CLOSING THE SUNDAY-MONDAY GAP: VOCATIONAL TRANSFORMATION NARRATIVES OF CHRISTIAN YOUNG ADULTS

By

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A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Higher, Adult, and Lifelong Education – Doctor of Philosophy

2019

ABSTRACT

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For more than a decade, over 50% of workers in the U.S. have reported feeling dissatisfied and disengaged from their work (Conference Board, 2016; Gallup, 2015), including growing numbers of workers who identify as Christian (Miller, 2007). While many Christian workers claim that connecting their faith and work is an important way of infusing their work with meaning and purpose (Miller, 2007), many also lament experiencing a "Sunday-Monday Gap" (Nash & McLennan, 2001 p. 7), where their faith has little to no meaningful connection to their work. Recently, the concepts of *vocation* and *calling* have experienced a resurgence (Duffy & Dik, 2013), partly as a reflection of Christian workers' desire and attempts to integrate their faith and work in more meaningful and comprehensive ways (Duffy & Dik, 2009, Miller, 2007).

The phenomenon of *vocational formation* describes a developmental process wherein a Christian learns to explore and articulate meaningful connections between their faith and the rest of life, with particular focus on the integration of faith and work (Chandler, Kiple, & Hagenberg 2014). While emerging adulthood has been shown to be an ideal time of life for young adults to explore life's "big questions" of meaning, purpose, and vocation (Parks, 2000), Christian young adults often lack the necessary resources from social institutions (e.g., church, college, and the workplace) to effectively support their vocational formation (Clydesdale, 2015; Kinnaman & Hawkins, 2011; Miller, 2007). In response, a number of Christian groups have created programs to foster the vocational formation of young adults; however, due to a lack of research, little is known about the efficacy of these programs, or about the process of vocational formation itself.

Therefore, the purpose of this appreciative qualitative inquiry was to uncover more about the vocational formation process and experiences of Christian young adults who have learned to integrate their faith and work in meaningful ways. To this end, 10 'vocational exemplars' were selected from a group of young adults who had participated in The Fellows Initiative (TFI), a 10-month long vocational formation "Fellows" program for recent college graduates. Data was collected in the fall of 2017 and primarily focused on a series of in-depth narrative-based interviews which were augmented by field observations and a wide range of vocational artifacts.

Findings from this study include evidence that participants engaged in a form of transformative learning during their Fellows year, a *vocational transformation* which resulted in a more expansive faith, a more satisfying relationship with work, and a less compartmentalized life overall. This study also found that the primary catalyst within participants' vocational transformation was a series of theological concepts which were introduced in, and reinforced throughout, their Fellows program. Participants often summarized these concepts through the frameworks of "God's story" and/or the "4-Chapter Gospel", and discussed how these ideas helped to transform their prior assumptions about the world, work, faith, and the relationships between them. Participants' new perspectives also helped them to discover more meaning, purpose, and value in their lay (i.e., non-ministry) work; specifically, their experiences were transformed from: a) *professional ambiguity into clarity* about how God was calling them to a lay profession, b) *spiritual anxiety into confidence* about the value of their lay work within God's mission, and c) *vocational apathy into creativity* about a wider range of ways their faith and lay work could be meaningfully connected. Since this study provides groundbreaking evidence about how vocational formation occurs for Christian young adults, a new conceptual model for vocational transformation is offered and implications for related theory and praxis are discussed.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

While these acknowledgements will not do justice to reflect the depth and breadth of the love and support that has been shown to me throughout my vocational journey, they do reflect my deepest appreciation and affection for all involved. First and foremost, I give thanks to the Triune God, who knows me best, loves me most, and calls me first. I pray that this study would enrichen the vocational clarity, confidence, and creativity of your people in their lay callings. In this vein, I also offer my deep gratitude to all of my participants whose stories form the foundation of this study. Your vocational experiences and insights are equal parts rich and compelling, and have given me much to think about and reflect on throughout this process.

Next, I want to acknowledge the contributions of my family, especially my lovely and long-suffering wife, Megan. It is not an overstatement to say that I could not have done any of this without you. You have been all things to me all throughout this PhD process: a helpful editor, an encouraging friend, and a beautiful reprieve after a long day of writing. You are one of the most incredibly supportive spouses and a hardest-working mothers I have ever known, and for some reason, you also continue to be my biggest fan and closest friend. You are my favorite, and as we have promised each other many times over the years, “Love you. With you.”. I am also deeply appreciative for the patience and encouragement of my precious (i.e., precocious) children, Hannah and Logan. Many days, I drew inspiration and strength from your outsized admiration of me and your simple interest in my work. Many nights, I returned home from writing long after you had both fallen asleep, and while I tucked you in, I held your faces and prayed that you would also find your deepest vocational calling, purpose, and joy as characters in God’s unfolding story of cosmic redemption. I continue to pray this for you both. Thank you also

to my parents, siblings, and in-laws, who have been an enormous source of support and guidance throughout my spiritual and vocational journey.

I am also thankful for the many friends and mentors who have been a helpful guides and fellows travelers throughout this academic marathon. Specifically, I am thankful to Lance Wheatley, Ben Espinoza, Eddie Centurion, and Drs. Amy Deitrickson, Jeff Tabone, Wayne Hutchinson, and Brian Ulrich for your interest in and support for my dissertation topic. Dr. Nate Cradit, you deserve special recognition for the careful editing, keen insight, and timely encouragement you offered throughout this research project. Thank you also to all of my mentors who have helped shape my understanding of and passion for vocational formation, including Drs. Bob Burns, Donald Guthrie, Lee Hardy, Dan Doriani, Michael Williams, and Steve Garber.

Last, I must acknowledge the invaluable contributions of my dissertation committee. Dr. John Dirkx, thank you for agreeing to be my dissertation Chair, and for being a tireless reader of my prolific printed streams-of-consciousness. You helped bring much-needed clarity to a broad dissertation topic. I know I have a special place in your filing cabinet (a large one) and you also have a special place in my heart (an equally large one). Thank you for your thoughtful questions and the sage advice that I always (i.e., eventually) came around to following. Dr. Kris Renn, thank you for being a wise and savvy advisor before, during, and beyond this dissertation. I deeply appreciate all of the timely and honest personal, academic, and professional advice you have given throughout my time at MSU. Our somewhat unlikely pairing has been an absolute joy for me and I have learned much from you. Dr. Steve Weiland, your keen ability and dogged commitment to “think otherwise” has inspired me as a scholar, and helped me to develop the confidence to think outside the box for this study, producing a richer and more original dissertation research project. Dr. Mary Juzwik, thank you also for the space and place to begin to

explore these ideas at MSU. The seeds planted in your class, and throughout our discussions, have taken root in these pages.

I hope the ideas and insights found on the following pages will make you all feel proud of the invaluable part you played. I am eternally grateful for you all.

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

While growing numbers of U.S. workers report feeling dissatisfied and disengaged from their work (Conference Board, 2016; Gallup, 2015), many Christian workers claim that connecting their faith and work is a critical way of infusing their work with meaning and significance (Miller, 2007; Park, 2012). *Vocation*, encompassing the integration of one's faith and work, has historically been a critically important issue in Protestant Christian theology, ethics, formation, and witness (Chandler, Kiple & Hagenberg, 2014 ; Dik & Domene, 2015; Hardy, 1990; Miller, 2007). In recent years, the ancient concepts of *vocation* and *calling* have experienced a resurgence (Duffy & Dik, 2013), partly as a reflection of Christian workers' desire and attempts to integrate their faith and work (Duffy & Dik, 2009, Miller, 2007).

