formal sanctioning, or

disciplining their followers; they are instead “soft” authorities (Heelas & Woodhead 2001). In recent decades their primary mode of disseminating ideas has shifted toward writing popular books and speaking at conferences, though they may also provide customized services to local organizations and individuals. New modes of technology and communication were largely responsible for the emergence of this societal role, and the internet and social media have further expanded the reach and intensity of their engagement.

Despite the neglect in empirical study, one can piece together a tentative framework for identifying and studying thought-leaders from several tangential literatures, including studies of “culture producers,” “norm entrepreneurs,” “moral entrepreneurs,” and research on expertise.. To tentatively lay out this framework,, thought leaders are at their core “entrepreneurs “in a moral, institutional, and economic sense. Outlining each of these dimensions provides an adequate conceptualization for going forward. First of all, following Howard Becker (1963), thought leaders are moral entrepreneurs who impute moral significance on issues or phenomena otherwise not framed as moral. In this case, the thought leaders are acting as moral entrepreneurs in stitching together a new moral vocabulary or framework that can be imputed on conditions of modern work. Offering these “symbolic wares” as a service allows thought leaders to derive a livelihood through “production and distribution of new ways of thinking and acting morally” (Hunter & Fessenden 1992, see Becker 1963, Lowe 2006). Secondly, thought leaders are institutional entrepreneurs in not occupying a single, durable institutional setting--an established hierarchical structure within a university or church, for instance--but instead moving in and out of different settings, at times configuring bricolage structures from existing institutions while other times constructing entirely new institutions. Examples of this behavior would be the formation of new conferences, nonprofits, and consulting enterprises, or in the case of bricolage structures, building networks of college professors or themed “conference tracks” at more established annual events. Following DiMaggio’s (1982) notion of cultural entrepreneurship, these actors are masters of creating new organizational forms that they then control and govern. While these new forms may deviate from existing structures, they are also at times capable of contending with established institutions (see Battilana et al. 2009). Finally, following these first two principles, thought leaders are often (though not always) entrepreneurial in the colloquial sense of establishing their own firm and supporting their efforts through providing for-pay services. The most common form of this economic entrepreneurship is developing the ideas and

insights of a popular book into an organization that provides a menu of services for individuals and organizations. Returning to Becker, this economic entrepreneurship is tightly coupled with their role in producing new moral typifications of a particular problem, as this typification process leaves them in excellent position to remedy the moral problem with their services.

Thought leaders' entrepreneurial activity can be best understood as actors in a particular field contending for various types of resources, whether symbolic or material. Some of these resources are not fixed or static: actors in a field may generate new resources for which they then contend to possess and control. For instance, thought leaders often contend over legitimacy as authorities in ameliorating crises related to the modern work experience. But before one becomes the leading voice in averting a particular crisis--whether it be millennial disloyalty in the workplace, employee disengagement, or distrust in corporations--thought leaders may have to first generate attention for this issue through blog articles, TED talks, popular books, or commissioning polls that confirm the problem at hand as real and worrisome. On acquiring these resources for legitimation, the resulting authority that thought leaders then garner from this process is not so much "hard" coercive power to sanction and discipline other actors but "soft" power to alter particular vocabularies, norms, or narratives surrounding an issue. Thus, thought leaders' moral authority, while distinct from the "hard institutions" that may also speak to moral-economic questions (see Woodhead & Heelas 2006), still represents "diffused" forms of ideological power (Mann 1986, see Gorski 2006) shaping cultural scripts, practiced strategies, and embodied rituals for the wider population.

### **Selecting Specific Cases within the Purposeful Work Discourse**

The subject of interest for this study is a cross-industry, multi-institutional moral discourse on purposeful and meaningful work for postindustrial knowledge, creative, professional, and managerial workers. While Chapter One highlights the enduring requirement of cultural understandings for economic activity, this particular moral discourse represents a specific form and moment for that discourse. The inclusion of every voice and institution speaking to the meaning and purpose of work within the global media space would be out of reach for any one study. Not only does the diversity of these voices span institution settings, but cultural frameworks for purposeful



work are also present within an endless number of cultural and social locations, including various ethnic and cultural traditions, military subcultures, sectarian groups, best-selling book audiences, and corporations with employee engagement initiatives. Voices speaking to purposeful work also vary in important ways across generations, cultures, trades, and economic configurations, and all these variations are multiplied by historical variation across time. With exhaustiveness being out of reach, this project was specifically structured around carving out a semi-bounded moral discourse to place under the sociological lens for deeper analysis. Yet while this narrower focus highlights the unique features of the cases being studied, fully understanding these specific moral discourses at hand requires, somewhat paradoxically, embedding it within the wider cultural and historical context of how moral frameworks relate to economics and particularly the economic order of modern capitalism. This wider context is particularly brought out in Chapter One and Two, which place this discourse within wider conversations about worker motivations and cultural understandings of economic activity.

Narrowing in on actors and organizations within this moral conversation followed the very basic question: who is producing the most widely visible cultural frameworks related to meaningful and purposeful work today? Two movements were selected for their clear visibility in this realm: the American Evangelical-led Faith and Work movement and the “purpose consultant” movement within organizational and corporate social responsibility circles. Both movements centrally rely on and revolve around thought leaders, as defined above, while also drawing in extra-movement networks and institutions. Both movements also possess porous boundaries regarding relevant actors, as actors frequently entered the conversation from other well-established sectors and may establish themselves as straddling two different sectors: purpose consulting and leadership expertise, for instance, or purpose consulting and marketing consulting. These porous boundaries can open analysis of a discourse to the dangers of conceptual inflation or conceptual imperialism. To avoid this, specific delineations have been invoked to partition off the discourse of analysis from wider sectors, genres, fields of expertise, or research literatures. For instance, purpose consulting is only a subset of the wider organizational behavior and human management resources world, while the faith and work movement is only a subset of theological frameworks related to culture, ethics, and layperson activities.

The specific moral discourse selected for study--the "new" moral conversation surrounding purposeful work--can be easily assigned a "cultural address" in relation to its location within the wider social order. A very preliminary analysis of conference locations and the demographics of their attendees suggests this movement primarily stretches across professional, managerial, creative, and knowledge work among Western, educated workers, primarily centered in the U.S. Thus, very little of this conversation focuses on the challenges of work conditions outside that cultural context: retail work, care work, manual labor, migrant work, and agricultural work are almost completely ignored. While certain actors promote general frameworks of work that would be applicable to work across contexts, these general principles are subtly channeled toward specific types of applications due to the homogenous characteristics of the promoters and through the specific examples provided by the curriculum and speakers. Additionally, the mediums themselves--multi-day work conferences requiring travel and flexible work scheduling, blog articles, best-selling books promoted to managerial circles--contribute to narrowing in on a self-sorting of audience of educated workers. Thus, even in cases where low-skill work might be highlighted and promoted, the mediums themselves continue to lock the cultural frameworks fairly close to the cultural location of the content creators.

Two caveats here: many readers who share the same cultural address as the culture producers studied will likely have little personal engagement with the names, conferences, and organizations highlighted. This will rightly produce some skepticism about the cultural influence and reach these actors have: though they themselves enthusiastically cheer on the emerging "purpose movement" or a theological revolution in thinking about work, perhaps this radical change does not extend beyond their particular tribe or brand of faith. To avoid building a case for cultural influence from personal experience--either mine or that of the actors studied, I have turned to quantitative measure of resources and organizations (McCarthy & Zald 1973). Though far more quantitative data is available for the growth of the faith and work movement, both movements demonstrate a clear growth and expansion in cultural reach and resources in recent years. This complements the reactions of many of my interviewees who were asked to react to the observation that their "work" (role in promoting purposeful work) did not exist a generation ago. They were cognizant of particular cultural, theological, and economic shifts that made their work emerge in the recent economic context. Purposeful work discourses almost certainly have greater

cultural influence than they did in the past and, at least measured by organizational growth and resource mobilization, hold unprecedented influence within at least two subcultures (American Evangelicalism and organizational behavior discourse), if not wider society. It may also need to be said that neither of these movements has a monopoly on producing cultural frameworks related to purposeful work and callings: there are many other ethical, personal, secular, religious, and spiritual frameworks drawn upon by individuals to make work meaningful. Stepping back an additional step, it would also be an over generalization to posit all members of contemporary society enter into an “ideational marketplace” of relevant cultural frameworks related to work in search of some means of imbuing work with significance. Many have no interest in or need for “thought leaders” in this realm. The diverse phenomenological experience of paid and unpaid labor in modern societies almost certainly transcends any particular universe of culture producers and resources.

