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INSEPARABLE FAITH: EXPLORING MANIFESTATIONS AND EXPERIENCES  
OF FAITH-WORK INTEGRATION IN YOUNG ALUMNI  
FROM A CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

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A thesis

Presented to

The School of Social Sciences, Education & Business

Department of Higher Education and Student Development

Taylor University

Upland, Indiana

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Higher Education and Student Development

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by

Emilie Hoffman

May 2017

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**Higher Education and Student Development  
Taylor University  
Upland, Indiana**

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

MASTER'S THESIS

This is to certify that the Thesis of

Emilie Hoffman

entitled

Inseparable Faith: Exploring Manifestations and Experiences of Faith-Work Integration  
in Young Alumni from a Christian University

has been approved by the Examining Committee for the thesis requirement for the

Master of Arts degree  
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## Abstract

The integration of faith and work refers to the manner in which individuals reconcile meaning sets and worldviews with their work. In the two most recent decades, discussion on the involvement of religion, faith, and spirituality in the workplace has increased in popularity in the United States (Hammond, Stevens, & Svano, 2002; Hillman, 2005; Kidwell, 2014). While recent studies describe the characteristics of an individual's integration of faith and work and influences on the same, research measuring the extent or trends of integration is lacking. Further, studies predominately focus on the impact of congregation, religious attendance, or workplaces on faith-work integration. A gap exists in the literature on the relationship between higher education and faith-work integration.

The present study describes the experiences of young alumni from a Christian university integrating faith and work as well as their perceptions of how Christian higher education affects this integration. Using a convergent parallel mixed method approach, the researcher explored the manifestations and experience of faith-work integration in young alumni through a survey and telephone interviews. The major finding reinforced the distinctive mark of Christian higher education, the inseparability of faith and life, and its impact on faith integration in the workplace. Christian educators are encouraged to consider three implications for practice: continuing the emphasis of faith integration, increasing discussion on vocation and faith-work integration, and modeling faith integration.

## Acknowledgements

The research process is undeniably a communal effort. Without help and encouragement from others, this thesis would not exist. With a full and thankful heart, I share this accomplishment with the following individuals and friends.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

The involvement of religion, faith, and spirituality in the workplace is a topic of increasing interest in the United States (Miller, 2007). Roughly 350 published books addressed the concept of faith and work in 2000; in 5 years, that amount increased to over 2,000 titles related to “faith-workplace connection” (Hammond, Stevens, & Svanoe, 2002; Hillman, 2005; Kidwell, 2014). Despite the increasing interest in understanding this phenomenon, little research describes the current manifestations of faith-work integration. Christian higher education promotes the incorporation of faith into various aspects of life, especially one’s work. However, few studies have clearly defined Christian college graduates’ perceptions of their education and its effect on their faith-work integration.

### **Faith-Work Integration**

Faith-work integration refers to the integral relationship between Christian faith and the area of one’s work (Keller, 2012). The integration of faith and work is a significant calling and experience for Christians journeying toward wholeness in life. In studying the Faith at Work Movement (FAW), Miller (2007) identified four major manifestations of faith-work integration: ethics, expression (or evangelism), experience, and enrichment. Miller defined *ethics* as “discerning right action and ethical behavior in the marketplace” and “developing business practices and leadership styles that are

modeled on biblical principles and figures” (p. 129). *Expression*, interchangeable with *evangelism*, encompasses individuals who see their workplace as a mission field. In other words, individuals viewing work through the lens of the Great Commission see opportunities to witness or share beliefs with coworkers (Matt. 28: 19-20, English Standard Version).

Individuals identifying with *experience* are primarily concerned with vocation, calling, meaning, and purpose. More specifically, these individuals view work as part of their larger role in serving broader societal interests and needs. Last, *enrichment* describes individuals who value personal fulfillment, inner awareness, and spiritual well-being. In practice, these individuals internalize faith both privately and personally in order to combat work stressors and difficulties in life. Miller (2010) developed a survey instrument, The Integration Profile (TIP), to measure the four manifestation types. The present study used Miller’s framework to describe trends in Christian college graduates’ manifestations of integrating faith and work.

### **Impact of Christian Higher Education**

The distinct nature of the Christian college, according to Holmes (1975), is “an education that cultivates the creative and active integration of faith and learning, of faith and culture” (p. 6). The study specifically sought to explore how university settings impact integration of faith and work and to reveal the common manifestations of faith in the workplace after graduation. Christian higher education institutions commit to serving Christ in every aspect of life particularly through learning and also seek to prepare students to integrate faith in future roles and occupations (Beers, 2003; Dockery, 2000; Glanzer, Alleman, & Ream, 2017; Hughes, 2005; Smith, 2009).

## Research Questions

While Christian higher education seeks to develop students vocationally and spiritually, a gap in the literature leaves unaddressed how graduates integrate faith and work after leaving the institution. The following research question and sub questions guided the current study:

1. What is the impact of Christian higher education on its graduates' integration of faith and work?
  - a. What are the common manifestations of faith-work integration in young alumni from a Christian university?
  - b. What are recent college graduates' understanding of faith-work integration and their experiences integrating faith and work since graduating from their institution?
  - c. If applicable, what impact does Christian higher education have on graduates' integration of faith and work? What influences and experiences within Christian higher education do graduates perceive as influential to their integration of faith and work?

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

Faith-work integration, also referenced as integration of faith and work, refers to “how people consciously or subconsciously integrate the meaning sets and teachings of their worldview . . . with their work” (Miller, 2010, p. 5). In recent decades, the involvement of religion, faith, and spirituality in the workplace has been increasingly addressed among major U.S. companies, academia, publishing, ministries, and the local church (Hammond et al., 2002; Hillman, 2005; Miller, 2007; Nash & McLennan, 2001). The following review of literature explores research regarding integration of faith and work. First, theoretical foundations to the Faith at Work movement, including definitions and developmental theories, are described. Next, the theology of work is presented based on recent literature. History and current research of the integration of faith and work are explained, specifically noting areas where literature is lacking regarding the exhibition of faith and work integration in emerging adults.

#### **Theoretical Foundation**

**Definitions.** Faith is broadly defined as the beliefs and worldviews that impact one’s way of living (Miller, 2010). Further, faith involves the “orientation of the total person, giving purpose and goal to one’s hopes and strivings, thoughts and actions” (Fowler, 1981, p. 14). Faith often overlaps with spirituality and religion, although it does

not necessitate either (Smith & Snell, 2009). Faith as referred to in the study, however, is rooted in the Christian narrative and God's redemptive story in the world.

The term *work* refers to the following definition:

. . . social activity whose primary goal is the creation of products or states of affairs that can satisfy the needs of working individuals or their co-creatures, or (if primarily an end in itself) activity that is necessary in order for acting individuals to satisfy their needs apart from the need for the activity itself. (Volf, 2001, p. 11).

A clear conceptual definition of work is difficult to pinpoint due to the various kinds, levels, and places of work (Miller, 2010). For example, an individual who is a stay-at-home parent might consider parenting as her or his main work. Additionally, work, in comparison to pleasure, is often marked by earning income, being employed, or serving a particular purpose. The presence of enjoyment does not disqualify an activity from being considered work. For the purpose of the study, work, whether a physical or mental activity, inevitably exists to achieve a purpose or result.

**Faith development.** Fowler (1981) proposed a six-stage model of faith development from infancy through adulthood. The first stage, described as Intuitive-Projective Faith, refers to an uncritical acceptance of parents' beliefs. Mythic-Literal Faith, stage two, involves a person imitating the beliefs, moral rules, and attitudes of his or her community. Next, Synthetic-Conventional Faith is developed in response to the broader community (i.e., family, school, church, or work) in order to develop a "coherent orientation" (p. 172). Individuative-Reflective Faith transitions from external forces to the individual internalizing and critically examining one's own beliefs, most often occurring between late adolescence and adulthood. The fifth stage is Paradoxical-

Consolidated Faith, in which one's past and developed beliefs are intertwined. Last, Universalizing Faith is a mature faith, resulting in unity with God and beliefs and involving sacrificial service to others.

Young adults tend to explore truth in pursuit of independence, which Parks (2011) described as "probing commitment" (p. 88), an additional stage between Fowler's Synthetic-Conventional Faith and Individuative-Reflective. Faith development, specifically from adolescence to adulthood, involves increasing independence and autonomy in relation to one's beliefs and way of living.