For this study, I describe the phenomenon of v*ocational formation* as a personal process of learning to explore and articulate meaningful connections between one's faith and the rest of life, with a particular focus on the integration of faith and work (Chandler, et al., 2014; Garber, 2014; Parks, 2000). Therefore, I situate the vocational formation process primarily within the scholarship on young adult faith development (Parks, 2000) and Christian spiritual formation (Chandler, et al., 2014; May, 1982; Willard, 2002). The phenomenon of vocational formation, as defined in this study, will also have implications for the career and faith development of Christians in general, and Christian young adults in particular (Duffy & Dik, 2013).

While emerging adulthood is an ideal time for young adults to explore life's "big questions" of meaning, purpose, and vocation (Parks, 2000), Christian young adults often lack the necessary resources from social institutions (e.g., church, college, and the workplace) to effectively support their vocational formation (Clydesdale, 2015; Dalton, 2001, Kinnaman & Hawkins, 2011). This a lack of support has caused some Christians to experience a "Sunday-

Monday Gap" (Nash & McLennan, 2001 p. 7), where their faith has little to no meaningful connection to their work (Miller, 2007). In this sense, the Sunday-Monday gap describes how many Christians report living the "pathology of a divided life" (Palmer, 2004, p. 7), which a could lead to a number of serious theological, psychological, and career-related problems (Duffy & Dik, 2013; Garber, 2007; Palmer, 2004). In an attempt to help close the Sunday-Monday gap, growing numbers of faith-based groups have created programs to foster the vocational formation of young Christians. However, due to a lack of research, we do not know much about how or if these programs work. Therefore, the purpose of this research project is to better understand a) how Christian young adults have engaged in a *process* of vocational formation, b) how these vocational formation *experiences* have impacted the *relationship* between their faith and work, and c) which *resources* were most instrumental in helping them *learn* to integrate their faith and work in more meaningful ways.

In this chapter, I provide an introductory overview of the background and context within which the vocational formation of Christian young adults occurs (or does not occur). This overview will lead to a discussion of the problem I am seeking to address and a description of my research questions. Next, I will examine the potential significance of this study to enhance the vocational formation resources, experiences, and outcomes for Christian young adults. To close this chapter, I will define key terms and concepts that are used throughout my project.

Background

For many adults, work is a central, necessary, and consuming aspect of their lives. The majority of adults in the United States spend more time working (8.9 hours a day) than doing anything else in their lives (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). Work occupies a central place in life as it is often deeply connected both to adults' livelihood (Terkel, 1974) and to their identity

(Gini, 1998, Hall, 2002). Work has and will increasingly become an important aspect of life for young adults as well, particularly as 'Millennials' (b. 1981) now constitute the largest generation in the workforce, making up over a third of all workers in U.S. (Pew Research Center, 2016).

Perspectives on work. Despite the importance and centrality of work for their lives, many workers have jobs that they do not like and a relationship to their work that is not satisfying. This trend is captured in the national research which consistently shows that two-thirds of U.S. workers feel disengaged from their work (Gallup, 2015). For the last decade, over 50% of workers in the U.S. also report that they are dissatisfied with their jobs (Conference Board, 2016). The trend of dissatisfaction with work is a sentiment that is shared equally among men and women (Conference Board, 2016), but is particularly pronounced among young adults who are relatively early in their career journey (Barna, 2012).

Meaningful work. Partly in response to these negative trends among workers in the U.S., some scholars have sought to better understand how people conceive of work they find satisfying and engaging. As a result, the study of 'meaningful work' has become a growing field of scholarly inquiry (Duffy & Dik, 2013), reflecting a growing desire for having work that aligns with one's personal values (Dik, Duffy, & Eldridge, 2009), ultimate life goals (Steger & Dik, 2010), and personality and passions (Dik, Byrne, & Steger, 2013). In the U.S., a growing desire for meaningful work is prevalent among both adult workers (LaRocque, 2016) and young adults alike (Barna, 2014; Net Impact, 2012; Society for Human Resource Management, 2016).

Religion and spirituality in work. For many working adults, and growing numbers of scholars, meaning in life and work are intricately related to (or rooted in) issues of spirituality and religion (Dik & Duffy, 2012; Hill & Dik, 2012;, Hill, Jurkiewicz, Giacalone & Fry, 2013). 'Meaning' is a core unifying construct for the psychology of religion and spirituality (Hill & Dik,

2012), partly because religious and spiritual meaning systems provide the primary frameworks through which people perceive themselves and their worlds, including their work and themselves as workers (Park, 2012). In this sense, a person's religious/spiritual frameworks often have a profound impact on their career choices and development, their on-the-job conduct, the ways they cope with work-related stress, and their overall experience of work-related well-being (Park, 2012). As a result, many workers express a desire to have work that aligns with their spiritual and religious commitments (Lips-Wiersma, 2002; Pink 2005), which gives them a greater sense of meaning and well-being in their lives and for their work (Hill & Dik, 2012; Park, 2005, 2012). This sentiment is prevalent among Protestant Christians, many of whom express a strong interest in integrating their faith commitments with their workplace responsibilities (Miller, 2007).

Work as calling and vocation. Many adults locate the religious or spiritual connections to their work through the concepts of 'calling' and/or 'vocation'. Both words come from the same Latinate root word *vocare*, meaning 'to call' (Cunningham, 2015), and are often synonymous and used interchangeably (Duffy & Dik, 2013). These terms have deep roots within the theology of Protestant Christianity and its historical influence on American perspectives towards work (Hardy, 1990; Weber, 1905/2002), but also remain popular and relevant notions within modern American culture (Duffy & Dik, 2013). Vocation and calling are important concepts for workers in the U.S. regardless of their profession or position (Dik & Duffy, 2009; Miller, 2007) and are associated with a range of positive outcomes for individual workers (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009; Duffy & Dik, 2012; Steger & Dik, 2009; Wrzesniewski, McCauley, Rozin, & Schwartz, 1997) and employers (Duffy, Allan, & Dik, 2011, Duffy & Sedlacek, 2007) alike. Calling and vocation are associated with meaningful work because they often refer to both how a person *derives* meaning and purpose *from* their work and to how one

demonstrates meaning and purpose *through* their work (Dik & Duffy, 2012). For these reasons, many scholars agree that the concepts of vocation and calling can function as a helpful lens for describing, analyzing, and promoting meaningful work for adults (Duffy & Dik, 2009; Duffy & Sedlacek, 2007; Wrzesniewski, et al., 1997), particularly for workers who identify as Christian (Hardy, 1990; Miller, 2007; Schuurman, 2004).

Since the Reformation, the Protestant theology of vocation has been a popular concept aimed at helping Christian laity to understand and embrace how their faith is implicitly and integrally connected to every aspect of their lives, including their work (Cunningham, 2015; Hardy, 1990). The long and rich theological history of vocation has led many scholars and theologians to situate it as a central aspect within Christian ethics (Hardy, 1990) and a primary goal of Christian spiritual formation (Chandler, et al., 2014; Keller, 2012). Christian spiritual formation is generally framed as a developmental process intended to deepen a person's faith, character, piety, and sense of vocation (May, 1982; Willard, 2002). For this reason, in Christian circles it has become commonplace to join the concepts of "vocational and spiritual formation" in practice (Chandler, et al., 2014), and occasionally conflate them into the single term "vocational formation" (Chandler, et al., 2014). For my dissertation, I will draw upon these current trends (and ancient ideas) and use the term *vocational formation* to describe the phenomenon of Christian young adults who engage in a vocationally-oriented process of faith development by exploring and articulating meaningful connections between their faith and work.

Vocational formation of Christian young adults. In recent years, scholars have argued that young adulthood (e.g., 18-40 years old) should be viewed as a unique and important stage of development occurring between adolescence and mature adulthood (Parks, 2000; Smith & Snell, 2009; Wuthnow, 2007). Rather than merely being a season of extended adolescence, emerging

adulthood is a critical time and stage for young adults to explore their identity (Arnett, 2006), consider life's "big questions" of meaning and purpose (Parks, 2000), and to develop a sense of vocation/calling for their lives and work (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). For these reasons, the identification of a vocational calling is an essential aspect within young adults' identity (Chickering, Dalton, & Stamm 2006) psychosocial (Chickering & Reisser, 1993) and faith development (Parks, 2000).