Attempting to keep this wider purposeful work world in view, I have tried to illuminate comparable efforts drawing on the same mediums and institutions as the two movements drawing the large amount of focus. These co-travelers in the purposeful work conversation would include various thinkers focused on mindfulness at work, self-help authors from the positive thinking tradition, and pockets of Mainline Protestant, Catholic, Muslim, and explicitly secular organizations helping adherents and members think through purpose in everyday life. In addition, there are many parallel moral conversations speaking to specific professions or subcultures in relation to personal work ethic or visions of bringing about social goods. Not providing a complete profile of these other efforts does not indicate an evaluation of their effectiveness, cultural importance, or influence: these other efforts may be just as influential as the two movements here. The two cases highlighted here stood out for sociological analysis for three reasons: the sheer number of texts and organizations created as part of the movement, the institutional location and proximity to powerful educational and professional institutions, and the financial support invested within the movements by well-resourced organizations. Surely had this study been conducted decades earlier or decades into the future, alternative cases would be highlighted.

## Participant Observations at National Events

While interviews with thought leaders were crucial to illuminating the cultural content of the two movements (discussed below), the settings in which these leaders were active offer their own emergent properties for the movement itself. These events offer everyday workers immersive, socially intertwined experience within a social gathering built around shared identities, vocabularies, and narratives. For movements built around critical communities articulating alternative frameworks and understandings (Rochon 2000), these environments are crucial for study for two reasons: for constructing a socially reinforced plausibility structure to solidify these frameworks as credible and real (see Berger & Luckmann 1967) and to produce emotional energies around the shared frameworks and identities (see Collins 2004, Goodwin & Jasper 2004). Thus my study of the two movements integrated the experience of the environments themselves as a crucial part of describing the respective universes the movements inhabit.

Evaluating the particular size, influence, and overall significance of any conference is difficult when relying on promotional websites and streams of enthusiastic tweets from coordinators. However, such evaluation was necessary due to budget and time limitations that required being selective in choosing field sites. In my own evaluations I relied on the themes of sessions and number of recognizable thought-leaders to determine which conferences seemed more central to the construction and dissemination of the purposeful work discourse. Early interviewees were also quite generous in providing recommendations of what conferences and events were most central, at times providing historical context and backstage information on conference coordination and coordinators' strategy. Additionally, I began my own twitter account largely to follow the tweets of lead organizations and thinkers, primarily to catch the events they identified as significant. Some events were annual and thus easy to place in my research timeline far in advance; others seemed to pop up out of nowhere.

Gaining access to gatherings proved to be fairly straightforward in most cases. The conferences I attended were openly advertised well ahead of time, and all but one (discussed below) were open to any interested attendees. Conferences ranged from one-day to five-day affairs, with registration fees ranging from free to \$1500. Those

events on the higher end of the cost spectrum were obviously not organized with the budget-conscious graduate student in mind. In three cases I reached out to conference organizers by email to ask about a discounted registration rate. In these cases I identified myself as a sociology graduate student studying the conversation around meaningful work and wanting to include the gathering in my study. In two cases I heard back from a lead conference coordinator: one generously waived the conference fee altogether, and the other offered me the special discounted rate for those affiliated with the university sponsoring the event. In the third case, on my initial email not producing a response, I located a phone number of an “event coordinator” who oversaw the marketing company that managed the event. While this person was seemingly unmoved by the plight of limited research funding for graduate students, I was informed of an opportunity to apply for a “Social Media Ambassadorship” position for the conference and attend for free. My unfamiliarity with this position did not deter my immediate application. One email later, I had submitted my 300-word essay for this position, offering to deploy my 60-follower twitter account for their services. After not hearing back for about a month, I received a group email a few weeks before the conference informing me and four other Social Media Ambassadors of our selection and responsibilities: “We selected you as Social Media Ambassadors because we know that you’ll be able to bring your unique voice and passion to the conversation! Please don’t feel like there are any constraints other than flagrant negativity – you’re free to comment on panels as you view them and tweet your takeaways!” To fulfill this task I largely tweeted word-for-word quotations from several sessions, which seemed to generate very little reaction from anyone following my account or the official conference “hashtag.” In all three cases my request for reprieve for registration fees was met with a warm and friendly response, generally only a few lines of an email, likely from a hurried coordinator with far more important things to tend to than a meddling graduate student.

Conference participant-observation began in May 2014 and ended in October 2016. Table 1 lists the major events attended during this span of time. In addition to the eight conferences that were exclusively devoted to the topic at hand, I was also able to attend several other types of gatherings and events that require broader categorization. As becomes obvious, the faith and work movement events were far more prolific during my time in the field, thus shaping my level of engagement with them. The other gatherings I was able to observe included: a one-week course for lay people at an Evangelical seminary on the topic of vocation and work (described in Chapter Five), five

luncheons in a speaker-series on faith and work jointly sponsored by a business school and a campus ministry, a specific paper session related to faith and work theology at an Evangelical theology conference, a week-long competitive national faith and entrepreneurship event for Christian college students, an Evangelical-led faith and work breakfast at the Academy of Management's Annual Conference, lectures featuring two Evangelical thought leaders in a university setting, and a national gathering of campus ministry leaders directing vocational programming for college students through their particular ministry. This latter gathering allowed me to sit in on a very insightful hour-long round-table discussion with program coordinators from two international parachurch campus ministry organizations, discussing their coordination of vocational programming.

Aggregating the eight conferences observed with these other miscellaneous events, participant observation totaled around a hundred hours of observation time. In total seventy-two different individual sessions related to purposeful work—whether a lecture, luncheon, panel, workshop, or class session—were observed while in the field. These sessions, events, and gatherings spanned twelve major cities: Memphis, New York, Indianapolis, Richmond, Dallas, Vancouver, Los Angeles, Raleigh, Anaheim, Orlando, Washington, D.C., and Ann Arbor.

Providing general description of the experience of this multi-site participant observation is made difficult by the vastly different settings and experiences across events. In some cases the leaders of the conferences greeted me warmly on my arrival and kindly inquired about the project, wanting to provide any help they could. Those were the exception, however: in most cases I came in without having any prior relationships with those gathered and never managed to talk to anyone “in charge.” Overall the experience can be described as what one would expect in attending conferences outside one's personal area of study or profession, perhaps in some bizarre movie-created world paralleling Tom Hanks' film *Terminal* but taking place in a convention center. In some ways I was very at home in the conference setting: my own world of academia helpfully cultivates the necessary habitus and practical knowledge to navigate the world of namebadges, panels with Q&A's, networking sessions, and conference-y small talk while riding elevators or sipping cocktails. Additionally, nothing in my demographic profile as a white, middle-class “young professional” male positioned me as an outsider in these gatherings. The real outsider status came more subtly: I generally did not possess any of the relevant status markers revered among

the group, my style of networking—lots of questions around ideas—likely disappointed those more accustomed to inner-industry gossip or resource exchanges, and I lacked the cohort of traveling companions enjoyed by other attendees. Many times the most relevant social capital I possessed in these settings was my unusually comprehensive knowledge of parallel events, speaker biographies, and detailed knowledge of the books promoted.

The discursive content of conference sessions was certainly crucial to my study, but the value of being at conferences in person to experience these gatherings went far beyond the words spoken and ideas shared. There is no doubt the specific setting required deviating from the general mode of ethnographic observation: silently sitting in rows watching a single speaker does not at first produce the rich accounts of person-to-person dynamics that might characterize other ethnographic studies. However, applying this mode of study in this setting produced a substantial contribution to understanding the topic at hand. The size, composition and quality of interactions of the attendees was the most concrete observable feature made accessible by personal attendance. Not only did this clue me into the racial, gender, and age demographics of the attendees, but the patterns and quality of interactions frequently revealed whether attendees knew each other previously, what sorts of networks linked attendees together, and the general demeanor of interactions, whether they be characterized by a cool professionalism or warm familial bonds. Gauging the tribal-ness of the attendees for many of the events was most crucial: do people come every year? Do they speak of past events fondly and chart out their plans for the next gathering? Are movement leaders and speakers highly revered? Is there a strong insider-outsider dynamic that elevates participants above those not present? Or, alternatively, do attendees engage the sessions more individualistically and with more of a consumerist mentality, a one-and-done come-intake-knowledge mentality. Also important to observe: are some attendees just enjoying the luxuries of paid work travel? Is this gathering a welcome escape to their work routines or a barely tolerable intrusion on their busy work lives?