**Vocational development.** Understanding vocation is increasingly important to career development. The concept of vocation, defined as meaning and purpose to one's work, stems from Martin Luther and John Calvin and their biblical interpretation of spiritual work to include laypeople, not only religious leaders (Keller, 2012; Volf, 2001). In modern context, vocation is not limited to religious faith but rather refers to the internal process of understanding one's gifts and talents in order to better find meaning and purpose in one's work and service to others (Cunningham, 2016). The consensus among psychologists and developmental theorists is that human beings desire meaning in their work (Chalofsky, 2003).

Beginning in the 1940s, U.S. universities have significantly expanded career counseling (Pope, 2011), which includes assisting students in developing an understanding of vocation (Chalofsky, 2003; Clydesdale, 2015; Goins, 2015; Keller, 2012; Nordenson, 2014). Royce-Davis and Stewart (2000) found college seniors value spirituality, and specifically noted the importance of addressing spiritual struggles and spiritual growth in their development as a professional. The study identified a "need to



include recognition, validation, and discussion of spiritual issues as part of career planning” (p. 1). A common understanding of Christian vocation fosters students’ identity in serving God and others (Keller, 2012; Nordenson, 2014).

**Purpose of Christian higher education.** The early colonial colleges in the U.S. aimed to train men in Christian character to bring about flourishing in society (Ringenberg, 2006). Despite the overall secularization of the academy, Christian colleges and universities continue to seek to integrate faith and learning to prepare students. Using the eight core dimensions of faith developed in 1990 by Benson and Elkin, Beers (2003) applied their ideas to create a framework for Christian colleges and universities to use in promoting college students’ development. Specifically, five of the eight dimensions relate to the integration of faith and work:

1. Experiences a sense of personal well-being, security, and peace.
2. Integrates faith and life, seeing work, family, social relationships, and political choices as part of one’s religious life.
3. Holds life-affirming values including commitment to racial and gender equality, affirmation of cultural and religious diversity, and a personal sense of responsibility for the welfare of others.
4. Advocates social and global change to bring about greater social justice.
5. Serves humanity, consistently and passionately, through acts of love and justice. (p. 25)

Beers is not alone in addressing the importance of teaching the integration of faith and work in Christian higher education. In a study of 105 Christian institutional missions, the terms *faith*, *world*, *service*, and *career* (or *vocation*) were among the top 15 most cited

words (Woodrow, 2006). The mission of Christian colleges and universities promotes the integration of faith into one's life.

### **Theology of Work**

“The doctrine of vocation is not just teaching about the value of work. It comprises a theology of the Christian life,” according to Veith (2002, p. 19). Volf (2001) described a theology of work as

how one should or should not work, and what one should produce, in the larger context of reflection on the meaning of work in the history of God with the world and on the place of work in human beings' relation to their own nature, to their fellow human beings, and to the natural world. (p. 74).

A theology of work interweaves faith and vocational development with the intention of equipping individuals and communities to integrate faith and work.

Understanding work through the lens of God's creation situates work as “connected with divine, orderly creation and human purpose” (Keller, 2012, p. 33). The relationship between God's work and human efforts can be seen as reciprocal. Christian faith influences one's approach to work while work also impacts one's Christian character (Volf, 2001). Additionally, the history of God working through human beings changes the social and natural environment (Keller, 2012; Volf, 2001). An individual's beliefs constitute her or his personal theology of work, consequently impacting how she or he views and approaches her or his own work (Neubert & Dougherty, 2015).

### **Faith at Work Movement**

The integration of faith and work refers to the connection between Christian faith and the workplace (Keller, 2012). Recent literature focuses on assisting individuals to

approach daily work with meaning and purpose (Goins, 2015; Keller, 2012; Kidwell, 2014; Nelson, 2011; Nordenson, 2014; Sherman, 2011). A religious survey at Baylor University found 61% of full-time workers “regularly attending a religious service agreed that their work honors God” (Neubert & Dougherty, 2015, p. 68). The U.S. workforce, while interested in incorporating faith at the workplace, experiences disconnection between the two (Griebel, Park, & Neubert, 2014; Laszlo et al., 2012; Miller, 2007; Nash & McLennan, 2001; Neubert & Dougherty, 2015). The attempt to address the tension has resulted in the “Faith at Work Movement” (Miller, 2007). The movement explores internal and external forces impacting integration. Increased understanding of the phenomenon has resulted in a growing number of organizations dedicated to promoting faith-work integration.

**Internal forces.** Theology of work shapes and informs Christian ethics, motives, identity, witness, and worldview (Keller, 2012). Keller concluded the integration of faith and work is marked by a distinct set of virtues, view of humanity, and source of guidance in the workplace. Faith and work integration is associated with character and moral development. The “internalization and integration of core values, beliefs, and moral standards” (Sweeney & Fry, 2012, p. 89) is associated with identity development in addition to the development of specific character traits such as agency, self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, and social awareness. Additionally, “meaningful work” is found to develop a “sense of self, the work itself, and sense of balance,” contributing to personal wholeness (Chalofsky, 2003, p. 69). Walker (2013) confirmed the association between higher levels of life satisfaction and organizational commitment in individuals who integrate faith at work.

**External forces.** The integration of faith and work develops internally but is also impacted by outside forces. The process of incorporating religious beliefs and practices is influenced by social contexts, both religious and secular (Cadge & Konieczny, 2014). Higher education institutions, relationships with others (i.e., mentors and friendships), and the church can foster or discourage the integration of faith and work.

Since the early 2000s, research has revealed a shift in the religious climate of universities and growing religious diversity among college students (Cherry, Deberg, & Porterfield, 2001; Eck, 2001; Nash, 2001). According to Mayrl and Oeur (2009), “College students are more religiously engaged than has traditionally been thought, but... this interest appears to be more broad than deep” (p. 261). The 2004 Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) survey found 79% of college freshmen believed in God; 81% frequently or occasionally attended religious services; 83% were affiliated with a denomination; 40% considered it essential or very important to follow religious teachings in everyday life; 26% considered themselves to be born-again Christians; and 9% identified with a non-Christian religion (Astin, Astin, Lindholm, & Bryant, 2005).

The development of values and character in students is greatly impacted by faculty and the classroom (Matchett, 2008; Nesteruk, 2007; White, 2011). Christian higher education exists to incorporate faith and learning for the purpose of translating faith to future work and societal engagement (Bailey, 2012; Ruyendo, 2015). Other studies found a correlation between educational activities and character development, specifically in mission-driven, faith-based colleges and universities (Turi, 2012). Developing character and asking meaningful questions during college assists graduates in daily living out their faith, including in their future work (Shushok, 2011; Turi, 2012).

Significant relationships, both mentorship and friendships, affect the integration of faith and work. Recent literature on higher education recognizes the valuable impact of university faculty and staff on the development of students (Bok, 2013). Faculty members in Christian higher education are responsible for the integration of faith and learning but also simultaneously model their own integration of faith and work. Students benefit from role-models exemplifying faith and work integration, giving them an example to emulate in future practice.

Matthias (2008) found passion, strong faith, desire for integrity and wholeness, humility, and openness evident in faculty members integrating faith and work. Interestingly, participants recognized that, “while their faith certainly impacts their learning, their learning also impacts their faith” (p. 153). In addition to mentorships, spiritual friendships encourage students’ ability to pursue “life’s big questions, meaning, purpose, and moral development in such a way that human spirit is altered, reshaped, and transformed” (Shushok, 2011, p. 5). Such friendships influence the integration of faith and work in individuals not only during the university experience but also after graduation and while working.

Religious congregations influence faith-work integration and workplace outcomes. Active religious service attendance promotes workplace commitment, job satisfaction, and entrepreneurial behavior. Congregations that emphasize faith integration are associated with individuals who view their work more positively (Park, Rogers, Neubert, & Dougherty, 2014). Keller (2012) found the majority of full-time workers who regularly attended church most commonly exhibited faith integration through the enrichment of relationships at work and when faced with difficult, ethical

decisions. Only 38%, however, described their “work as partnership with God” (pp. 72–73). In response to growing interest, church congregations have developed “vocational discipleship” (p. 242) to assist members in integrating faith and work.

A number of external forces influence an individual’s integration of faith and work. Higher education, relationships, and churches are a few forces that might enable a person to explore the meaning of her or his work and how it might contribute to the furthering of God’s kingdom.