Young adulthood is a distinct stage of life wherein adolescents become "obsessed with questions about their purpose, vocation and belonging" (Parks, 2000, p. 24). For this reason, young adults are primed for faith development, often occurring through a process called "meaning-making" (p. 25) which is rooted in an intrinsic human desire to "make sense of the world and understand the fitting connections between things" (p 24). So, as young adults develop deeper interest in and capacity for exploring life's big questions of meaning and purpose, they also long to explore potential connections between the seemingly disconnected aspects of their lives (Parks, 2000). Given how many Christian adult workers express frustration about feeling that their faith and work are disconnected (Miller, 2007), the integration of Christian young adults' faith and work could be conceived of as a critical aspect of their faith development. Since I am primarily interested in how Christian young adults learn to integrate their faith and work, I will be framing the phenomenon of vocational formation primarily through Parks' (2000) lens of faith development. However, given the faith-work nexus of my topic, my findings will have major implications for the career development of these young adults as well.

Vocational formation resources. I have argued that vocational formation is a critically important concept for Christian young adults due to the central role that work plays within our lives, the priority that vocation and calling hold within Christian theology and ethics, and the

importance of faith development within young adulthood. For these reasons, vocational formation has become a greater priority among some Christian leaders and educational institutions as well, which explains why growing numbers of faith-based groups have created programs and initiatives to support the vocational formation of Christian young adults in church, college, and the workforce (Keller, 2012; Miller, 2007; Sherman, 2011)

Participants in *church-based* programs are primarily drawn from within local congregations and represent a wide range of ages and career fields. Young adults are often engaged in these programs as a function of being involved in the congregational life of the church. One such church-based program is The Fellows Initiative (TFI), a national network that coordinates "Fellows Programs" which partner with local churches to foster the vocational formation of recent college graduates (The Fellows Initiative, 2018). Currently, there are 23 Fellows Programs across the U.S., in churches ranging from Boston to Salt Lake City. The aim of these programs is to develop Christian leaders who "live their Christian faith seamlessly" (The Fellows Initiative, 2018), which includes the seamless integration of the fellows' faith and work.

In recent years, a number of vocation-oriented programs have also emerged in and among religiously-affiliated college campuses. One of the more popular *college-based* programs began in 2000, when the Lilly Foundation provided 225 million dollars of funding to 88 church-affiliated higher education institutions to create Programs for Theological Exploration of Vocation (PTEV). One of the primary goals of each PTEV initiative was to provide undergraduates with a wide range of resources to support their exploration of the relationship between their faith and work (PTEV, 2017). The impact of these PTEV initiatives resulted in a wide range of positive outcomes for the participating institutions and for individual participants both during and after college (Clydesdale, 2015). To continue and expand this work, the Council

of Independent Colleges launched the Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education (NetVUE) in 2009.

In the U.S., a number of para-church ministries have supported Christian workers in the *workplace* since the 1890s (Miller, 2007). This Faith-at-Work (FAW) movement is a loosely coordinated initiative of marketplace ministries that are "organized around a quest to integrate one's personal faith teachings with one's professional work responsibilities" (Miller, 2007. p 6). To achieve faith-work integration, programs and ministries within the FAW movement aim to "bring marketplace issues and religious, spiritual, and ethical teachings into conversation with each other" (p. 14). The FAW movement reaches across a wide range of career fields, professional rank/positions, salary levels, and age ranges, because Christian workers want their work to be meaningful and "are no longer content to leave their souls in the parking lot" (p 6). Examples of workplace programs include newer initiatives like At Work on Purpose (AWOP, 2017) and more established groups like Christian Business Men's Connection (CBMC, 2017).

Problem Statement

While the programs described above demonstrate the high value that some faith-based institutions place on vocational formation, the literature demonstrates that there is a widespread lack of resources to effectively foster the vocational formation of Christian young adults. Like any developmental process, vocational formation requires contexts that provide an appropriate balance of challenge and support to promote personal growth and change (Sanford, 1962). While challenges to integrate their faith and work abound, Christian young adults often lack the necessary resources to support their vocational formation. This includes a lack of a) support from the major social institutions of church, college, and the workplace, and b) scholarly research to define, describe, and guide the vocational formation process of Christian young adults.

Lack of support from major social institutions. Even though vocational formation is an important developmental process, and is associated with a myriad of positive outcomes for college students, workers, and employers, the literature shows that several major U.S social intuitions have not adequately supported the vocational formation of Christian young adults.

Church. Although some churches have made it a core part of their mission to foster the vocational formation of their congregations (Keller, 2012; Nelson, 2011), many Christian professionals feel "unsupported by their Sunday church in their Monday marketplace vocation" (Miller, 2007, p. 24). For example, 66% of Christian young adults say it has been over three years since they heard church teachings on work and career (Barna, 2012). The perceived lack of vocational support from the church has even caused some Christian young adults to leave the church, and in some cases their faith altogether, seeing both as disconnected from their 'real lives' and irrelevant to their career interests (Kinnaman & Hawkins, 2011). Echoing these findings, Miller (2007) claims that the FAW movement has largely developed independently of most churches, primarily due to a lack of perceived support or interest from the clergy.

College. Historically, colleges and universities were places where students were expected to explore questions of truth, meaning, and purpose (Kullberg, 2007; Marsden, 1992; Strange, 2001), and many scholars argue that college remains an ideal context for these types of explorations (Astin, 2004; Chickering et al., 2006; Parks, 2000). Some scholars describe students' pursuit of purpose and meaning in college as an endeavor in 'spiritual development' (Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2011; Dalton, 2001; Strange, 2001) because it is a process wherein students identify their inner values and personal beliefs in order to connect them to their future goals and career choices (Arnett, 2006; Bok, 2006; Dalton, 2001). Finally, scholars have described college as an ideal context for vocational formation, because it offers critical resources

(e.g., time, a safe space, and mentors) to promote students' vocational reflection and discernment. (Clydesdale, 2015; Cunningham, 2015; Parks, 2000).

Despite the vocational purposes and potential of colleges described above, several prominent scholars have critiqued U.S. higher education for moving away from promoting the inner development of college students (Astin, 2004), including the neglect of students' search for purpose and meaning through their studies (Astin, et al., 2011; Chickering, Dalton, & Stamm, 2006; Strange, 2001). Although college commencement speeches are often filled with lofty speeches about graduates' purpose and calling (Clydesdale, 2015), this message is essentially, "too little, too late" (p. 1), because most U.S. higher education institutions do not to consistently talk to students about purpose or vocation in the critical years before they graduate.

Many students' expectations of and experiences in college reflect the perspectives of the scholars listed above. For example, while the vast of majority college students' expectations for college are in line with the traditional purposes of college (e.g., exploration of meaning and purpose), they are also often disappointed with their spiritual development opportunities and experiences in college (Astin, et al., 2012). This dissatisfaction is particularly acute among Evangelical Christian students, who make up 35% of all college students (Calhoun, Aronczyk, Mayrl & VanAntwerpen, 2007). Many Christian students describe their experiences in college as being detrimental to their faith and spiritual development within both public higher education (Lowery, 2001; Moran, Lang, & Oliver, 2007) and private Christian colleges (Hall, 2010). These findings are significant for my study, particularly since these negative spiritual development experiences of Christian students could have a detrimental impact on their vocational formation.