The most illuminating “programmed” element of these events was the time of open questions that followed most lectures, panels, or workshops. This gave me a sense of the group’s collective mood and response regarding the presented material, whether positive, skeptical, dismissive, overwhelmed, or unsure. This was also extremely

helpful in gauging where my own points of emotional incitation—whether to excitement, skepticism, frustration, or surprise—were aligning with those of the group. Of course the questions voiced in these settings were heavily shaped by social desirability factors, the norms of cordial respect for invited speakers, and perhaps invisible group dynamics that kept dissenters from approaching the microphone. Nevertheless, in most settings a perceivable shared doxa would be observable by the end of these sessions. Most questions were pragmatic in nature, many grounded in the particular social role of the questioner asking for guidance in applying an idea or concept to a specific episode in his or her own life. Occasions where questioners voiced substantive dissent against the speakers' ideas were rare, and those cases generally spurred me to follow up with the questioner later to ask more questions about their perspective. In times when questions were solicited anonymously—generally by texting a projected phone number or written on a card—I occasionally submitted questions directly from my interview questionnaire to the speakers. The moderator's selection of my question was affirmation I had captured and echoed the session's language and interests.

The interactive time between conference sessions and the more socializing-oriented moments enriched my experience of the events in numerous ways. While few of the conversations conducted between sessions warranted inclusion in my account of the event, these interactions gave further insight into the movement itself from the eyes of the event attendees. I was able to take note of some of the social dynamic questions laid out above while also gauging inconsistencies, tensions, or pushback from those who were sitting through sessions with me. These interactions would fall far short of constituting a focus group or reception study of the thought leader's views: many times the interactions were squeezed between sessions and restroom breaks, taking place while juggling cups of coffee and refreshments. Conversation topics were mostly fairly casual, and my general inquisitiveness as a researcher was frequently matched against an equally enthusiastic curiosity about my project. But these conversations were helpful: many expanded my knowledge of other speakers, events, and resources that would have otherwise remained invisible. A few provided anecdotes from past events I was not able to attend. I also had the opportunity to speak informally to many event speakers between sessions, generally individuals who did not qualify for the more selective "thought leader" status but could still contribute to my knowledge of the movement.



Participant observation produced several notebooks full of field notes, as well as photos of powerpoint slides, jotted down references in the margins of event programs, and handfuls of business cards from eager interlocutors and new connections. The field notes were generally preserved alongside print materials I received at the events: programs, advertisements, workshop handouts, and advertisements for future events. All of these materials were drawn upon as cultural artefacts in recreating the personal experience of attending the conference. In cases where an online recording of the talk is available, I drew on both my own notes and the online recording to piece together exact quotes from the speaker as closely as possible. One important methodological question was navigating questions of confidentiality in these event spaces: the university ethics board that approved the project requires researchers to obtain explicit consent for all non-public observations. Conferences largely operate in a liminal space between public and private: they are publicly advertised, place speakers in front of mass audiences for public consumption, and are very frequently live-streamed online or recorded and broadcast later in their entirety. They certainly do not take place in private workspace or private residences, a conceptualization of “private space” appearing in the research ethics guidelines. Yet there is also a private intimacy to conferences: attendees must register ahead of time to gain admittance, the subcultural feel can at times incite a “backstage” collegiality among committed adherents, and personal interactions between attendees are of course no more public than those in any settings. I incorporated the ethics board’s standard that an interaction is public when participants “do not have an expectation of privacy.” As a result, in cases where conferences either livestreamed or later posted videos of conference sessions, I reveal the names and content of these talks in my accounts of the events: this discourse has become “public” just as an edited volume of conference proceedings and papers would be public materials for study. In cases where sessions were not broadcasted, I have not revealed the names of speakers or any attributes of the event that would make the speaker immediately identifiable. Modifications to this rule of thumb were required for two cases. In one case a conference had edited their event video to remove one speaker’s session from the recording of the day’s programming: in this case I have not identified the speaker’s name but have included quotes from that presentation, simply referring to the speaker as a “professor,” the speaker’s job title. In another case I drew on an event observation solely to assess the sponsoring organization’s objectives and how it presented its motivations for being active in the particular movement. This case was the

campus ministry leaders conference coordinated by the Lilly Endowment, which was outlined in Chapter Six. No recordings of this event were posted online afterwards and, unlike other events, this was an invitation-only event, limited to ministry leaders and their guests. In this case, while revealing the name of the conference was necessary to tie it to the argument being presented, to preserve privacy I did not identify the name of the speaker of the event and only provided quotations that closely mirror what is also available online through that organization's own website.

### **Constructing a Sample of Thought Leaders for Interviews**

The deinstitutionalized and decentralized nature of both movements initially presented a challenge to constructing a representative sample of thought leaders that could best provide insights into the cultural frameworks promoted by the movement. As mentioned above, both movements had particularly porous boundaries around their leaders--often borrowing leaders from other spaces--and both lacked any central authorities that could deem authority and legitimation to some actors as central players in the movement. This boundary fuzziness challenged any sort of probability-based sampling strategy. Several non-probabilistic sampling strategies were also judged inadequate. Without defined boundaries or universally designated movement leaders, convenience sampling would run the risk of only picking off a corner of the movement and over-generalizing it as representative. Additionally, as demonstrated in particular by the purpose consulting movement, relying on snowball sampling would likely also compromise any sort of representativeness, as leaders identify a large disconnected set of thinkers and actors as allies in their efforts (see Chapter Three), spanning human resource management, corporate social responsibility, leadership expertise, positive psychology, and "design thinking" experts. To overcome this challenge, I employed what Patton (1990) designates as a criterion purposive sampling strategy. Compared to other purposive sampling strategies, criterion methods work to offset researcher bias by subjecting the sample construction to empirical reality rather than selecting "influential" or "typical" cases a priori (see Bourdieu & Wacquant 1990).

On entering this space, I had initially believed the two movements of study would prove to be similar in form, institutional setting, and resource mobilization, thereby providing arenas in which the same research method could be applied. Empirical reality quickly challenged this assumption: while both movements consist of

conference-hopping, book-producing individuals contributing to discourse around purposeful work, they radically diverged below the surface, both in size and in constructing and offering up spaces in which their respective leaders operated. The most straightforward way to explain these differences is laying out the purpose consultant sample construction first, and then outlining the many modifications required to make the same approach “work” for the Evangelical faith and work movement.

The initial criteria for being a thought leader in both movements was speaking at national conferences on the topic of purposeful work. On surveying the relevant conferences for sessions on purposeful and meaningful work (as well as references to “callings” or “vocations” in modern work), I found conferences often deploy speakers who may have little professional engagement with the topic of purpose but merely be thrown onto a particular panel or session for a conference: a heroic CEO thought to inspire workers to adopt company values or a corporate social responsibility leader who might in most other settings speak on sustainability or building certification practices. Therefore, for the purpose consultants I added an additional criteria: not only must the thought leader speak on the topic, but they must be involved in some form of culture production related to purpose and meaning beyond this conference appearance: writing blog articles, writing books, consulting, or speaking at other conferences at the same topic. With this criteria in place, I began constructing a list of individuals who met the criteria as possible interviewees. Since purpose consultants speak at a wide variety of conferences--often giving keynotes at conferences at which they are the only person speaking on purpose--scanning the entire universe of possible conferences would create an impossible task. To provide a starting point, I selected a central figure in the purpose consultant world--a subcultural “tent pole” in some sense--who could serve as my starting point and initial foothold in this world. To identify this figure I relied on online discourse on twitter, coverage of meaning and purposeful work in popular media, and informal conversations with actors in this world. I also scoured Amazon for books on purposeful work, examining not only the books that came up but who was deemed worthy to blurb these books. Because I asked all interviewees about who they see as allies in their work, I could later confirm that this center point was indeed a central and not peripheral figure in the movement. For both cases my selection proved largely accurate, based on interviews and fieldwork observations conducted after the selection.

The purpose consultant movement revealed several possible center points due to the movement's stretch over different sectors and fields. A case could be made for several popular authors, consultants, a nonprofit organizational leader, and even a management professor, each of whom possess a significant amount of symbolic and financial resources. However, my early exploration in the field kept circling back to one actor who seemed to have maximized his cultural reach in a variety of fields: Aaron Hurst, author of *The Purpose Economy*, and founder of Imperative, an organization that helps both individuals and organizations find their purpose. Hurst is the ultimate example of the institutional entrepreneurial thought-leader: he has written a best-selling book, created an organization to promote that book's ideas, and made a career of speaking at an incredibly diverse conferences and gatherings, spanning from regional professional associations to leadership gatherings to academic settings. In 2014 Hurst wrote a New York Times editorial promoting ideas from his book *The Purpose Economy*. His alma mater, the University of Michigan, invited him back to be the keynote speaker at their 2014 Social Innovation conference.

Working out from this center point involved mapping out the answer to two different questions: what sort of conferences draw on Hurst as a speaker, and with whom does Hurst tend to share the conference stage in talking about purpose? Hurst's past speaking schedule was roughly constructed by drawing on his own organization's website listing of speaking events and combining it with publically accessible information on past conferences available online. I quickly found Hurst and those who shared the stage with tend to circulate around two types of conference: human resource management conferences and corporate social responsibility conferences. Scanning lineups in across these conferences produced a list of approximately twenty purpose consultant thought leaders. All of the leaders here were contacted by email or in-person at events and asked to participate in the study. Follow-up emails were sent to those who did not initially respond. Table Two reveals which leaders I was able to secure for participation.