**Organizations.** The faith-work phenomenon has led to a growing number of organizations dedicated to promoting faith-work integration. Churches offer faith-work ministries. For example, Redeemer Presbyterian Church (n.d.) created the Center for Faith & Work to “empower the church as it is scattered, living and working out in the world” (para 1). Non-profit organizations specific to urban cities or universities are now dedicated to mentoring and training. Examples include the Denver Institute of Faith and Work, Nashville Institute for Faith and Work, and the Princeton Faith and Work Initiative. Other national or global entities address these issues: the Faith@Work Summit, the Institute for Faith, Work, and Economics, and the Washington Institute.

### **Integration of Faith and Work in Emerging Adults**

Emerging adulthood encompasses the period following adolescence as individuals transition to adulthood, typically including the ages of 18 to 29 years old (Arnett, 2000). In the US, characteristics of this life stage differ from those of previous generations due to increased life expectancy and increased access to higher education. Engagement in marriage and children has been delayed (Smith, Hojara, Davidson, & Herzog, 2011).

This demographic values self-expression, individualism, and the ability to choose, which transfers authority from religious leaders to the individual (Griebel et al., 2014).

Researchers argue emerging adults view religion as an entity supporting one's life rather than an organization demanding one changes (Smith & Snell, 2009). Thus, this demographic feels "free to choose what to believe based upon what satisfied them" (Griebel et al., 2014, p. 782). Consequently, emerging adults tend not to commit to a church community (Black, Smith, & Keels, 2014). Despite the disengagement with corporate church communities, faith development in young adults remains important. A study found three areas of faith development in Christian college seniors: "discovering self and an authentic connection with self, discovering others and an authentic connection with others, and discovering God and an authentic connection with God" (Powell, Tisdale, Willingham, Bustrum, & Allan, 2012, p. 187). As shown in other studies, two characteristics mark faith development during emerging adulthood. Young adults gain ownership of their beliefs, and, as faith changes, one's relationship with God becomes more reciprocal in nature (Balswick, Reimer, & King, 2005; Powell, et al., 2012).

Emerging adults and their relationship with work differ from those in other stages of adulthood. Black et al. (2014) found the present generation of emerging adults tends to work hardest in relation to projects they believe in or find interest in doing and strongly value work-life balance. For example, Griebel et al. (2014) described the importance of meaning to work this way:

Starting a business that reflects their values is a drive towards authenticity within their own faith, creating a congruent identity between their work and faith. In

order to have their faith be authentic to them, they need it to be present in all parts of their life, including their work. (p. 795)

Similarly, Dudeck (2004) found a relationship between spirituality and vocational values—specifically among young adults is an intentional effort to incorporate spirituality into one’s work life. Emerging adulthood is critical as individuals first enter the workplace and develop a framework for integrating, or not, their faith in the multiple facets of life. For emerging adults, the process of integrating faith and work not only benefits work outcomes but also their identity and overall well-being.

### **Summary**

The Faith at Work Movement generated research to better understand the characteristics of and influences on an individual’s integration of faith and work. Despite increasing literature regarding the concept of faith and work integration, research describing the degree to which individuals do this integration is lacking (Cadge & Konieczny, 2014; Miller, 2007; Walker, 2013). Most studies focus on faith traditions, religious attendance, or workplace impact; however, a gap exists in the literature on higher education’s impact in promoting the integration of faith and work (Lynn, Naughton, & VanderVeen, 2013). The questions guiding the study sought to identify the ways emerging adults integrate faith and work, specifically Christian college graduates and their perceptions concerning if and how Christian education influences this integration.



## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

The purpose of the study was to examine the perceived impact of Christian higher education on graduates' integration of faith and work. A mixed methods design was implemented to study the variables of Christian higher education and faith-work integration. Such a design is recommended to “provide a better understanding of your research problem than either type [quantitative or qualitative] by itself” (Creswell, 2012, p. 535). A convergent parallel mixed method allowed the researcher to collect and analyze quantitative and qualitative data in order to more fully explain the phenomenon in question (Creswell, 2014). By collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, the findings provided a richer description of alumni experiences integrating faith and work as well as their perception of the impact of Christian higher education on this integration.

### **Participants**

All participants in the study graduated from a small, private, faith-based liberal arts institution in the Midwest. The participating institution annually surveys alumni 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9 years after graduation. To avoid survey fatigue, the survey instrument for the study's first phase was emailed to 1,611 alumni who graduated 2, 4, 6, and 8 years prior.

Upon completing the online survey, participants volunteered to participate in the second phase of the study, a phone interview (see Appendix C for consent form).

Initially, a purposeful sampling was performed inviting 23 participants to proceed to the

interview process (Creswell, 2012). Maximal variation sampling guided the selection in order to “present multiple perspectives of individuals to represent the complexity” of the student body (p. 207). Due to low responses, the researcher utilized a convenient sampling and conducted 13 telephone interviews.

### **Procedures**

Prior to data collection, the researcher gained approval from the participating institution’s IRB as well as the institution’s alumni and advancement office in order to contact participants. The researcher collected quantitative data through a survey instrument and subsequently contacted interested participants to conduct telephone interview.

**Quantitative research component.** The first phase of the study utilized a survey design method to provide quantitative descriptions of trends in faith-work integration (Creswell, 2012). Data collection involved distributing The Integration Profile survey instrument in order to measure the faith-work integration type of graduates from a Christian liberal arts institution. Miller’s survey instrument, known as The Integration Profile (TIP), assesses four integration types as well as two sub-orientations for each type. The Integration Profile identifies the degree or extent (low, average, or high) to which a participant utilizes the eight sub-orientations. The survey recognizes the ability of participants to utilize various modes of integrating faith and work; thus, people and groups are not limited to one integration type nor are the individual manifestations in opposition. Equally, individuals are not expected to utilize all eight sub-orientations.

The researcher received permission to utilize the survey from the survey owner. The TIP instrument is a valid and reliable psychometric scale, measuring eight

orientations of faith-work integration (see Appendix A). The eight factors make up 57% of the total variance. The results of Cronbach's coefficient alpha revealed a range from 0.74 to 0.92, which supports reliability of the survey instrument (Miller & Ewest, n.d.).

The survey instrument was distributed in Fall 2016 through the institution's alumni office. Prior to survey completion, participants received a brief explanation of the research being conducted and electronically signed the consent form (see Appendix B). The survey remained open for two weeks. One email reminder was sent to alumni who had not participated in the survey 48 hours prior to the survey closing.

**Qualitative research component.** The second phase involved implementing semi-structured phone interviews in order to study participants' experiences integrating faith and work since graduating from the institution. Specifically, the researcher explored if and how their undergraduate institution prepared them to integrate faith and work. A phenomenological design was used in order to "make sense of [the] experience and transform [the] experience into consciousness, both individually and as shared meaning" (Patton, 2002, p. 104). In other words, the researcher interviewed the participants to understand "how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember, it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others" (p. 104).

The researcher conducted three pilot interviews before interviewing any participants. Practice interviews assisted the researcher in refining the interview protocol (see Appendix D). The researcher selected the participants from those who had expressed interest through the online consent form at the conclusion of the survey. A phone interview time was arranged via email. The researcher began the interviews by reviewing the purpose of the study and obtaining the participant's permission to record

and transcribe the interview. Participants were asked a series of questions relating to their understanding and experience of faith-work integration, followed by their perceptions of if and how Christian higher education impacted this integration.

Interviews ranged in length from 25 to 85 minutes. Each semi-structured interview was recorded and transcribed. Prior to analyzing the data, participants were provided with their interview transcription. The researcher provided this opportunity for participants to correct any errors as well as remove, clarify, or add any statements. Last, the researcher removed all participants' names and identifying details from the transcriptions, and each interview was assigned a number randomly.

### **Analysis**

Analysis was consistent with a convergent parallel design approach. Both phases were analyzed independently after data collection and then brought together for a final analysis in order to provide a rich description of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2014).

**Quantitative data analysis.** All the quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. In order to describe trends of faith-work integration among Christian college graduates, the researcher analyzed “general tendencies in the data, the spread of scores . . . [and] a comparison of how one score relates to all others” (Creswell, 2012, p. 182). The analysis allowed trends to emerge for frequency and averages of the eight factors of the TIP survey.

**Qualitative data analysis.** Pursuing a transcendental phenomenological approach, the researcher began by bracketing her own experiences of faith-work integration and attending a Christian university in order to focus on the participants' experience. Data collected in phase two was coded by “segmenting and labeling text to

form descriptions and broad themes in the data” (Creswell, 2012, p. 243). The researcher read through the data, identified significant statements, labeled the segments of information with codes, reduced the redundancy of codes, and collapsed codes into themes. Additionally, the researcher utilized an online analysis tool, Dedoose, to quantify the frequency of the themes as well as compare key words and phrases related to participants’ perceptions of influencers of faith-work integration.