Workplace. Although most of the literature focuses on the potential benefits of bringing spirituality and religion into the workplace, potential struggles could arise for workers who want

to integrate their religious beliefs within the organizational, interpersonal, intra-personal domains of their work (Exiline & Bright, 2011). For example, within the organizational domain, many workplaces implement strict rules against proselytization or explicit forms of religious expression, which could lead workers to believe their workplace to be unwelcoming of their religious beliefs (Exiline and Bright, 2011). Miller & Ewest (2015) describe this kind of organization as implementing a "faith-avoiding" (p. 316) approach towards faith-at-work. A faith-avoiding workplace seeks to suppress all personal and communal expressions of religion, spirituality, and/or faith at work, seeing these as inherently problematic and counterproductive to the aims of the workplace (Miller & Ewest, 2015). The "faith-avoiding" workplace promotes a "fatal dualism" (Johnson, 2007) that "forces employees to leave their faith, and therefore part of their identity, outside the workplace" (p. 316).

In this sense, the faith-avoiding organization stands in stark contrast to the vocational emphases of the Faith at Work (FAW) movement, which is rooted in a desire to "live an integrated life, where faith teachings and workplaces practices are aligned" (Miller, 2007, p. 6). To this end, The FAW movement aims to "bring marketplace issues and religious, spiritual, and ethical teachings into conversation with each other" (p. 14). It is possible that faith-avoiding workplaces are why many Christian workers report that they are living "increasingly bifurcated lives," where their faith has little to no meaningful connection to their work (Miller, 2007)

Lack of vocational formation research. Although some vocational formation programs for Christian young adults have begun to emerge, there is a lack of research focusing how Christian young adults develop a sense of vocation about their work (Dik & Domene, 2015). In their comprehensive survey of the research, Duffy & Dik (2013) describe the state of vocation/calling literature as being "like a toddler—developed to the point of being able to stand

on her own two legs, but with much room for future growth" (p. 435). The literature is lacking in two ways: a) there is a lack of empirical evidence to adequately describe what the vocational formation process of Christian young adults looks like, and b) there is a lack of theory to guide vocational formation scholarship on (and programming for) Christian young adults.

Empirical evidence. Most of the scholarly literature on vocational formation of Christian young adults has been largely conceptual (e.g., theological) or persuasive in nature. This literature often argues that vocational formation is an important process for Christian young adults because it enables them to explore and articulate the myriad of connections (e.g., theological, ethical, practical, personal) that exist between their faith and work (Chandler, et al., 2014 ; Garber, 2007; Parks, 2000). However, to date, there is little empirical evidence that describes *how* this vocational formation process occurs (Constantine, et al., 2006), largely because "Few studies have explored the unique role of religion and spirituality in the career development process of the general college population" (p. 227). As a result, Duffy & Dik (2013) have called for scholarship that focuses on how interventions help young adults discern and live out a vocational calling. Echoing this call, other scholars have argued for the development of and research on educational ecosystems that support young adults in vocational formation (Cunningham, 2016; Kinnaman & Hawkins, 2011; Miller, 2007). However, outside of the notable exception of Clydesdale (2015) studying the impact PTEV programs had on students' academic performance and success in college and life, few scholars have answered this call.

Theory. Most of the research on calling and vocational formation has been devoid of theory (Duffy & Dik, 2013), due in part to the lack of empirical evidence described above. The lack of theory in the literature would necessarily have a negative impact on programs which aim to foster young adults' vocational formation. In this way, theory is needed to guide high quality

vocational formation scholarship and programming heading forward (Duffy & Dik, 2013). While the importance of vocational formation for Christian young adults is clear, the lack of related research is concerning, and provides a strong rationale for this study.

Purpose of this Study

However, despite the lack of resources and social supports listed above, some Christian young adults are still able to intentionally and meaningfully integrate their faith and their work. Within my study, I will refer to this group of people as 'vocational exemplars' by virtue of how their vocational formation has been successful in its attempt to foster a more meaningful connection between their faith and work. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to learn more about the vocational formation experiences of these exemplars. To this end, I will utilize a hybrid narrative-phenomenology research methodology as a way to deeply explore and explain how my participants' vocational formation processes unfolded.

Since young adults are often obsessed with life's "big questions" of vocation, meaning and purpose, and have a deep desire to understand the connections between seemingly disconnected aspects of life (e.g., their faith and work), I will utilize Parks' (2000) faith development theory as a primary lens for this research project. In my interpretation chapter, I draw upon frameworks embedded within her theory (e.g., Process of Imagination) to help me frame my findings and argue for how many of my participants' vocational formation experiences are more accurately understood as a form of transformative learning. Parks' (2000) theory will enable me to demonstrate how some of my participants' experiences led to the development of a more comprehensive and coherent faith perspective, which helped them learn to connect their faith and work in more meaningful ways. Because of its alignment with transformative forms of learning, I refer to this deeper phenomenon as a process of *vocational transformation*.

Therefore, my study will contribute to the related research literature on faith development, career development, meaningful work, religion and spirituality in the workplace, and the nascent literature on vocational formation (as defined in this study). In doing so, I hope to provide empirical evidence to define, describe, and guide the emerging literature and growing numbers of programs focused on supporting the vocational formation of Christian young adults. My goal is help to inform, supplement, and advance the development of effective educational resources, programs, and theory to offset the perceived lack of support from the major social institutions listed above.

Research Questions

The overarching research question that guide my study is: *How do some Christian young adults learn to integrate their faith and work in more meaningful ways?* To more effectively answer this broad overarching research question, I will explore three sub-questions:

1. *How do participants describe the **relationship** between their faith and work?*
2. *How do participants describe the **process** of **learning** to integrate their faith and work?*
3. *What were some of the **primary catalysts** that helped participants learn how to integrate their faith and work in meaningful ways?*

Throughout my research project, I will describe how these three sub-questions have framed the overall design of my study, as well as the specific data collection, analysis, and reporting strategies I chose to use.

Significance of this Study

This study is significant because, by contributing to the related vocational formation research and programs, it should ameliorate some of the potential consequences that could occur when Christian young adults do not successfully engage in vocational formation. For example,

consider two related consequences: the theologically-oriented "Sunday-Monday Gap" (Miller, 2007) and the psychologically-oriented "divided life" (Palmer, 2004).

Based on the evidence laid out earlier, when Christian young adults do not engage in vocational formation, they are less likely to perceive or experience a meaningful connection between their work and faith. Several scholars have deemed the faith-work disconnect among Christian adults as the "Sunday-Monday Gap" (Nash & McLennan, 2001), "where [a Christians'] Sunday worship hour bears little to no relevance to the issues they face in their Monday workplace hours" (Miller, 2007, p. 10). Several scholars have argued that this problem is inherently theological (Garber, 2007; Schuurman, 2004; Sherman, 2011), because it assumes that a person's faith should be compartmentalized and disconnected from another aspect of their lives. However, the literature also shows that many Christian workers are frustrated with their experience of Sunday-Monday gap and are not content to lead a bifurcated live where their faith commitments and workplace responsibilities do not connect in meaningful ways (Miller, 2007). For these workers, a gap between their worship and work represents some potentially serious consequences, such as experiencing less meaning and satisfaction in their work and life.