In general this world was very difficult to secure access to leaders: nearly all of them kept incredibly busy schedules and employed assistants as gatekeepers to filter speaking and interview inquiries. My most effective strategy--though costly in time and financial resources--was to attend conferences where these leaders were speaking and

ask for their participation in person, chasing them down after their talk. This strategy was successful in every case that it was employed. A few times I also asked interviewees to help open doors to other figures on my list that they might personally know: remarkably, in some cases the thought leader proved inaccessible even to their own colleagues. Unfortunately, I did not manage to secure Hurst's own participation--never making it through his gatekeeper or tracking him down at an event--though Arthur Wood, the co-founder of Hurst's organization, provided a very helpful interview.

I also supplemented these purpose consultants who met the sampling criteria with five interviewees engaged to provide supplemental perspectives (bottom of Table Two). These five interviewees could be categorized as "convenience" or "opportunistic" sampling in the sense that I was able to acquire access far easier than those in my criterion purposive sampling. However, they also capture the fluidity of conceptualizing this particular topic. As discussed in Chapter Three, "purpose" in many conceptions comes to represent socially oriented objectives of businesses, melding the purpose conversation with corporate social responsibility and other socially conscious business efforts. Thus, three of my interviews here have not directly spoken on purposeful work but do represent thought leaders in the space of socially oriented business efforts. The other two interviewee may be considered an "opportunistic" sampling addition (Patton 1990) to the study: first, a business consultant--seemingly not active in the conference world--who shares a passion for integrating spiritually grounded purposes in work, though working largely in southeastern Asia countries. Second, a business leader who has been recognized for innovative employment practices to employ workers from extreme poverty and workers with criminal records. These latter five interviewees were not directly engaged in the analysis as "representative" sources of frameworks related to the purpose consultant movement, but they do provide helpful insights on the wider realm of corporate social responsibility and organizational consulting. Perhaps most helpful was that the interview script had to be adjusted for these supplemental perspectives in various ways on finding that they were not primarily interested in imbuing individual work with substantive frameworks of meaning: their understanding of purpose was much broader and drew connections to wider socially responsible themes.

Moving to the faith and work movement, once again a central figure was selected to provide a foothold in this world, from whom various events and networks could be traced outward. After monitoring discourse online on twitter and faith and work blogs, having informal conversations with actors within the space, and flipping through various bibliographies on faith and work resources, I intuited that Manhattan pastor Dr. Timothy Keller, though a more recent joiner to the movement, held perhaps the greatest influence among a wide variety of movement participants. Keller leads Redeemer Presbyterian Church, a large, multi-site congregation in New York that attracts a population of educated, professional, and creative workers (see McMillan 2013, Matthewes & Yates 2014). Keller gave sermons on topics related to work many times over the long tenure of his career, but his real influence in the national conversation began with Redeemer's establishment of the Center for Faith and Work in 2010. The Center's yearly national conferences--combined with Keller and co-writer Katherine Leary Alsdorf's 2012 book *Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God's Work*--propelled the ideas of Keller, Alsdorf, and the Center beyond their congregation to a national audience. The Center is today directed by David Kim, who also participated in the study.

Since Keller's Center had coordinated seven annual faith and work conferences with varied speaking lineups, the selection of Keller as the center point immediately generated 15-20 thought leaders in this space from these event lineups alone. Moving only one degree away to the other events these leaders spoke at revealed an immediate methodological challenge: while purpose consultants are frequently the only purpose-oriented speakers at gatherings, faith and work leaders frequently speak at events with several days' worth of panels devoted to faith and work. This sent the list of thought leaders spiraling far beyond what any one study could cover. In the interest of working toward representativeness for the wider, national Evangelical faith and work movement, a new auxiliary criteria was imposed: "thought leaders" in the faith and work world must speak at events that could meet the criteria of a "national" faith and work event. This criteria included the following: 1) the event was publicized and open to the public, 2) the event must span more than one day, signaling it is worthwhile for non-local attendees to travel to, and 3) it must feature two or more figures who have spoken about faith and work at more than one event that meets the first two criteria. The second criteria is far from perfect but necessary to weed out the events coordinated by well-resourced churches and Christian seminaries that can draw national figures to

their local, inner-group-focused event: inclusion of these events would inflate the list beyond a manageable level. This third criteria can teeter toward a circular definition: national faith and work events are defined by those events that feature national faith and work speakers, a category in turn defined by those who speak at such events. However, events that managed to meet the first and second criteria but not necessarily the third criteria were compared not only to the ever expanding list of faith and work leaders but also to each other. Promotion to “national” status, then, often happened to two events at once, when shared speakers were spotted across events. Of course, the second and third criteria on their surface appear quite arbitrary: what is it about adding that second notable speaker and perhaps a Friday night session to a full Saturday slate that propels an event to national status? These are obviously analytical heuristics that, as demonstrated below, are entirely necessary (and helpful) to make this thought leader space accessible to empirical study.

Once the national event criteria are established, sixty events were identified as meeting this criteria. Though no beginning date was established for building this sample, the first conference to meet specifications occurred in 2006. Some of this reflects the reliance on the internet to list old conferences: conferences before 2006 may not have had any web presence that can be excavated today. However, in constructing the narrative of faith and work through the various theologians who have written on this, I became fairly confident no conference prior to 2006 met the specification of “national conference,” as the innovative practice of hosting a national faith and work conference goes back only to the late 1990s. Combining all the advertised speakers and session leaders of these sixty events produces a list of 386 different thought leaders in this space. This heterogeneous incorporation of speakers across events is largely a product of how faith and work events are constructed: once a coordinator secures a respected author or pastor to speak on the topic and draw a crowd, the rest of the lineup can be filled with more general theologically-minded speakers or local professionals who can draw on their own experience while staying on topic.<sup>74</sup> Adding poets, musicians, and artists to conference lineups also contributes to the heterogeneity of this list. The large majority of faith and work speakers, then, have never been “on the circuit,” lack national profiles, and are instead one-time speakers. Speakers who are recognizable outside Evangelical circles

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<sup>74</sup> Conference coordinators by and large do not turn to professional speakers’ bureaus when needing a faith and work expert, it seems. This would otherwise explain a wide diversity in speakers, if speakers were only loosely coupled with the topic they were asked to speak about.

are virtually non-existent, with New York Times columnist David Brooks being perhaps the sole exception (Brooks spoke at a Center for Faith and Work conference and has cited Tim Keller in several of his columns). Sorting this list of 386 by number of national events spoken at produces a ranking of leaders, based on speaking frequency. A natural cutoff occurred below those who had spoken at less than three national conferences: therefore the top 29 most frequently speaking leaders were deemed the movement's thought leaders, all of whom had spoken at three or more events. Table Three lists those speakers, along with identifying who agreed to participate in the study.

Two additional pools of people were also interviewed: first, a convenience or opportunistic sample that mirrors the purposeful consultant supplemental interviews outlined above. I encountered recorded talks by all these individuals at some point in data collecting, and all of these talks offered something unique to the space: a ministry leader who applied entrepreneurship principles to community development, a female leader (severely underrepresented in this space) who spoke of motherhood as a calling and vocation, two small business owners who had been recognized for incorporating radically deviant practices in their managerial models, and a systematic theologian whose writing on faith and work was well known despite little speaking presence in this space. Another pool of interviewees were also added, these holding more material influence in the space. In doing early field work and monitoring online discourse, it became clear that the faith and work space--unlike the purpose consultant space--had several organizations in it with disproportional resources and influence--whether financial or symbolic--that nearly all the other interviewees spoke of regularly. These organizational leaders, then, exert far more will on the faith and work space and its frameworks than others. I designated these figures "resource leaders," drawing attention to their capacity to control and steward resources for the movement. Here I interviewed six individuals, five of whom worked to lead some of the major funding sources present in the space, and an additional figure who led up a charge to produce a new Bible commentary on work, a project with significant symbolic power. Table Five lists these supplemental interviewees, those who did not meet the criteria established for being a "thought leader."