**Mixed methods analysis.** After analyzing both data sets, the researcher brought the findings together. First, the research compared and related the findings to see what parts of the two data sets supported one another and if any conflicted. Conclusions were drawn from “how the connected results answer the quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods questions” (Creswell & Clark, 2011, p. 218). The researcher looked for convergence, divergence, contradictions, or relationships between the two datasets. The mixed methods analysis and interpretation of the quantitative and qualitative results is presented in the discussion section of Chapter 5.

## Chapter 4

### Results

The study gathered both quantitative and qualitative data to understand the manifestations of faith-work integration in alumni from a faith-based institution as well as their perceptions of influences from the university experience on their integration. Using a mixed methods design, the researcher gathered 177 survey responses and conducted 13 telephone interviews to provide an in-depth analysis. A convergent parallel method—analyzing the quantitative data and qualitative data independently—was used in order to provide more in-depth analysis of the phenomenon.

#### **Quantitative Component**

The quantitative component sought to explore the research question, “What are the common manifestations of faith-work integration in young alumni from a Christian college?” The Integration Profile (TIP) survey from the Princeton Faith and Work Initiative was sent to 1,611 alumni (50% of alumni from the last 10 years) from one institution, and 177 survey responses were collected for a low response rate of 11%.

**Demographics of survey participants.** From the 177 responses, 124 (70%) were female, and 53 (30%) were male, not reflective of the average female-male ratio of this particular institution. In relation to racial background, 93% indicated white, while the remaining 7% included the minority groups of Asian (n=6), Latino (n=3), other (n=2),

African-American (n=1), and Pacific Islander (n=1). Similar to gender, the diversity was lower than the average for the institution (approximately 17% at the time of the study).

**Frequency of integration types.** The Integration Profile measures how an individual integrates faith in the work place, yielding one of eight sub-orientations. For each sub-orientation, a participant scored 1 to 9. A preference score of 1-3 is low, 4-6 is average, and 7-9 is high. Each sub-orientation is calculated based on the relevant factor questions and not scaled in comparison to other types. Given this, a participant can have repeating scores in multiple sub-orientations. Table 1 presents the frequency of integration type by participants' scores (high, average, and low) according to each sub-orientation. Table 2 provides the mean and standard deviation for each sub-orientation.

Table 1

*Frequency of Integration Types*

Preference Score	Self Ethics	Community Ethics	Verbal Expression	Non-verbal Expression
High	21% (n=37)	38% (n=67)	36% (n=64)	15% (n=27)
Average	41% (n=72)	50% (n=88)	52% (n=92)	59% (n=105)
Low	38% (n=68)	12% (n=22)	12% (n=21)	26% (n=45)

Preference Score	Individual Enrichment	Group Enrichment	Experience Process	Experience Outcome
High	31% (n=53)	48% (n=84)	38% (n=68)	38% (n=67)
Average	56% (n=101)	38% (n=68)	54% (n=95)	47% (n=83)
Low	13% (n=23)	14% (n=25)	8% (n=14)	15% (n=27)

Table 2

*Descriptive Statistics*

	Self Ethics	Community Ethics	Verbal Expression	Non-verbal Expression
Mean	4.45	5.82	5.83	4.46
Standard Deviation	1.84	1.73	1.92	2.08

	Individual Enrichment	Group Enrichment	Experience Process	Experience Outcome
Mean	5.59	5.91	5.97	5.62
Standard Deviation	1.66	2.06	1.81	2.03

**Qualitative Component**

From 13 verbatim transcripts, 222 significant statements were extracted in the horizontalization process. Arranging and clustering the excerpts into meaning units resulted in 55 initial codes. In order to collapse the codes into larger themes, the researcher reviewed the transcripts for frequency of codes across participants. For the purpose of the study, themes were separated into two sections. The first section summarizes seven themes and three sub-themes related to participants understanding and manifestation of faith-work integration, whereas the second section outlines five themes

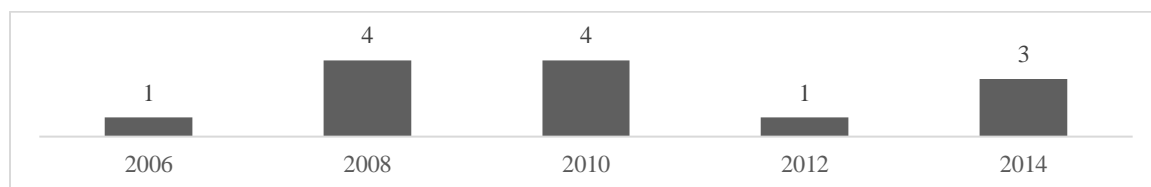


and one-subtheme related to participants' college experience and their perception of its impact on faith-work integration.

**Demographics of telephone interview participants.** From the 13 telephone interviews conducted, eight participants (62%) were female, and five (38%) were male. The participants ranged in age, the average being 29 years old, as well as the year they graduated from their institution (see Figure 1). Participants represented a variety of undergraduate majors, including biblical literature (n=2), history (n=2), biology (n=1), computer science (n=1), economics (n=1), elementary education (n=1), English education (n=2), finance (n=1), philosophy (n=1), political science (n=1), professional writing (n=1), psychology (n=1), social work (n=1), and systems (n=1).

Figure 1

*Graduation Year of Participants*



### **Participants' Understanding and Manifestations of Faith-Work Integration**

Participants were asked to define faith-work integration in their own words, as well as describe how they have integrated faith and work in past employment and their current occupation (if applicable). The interconnectedness of definitions and lived experiences were then clustered into seven significant themes (see Table 3).

Table 3

*Participants' Understanding and Manifestations of Faith-Work Integration*


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 Summary of Themes
 

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Theme 1: Imitating Christ

Theme 2: Faith as identity

Sub-theme 1: Faith as mindset, lens, or worldview

Theme 3: Verbally expressing faith

Theme 4: Scripture informing participants' approach and perspective of work

Theme 5: Variation in integrating faith and work

Sub-theme 1: Impact of work environment/responsibilities on faith-work integration

Sub-theme 2: Challenges or perseverance in their work

Theme 6: Guided by vocation

Theme 7: Experiencing God in participants' work

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**Theme 1: Imitating Christ.** Participants focused on how they conducted themselves—specific behaviors and interactions with others—in the workplace. All 13 participants referenced emulating Christ through their behaviors in the workplace as a way to integrate faith and work. Participant 10 commented,

How do I go to work every day, how do I pray for my co-workers, how do I interact with them, how do I represent Christ to them? . . . just sort of like those daily questions that you ask are like, well, how does God fit into this moment and how do I honor Him?

Similarly, Participant 3 mentioned, “And, so I’ve always kind of felt like it was my job to, I guess, just represent Christ as best as I can and just love people and just, um, show them the love of Christ.”

Imitating Christ motivated participants to love and serve others in their workplaces. In her work as a social worker, Participant 13 elaborated,

I want people to feel like I'm not there to judge them and that I accept people where they are in life . . . Jesus accepts us as we are and encourages us to come to Him as we are, warts and all, you know...He loves us no matter what. And so, I guess I just want people to, um, know that they can be comfortable around me and safe around me . . . that I'm not there to judge them, that it's unconditional.

Within the intention of loving others as Christ loved them, participants further described imitating Christ as the purpose of witnessing for Christ. Participant 10 stated,

I'm still called to reflect Christ in . . . how I interact [with others] or how I manage something . . . [it's] going to and should point others to the truth of the gospel. And, um, what Jesus has done in my heart, and what he can do for them.

For Participant 2, exemplifying Christ felt imperative in a workplace where she was the only devoted Christian and many co-workers worked on temporary visas. She explained,

I was always very cognizant of the fact that, even though they were spending a few years living in the United States . . . most of them were just there temporarily. I might be the only or one of a few Christians, serious Christians, that they ever actually have a lot of conversations with. . . . So, even though I may not be talking to them about Christianity every day I was very aware of my behavior . . . they knew that I was a Christian. So, I had to behave in a way that was in line with Christian ideals and not going to give them a false impression of Christianity, because this might be the only picture of it they ever get.

Participant 12 summarized the importance of being a Christian witness, "God has given me work to do . . . and to represent Him well in my workplace and to interact with my co-

workers in a way that is glorifying and honoring to Him and represents Him well to them.”