For other Christian young adults, the Sunday-Monday gap could lead to a more serious psychological consequence, one that Parker Palmer (2004) refers to as "pathology of the divided life" (p. 7). Palmer argues that the "divided life" is, at its core, "a failure of human wholeness" (p. 7), because it describes how a person attempts to separate and compartmentalize their "soul" (e.g., personal meaning, purpose, and values) apart from their "role" (e.g., public world of work). Those people who live a divided life become accustomed to "commuting daily between the public world of role and the hidden word of soul" (p. 15) via "a well-rehearsed habit of holding their own knowledge and beliefs at great remove from the living of their lives" (p. 7). By

framing the behavior that results from a bifurcation of one's faith and work as a "pathology", Palmer (2004) draws upon the literature that shows how living a non-integrated life can lead to a host of negative psychological issues (Jung, 1962). Garber (2007) elaborates on the some of the psychological and practical consequences of living a non-integrated life:

> "There is something in our humanness which recoils at the schizophrenia seemingly forced on us by the modern world. To settle for a split in one's consciousness - the dichotomy between private and the public - is to settle for two realities, a private world with no meaningful connection to the public world (p. 117)"

Additionally, Palmer (2004) warns that the divided life can lead people to be perceived as inauthentic, which could also undermine workers' morale, relationships, and capacity for good work. Most of all, the divided life feeds the materialistic danger of "losing touch with our souls and disappearing into our roles" (p. 17). This latter consequence is most problematic for Christian workers because the Christian young adult who is dissatisfied with the Sunday-Monday gap has a chance of bridging this gap, and the potential of experiencing more meaningful work, by seeking to merge their soul (e.g., faith), with their role (e.g., work) through vocational formation. Conversely, the Christian who willingly accepts the divided life, cuts themselves off from the possibility of finding more meaning and satisfaction in their work by keeping their private (e.g., faith) life disconnected from their public (e.g., work) life.

Through a deeper understanding of how Christian young adults have successfully and meaningfully integrated their work, I hope to augment the work of the FAW movement and the vocational formation programs described above. The primary goal of my research is aligned with the mission of these vocational formation initiatives: to help close the Sunday-Monday Gap for Christian young adults, so they may experience an "undivided life" (Palmer, 2004), and learn to find more meaning and value in their work. The purpose of this study is to learn how to support Christian young adults as they learn to pursue "good work, done well" (Sayers, 1949, p. 108).

Definitions of Key Terms and Concepts

A major challenge for scholarly work on issues of faith, work, and vocation is the semantic ambiguity within the field, which prevents a lack of well-defined and mutually agreed upon basic terminology (Miller, 2007; Nash & McLennan, 2001). Despite this, I will define the following terms in operational ways, to describe what I mean when I use them in my project.

Young adult. While the terms 'young adults' and 'emerging adults' are often used interchangeably, it is important to note that these terms can point to different stages of life. Scholars who focus on emerging adulthood typically identify this stage of as being between the ages of 18-25 years old (Arnett, 2006; Smith, 2009), while scholars who study young adulthood, typically view this stage as having a wider scope, between 18-40 years old (Erikson, 1980; Parks, 2000). Parks (2000) continues to use the term 'young adults', because her work on faith development occurred before the term 'emerging adult' became popular in sociological research.

I have chosen to use the term 'young adult' within my study for three primary reasons: 1) Parks' (2000) faith development theory provides a core framework within this study, and using her terminology maintains consistency between her research and my own; 2) my study will focus on individuals who represent the middle and later years this stage of life, between the ages of 23-35 years old; 3) the broader scope of young adulthood also helps me to identify to particular demographic group, "Millennials" (b. 1981), who exhibit unique generational characteristics, religious perspectives, and work-related experiences (Smith & Snell, 2009; Wuthnow, 2007).

Work. While unpaid internships and paid part-time jobs are becoming more commonplace, I will focus on work as a full-time, paid employment activity for this study. I will utilize Miller's (2007) definition of work as that which "is undertaken in a paid job, occupation, position, function, or profession and the place in which one performs that work" (p. 7).

Christian. While Christianity is made up of many different sects (e.g., Catholicism, Eastern Orthodox, Anglicanism, Protestantism, Evangelicalism), I will use the generic term "Christian" to describe the participants in my study who I would classify as Confessional Evangelical Christians. The logic for this classification is threefold: First, while many of my participants described faith beliefs that are typically associated with Evangelicals, such as biblicism, conversionism, crucicentrism, and activism (Bebbington, 1993), none explicitly identified themselves as an being an "Evangelical". Instead, as participants described their beliefs, they commonly utilized terminology that was denominationally-oriented (e.g., Presbyterian, Anglican, Non-denominational), theologically-oriented (e.g., Reformed, Conservative, Protestant) and/or some novel combination of both (e.g., "Charismatarian").

Second, while none of my participants identified themselves as being "Evangelical", this does not appear to be a mere oversight or omission. Rather, while all of my participants were explicit about holding theological conservative beliefs, several also were explicit about how their social/political viewpoints reflected a more centrist or liberal perspective. Given the timing of these interviews (circa 2017), and the timbre of the political discourse at that time, it is possible that several of my participants were consciously attempting to differentiate themselves from the common cultural depiction of American Evangelicals, including 81% of white self-identified "Evangelicals" who voted for Trump in the 2016 election (Martinez & Smith, 2016). By presenting a more nuanced version of their faith perspectives, my participants reflected a trend among some prominent Christian scholars and thinkers who are questioning the legitimacy of the broad term 'Evangelical', citing how it has become overly-politicized, uncritically linked with conservative fundamentalist political affiliations, and is not reflective of the current views (and historical roots) of Evangelicalism as a broader movement (Kidd, 2016; Yeh, 2018).

Third, a number of influential Christian leaders have begun to employ the terms "Confessional" and/or "Confessional Evangelical" as ways a) to distinguish their faith beliefs from the hyper-politicized version of American Evangelicalism described above, and b) to align their beliefs with a more historical Evangelicalism as a "movement of Christian believers who seek a constant convictional continuity with the theological formulas of the Protestant Reformation" (Mohler, 2011, p. 68). In fact, all of my participants explicitly described their faith convictions within some of the core theological formulas of the Protestant Reformation as they emphasized the primacy of the Bible (e.g. Sola Scriptura) and the priority of the orthodox Christian confessions (e.g., Apostles Creed) as forming the foundation of their faith.

While all of my participants could be broadly described as "Confessional Protestants" or "Confessional Evangelicals" in their overall orientation, these are emerging terms that are not yet widely defined or understood. For this reason, I have chosen to identify participants' specific theological orientations within this introduction, but to use their own preferred terminology, "Christian", to describe their faith identity through the rest of this study.

Vocation. Historically, vocation has typically referred to the integration of all aspects of a person's life in alignment with their faith commitments (Cunningham, 2015; Fowler, 1981; Hardy, 1990). In recent times, many scholars have viewed vocation primarily through the lens of work and career (Dik & Duffy, 2012; Parks, 2000). For this study, I will merge these old ideas and recent trends by focusing on an aspect of vocation: the integration of one's faith and work.

Calling. Although the terms 'calling' and 'vocation' are often synonymous and used interchangeably (Duffy & Dik, 2013), not everyone conceives of them in a similar way. For example, while some use 'vocation' and 'calling' to describe a particular genre of jobs (e.g., Catholics often use 'vocation' to refer to the profession of the clergy), a number of prominent

vocational psychologists have begun using the term ‘calling’ to describe how a person approaches whatever particular work they have (Dik & Duffy, 2012;). Within the literature, it has become commonplace to distinguish between three primary approaches or orientations to work: a) work as a *job*, focusing on the external benefits of work (e.g., money); b) work as a *career*, focusing on advancement and as a source of achievement; or c) work as a *calling*, focusing on finding intrinsic meaning and purpose in work. (Bellah, 1985; Wrezenewski, et al., 1997). For this study, I subscribe to this conceptualization of work, and draw upon Dik and Duffy (2013) who define ‘calling’ as “an approach to work that reflects the belief that one's career is a central part of a broader sense of purpose and meaning in life and is used to help others or advance the greater good” (p. 340).