The imbalance in number of interviews between movements--faith and work compared to purpose consultants--reflects a number of factors. For one, the faith and work thought leaders were far more easily accessible: even



those who were initial non-responses were fairly easily reached when I asked other interviewees for help me connect with them. Because their conferences were far more prolific, I was able to string together far more events to attend during my time in the field, which had the result of bringing me face-to-face with a high number of faith and work leaders who I could recruit directly to the study. There also seemed to be an overall enthusiasm in this world for being part of an academic study, at times surprising even myself: I would describe only two purpose consultants as sharing the same enthusiasm that nearly all the faith and work leaders exhibited. The second reason for the imbalance is that the faith and work world is in many ways significantly larger than the purpose consultant work, as its institutional location within American Evangelicalism delivers an incomparable boost of large network of well-established speakers, thinkers, theologians, pastors, and existing networks. This size of the world, my ability to track down many leaders in person, and the overall eagerness to participate in the study all contributed to the high number of interviewees from the faith and work movement relative to the purpose consultant movement.

One other note about sample construction: the criterion purposive sampling approach produced a list that not only surprised me as the researcher but would likely surprise most actors in the field. A handful of figures on the list--particularly those who have not undertaken the nearly ubiquitous status-granting task of writing a faith and work book--receive surprisingly little mention by other actors in the space, relative to the rest of the list. Yet their conference speaking suggests they are central thinkers for this movement: they are go-to experts when conference coordinators put together speaking lineups. Another benefit of constructing the sample in this manner was having a more objective measure of whether perhaps I had underappreciated major poles in the space. What I found was at least two major "hubs" of actors, while overlapping in some ways with the influential thought leaders, were still overall peripheral to the movement in terms of speaking at national conferences Chapter Four outlines a First Wave of Evangelical faith and work conferences that had largely adopted a charismatic and theocratic-leaning understanding of "claiming power" in the economic sector through faith and work theology. No figures from this First Wave placed in the top seventy-seven most frequent conference speakers (the top seventy-seven all had two or more national conferences on their resume). Another set of actors stayed fairly close to the "faith and business" focus of the very early groups--the Fellowship of Christian Companies International, Christian

Businessman Connection, etc.--and now largely cater their events to CEOs and those in executive business leadership. While these groups occasionally have booths and sponsorships at national events, their leaders are also not tapped upon to speak at the conferences, suggesting they are also not at the center of the movement. Finally, regarding the question of culture war issues and “embattled” mentalities in the space, I found there were a handful of groups--many of them identified as “marketplace ministries”--that were offering multi-day conferences with a much different political orientation than the rest of the movement. An example would be an organization called “Truth at Work” which sponsored several conference events called “America’s Best Hope,” a strikingly political title for this space. While Truth at Work is clearly an Evangelical organization, the pool of speakers their events draw together is markedly different than the wider movement: well-known sports figures like Tom Crean (college basketball coach) and Tony Dungy (an NFL coach) have shared stages with executives from Chick-fil-a and Hobby Lobby, companies well known for very public religious liberty battles. Anne Graham Lotz, daughter of Billy Graham and enthusiastic supporter of Donald Trump, has also been a featured speaker, as well as Karen Pence, then the first lady of Indiana when her husband was in office. These events have tapped several highly ranked faith and work thought leaders in my sample, but those leaders have always been interspersed with a very different set of speakers. As a result, America’s Best Hope failed to meet the criteria of a national faith and work conference. The America’s Best Hope website identifies its lineups as “inspiring industry CEOs, relevant entertainment figures, and thought leaders around the country,” which tend to prioritize far bigger names, placing the events out on a limb. Thus, America’s Best Hope may function as the culture war wing of the faith and work movement, but it is not clear that they have much influence beyond their own conferences, and “their” thought leaders are not generally tapped upon by any other organization in the movement.

## **Conducting and Analyzing Interviews**

Understanding the cultural frameworks at the heart of this movement required prioritizing the discourse of thought leaders, both through formal interviews as well as through participant observation at event gatherings. Here I outline the interviewing procedure for these leaders. Interviews were intensive, semi-structured script-guided conversations that probed their organization’s mission and audience, how purpose is integrated into work, assessment of the larger movement, and ethical questions regarding integrating purpose into economic settings

(see Appendix B for script). The interview for both the Faith and Work movement and the Purposeful Work movement followed an identical script, but “faith” was substituted for “purpose” (or vice versa) to match with the interviewee’s respective movements, shifting the questions from purpose-integration to faith-integration as was appropriate. This technique does not reflect any metaphysical or functional claim about the equivalence of faith and purpose but only a baseline observation that both concepts, as employed by thought leaders and general adherents, hold similar places in the discourse in making “normal” work meaningful. In the rare case that an interviewee protested my choice of language, I made note of this and followed their lead to ask the question more precisely incorporating their language. These cases were rare: in most cases the questions and the underlying framework clearly resonated with the interviewees and many times incited the same talking points, anecdotes, and narratives that make up the interviewees’ public speaking and writing, suggesting they felt the questions hit home with their expertise.

Interviews were conducted in person when possible; when not possible they were conducted over Skype or phone. These interactions were recorded and then transcribed. Interview duration ranged from 35 minutes to 95 minutes. The interview questions were specifically created to access the meaning-making processes, metaphors, symbols, narratives, and mental maps of the interviewees, dimensions not accessible through quantitative studies (Pugh 2013), seeking to map out underlying “landscapes of meaning” (Reed 2011) related to work. Particularly because so many of the participants were already “in print” regarding these topics, the interview process sought to probe the subject matter at a deeper level whenever possible. This meant asking for clarification when popular clichés were used, at times asking for the origins of a particular view or idea, and even occasionally holding up the participants’ views to alternative views in the movement and inquiring about the difference. Several questions also pressed participants into cognitive processes of problem-solving and adapting a previously delivered claim into a particular context. The general tone of these interactions were energetic and lively, though at times the more conceptual questions produced a shift in the interaction from neatly scripted responses to longer pauses for careful deliberation and reflection on the questions. The final part of the interview shifted toward explicitly ethical questions that could serve as exam questions in a business ethics course: while at times I anticipated this to be an awkward shift in conversational topic and tone, the participants consistently exhibited eagerness to jump into

deeper moral reflection on economics and ethics. A few participants remarked on my “unique” perspective after the interview, clearly recognizing the questions had deviated from journalistic interest in their work. I also realized, while transcribing the interviews, I as a questioner may have failed to embody the ubiquitous enthusiasm that generally accompanies responses to these speakers’ ideas, having heard them so many times. One participant informed me my questions made him understand his work and calling in a new way, seemingly because he had not previously considered how his work directly connected with a wider movement--all figures he knew (even personally) but did not see himself ideationally closely with. Occasionally, to gauge reactions I informed speakers in the faith and work movement they were--by my measures--some of the most sought after speakers of anyone in the space. Reactions were generally polite amusement but not surprise.

Responses were analyzed and coded for recurring emergent themes that spanned answers and participants. Analysis focused specifically on frameworks, concepts, and ideas that were not as accessible in the public speaking and writing of the participants. Much of this was the result of the more probing questions that sought to dig deeper into participants’ mental map of the market, economic forces, work conditions, and wider questions of political economy. A central priority in the analysis was preserving the conceptual framework of the participants themselves rather than translating it one-for-one into more formal frameworks, whether that be more formal economic thinking (*laissez faire* economics, for example) or sociological theories (the bureaucratization of modern work, for example). Preserving inconsistencies, underdeveloped assertions, and contradictions within the analysis intentionally resisted neat categorization of the interviewees’ views: most did not speak in terms of systematic adherence to a school of thought--as one might expect economists and philosophers to speak--but rather as pragmatic actors navigating day-to-day situations and prioritizing cultural frameworks that solve particular problems. Prioritizing inductive analysis allowed for emergence of common themes, codes, and frameworks that were only post hoc connected to more systematic modes of thinking when appropriate.

### **Drawing Upon Printed Texts, Online Materials, National Surveys, and Other Data**

Quantitative measures were drawn upon to gauge the organizational strength and resources that the movements had at their disposal. Building on basic insights from social movement theory (McCarthy & Zald 1977), movements

require a variety of resource inputs to advance their cause and mobilize others. These resources can be material--such as money, supplies, physical space--or organizational, which gives attention to how existing networks, organizations, and organizational infrastructure can serve the organization's interests. I have drawn upon quantitative measures of resources in order to chart the steady growth of both movements of interest, both in recent decades but also in the larger timeframe of the 20th century. I have specifically drawn on the following three areas of resource growth:

**Organizational Creation: For the faith and work movement,** basic analysis of when relevant organizations were founded produces a general timeline of when various organizational actors came online. This was used to map out the general timeline of when the Purpose Industry developed.

**Funding and Organizational Structure:** Several organizations in the faith and work space have generated attention for corporate and political financial backing. I drew on publicly accessible 990 tax forms--required tax filings for public nonprofits--to trace out relationships and money trails that traveled across multiple fiscal agents. Where cited, I also drew on previous research and journalism that traced out these relationships, though the stark agenda-driven nature of this journalism motivated me to check their sources wherever possible.