In addition to the daily interactions with others and choosing how to respond like Christ, some participants expanded on conducting their work with Christian integrity and work ethic. Participant 5 mentioned,

When you go in every day, doing your best work . . . having that work ethic that I think we’re called to have as Christians . . . doing everything with a level of integrity. So maybe in that spreadsheet you’re saying, “Well, should I round up? Should I round down? Should I add in some?” You know, the way you make decisions and the way you want to, if I was to keep things above the line, above reproach, right? Um, I think is a way you would see my faith in every day.

Participant 7 pointed out the importance of being a Christian in an industry that is assumed to lack integrity. He shared,

The overall population has a very low expectation when they go into [my industry] of being treated fairly, ethically, morally, with respect . . . Certainly being a Christian and saying, “Look, I’m going to make business decisions based on what I think is morally right, morally correct, regardless of whether the business outcome is positive or negative. I’m going to do what’s right. I’ve given my word. I’m going to honor it even if that means I’m going to take less profit or whatever the situation is.”

**Theme 2: Faith as identity.** Twelve participants described faith as part of their identity and, consequently, their faith as inseparable from their work. In essence, wherever they go, their faith goes with them. Participant 6 articulated, “I feel like the

two [faith and work] coincide together, like, I personally can't view them separate. Um, in the sense that because I am a Christ-follower I need to show the fruits of the Spirit, basically, to others." Similarly, Participant 12 stated,

I think for me the integration of faith and work, or how I would describe it is just . . . if your faith defines who you are, it should define your work. So I think your work should be yet another subset of your faith and who you are in Christ and not like a separate thing. . . . They should all be considered together and your work should be an outpouring of who you are as a Christian.

For Participant 5, not integrating faith and work is harder than doing so: "I think it's all about the personhood and the person that you are, um, guided by the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, how you conduct yourself with others, [and] how you interact with others."

Other participants described how their faith or identity in Christ came first, before anything else. Participant 10 mentioned, "My primary call as a believer, but my secondary call to my job and doing that well." Faith served as a constant, despite varying work situations and environments. Participant 13 explained,

I am a person of faith whether I'm working at an explicitly faith-based organization or one that is not. And so that's not gonna change who I am, or what I believe, or how I treat people, or the way I act, you know?

***Sub-theme 1: Faith as mindset, lens, or worldview.*** One sub-theme emerged under faith as identity. Eight of the thirteen participants stated their faith impacts the way they view their work, how they see others, and determines their perspective when engaging in their work. Participant 1 commented, "I'm a Christian foremost doing the

work that I do . . . it is a lifestyle. It's a way of seeing the world, seeing people, about seeing the work I do." Likewise, Participant 8 described,

I would probably say that you, if, if you're integrating your faith with your work, then you're not starting any of your work until you've, until you've really examined your faith and until you, you keep that in your mind. It's sort of like the lens through which you view all of your work, I would say.

While certainly tied to identity, the idea of faith as a mindset, lens, or worldview was also distinctly described by participants.

**Theme 3: Verbally expressing faith.** When asked how they integrate faith and work, 12 of the 13 participants mentioned verbally expressing their faith. In his first employment, Participant 9 regularly worked with people, whether coworkers or customers, and he recalled,

If I felt like the conversation could go toward talking about my faith, it was easy to direct the conversation that way. And I found it, um, to be a strength I didn't know I had, which was really interesting.

He described verbalizing faith as evangelizing in settings with non-Christians, whereas, in his second career where he worked with more Christians, he described it as edification since they shared similar beliefs.

Some participants identified verbal expression of faith as a way others integrate faith and work, but other participants did not. Participant 5 explained,

Some people would define that aspect, that part of being a Christian, is sharing my faith with my coworkers and bringing them to Christ. I think people would

know I'm a Christian but I don't think it's something I talk about a lot unless, you know, asked about it.

Similarly, Participant 7 echoed, "I would say that my role here is different in that I don't talk about my faith unless I'm asked. I don't initiate conversations about that here very often." Participant 8, a schoolteacher in the public school system, described not being able to share about his faith unless a student explicitly asked.

Some participants described a middle ground of being open and willing to discuss faith with others while not forcing it. For example, Participant 6 commented,

I don't think integrating faith and work means you're constantly talking about Jesus all the time. I think it's carefully listening to the conversation, um, seeing where it flows . . . if the conversation actually flows to talking about faith and not being shy and giving an answer or sharing whatever your experiences are.

Several participants said verbalizing their faith required a willingness to listen to the other. Participant 2 described her experience of sharing her faith beliefs with a coworker of another religion: "I don't know that you can say that I took them like on a five-point gospel plan, but I definitely made clear to them, you know what I believe and they made clear to me what they believed." Participant 1 discussed the positive benefits of verbalizing faith beliefs in the workplace when he stated, "It seems like a, uh, people have been fairly willing and interested to know what matters, um, and I think that's something that helps foster belonging in the places that I've been."

**Theme 4: Scripture informing participants' approach and perspective of work.** In this cluster, 10 participants referenced how scripture informs their

understanding of and approach to work. Some participants abstractly mentioned the role of scripture and its influence on behavior. Participant 5 described,

There's just some key Christian principles that translate . . . into the workplace or what a hard worker looks like . . . we talk about the Christian work ethic, we talk about you know, um, staying above reproach, doing what's right . . . I think the Bible and my faith support my ability to go into tough situations, go into the workplace, and um, get my, get my job done in an excellent way.

She further mentioned how scripture emphasizes the importance of stewardship and applying this principle in the workplace.

Participants mentioned specific passages of scripture that guide them in their workplace. Three participants referenced the same passage from Colossians 3:23. For example, Participant 9 commented, "I am working for the Lord and not for any one man or any even the company and that's probably when I do my best work." Participant 12 took it a step further and stated, "To do it for the Lord and not for men. But, to also do it because I am called to honor those in authority over me, um, and to obey their instruction, and to work hard for them." Similarly, participants commonly referenced their desire to glorify God in the work they do.

In addition to mentioning specific passages, participants also commented on the general impact of scripture in their daily work. Interwoven throughout interviews was a sense of applying scripture to their perspective on work in their life. Participant 3 told a story of a young client, not from a Christian background, in her first employment who was repeating a line from the cartoon *Veggie Tales*, "1 John 4:11! 1 John 4:11!" She later looked up the verse, which instructed, "Since God so loved us, we also ought to love one



another.” She explained, “And, it just really hit me like, you know, this is my place right now, to love these kids and, um, you know . . . see them through God’s eyes.”

**Theme 5: Variation in integrating faith and work.** Nine participants commented on the variety of different ways they or others integrate faith and work. Some explained how they integrated their faith and work differently in the various employment situations they had experienced. Other participants contrasted their integration style with how others, such as friends or co-workers, integrate faith and work. Several participants specifically compared how others evangelize in their workplace or verbalize their faith to co-workers, but they do not. Participant 3 stated,

Obviously, there’s places where you can just really easily, easily and openly share your faith, um, you know, point exactly to the Gospel. But there’s also work places like what I believe I’m in now where it’s more about just bringing Christ in a different way through your actions or through loving other people.

Even though there are broadly similar ways for integration of faith and work to occur, one participant described manifestations as inward or outward. For example, from the themes already discussed, emulating Christ often is an outward expression of respecting or caring for others through one’s behavior in the workplace setting. By contrast, a person’s integrity and worldview are inward processes for integrating faith and work.

***Sub-theme 1: Impact of work environment/responsibilities on faith-work integration.*** Ten participants mentioned the impact of their work environment or responsibilities on the manner in which they integrated faith and work. Their expression type and the degree to which participants integrated faith and work were limited or influenced by their work environment. Six of the thirteen participants had worked in

both secular and Christian-affiliated organizations within their career lifetime. Many shared parallel sentiments, stating something similar to, “It looked different between X company and Y company.” While participants did not label secular workplaces as bad or negative, they often described it as an opportunity to integrate faith and work differently.

***Sub-theme 2: Challenges or perseverance in their work.*** Six participants addressed the impact of challenges at work and the need for perseverance relating to their integration of faith and work. Some participants graduated from their institution and entered the workforce during the 2007-2009 recession in the United States, which affected their ability to find work quickly or work within their field of study. Other participants described negative work-environments, challenging ethical situations, or lack of purpose within the work that made it difficult for them and also reinforced their reliance on God in order to persevere in those circumstances. Participant 2 described a time when she asked herself, “Can I do this job as a Christian? Can I be a light for Christ here, in this office?” Others had physically or emotionally draining aspects to their jobs that required them to rely on God, which is discussed more in Theme 7.