Faith. For this study, I will conceptualize faith both as a noun and as a verb. As a noun, faith refers to the content of what a person believes to be true about the world (Fowler, 1981; Parks, 2000). In my study, faith (n.) will primarily refer to the theological and religious beliefs of the Christian young adults that will make up my study. As a verb, I conceive of faith as describing the process of how we believe. In this sense, I draw upon Fowler (1981) who thought of “faith as a way of knowing, a way of construing or interpreting one’s experience” (p. 4). However, despite the nuanced ways I conceive of faith, I will primarily refer to it as noun within this study. Therefore, I will also primarily draw upon Parks (2000) term “meaning-making” to describe how Christian young adults make meaning in and of their world (i.e., faith-as-verb).

Religion. For this project, I will utilize Fowler’s (1981) definition of religion as being the “...shared beliefs and practices of a collective people over a period of time” (p. 2). For the purposes of my study, I will primarily use religion to describe some of the shared beliefs and practices of the emerging Confessional Evangelical / Protestant faith in the 21st century.

Spirituality. While the term spirituality has historically been used interchangeably with faith and religion (Fuller, 2001), in recent times, spirituality has taken on a more particular meaning. Often, *spirituality* is set in opposition to, and favored over, popular notions of *religion*, which is described as being impersonal, rigid, and institutional (Fuller, 2001; Miller, 2007). In contrast, *spirituality* is frequently described as being deeply personal, informal, focusing on the "inner life" of meaning/values, and inclusive of other perspectives (Astin, 2004; Fuller, 2001). However, the broad appeal of the term spirituality is also its downfall; several scholars have argued that the meaning of spirituality "varies wildly and incoherently" from one study to another, rendering it semantically "amorphous and untethered" (Clydesdale, 2015, p. 216), lessening its ability to be effectively described or engaged with. Therefore, I will primarily use the term 'spirituality' when referencing the literature and scholars who utilize this terminology within their own work.

CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

In qualitative research, the primary role of a literature review is to outline related research that has been conducted around the research topic in order demonstrate the need for the current study and the knowledge of the researcher about the research topic and related issues (Creswell, 2015). Within this chapter, I have organized my literature review primarily to demonstrate the need for my study and I anticipate that my knowledge of the topic will be implied throughout.

The first section of this literature review describes the background context within which my study takes place, identifying the central and critical role that work plays in the lives of workers in the U.S. In this section, I will also demonstrate how several national studies have consistently shown that many workers in the U.S. have a negative perspective towards their work. The second section will document the growing desire for and scholarship on meaningful work, focusing particularly on the religious and/or spiritual dimensions of meaningful work, and highlighting the related concept of work as calling and/or vocation. The third section examines the range of literature related to the vocational formation of Christian young adults, describing the unique potential and vulnerability of emerging adults, specifically through intersecting lenses of Christian spiritual formation and faith development. The fourth section examines three of the primary social contexts (e.g., church, college, workplace) within which Christian young adults' vocational formation occurs, or more accurately, *rarely* occurs, if at all. In the final section, I offer a brief analysis of the related literature, highlighting the current state of the scholarship on Christian vocational formation and identifying some of the major gaps within the research.

Background

While work today shares some common traits with work from previous eras, it also has some unique features that impact the context of my study. First, modern work is *consuming*, as

the majority of U.S. adults spend more time working and doing work related activities (8.9 hours a day) than doing anything else in their lives (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). Second, work is also a *necessity* for many adults, as indicated by the record number of people currently in the workforce, which is reflected in the lowest national unemployment numbers (4.7%) in the last ten years (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017), and by the number of double income families (47%) which is also at an all-time high in the U.S. (Pew Research, 2015). Finally, work in the modern era is also often *personally significant* for workers, functioning as a critical aspect of an adult's identity (Gini, 1998; Hall, 2002; Whyte, 2001). In this sense, work is a way that many people search for meaning in everyday life (Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi, & Damon, 2001; Terkel, 1974) and express their personal values (Park, 2005; Dik & Duffy, 2009). Work has and will increasingly become an important aspect of life for young adults as well, particularly as 'Millennials' (b. 1981) now constitute the largest generation in the workforce, making up over a third of all workers in U.S. (Pew Research Center, 2016).

Negative perspectives towards work. Over the past decade, several national studies have consistently shown that growing numbers of adults are increasingly dissatisfied with and disengaged from their work. For example, for the past ten years, the Conference Board Job Satisfaction survey has found that over 50% of U.S. workers are dissatisfied with their jobs (Conference Board, 2016). Another national poll has consistently found (for 15+ years) that almost two-thirds of U.S. workers report feeling disengaged from their work (Gallup, 2015). These sentiments are also shared among young adults, as 71% of Millennials report feeling disengaged from their work (Gallup, 2015) and 20% of all Millennial workers describe themselves as being "not very satisfied" with their current careers (Barna, 2012). Disengagement and dissatisfaction with work is not limited to early or mid-career workers, but also describes the

perspectives of mid to late career workers. For example, 8.4 million adults between 44-70 have launched an "encore career", a secondary occupation that combines income with personal interest and social impact (MetLife Foundation, 2008). Of workers surveyed who had not yet begun an encore career, 50% said they were interested in doing so (Freedman & Harris, 2008).

Dissatisfaction and disengagement from work also describes the experiences of many workers who identify as Christian. David Miller's (2007) research has focused on the Faith-at-Work (FAW) movement, which has emerged in response to a large number of Christian workers who complain of a growing "Sunday-Monday gap" (Nash & McLennan, 2001), where their "Sunday worship hour bears little to no relevance to the issues they face in their Monday workplace hours" (Miller, 2007; p 10). This "Sunday-Monday gap" describes how many Christian workers across a wide range of positions and professions report that their faith has little to no meaningful connection to their work (Nash & McLennan, 2001). These workers describe having a dissatisfying relationship with their work and lament living a bifurcated life, "where work and spiritual identity are compartmentalized into disconnected and unrelated spheres" (Miller, 2007, p 6). Many of these Christian workers have been vocal about their dissatisfaction and "are no longer content to leave their souls in the parking lot" (p 6). While Miller's (2007) research was conducted before 'The Great Recession' (cir. 2008), a more recent survey showed that 48% of Christian Millennials feel called to do something other than their current job (Barna, 2014). The literature is clear that many adults and young adults, particularly those who identify as Christian, often experience disengagement from and dissatisfaction within their work.

Meaningful Work

Partly as a response to the negative perspectives described above, meaningful work is growing field of scholarly interest (Duffy & Dik, 2013) reflecting a growing desire among U.S.

workers to have work that they consider personally meaningful (LaRocque, 2016). As a field of scholarship, inquiry into meaningful work draws from many different disciplines, which has created an "identity problem" for exploring the topic (Rosso, 2010) and has resulted in a fragmented field of scholarship that is framed by ambiguous terminology (Dik, Byrne, & Steger, 2013). Despite the semantic ambiguity within the literature, a wide range of research has shown that meaningful work can identified by some common characteristics and outcomes. Meaningful work is defined as work that aligns with a person's values (Dik et al., 2009), ultimate life goals and aspirations (Steger & Dik, 2010), personality and passions (Dik, et al., 2013), and offers a pathway for workers to pursue their purpose and personal growth while positively contributing to the world and/or their workplace (Dik, et al., 2013). When workers find their work meaningful, they also report a myriad of associated positive outcomes, including higher levels of life and work satisfaction (Wrzesniewski, et al., 1997), a greater sense of purpose and well-being in their life and work (Dik, et al., 2013; Hackman & Oldhman, 1980), and describe their work as an important way they express their personal values (Park, 2005).

The literature also shows that there is a growing desire for meaningful work among U.S. workers. For example, 53% of all Americans believe that having a job where they can make an impact is essential or very important to their happiness (Net Impact, 2012), and 57% of employees say that having meaningful work is a major aspect which contributes to a positive sentiment in the workplace (LaRocque, 2016). Young adults are also expressing a desire for meaningful work. When asked what their "dream job" looks like, the most common answer (42%) from young adults was "I feel passionate about it" (Barna, 2014). When asked to state the level of influence different factors have on their decision making at work, the most common answer given (55%) from young adults was "my personal values/morals" (Barna, 2014). For this

reason, millennial workers have been labeled as being "values-driven" to describe how their values have a major impact on their overall career decisions and job satisfaction (Society for Human Resource Management, 2016).