**Administered Surveys:** In addition to these evaluations of resources, I have also incorporated data from two surveys created or co-created specifically for the project. All thought leader interviewees were given a survey of basic demographic information and a few substantive multiple-choice survey questions for response (See Appendix C). The latter were taken from national surveys in order to provide comparison between the sample and national dynamics. For the faith and work movement, another survey was co-designed with event coordinators at the 2016 Faith and Work Summit, who were eager for assistance in this realm. The final product was a 16-question survey with five questions pertaining to non-event related topics: basic demographics, aspirations for the faith and work movement for the future, helpful influences for faith-work integration, identifying one's greatest passion for faith-work integration, etc.

National Surveys: Existing datasets were also drawn upon where polling and survey data on “meaningful work” could be accessed. More data was available here for the faith and work movement: to gauge idea dissemination and adoption I incorporated the following datasets: 1992 Economic Values Survey, the 2010 Baylor Religion Survey Wave III, and a 2011 Public Religion Research Institute News Survey. For the purpose consultants, an important part of their own account was the Gallup Daily Survey, which plays a central role in constructing the need to which they see themselves responding. I have provided a wider historical context of that poll in discussing the central role that data has come to play for leaders.

### **Book Production: Quantitative Production Measures, Qualitative Themes Study**

Perhaps the most visible indication of the growth in the Purpose Industry is the rapid growth of book publication related to topics of purpose, calling, vocation, and “secular” work. Here I was disappointed to find no methodologically sophisticated way to quantify book production on the purpose consultant side. Clearly more books are being written with “purpose” and “meaning” related to work in the title. Additionally, the blurbs appearing on these books seem to be crystallizing around the very corner of the managerial and organizational behavior world I have separated out for study. But there was unfortunately no straightforward way to quantify purpose-oriented book production. The words these actors wrap around their ideas have the misfortune of being common and polysemic--meaning, calling, vocation, purpose--making it difficult to derive any conclusions from book title trends or google N-gram trends. Further study might allow a probing the rapid rise and interest among organizational behavior theorists in Viktor Frankl’s 1946 *Man’s Search for Meaning*, which is a near required citation for these thinkers. Ideally the “employee engagement” or “employee motivation” genre would gain a Library of Congress-recognized category tag, making present and future production trackable for growth trends going forward.

The Evangelical faith and work book production was a far more empirically traceable phenomenon. Here I found book production could be traced not only to demarcate the rise of the modern movement but also trace out the lineages of various cultural and theological frameworks across the 20th century. This became important because the thought leaders were positioning their own purpose and objectives as a recovery and correction effort: a

“remedial theology.” Unfortunately, while they seemed to be on fairly solid footing that this was indeed “remedial” to more dominant Evangelical theology of the 20th century, neither sociology or religious studies had a developed historical account of Evangelical cultural frameworks of work, economics, and marketplace behaviors, against which the thought leaders’ own narrative could be compared. Particularly in the sociology of religion, the shadow of Weber’s “Protestant work ethic” thesis posited a static and uniform understanding of Protestant thinking on work and economic activity. Thus, book production could both chart the growth of the movement regarding culture production and tell the story of evolving cultural frameworks.

Defining “Evangelical faith and work book”--in order to both gauge production trends and construct a sample for qualitative study--was the first step in incorporating book production into the project. The genre or category of a faith and work book is somewhat ambiguous, and boundaries around this category can be rather porous. Books on subjects such as leadership, day-to-day lay ministry, evangelism, gender, or personal piety topics like relationships may bear relevance on work but present the potential for categorical slippage without a precise definition. Books on ethical issues related to specific professions such as issues in the healthcare industry, science, or even the practices of governing are also difficult to categorize. Three different methods were employed to overcome these challenges.

To provide a wider count of “faith and work” books published across the 20th century, a global database of published materials in 72,000 libraries worldwide (worldcat.org) was consulted to assess books that receive the corresponding subject categorization for faith and work books. Finding most contemporary faith and work books (those written by the thought leaders identified above) are categorized as “Work--Religious Aspects--Christianity,” a chart of books produced in that category was produced. The second and third methods revolved around a curated database of 1,648 “Work and Faith Collection,” a physical collection of books maintained by Seattle Pacific University’s University Library. This is the largest maintained database and collection of faith and work books available. I worked with the reference librarian who oversaw this database to gain digital access to the full catalog of books maintained in this library. The reference librarian also provided an explanation of how the collection is maintained and updated. A memorandum of understanding and “endowment agreement guide” provides

guidance for the library's stewardship of the collection, which has its own annual budget for maintenance. The collection is built, maintained, and shaped by the work of a "standing committee" of Evangelical scholars and leaders who carefully select which new books will be added each year. Some of these figures are recognizable authors and conference speakers, though none were in the sample of thought leaders interviewed. The committee's priorities for adding to the collection are defined in the collection's scope note: "Materials to be included will be substantive in nature and/or of scholarly value and related to Christians in Business and other professions." A chart of the year of publishing of these books was included in Chapter Four to show a steady upturn since 1970, with the peak of production around the late 1980s.

The third method took additional steps to gauge book production for works specifically directed toward Evangelical laity. Without this third method, the list includes books written across Christian traditions and even sociological and historical works parsing the relationship between religion, economics, and theology, which would not constitute the "Evangelical faith and work" books of interest here. To sort out books that are most likely written for Evangelical laypersons (as opposed to academics, historians, or adherents in other traditions), this list was narrowed to books published by Evangelical publishers. Categorizing these publishers was relatively straightforward: the publisher either self-identified as "Evangelical" or self-identified with a denomination historically associated with American Evangelicalism. In cases where the publisher had merged or gone out of business, historical data on publishers were consulted to ascertain the identity of the publisher at the time of the relevant book's publication. Chapter Four contains the resulting chart of books printed on Evangelical publishers. While data on readership or perhaps denominational endorsement would have been more ideal than publishers, publishers provided a useful proxy of the intended audience of a book. Several experts working in Christian book publishing were also consulted who provided general plausibility that publishers have played a gatekeeping role: only certain theological beliefs and certain topics were permitted on these publishers.

Moving to the qualitative study of book production, this third method provided the foundational basis for constructing a sample of Evangelical faith and work books published from 1930 to 1980. The start-date was selected in correspondence with two factors: the dataset itself did not include any Evangelical publisher books



prior to 1941, and the founding of the first Evangelical faith and work organization--a central point in all existing histories of American Christianity faith and work (Hammond, Stevens, & Svanoe 2002, Hillman 2004 Miller 2007, Johnson 2009, Mitchell 2013)--was 1930. With histories of American fundamentalism positing the 1920s seminary battles and 1925 Scopes Monkey Trial as a central point in the production of American Protestant Fundamentalism (Marsden 2006), 1930 offers as good a point as any to begin charting the subject of interest here: developments of Evangelical theologies of work coming out of fundamentalism, neo-Evangelical, and Evangelical efforts across the 20th century. The stop-date of 1980 was both an analytical and historical decision. First of all, while comprehensive inclusion of all Evangelical faith and work books prior to 1980 was a manageable universe of texts, the surge in production after 1980 makes comprehensive study of this universe far more difficult, with production moving up to 10 to 15 new books a year across the 1980s. Historically, this cut-off provided a rather uncharted immersion into the pre-Christian Right world of American Evangelical public theologies and cultural engagement orientations, a world in which little scholarly research has been undertaken. This cutoff was affirmed in a more informal way when the possibility of constructing a present day sample of books was briefly considered but ultimately not undertaken. This was because my familiarity with present day writings suggested all the basic frameworks of faith and work were developed prior to the 1980s. In fact, many books published in the 1960s and 70s, in their main theological themes, are largely indiscernible from those published in the 1990s and 2000s. It is of course difficult to produce evidence of this claim, but the four cultural frameworks unearthed in the 1930 to 1980 sample left little that could not be categorized in either my interviews or the books written by contemporary thought leaders. This of course may have obstructed the study from probing a specific 1980s Reagan-era "neoliberal turn" or a corresponding "Christian Right" turn in faith and work literature. However, several works across the 1980s and early 1990s were also analyzed and found to stay consistent with the four cultural frameworks outlined earlier. The 1980s also produced several classical texts that continue to hold intellectual sway in the movement today, making it difficult to suggest there was a significant shift in themes in this era.

The window of 1930 to 1980 produced a list of forty-nine works that appeared on Evangelical publishers and were selected by the Seattle Pacific University Library committee for inclusion in the collection. This list was also checked against bibliographies generated by several other "bibliographical authorities" in the movement to find

possible omissions in Seattle's collection. This included: a list of references and significant texts by Greg Forster, head of the Oikonomia Network, a bibliography produced by Gordon-Conwell Seminary in association with their faith and work center, a bibliography generated by the "Business as Mission" arm of the Lausanne Committee on World Evangelism, and several lists produced by the Theology of Work project, an organization that has assembled Biblical scholars and other leaders in this space for the production of their faith and work Bible commentary. These lists confirmed the Seattle Pacific collection as the most comprehensive: no book was identified on these bibliographies that was not included in the collection.