**Theme 6: Guided by vocation.** Nine participants referenced the role of vocation or calling in regards to faith-work integration. Some participants described it simply as “a call from God to my current occupation to serve Him in my work” (Participant 10). Some participants also described an individual calling in which God indicates a particular kind of work, whereas others mentioned the broader calling as Christians to love others.

In regards to vocation, several mentioned the difficulty of being so preoccupied with finding their calling that, at times, it hindered them. For example, Participant 12 explained,

I am so prone to getting really wrapped up in, um, like trying to find exactly the right thing that I'm supposed to do for the rest of my life, or like, what purpose am I trying to fulfill or what exact task am I supposed to do or what struggle am I supposed to overcome to like fulfill my life, or to gain like the meaning in my life or to like fulfill my purpose as a human being. Um, and so realizing that like, that doesn't matter so much. Like, I have purpose and worth because I am a child of God and I have meaning, um, in life because He has given it to me and He has given me this work to do as kind of an outpouring of what I already have, um, as a purposeful creature of, um, His creation.

Overall, participants related vocation to the larger idea that God calls us to work and it matters. Participant 11 specified, "I have like a very high perspective of work and, um and like that God does too."

When mentioning vocation, many participants articulated a desire for legacy, culture making, or missions. In other words, they desired for their work to have purpose. Several participants specifically alluded to the need to lead coworkers toward God. Also, a desire to be faithful to God in daily moments and over the long-term was discussed.

**Theme 7: Experiencing God in participants' work.** Seven participants described experiences of encountering God in their work. Participant 12 articulated, My thought patterns around faith and work is that God is Sovereign. Which doesn't necessarily seem like it has a lot of bearing, but it's been, um, just kind of a constant exercise for me to remember I'm here and I'm doing work because God created me to do work and this is the work He's given me.

Participant 1, a public school teacher, also referenced the sovereignty of God: “Hey, it’s not about just me with them. I know that the Spirit is also working, and God is intervening in ways that I don’t even know about.” In a sense, God is responsible for the fruit or outcomes of their work.

For some, experiencing God in the workplace sustained them in the work they do. “Whatever situation you're in, be it good or bad, to treat it as a learning experience and to always be looking for what is God trying to teach me through this work experience that I'm in” (Participant 2). Participant 13 worked in social services where she witnessed depressing and upsetting circumstances involving children. She expressed,

My faith was especially helpful when I was doing child welfare because . . . to know that seeing all the things that some of these kids had experienced and gone through...that all was going to be wiped away one day . . . they’re not going to have to worry about it anymore. And thank goodness Jesus is going to come back and make this all better because there’s a lot of really crappy things that they’re experiencing . . . If anything it just, it was a source of hope for me, but then also a motivator for why I was doing the work that I was doing.

Experiencing God’s hope was critical to sustaining meaningful but difficult jobs.

### **Participants’ Perceptions of College Experience Impact on Faith-Work Integration**

The researcher asked participants to reflect on their Christian higher education and describe how their education may have influenced their integration of faith and work. Five major themes and one sub-theme emerged in analysis (see Table 4).

Table 4

*Participants' Perceptions of College Experience Impact on Faith-Work Integration*

Summary of Themes
Theme 1: Integrating faith
Sub-theme 1: The example of faith and learning
Theme 2: Impact of relationships
Theme 3: Equipped for the workplace
Theme 4: Solidifying participants' beliefs
Theme 5: Lack of real/practical experience to integrate faith and work

**Theme 1: Integrating faith.** Twelve participants described the importance of integrating faith in the various dimensions of their college experience. Faith was present in every area of campus life, whether in classes, chapels, or conversations with peers. With the experience integrating faith at an institution holding faith as an underlying educational thread, participants felt prepared to continue integrating or considering their faith in all areas of their life post-graduation. Participant 10 stated,

I think like kinda broad strokes, that faith is just like a part of everything that we do. I mean, you know, every class had some kind of either implicit or explicit understanding behind it, and that was, you know, the truth of our faith and the truth of the gospel, and what, you know, is what we believe first and foremost and that's how we move forward. So, I think, it sort of, it informs on what we study and what we learned. It's the lens through which we look through everything . . . just being encouraged to have that be the backdrop of my work.

Participant 9 expressed, "I think there was an expectation . . . maybe more unspoken than anything else . . . that you need to integrate your faith with everything you do." Another participant described the impact of a "Christ-centered approach" (Participant 8).

Participant 12 explained how her university experience addressed the temptation to dichotomize various areas of her life:

I think something I started to grasp at [my institution] about like the faith and learning integration that then translates to faith and work is that they're not two separate boxes. I don't have a work box and a spiritual box. I am . . . like, my spiritual life should be permeating all of my life because that's like the core of who I am. And so, um, the integration just looks like taking myself to work every day, if that makes sense.

Integrating faith into the various aspects of university life provided a framework for participants in future workplaces to integrate faith and work.

***Sub-theme 1: The example of faith and learning.*** Eleven participants referenced the experience of integrating faith and learning as influential to their present-day integration of faith and work. Participant 2 put it like this:

Multiple classes, multiple chapels and things where they're talking about this integration of faith and learning—which in a sense can be applied to the integration of faith and work because really, you're taking something, your faith, and integrating it with something that is thought to be secular.

Participant 3 similarly explained, “They did kind of a good job preparing me with understanding that you can have both faith and work or both faith and [my major].”

Some participants described specific assignments or class exercises in which professors asked them to look at issues with different perspectives, both their disciplinary view and a Biblical lens. Participant 8 recalled, “In a lot of my English classes, the ability to have discussions about classic texts, but then take it further and connect that to my faith . . . I

think was a big piece of seeing that constant connection between faith and work.”

Essentially, the experience of integrating faith and learning equipped participants to look for connections between the two, and the process of doing so similarly translated into their practice of integrating their faith and work.

**Theme 2: Impact of relationships.** Eleven participants specified the impact of relationships—such as with peers, mentors, faculty, and other institution leaders—that have helped them develop their understanding of integrating faith and work. Observing how others integrate faith and work (e.g., professors, the university president) provided examples for participants to emulate in their own work setting. Participant 9 conveyed,

As a business student I, uh, had a lot of classes with professors that also had, uh, real world experience before they came to [the institution] as professors . . . just seeing, you know, having relationships with them, um, and seeing both their faith and their knowledge of business, um, at least showed me the possibility that you can be both. That you can have great faith, but also have a great knowledge of business and be good at your job.

Other participants mentioned how professors integrated faith and work in the classroom, such as opening class with prayer or sharing a devotional. Additionally, participants described how faculty invited students into their home or cared for them, which they viewed as an integration of their faith and work.

While at the institution, the experience of interacting with peers of different backgrounds and engaging in dialogue prepared them for conversations in their workplace. Despite being similar in that the majority of students were Christian, one participant described, “Even within that, differences in doctrine or religious practice and

kind of navigating, being respectful of someone's differences, but trying to find out why they believe that, whether you should believe that" (Participant 7). Learning how to engage in conversations prepared this participant for the workplace and being able to navigate differences in the workplace.

On the other hand, the Christian community that was formed with peers and university employees during their undergraduate careers followed many participants into adulthood. These relationships provided support systems for encouraging one's faith or general approach to life. Participant 3 described it as "Christian friendship to fall back on"; she could rely on college friendships in work seasons when it felt difficult to integrate faith and work. Mentoring relationships with faculty members or long-term relationships within the university impacted participants, predominately in terms of faith development, which then strengthened their ability to integrate faith and work.

**Theme 3: Equipped with knowledge and skills for the workplace.** Six participants referred to feeling prepared and equipped by their institution. Participant 5 explained, "From my classes and from some of my extracurricular activities, [it] made me good at what I do. Prepared me for the workplace, gave me skills and confidence to execute in the workplace." Being prepared with knowledge and skills mattered because it gave participants confidence and credibility in the workplace. In a sense, doing their job well proved necessary in order to integrate faith and work effectively.

**Theme 4: Solidifying participants' beliefs.** Another clear theme was indicated by six participants, who explained how their university experience developed their faith by solidifying what they believed. Participants specifically referenced the classroom and receiving knowledge, which in turn developed their faith. Examples included class



discussions on philosophy, ethics, or scripture, how one should live, “hearing multiple right ways to live out your faith” (Participant 1), or being “taught to think more open-mindedly about the Bible and Scriptures” (Participant 8).