Religion and spirituality in work. For many working adults, and growing numbers of scholars, meaningful work is intricately related to, and even rooted in, issues of spirituality, religion, and faith (Dik & Duffy, 2012; Hill & Dik, 2012). Research on religion and spirituality in the workplace is one of the fastest growing area of new scholarship (Giacalone, Jurkiewicz, & Fry, 2005) and goes by many names including "spirituality and work", "soul at work", "religion in the workplace", and "faith at work" (Miller, 2007). Since this this topic explores the intersections between work and religion, some sociologists have argued that there is an "urgent ethical need" to understand how the religious sphere fits in with the economic sphere of life. (Miller, 2007)

In their volume, *Psychology of Religion and Workplace Spirituality*, Hill & Dik (2012) draw upon the relevant literature to show how "meaning" is a central and unifying construct for psychology of religion and spirituality. Park (2012) has found that "religious and spiritual meaning systems are central to the functioning of most human beings, providing the framework through which they perceive themselves and their worlds" (p. 25). Therefore, in the context of the workplace, religion and spirituality are central in forming the meaning systems which shape the fundamental ways that people see their work and themselves as workers. As a result, Park (2012) argues that a worker's spiritual and religious commitments form the basis for the ways that they make meaning about their work in both a "global" sense (e.g., beliefs, goals, and feelings about work) and "situational" sense (e.g., everyday experiences with work and/or times of high-stress in work). Workers' spiritual and religious meaning systems often have a profound

impact on their career choices/development, their conduct on-the-job, the ways they cope with work-related stress, and their overall experience of work-related well-being (Park, 2012).

For these reasons, large numbers of adult workers have indicated a desire to have work that aligns with their spiritual and religious commitments (Lips-Wiersma, 2002). For example, 60% of adults believe a greater sense of spirituality would improve their own workplace (Pink, 2005). The desire to incorporate faith, spirituality, and religion into one's work appears to be especially important among many Christian workers. The growing Faith-at-Work (FAW) movement is organized around such a "quest for integration", where Christians' faith perspectives are aligned with their workplace responsibilities as an attempt to close the Sunday-Monday Gap (Miller, 2007). The desire for faith-work integration reflects the research which shows that living in a way that aligns one's core religious/spiritual beliefs, and/or making progress towards one's ultimate goals, gives people a strong sense of meaning and well-being in their lives, and particularly for their work. (Park, 2005, 2012; Hill & Dik, 2012).

Work as calling and vocation. Many adults identify religious and spiritual connections to their work through the concepts of calling and/or vocation. Workers' religious and spiritual meaning systems also shape their conceptions of vocation and calling (Dik & Duffy, 2009), and for this reason, many scholars agree that these concepts often function as a helpful lens for understanding and promoting meaningful work (Duffy & Dik, 2009; Duffy & Sedlacek, 2007; Wrzesniewski, et al., 1997), particularly for young adults (Duffy & Dik, 2013) and workers who identify as Christian (Garber, 2014; Keller, 2012; Miller, 2007, Sherman, 2011). For example, academic publications that focus on vocation and calling have more than quadrupled between the years of 2005-2013 (Dik, et al., 2013); since 2007, more than 40 studies have been conducted on the impact of vocation/calling on work satisfaction and general well-being (Duffy & Dik, 2013).

The concepts of vocation and calling have deep roots within the theology of Protestant Christianity and its historical influence on American perspectives towards work (Hardy, 1990; Taylor, 1992; Weber, 1958), but also remain popular and relevant notions within modern American culture (Dik & Duffy, 2013). However, research has also shown that not everyone views these terms in a similar manner (Dik & Duffy, 2012). Some scholars even describe the concepts of calling and vocation as being akin to a Rorschach test, tapping into people's unconscious perspectives and beliefs about these meaning of these terms (Wrzesniewski, 2012). Some of the semantic ambiguity associated with calling and vocation is reflective of how both words come from the same Latinate root word *vocare*, meaning 'to call' (Cunningham, 2015). As a result, vocation and calling are often linguistically synonymous and used interchangeably (Dik & Duffy, 2013). Yet, the literature also shows that it would be a mistake to assume that all conceptions of calling and vocation are equally synonymous or interchangeable.

Conceptions of calling and vocation. To understand the major distinctions between common conceptions of calling and vocation, it is important to understand some of the differences and similarities in the ways these terms are used within the research literature and across popular culture.

Differences. There are three primary distinctions in the way that calling is used within the research literature and popular culture. First, while some people use vocation and calling to describe work in a broad sense, others frequently use these terms to describe specific kinds of work. For example, while some people use vocation and calling to describe *what* kind of job a person has (e.g., Catholics often use 'vocation' to refer to the profession of the clergy), the predominant perspective on calling and vocation describes *how* a person approaches whatever particular job they have (Dik & Duffy, 2012; Wrzesniewski, 2012).

Second, current popular conceptions on calling can be categorized as subscribing to either a *modern* or *neoclassical* perspective (Dik & Duffy, 2012). The *modern* perspective is sometimes referred to as the *secular* view because it emphasizes an internal calling which emerges from within the self with the primary motive being self-focused on personal happiness (e.g., self-actualization or self-expression). In contrast, the *neo-classical* view draws from the classical *religious* view as it emphasizes an external calling from a transcendent being (e.g., God) with the primary motive being other-centered (e.g., pro-social aim or common good). While Wrzesniewski (2012) argues that the modern perspective on calling has become the predominant view within American culture, Dik & Duffy (2013) convincingly demonstrate that this claim is untested and unproven.

Finally, within Christian contexts, conceptions of calling typically reflect the emphases of the neoclassical view, but a distinction is often made between a Christian's *primary* (or *general*) and *secondary* (or *specific*) calling. Dating back to the Puritans, a Christian's *primary/general* calling has been understood to be a call follow, love, and obey God, while their *secondary/particular* calling is to faithfully live out their *primary* calling in every area of their lives (Guinness, 2003; Schuurman, 2004). Put another way, a Christian's primary calling is to *someone* (e.g., Jesus) while their secondary calling is to *something* (e.g., a job or duty) and to *somewhere* (e.g., a place or field of interest). While a Christian's secondary calling is thought to flow from their primary calling, both are intentionally held together in the Christian doctrine of vocation, and both are often presented as complimentary perspectives within Christian teaching and discipleship (Chandler, Kiple & Hagenberg, 2014; Guinness, 2003; Schuurman, 2004).

Similarities. Despite the differences in conceptions of calling, there are also three notable similarities in how calling and vocation are used within the research literature and popular

culture. First and foremost, calling and vocation are often framed as iterative and emerging aspects of a person's life, often being the *result of a developmentally-oriented process* (Dik & Duffy, 2009). For example, the identification of a person's calling or vocation is often described as a core process within the fields of faith development (Fowler, 1981; Parks, 2000), psychosocial development (Chickering & Reisser, 1993), career development (Dik & Duffy, 2012), and Christian spiritual formation (Chandler, et al., 2014; Garber, 2007; Keller, 2012; Nelson, 2011; Sherman, 2011).

Second, calling and vocation are always *focused on integration* and often describe integration as a developmentally-oriented process of bringing together aspects of one's life that are (or appear to be) disconnected. Palmer (2004) describes the integrative features of vocation as the connecting of one's inner "soul" (e.g., faith commitments) with their outer "role" (e.g., workplace responsibilities), while Miller (2007) highlights the potential of vocation to provide a bridge to re-connect the Sunday-Monday gap. Miller argues that the idea of vocation undergirds the modern American quest "to live an integrated life, where faith teachings and workplace practices are aligned" (p 6). When viewed as a vocation, a Christian's work can be viewed as a meaningful expression of their faith and a core aspect of Christian ethics and spiritual formation (Chandler, et al., 2014; Garber, 2007, 2014; Hardy, 1990; Keller, 2012; Sherman, 2011).