Drawing on a grounded theory approach, these texts were coded for organically emerging themes related to the relationship between "work" and religion. This process was split between myself and a research assistant. "Work" could cover any sort of economic activity or involvement in the labor sphere: particularly with the books probed from the earlier era (discussed below) work was defined in the broadest way possible, aspiring to include any form of paid or unpaid, formal or informal labor. The priorities for constructing the list became apparent through this coding exercise: not all books possessed any discussion of work. The scope note for the collection provides the most likely explanation for this: a "medium priority" for book inclusion was "foundational Christian worldview" books that may "support" faith and work. Several books clearly were laying out sophisticated views of cultural engagement and ethical dimensions of Christian lay life that had been deemed worthy to be included: with no content specifically on work, these books were judged not to contribute to any of the four cultural frameworks discussed in Chapter Four.<sup>75</sup>

Constructing this 1930 to 1980 sample in this manner had a significant shortcoming: if Evangelical theologies of work were in fact being "remediated" by the modern movement leaders, and these books have been selected post hoc by the modern movement as significant, it was likely these works were *not* the theological orientations for

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<sup>75</sup> The historical narrative in Chapter Six regarding historical development "cultural engagement orientations" of Evangelicalism was directly aided by reading these books, particularly those from the 1960s and 1970s. It appeared the authors of these non-work-oriented "faith and work books" were articulating such uncommon ideas, relative to the Evangelical subculture of the time period, concerning cultural engagement and social ethics that the Seattle working group committee saw them laying important groundwork for faith and work. My conversations with figures active in the Christian book publishing world in the 1970s suggest these books were not big sellers, so their perspectives may have been overshadowed and largely ignored until absorbed into the faith and work world.

which alternative orientations were required. In other words, there was no “before” picture of Evangelical theology in this sample, and the books selected to the Seattle collection could very well represent a “greatest hits” collection of the 20th century. This proved useful for probing variations across 20th century *within* theologies of work: four major codes or themes emerged from these works that served as the basic structures of the four cultural frameworks. But additional steps would need to be undertaken to get at the orientations for which modern faith and work theology provides the interventionary remedial alternatives. A comparison across the same era would theoretically be possible but there were two methodological challenges: one, there are challenges in attempting to historical verify the historical *absence* or neglect of a subject in books where, in theory, it might appear (such as lay theology books that one would presume would discuss work but do not). Secondly, there was no way to possibly construct a comparable sample of books that did theology of work “poorly,” for a lack of a better descriptor. On a very basic level, there may be no “poor” Evangelical theology of work books post-1930: though interviewees voiced their disagreement with more sectarian, pietistic, or other-worldly-minded thinkers, the targets of such criticism do not produce books on work written for lay people. For these reasons it made more sense to wade back in time to the previous era to excavate views on work that might warrant the interventionary remediation.

Constructing any sort of representative sample of produced faith and work books from 1880 to 1929 era was found to produce several challenges. For one, both the historians of the faith and work movement and the bibliography-makers cited earlier do not cite any lay-oriented texts on faith and work from that era. While there are some books produced during this era that appear on the Seattle collection list, they are not lay-directed theology texts, and it is fairly unlikely that a nascent fundamentalists pondering work theologies would turn to in *Rerum Novarum*, Walter Rauschenbusch, R.H. Tawney, or Max Weber. Thus, to locate the theology of work discourse for this era, the criteria of inclusion was opened considerably to any lay Evangelical-focused book that provided any substantive commentary on work, labor, or economic activity, with, again, the widest possible understanding of those terms. Since few Evangelical publishers existed during this era, I drew upon available catalogs from the following presses, both associated with Moody Bible Institute in Chicago: Bible Institute Colportage Association and Fleming H. Revell Company. Books published in this era routinely featured their

publisher's catalog in the back of the book, so these catalogs proved fairly easy to access. I constructed a convenience sample of relevant texts by scanning catalogs from five-year gaps across the fifty year eras. The Bible Institute Colportage Association did not begin publishing until 1894, so for the earlier part of the era I relied heavily on Revell. While this only encompassed two publishers for this era, they were not only the most central revivalist-fundamentalist presses but also some of the only two presses to span the era, as mass-producing affordable lay books was a largely uncharted entrepreneurial practice for conservative Protestant groups (see Gloege 2015). Despite their focus on books for the laity, books devoted exclusively to work, labor, or even economics were nearly non-existent. For analysis, I located twenty books of this era that, by their title and short catalog description, suggested they would engage day-to-day activities of laypersons. These books were then obtained in order to code for themes in any passages related to work, economics, secular callings, labor, industrial relations, professions or any reference whatsoever to "office," "workshop," or "occupation." By and large what emerged was very little content to code. Relevant passages I was able to locate were summarized in Chapter Five, which provide some insights into how a very small portion of Evangelical discourse explored the topic of work during this era.

### **Disclosure Statement Regarding Potential Conflicts of Interest**

As a possible conflict of interest, the Lilly Endowment indirectly provided support to this research through two channels. First, my travel, lodging, and meals at the gathering of campus ministry leaders (described in Chapter Six) was funded by their Campus Ministry Theological Exploration for Vocation program. This was the result of a ministry organization at my educational institution inviting me to attend this event as their "student" guest. Secondly, early in my research process I received a modest research grant award from the Lake Institute of Faith and Giving, a program coordinated within the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy out of Indiana University. Additionally, while researching I was also briefly employed as a research assistant on an academic program related to vocation which received substantial support by the Lilly Endowment. In none of these cases was I required to coordinate with (or even communicate with) anyone directly employed by the Lilly Endowment; in all cases I worked with intermediary organizations who possessed only cursory knowledge (or in the latter two cases, nearly no knowledge) of my research.

Table One: Major National Events Observed, May 2014 to October 2016

<b>Movement Affiliation</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Event Name</b>	<b>Coordinating Organization</b>	<b>Location</b>
Faith & Work	5/30-31/2014	Entrepreneurship & Innovation Forum	Center for Faith & Work (Redeemer Presbyterian Church)	New York City, NY
Faith & Work	11/10/2015	Market Solutions for Community Transformation	Christian Community Development Association	Memphis, TN
Faith & Work	4/19-20/2016	The Asbury Project	Asbury Theological Project	Orlando, FL
Purpose Consultants	5/12-13/2016	Positive Business Conference	Ross School of Business, University of Michigan	Ann Arbor, MI
Purpose Consultants	6/7-8/2016	Social Innovation Summit	Landmark Ventures	Washington, D.C.
Faith & Work	9/23-24/2016	Gospel at Work Conference	Gospel at Work	Richmond, VA
Faith & Work	10/27-29/2016	2016 Faith & Work Summit	Center for Faith and Work at LeTourneau University	Dallas, TX

Table Two: Purpose Consulting Thought Leaders & Supplemental Interviewees

<b>Thought Leader Study Participants (N=10)</b>		
<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliated Organization</b>	<b>Relevant Conference Appearance</b>
Arthur Wood	Imperative	Sustainable Brands 2013
Haley Rushing	The Purpose Institute	GreenBiz 2016
Susan Hunt Stevens	Wespire	GreenBiz 2016, Positive Business Conference 2016
Shannon Schuyler	PwC	GreenBiz 2016, Positive Business Conference 2016, Social Innovation Summit 2016, Sustainable Brands 2016
Abby Brennan	PwC	GreenBiz 2016
Tim Leberecht	Leberecht & Associates	Various
Dan Pontefract	Telus Transformation Office	Various
Lindsay Clinton	SustainAbility	Intrepreneurship Conference
Linda Kay Klein	Echoing Green	Ashoka U. Exchange 2014
Chris Wright	Ross School of Business, University of Michigan	Positive Business Conference 2016
<b>Supplemental Interviewees (N=5)</b>		
<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliated Organization</b>	<b>Relevance to Discourse</b>
John Elkington	SustainAbility	Originated "Triple-Bottom-Line" Thinking
Alvin Ung	Barefoot Leadership	Leadership Organizational Consultant
Gerald Davis	University of Michigan	Co-Author of Social Intrapreneurship Book
Fred Keller	Cascade Engineering/University of Michigan	Positive Business Conference Speaker
Miguel Padro	Aspen Institute Business & Society Program	Lead "Corporate Purpose" Research Project

Also conducted conversation guided by a non-interview questions--focused on conversant's specific knowledge base--with one other organizational leader: Matt Bloom of Wellbeing at Work, a research center at the University of Notre Dame.