In part, understanding what Christians believed prepared participants to be able to articulate an understanding of their faith in the workplace. The ability to discuss “what you believe in, who you are, [and] knowing yourself” (Participant 7) was important in preparing participants to integrate faith and work.

**Theme 5: Lack of practical experience to integrate faith and work.**

Participants proved overwhelmingly positive in describing their preparedness to integrate faith and work in terms of knowledge, ways of thinking, and skills, yet the lack of real, practical experience of integrating faith and work emerged as a theme. Participant 3 mentioned, “You get kind of the knowledge, you just don’t get as much practice.”

The Christian community of the institution was overwhelmingly positive to participants. At the same time, participants suggested the “Christian bubble” did not necessarily prepare them for work environments where the majority of people are non-Christians. Participant 9 said, “[My institution], I would say, did not necessarily prepare me to share my faith in that sort of environment. Um, it did prepare me in giving me the knowledge that I could have to share with those people.” Participants referencing this theme were quick to rationalize why it was not necessarily possible for the institution to prepare them for secular environments. For example, Participant 11 stated, “I mean, the only way they didn’t prepare me is that . . . kind of where it’s just such a back-stabbing kind of culture. But do you really even want to teach that?”

## **Summary**

The phenomenon of faith-work integration among Christian college graduates—both how it manifests in their current work as well as perceptions of how their university influenced it—has been presented. Faith-work integration varied in manifestation across participants, sometimes influenced by work responsibilities and environments. The common thread among participants, however, was a concept of faith as central to their identity, thus informing how they engage and view their work, others, and the world. Christian higher education contributed to participants' ability to integrate faith and work in two predominant ways: (1) modeling a Christ-centered approach and making faith integral to all areas of their life, whether class, community, or service; and (2) equipping individuals to do their future work well by providing skills and knowledge.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Discussion**

Similar to past literature describing the relationship between faith and work (Hammond et al., 2002; Miller, 2007; Nash & McLennan, 2001), the current study challenged fragmentation or separation in a person's life and, instead, supported the value of faith integration and connection between a person's identity and values in the various stations of life. Previous studies have focused on the importance of "bringing one's 'whole self' to work," specifically defending the need to take "seriously that religious belief is part of the whole for many individuals" (Lynn, Naughton, & VanderVeen, 2009, p. 230). The findings and results of the study extend insights regarding the common understandings and manifestations of faith-work integration, specifically in relation to Christian higher education and alumni perceptions of its impact on integration.

#### **Common Understandings and Manifestations of Faith-Work Integration**

The survey results, while limited due to the low response rate, revealed a spread of different integration types across alumni. None of the eight factors were statistically significant or dominant in comparison to the others. This finding is supported by the qualitative findings, in which participants explicitly described variation in ways to integrate faith and work, whether for themselves in various roles and workplaces or observing variation in others. A plethora of scales exist that have attempted to analyze how human values, religious beliefs, or spiritual well-being manifest in the workplace

(e.g., Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Kinjerski & Skyrpnek, 2006; Pandey, Gupta, & Arora, 2009; Lynn et al., 2009).

While participants varied in how faith manifested itself in the workplace, the collective majority expressed a similar foundation or understanding of integration. A desire to imitate Christ in the workplace, the ability to appropriately express their faith verbally, and the role of Scripture in informing participants' approach and perspective of work were all prevalent. As previously mentioned, Griebel et al. (2014) found that, "in order [for emerging adults] to have their faith be authentic to them, they need it to be present in all parts of their life, including their work" (p. 795). The participants in the study similarly echoed the sentiments of congruency between their work and faith. Specifically, the study has provided a thicker description of factors that guide Christians in the workplace: imitating Christ, verbally expressing one's faith, and being guided by Scripture in the workplace.

### **Alumni Perceptions of University Impact on Integration**

Participants overwhelmingly agreed integrating faith into the various aspects of the university experience provided a framework for faith-work integration in their current workplaces. This finding also overlapped with the participants' description of faith as identity. A study on faculty's experiences of integrating faith and learning reached a similar conclusion. All the faculty participants described "their faith in ontological terms, such as the essence of their being, inseparable in every way from every aspect of their life and work, the center of everything they do" (Sites, Garzon, Milacci, & Boothe, 2009, p. 32). Christian higher education creates an organizational structure for organizing one's life around one's faith identity. The combination of the study and Sites et al. indicated

this faith integration is impactful for both students and faculty. While the study cannot prove the university experience uniquely develops this perspective of the integral nature of faith, participants agreed integrating faith at their university mattered.

Another important connection is participants' description of verbally expressing faith in the workplace and the university experience solidifying participants' beliefs. One participant described being asked about the Old Testament at work and responding by giving a synopsis of her Biblical Literature course. Others mentioned their education provided a framework for engaging with coworkers who could not articulate their own beliefs. Beyond being able to verbalize the core tenants of ones' faith, solidifying what participants believed also included a deeper understanding of God's redemptive story and a call to be change-agents in the world. Similarly, this call for believers to be obedient to Christ is echoed in various publications (e.g., Garber, 2007; Guinness, 2003; Keller, 2012; Palmer, 1999; Willard, 2006).

### **Implications**

A study on faith integration in the classroom by Dulaney et al. (2015) concluded, "It has now been determined that this integration is the most distinguishing feature between religious and secular universities" (p. 61). Participants of the current study reinforced this distinctive mark of Christian higher education, practicing the inseparability of faith and life and its impact on faith integration in the workplace. Three implications emerged from the study, some specific to the Christian university but others applicable to other organizations that impact faith-work integration, such as the local and global church, parachurch organizations, and employers interested in holistic support to their employees.

First, higher education professionals, both faculty and staff, should continue to emphasize faith integration. While many participants reached the conclusion it was the “faith factor” of their educational experience that most affects their current faith-work integration, many also noted their institution did not explicitly address it in terms of faith-work integration. Rather, it was hidden or implicit. When asked to define or describe the integration of faith and work, some responded, “Integrating faith and work . . . how would I explain that?” or “I mean, coming from [my institution] this is a concept that sort of becomes like second nature and then you’re like wait, do I actually know what it means?”

Second, institutions can improve graduates’ preparedness through intentional discussion regarding both vocation and faith-work integration, whether in the classroom, chapel, or residence hall. Tim Clydesdale studied Lilly Endowment programs at 88 different institutions that focused on vocational exploration. Overwhelmingly, students who participated in these programs and conversations around purpose and flourishing experienced a positive impact in their future work and endeavors. Similarly to the study at hand, Clydesdale (2015) recommended institutions engage “the questions of what makes a meaningful life both in and out of the classroom, and . . . [allow] students to engage their religious and spiritual identities when they answer” (p. 226).

Last, educators must model and practice faith integration themselves. Many participants described faith-work integration from their observations of others. Similarly, when asked about their university experience, several participants reflected upon observing university faculty, both academic and student affairs, as models of integrating faith and work well. Dulaney and colleagues (2015) argued for encouraging faith

integration through mentoring: “Setting students up with these professionals gives them another example of integration to study and follow” (p. 58). Similarly, Lynn, Naughton, and VanderVeen (2010) found non-family workplace mentors and role models impacted faith-work integration. Mentorship need not be limited to academic faculty, and institutions should consider inviting alumni to share how they meaningfully engage their faith in their work.

### **Limitations**

The study had a number of limitations affecting data collection and analysis. The intended methodology of the study was an exploratory sequential mixed method. The researcher would collect the quantitative survey results and then further explore the findings through the qualitative interviews. A delay in access to The Integration Profile survey shortened the research timeframe, and, therefore, the researcher changed the method to a convergent parallel approach.

Another limitation of the study is the low response rate (11%) in the quantitative data. A host of unknown reasons could explain the low response rate, such as out-of-date alumni email addresses. Whatever the cause, the low response rate does not provide an adequate percentage of alumni necessary to describe trends of integration types of all alumni. For meaningful interpretation, the numerical analysis must be considered in conjunction with the qualitative findings and mixed method analysis.

Additionally, the convenience sampling of the telephone interviews was not the original intent. An initial purposeful sampling was conducted. Due to a low number of initial replies, however, the researcher contacted additional participants until saturation of data was obtained for the qualitative portion of the study. From the sampling of

volunteers for the second phase, the telephone interview participants lacked diversity with no representation of minority students.

Last, bias of both the researcher and participants may be evident in the study. All participants in both phases of the study volunteered. More specifically, participants interviewed in the second phase may have been more interested in the topic of faith-work integration than the initial sampling pool. Similarly, though the researcher conducted bracketing to remove any personal bias, some bias may remain in regards to past experiences in Christian higher education and understanding of faith-work integration.

### **Future Research**

Given the study's limited focus on a single Christian university, future studies could expand participants to include multiple institutions. In doing so, other research might consider comparing findings at various types of institutions. A larger survey sampling is needed. Correlational research may be beneficial in order to understand the relationship between faith-work integration and assorted factors, such as specific disciplines and majors of participants or specific areas of the university (e.g., calling and career, general education courses, or student leadership). Last, future research might look at identifying educators' and leaders' understanding of faith-work integration and their goals for preparing graduates for the workplace in relation to integrating their faith.

### **Conclusion**

According to Benefiel, Fry, and Geigle (2014), "Research has shown that most students, workers, marketplace professionals, and leaders want to live a holistic life that integrates, among other things, faith and work, but have few resources to help them do that" (p. 177). The study sought to explore how Christian higher education might serve



as a resource for equipping its graduates to integrate faith and work. Faith-based universities aim to prepare their graduates to engage in their work and whole life in light of being made in the image of God and according to our Christian calling (Beers, 2003; Glanzer et al., 2017). Specifically integrating faith into the various dimensions of the university experience not only contributes significantly to faith development but also proves beneficial in guiding graduates in their later integration of faith and work.

The impact of Christian higher education on faith-work integration in alumni has been described in the broader context of higher education research. Mirroring the subtle, often tacit ways Christian universities emphasize or teach it, integrating faith and work may be more hidden or inward in how it manifests in the work of alumni. Faith cannot be left behind or separated from who they are, how they live and work, and how they treat others. Christian institutions must be intentional in forming students in relation to their faith identity, which will guide their integration of faith and work.

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## Appendix A

### The Integration Profile: Explanation of the Four Manifestations

Manifestation (Four E's)	Description	Orientations
Ethics Type	Places high value on attention to ethical concerns.	<i>Community:</i> Ethical issues pertaining to organizational and social concerns.  <i>Self:</i> Ethical issues pertaining to individual and interpersonal ethical concerns.
Expression Type	Places high value on the ability to express their faith tradition and worldview to others.	<i>Verbal:</i> Verbally declare their faith/spirituality to those at work.  <i>Non-Verbal:</i> Use non-verbal ways as a means to express their faith/spirituality.
Experience Type	Places high value on how they experience their work, understanding work as a spiritual calling with special meaning and purpose.	<i>Outcomes:</i> Views work primarily as a means to an end.  <i>Process/activity:</i> Views work as an end in itself.
Enrichment Type	Places high value on drawing strength and comfort from religious/spiritual and/or consciousness practices.	<i>Group:</i> Seeks others with similar inclinations, finding comfort, growth, and encouragement in group interactions.  <i>Individual:</i> Engages in non-group and less publically engaged ways of finding comfort, growth, and encouragement.

*Note:* Table adapted from “The Integration Box (TIB): An Individual and Institutional Faith, Religion, and Spirituality at Work Assessment Tool” (Miller & Ewest, 2013, p. 407)

## Appendix B

### Survey Informed Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a research study on how you integrate faith and the workplace. You were selected as a possible subject because you graduated from Taylor University. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

The study is being conducted by Emilie Hoffman to fulfill the thesis requirement of Taylor's Master of Higher Education and Student Development program.

What the study is about: The purpose of this study is to both understand: (1) the ways in which Christian college graduates integrate faith and work; and (2) graduates' perception of what impacts their ability to integrate faith and work

What we will ask you to do: If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to complete the Integration Box survey. The survey has 3 sections with 60 questions in total. Completing the survey should take no more than 20 minutes. Questions will ask you about how you currently integrate faith and work.

Risk and benefits: The researcher does not anticipate any risks to you participating in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life. You are free to stop the survey at any time, and incomplete surveys will not be used in this project. You may benefit from the opportunity to identify and reflect how you integrate faith and work. The researcher will notify all invited participants when the results of this study will be announced. You may benefit from hearing the results of the findings from this study.

Your answers will be confidential. The records of this study will be kept private. In any public report or presentation of the research findings, the researcher will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you.

Taking part is voluntary: Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. If you decide not to take part or to skip some of the questions, it will not affect your relationship with Taylor University. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time.

If you have questions: Please contact principal investigator, Emilie Hoffman, Graduate Student, at [emilie\\_hoffman@taylor.edu](mailto:emilie_hoffman@taylor.edu) or 765.998.4373. You may also contact Drew Moser, Faculty Advisor, at [drmoser@taylor.edu](mailto:drmoser@taylor.edu) or 765.998.5384. Additionally, you may contact Taylor University's Institutional Review Board at [IRB@taylor.edu](mailto:IRB@taylor.edu) or the Chair of IRB, Sue Gavin, at [ssgavin@tayloru.edu](mailto:ssgavin@tayloru.edu) or 765.998.5188.

#### SUBJECT'S CONSENT

By ticking this box, I give my consent to participate in this research study.

## Appendix C

### OPTIONAL FOLLOW-UP PHONE INTERVIEW INFORMED CONSENT

#### [Provided After Submitting Survey]

Thank you for participating in the first phase of this study. You are invited to provide your name and contact details if you would like to volunteer for the second phase of this study.

**What we will ask you to do:** If you agree to the second phase of this study, the researcher will contact 10-12 participants to conduct a 30- to 45-minute phone interview. The interview will involve the researcher asking you questions regarding previous experiences or preparations you draw upon to help you integrate your faith and work.

**Risk and benefits:** The researcher does not anticipate any risks to you participating in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life. You are free to stop the telephone interview at any time, and incomplete interviews will not be used in this project. You may benefit from the opportunity to identify and reflect how you integrate faith and work. The researcher will notify all invited participants when the results of this study will be announced. You may benefit from hearing the results of the findings from this study.

**Your answers will be confidential.** The records of this study will be kept private. In any public report or presentation of the research findings, the researcher will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you.

**Taking part is voluntary:** Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. It will not affect your relationship with Taylor University. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time.

**If you have questions:** Please contact principal investigator, Emilie Hoffman, Graduate Student, at [emilie\\_hoffman@taylor.edu](mailto:emilie_hoffman@taylor.edu) or 765.998.4373. You may also contact Drew Moser, Faculty Advisor, at [drmoser@taylor.edu](mailto:drmoser@taylor.edu) or 765.998.5384. Additionally, you may contact Taylor University's Institutional Review Board at [IRB@taylor.edu](mailto:IRB@taylor.edu) or the Chair of IRB, Sue Gavin, at [ssgavin@tayloru.edu](mailto:ssgavin@tayloru.edu) or 765.998.5188.

#### SUBJECT'S CONSENT

**By providing my name and contact details, I volunteer to being contacted for a phone interview and participating in this research study:**

Name  
Phone Number  
Email Address

## Appendix D

### Interview Protocol

Interviewee #: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This follow-up interview will take approximately 30 to 45 minutes, and will include eight to ten questions regarding your experiences integrating faith and work, and influences on this integration. I would like your permission to audio record this interview, so I may accurately document the information you convey. If at any time during the interview you wish to discontinue the use of the recorder or the interview itself, please feel free to let me know. All of your responses are confidential.

At the completion of the survey, you completed a written consent form to participate in this telephone interview. If you would like a copy of that consent form, I am able to send it to you electronically. I am the responsible investigator, however, you may also contact my faculty advisor, Drew Moser, or Taylor's Chair of IRB, Sue Gavin, should you have any questions or concerns.

Your participation in this interview is voluntary. If at any time you need to stop, please let me know. You may also withdraw your participation at any time without consequence. Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin? Then with your permission we will begin the interview and recording.

#### Sample Interview Questions

1. To begin, would you describe your work experiences since graduating from your institution?
2. How would you describe/define integrating faith and work? What does integrating faith and work mean to you?
3. How do you currently integrate faith and work? What does it look like in your life?
  - a. Do you have any specific examples or experiences where you felt you integrated faith and work well?
4. What experiences or influences have shaped the way you integrate faith and work?
5. What role, if any, did your university experience influence your current faith-work integration?
  - a. What was it about your institution that impacted you? How did it impact you?
6. Are there any ways your institution could have prepared you better to integrate your faith and work?
7. Are there any other examples you draw upon to help you integrate your faith and work?
8. From the experiences and influences you've described, what has been most influential to your integration of faith and work?

Thank you for your time and for participating in this research study. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher at [emilie\\_hoffman@taylor.edu](mailto:emilie_hoffman@taylor.edu)

Time of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_