Table Three: Faith &amp; Work Thought Leaders, Resource Leaders, &amp; Supplemental Interviewees

Thought Leader Study Participants & Non-Participants (Participants N=24)			
Name	Affiliated Organization*	# of National Conferences	Participated in Study?
Tom Nelson	Made to Flourish	12	Y
Katherine Alsdorf	Center for Faith & Work (Redeemer Presbyterian Church)	9	Y
Henry Kaestner	Sovereignty Capital	8	Y
Boll Doll	Nuveen Access Management	8	Y
Greg Forster	Oikonomia Network (Trinity International University)	8	Y
Skye Jethani	Independent Author (Formerly Christianity Today)	7	Y
Tim Keller	Center for Faith & Work (Redeemer Presbyterian Church)	7	Y
David Miller	Faith & Work Initiative (Princeton University)	7	Y
Steven Garber	Washington Institute on Faith, Vocation, and Culture	7	Y
Scott Rae	Biola University	7	Y
Amy Sherman	Sagamore Institute	7	Y
Greg Gilbert	Gospel at Work	5	Y
Anthony Bradley	The King's College	5	N
Chris Brooks	Evangel Ministries/Moody Theological Seminary	5	Y
Rudy Carrasco	Worldwide Partners	5	Y
Mark Washington	MBA Ministries (Intervarsity)	4	Y
Charles Self	Assemblies of God Theological Seminary	4	Y
David Kim	Center for Faith & Work (Redeemer Presbyterian Church)	3	Y
Peter Greer	HOPE International	3	Y
Andy Crouch	Christianity Today (Executive Editor)	3	Y
Michael Lindsay	Gordon College (President)	3	Y
Bill Peel	Center for Faith & Work at LeTourneau University	3	Y
Dave Evans	Stanford University	3	Y
Ashok Nachnani	Gospel at Work	3	Y
Sebastian Traeger	Gospel at Work	3	Y

Y. Marc Belton	Wisefellows Consulting	3	N
Sherron Watkins	Independent Speaker (Former Enron Vice President)	3	N
J.D. Greear	The Summit Church	3	N
Phil Vischer	Independent Speaker (Former Founder of Big Idea Productions)	3	N
Resource Leaders (N=6)			
Name	Affiliated Organization		
Chris Robertson	Acton Institute		
Jordan Bailor	Acton Institute		
Shirley Roels	NetVUE (Affiliated with Lilly Endowment Efforts)		
David Cunningham	Campus Ministry Project on Theological Exploration for Vocation (Supported by Lilly Endowment )		
Josh Good	Kern Family Foundation		
Will Messenger	Theology of Work Project (Faith & Work Bible Commentary Effort)		
Supplemental Interviewees (N=6)			
Name	Affiliated Organization		
Kate Harris	Washington Institute on Faith, Vocation, and Culture		
Justin Straight	New City Commons		
Wayne Grudem	Phoenix Seminary		
Hugh Whelchel	Institute for Faith, Work, & Economics		
Cheryl Broetje	Broetje Orchards		
Wendy Clark	Carpe Diem Cleaning		

\*Affiliated Organization was accurate at time of interview except where noted.

Also conducted conversations guided by a non-interview questions--focused on conversant's specific knowledge base--with three other authors/organizational leaders: Jon Hart of Praxis Labs, Os Hillman of TGIF Ministries, and Paul Stevens of Regent College.



## Appendix B: Interview Guide for Thought Leaders

### Background

- Express thanks
- Have interviewee sign and fill out IRB consent form

### Organizational Affiliation and Mission

1. Tell me about the organization you work with. What is their mission and how do they work toward that mission?
2. What types of people do you generally serve—who do you end up engaging the most? Particular careers? Lifephases? Education levels? Racial or ethnic groups?

### Integrating Work and Purpose/Faith

Now I'd like to talk about efforts to integrate purpose/faith into one's day-to-day work.

1. How can a person integrate purpose/faith into their work [or workplace organization]?
  - a. *Probe:* Can you provide a precise definition for [any specific terms used].
2. How would someone who integrates purpose/faith into their workplace organization look different from someone who does not? Does their work become more meaningful?
3. What do you think motivates people to pursue being a different kind of worker?
  - a. *Probe:* A calling? Specific political orientations? Values? Religious beliefs? Background experiences?
4. What are some of the best examples you've seen of people working for this integration?
5. What are the greatest challenges to this type of integration? Both "locally" in the particular setting and in the wider cultural setting?

### Evaluating a Purpose/Faith & Work Movement

1. Do you perceive a greater interest or demand for purpose/faith and work at the present moment?
  - a. (If answered affirmatively) Why do you think we're seeing that at this point?
  - b. (If answered affirmatively) What do you see purpose/faith work *doing* for people?
2. What would it look like if a significant portion of workers and companies adopted what you're advocating?
3. What other organizations and thinkers do you see as allies in what you're promoting?
4. On the other hand, are there any organizations and thinkers you see yourself working against?

### Ethical and Political Dimensions

For the final part I'd like to switch gears to talk about more ethical and political dimensions of this.

1. Many workers are encouraged to make the "business case" for change in their organizations. What does this mean? What happens if a worker can't make a successful business case?
2. Imagine you were advising a business executive who suddenly sensed a deep moral obligation to substantially increase employee wages. How would you advise that person in trying to integrate their values with their work?
3. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: *Workers in for-profit settings are ultimately*

- going to be limited in their ability to pursue any objectives beyond “just making a profit.”*
4. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: *Businesses and for-profit companies can do far more for social change than government entities, NGOs, or philanthropy can.*
  5. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: *Companies frequently face a basic tradeoff between economic performance and social responsibility.*

## Appendix C: Thought Leaders Follow-Up Survey

1.           **What is your title at your current organization?**  
\_\_\_\_\_
2.           **On average, how many hours do you work per week?** \_\_\_\_\_
3.           **Have you ever taken a for-credit class on ethics, whether applied, professional, or philosophical/theological?**  
[ ] Yes  
[ ] No
4.           **Have you ever taken a class on economics?**  
[ ] Yes  
[ ] No
5.           **In general would you describe your political views as...**  
[ ] Very Conservative  
[ ] Conservative  
[ ] Moderate  
[ ] Liberal  
[ ] Very Liberal
6.           **What is the highest grade of school or degree that you have received (select all that apply):?**  
[ ] Bachelor's Degree  
[ ] Master's Degree (non-MBA)  
[ ] Master's of Business Degree  
[ ] Juris Doctor (J.D.)  
[ ] Academic Doctoral Degree  
[ ] Doctor of Medicine  
[ ] Other \_\_\_\_\_
7.           **In what year were you born?** \_\_\_\_\_

8. **Do you consider yourself (check all that apply):**
- ☐ African-American/Black
  - ☐ Asian
  - ☐ Hispanic/Latino
  - ☐ White
  - ☐ Native American or Alaskan Native
  - ☐ Pacific Islander
  - ☐ Other
9. **From what you know, who or what do you think was most responsible for the economic downturn that began in December 2007?**
- ☐ Individuals who were careless and borrowed more money than they could afford
  - ☐ Corporations that were greedy and made risky business decisions
  - ☐ Government that neglected its duty and allowed unethical business practices
  - ☐ None of these: the economic downturn was just a natural part of how our economy works.
  - ☐ Don't Know
10. **Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: *Most businesses would act ethically on their own, without regulation from government.***
- ☐ Complete Agree
  - ☐ Mostly Agree
  - ☐ Mostly Disagree
  - ☐ Completely Disagree
  - ☐ Don't Know
11. **Please indicate whether the first or second statement comes closer to your own views—even if neither is exactly right.**
- ☐ Capitalism and the free market system are consistent with Christian values.
  - ☐ Capitalism and the free market system are at odds with Christian values.
  - ☐ Both
  - ☐ Neither
12. **What religious denomination do you personally identify with (if any)?**
-

13. **Which of the following thinkers or resources have shaped your views on faith, work, and economics? (check all that apply)**

- ☐ Catholic Social Thought (*Rerum Novarum*, *Centesimus Annus*, *Pope Francis*, etc.)
- ☐ Reformed Social Thought: Abraham Kuyper, Richard Muow, Al Wolters, etc.
- ☐ Christian Business Writers: John C. Maxwell, Stephen Covey, etc.
- ☐ Business Writers: Jim Collins, Peter Drucker, etc.
- ☐ Michael Porter
- ☐ Milton Friedman
- ☐ Muhammed Yunus
- ☐ Resources from Dr. Timothy Keller & Center for Faith and Work (NYC)
- ☐ Resources from the Acton Institute/Acton University
- ☐ Resources from Oikonomia Network/Kern Family Foundation
- ☐ Resources from “Business as Mission”
- ☐ Other\_\_\_\_\_

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