Third, calling and vocation are always *associated with meaningful work.* In the following section, I will demonstrate how these terms often refer to both how a person *derives* meaning and purpose *from* their work, and to how one *demonstrates* meaning and purpose *through* their work (Dik & Duffy, 2012). The association of vocation and calling with meaningful work is so central within the literature that Duffy & Dik (2013) summarize calling as "an approach to work that reflects the belief that one's career is a central part of a broader sense of purpose and meaning in

life and is used to help others or advance the greater good" (p. 430). This claim is verified by the myriad of positive outcomes associated with conceiving of one's work as a vocation or calling.

Outcomes associated with having a vocation or calling. When people identify their work as being a vocation or calling, it results in positive outcomes for both individuals and for their workplaces. For example, when work is viewed as a calling or vocation, workers report having higher levels of life & work satisfaction (Wrzesniewski, et al., 1997), a greater sense of meaning in their work (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009; Duffy, et al., 2012), and feeling their lives are more meaningful (Steger & Dik, 2009), especially when they think their work contributes to the greater good of society (Grant, 2007). When people identify their work as a calling or vocation, it also has positive outcomes for their workplaces and employers, including higher levels of productivity in the workplace and reduced absenteeism (Duffy & Sedlacek, 2007), greater levels of commitment to specific careers and organizations (Duffy, Allan, & Dik, 2011), and sustained commitment to work that is challenging and where the risk of burn-out is high, as in environmental activism (Kovan & Dirkx, 2003) and academia (Oates, Hall & Anderson, 2005).

Young adults also report that calling is an important concept for their lives. A recent study reported that 44% of college students believed they had a calling, and 28% reported actively searching for a calling (Duffy & Sedlacek, 2010). Other studies have shown how the idea of calling has a major impact on college students' decision-making processes and career choices (Duffy & Sedlacek, 2010; Duffy, Dik, & Steger, 2011; Hunter, et al., 2010). For example, college students who perceive a calling to a specific career also tend to be more planful and confident in their career decisions, and more likely to expect positive outcomes for following a specific career path (Duffy & Sedlacek, 2007; Hirschi & Hermann, 2012).

For these reasons, many scholars argue that the concepts of calling and vocation can function as helpful lenses for understanding and promoting meaningful work for adults (Duffy & Dik, 2009; Duffy & Sedlacek, 2007; Wrzesniewski, et al., 1997). This is particularly true for workers who identify as Christian (Miller, 2007; Sherman, 2011), as they often draw upon these terms as theological frameworks for conceptualizing how their faith and work are/could be integrated (Cunningham, 2016, Schuurman, 2004).

Vocational Formation of Christian Young Adults

Vocational formation is a relatively new term that has gained popularity within Christian education and ministry contexts in recent years. However, specific research on vocational formation is sparse, and as a result, I will have to draw from a range of related literature to describe and situate what is commonly referred to as 'vocation formation'. The related literature in this section begins with research on young adulthood, then draws upon scholarship on the faith development of young adults, and finally upon Christian concepts of spiritual formation.

Young adulthood. The term 'young adulthood' was coined by scholars to describe a phase in the American life course, typically occurring between the ages of 18-40 years old, that marks the transition from adolescence to mature adulthood. (Erikson, 1980 Parks, 2000). Numerous scholars have also argued that young adulthood is a helpful concept to describe an important stage of human development. For example, sociologists Smith and Snell (2009) have demonstrated that young adulthood should be viewed as unique phase of life by highlighting the impact that macro level social changes have had upon the lives and development of young adults. These major social changes include the dramatic growth of higher education, delay of marriage age, changes in the national/global economy, a decrease in clear career pathways and job security, and the extended financial support that many parents extend their to their young adult

children (Smith & Snell, 2009). Likewise, developmental scholars have also demonstrated that emerging adulthood should be viewed as a distinct and important stage of human development (Parks, 2000; Chickering & Resisser, 1995). Dalton (2001) summarizes young adulthood as:

> "a time of heightened sensitivity about personal identity, relationships, ideology, and decisions about the future. It is a time of great potentiality and vulnerability in development, when concerns about individual purpose, meaning, and commitment interact with the forces of cognitive development, maturation, and social expectations" (p. 11)

Therefore, developmental scholars have argued that emerging adulthood is a critical time for young adults to explore their identity (Arnett, 2006), consider life's "big questions" of meaning and purpose (Parks, 2000), and to develop a sense of vocation/calling for their lives and work (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Parks, 2000). The identification of having a vocation or purpose for their lives is an essential aspect of identity development for young adults (Chickering, Dalton, & Stamm 2006) and a primary positive outcome associated within the processes of psychosocial (Chickering & Reisser, 1993) and faith development (Parks, 2000).

Faith development. James Fowler (1981) is famous for applying a developmental lens to faith, and Sharon Parks (2000) expands Fowler's work by focusing on the faith development of young adults. Parks' research demonstrates that young adulthood should be considered a key stage of development wherein adolescents become "obsessed with questions about their purpose, vocation and belonging" (p. 12). This stage of life encompasses an important process she calls "meaning-making", an intrinsic human desire to "make sense of the world and understand the fitting connections between things" (p. 24). The connections Parks (2000) has in view include the integration of a young adult's developing cognitive, emotional, social, and vocational identities. So, as young adults develop deeper interest in and capacity for exploring life's "big questions" of meaning and purpose, they also long to explore potential connections between the seemingly disconnected aspects of their lives. For this reason, Fowler (1981) argued that the

main goal of faith development is vocation, which he defined as the integration of every aspect of a person's life into a consistent, unified whole. Likewise, Parks (2000) describes the culmination of faith development as an articulation of one's vocation, a "worthy dream" that successfully integrates young adults' inner beliefs, outward actions, and social commitments (Parks, 2000).

Spiritual & vocational formation. Whereas faith development is a process that focuses on the "meaning-making" processes which occur within young adulthood (regardless of whether a person is religious or not), spiritual formation is often framed as a developmental process intended to deepen a Christian's faith, character, piety, and sense of vocation (May, 1982; Willard, 2002). Despite their differences, faith development and spiritual formation share a deep appreciation for the integrative process of vocation and the ultimate goal of forming a sense of vocation for one's life and work. Garber (2014) captures these intersecting goals when he states:

> "The word *vocation* is a rich one, having the address the wholeness of life, the range and relationships and responsibilities. Work, yes, but also families, and neighbors, and citizenship, locally and globally – all of this and more is seen as vocation, that to which I am called as a human being, living my life before the face of God. It is never the same word as *occupation*, just as *calling* is never the same word as *career*. Sometimes, by grace, the words and realities they represent do overlap, even significantly; sometimes, in the incompleteness of life in a fallen world, there is not much overlap at all" (p. 11).

Here Garber describes how the concept of vocation is often synonymous with the goal of spiritual formation: both are focused on describing and promoting greater levels of overlap between a Christian's faith and work. In fact, in many Christian contexts it has become commonplace to join the concepts of "vocational and spiritual formation" (Chandler, et al., 2014) and occasionally conflate them into the single term "vocational formation". In many of these Christian contexts, vocational formation is used to describe the phenomenon of Christians who are engaging in a vocationally-oriented process of spiritual formation by actively exploring and

articulating the myriad of connections that exist between their faith and work.

Contexts of vocational formation. As described in chapter 1, the "Sunday-Monday Gap" (Nash & McLennan, 2001) describes how many Christian workers, across a wide range of positions and professions, report that their faith has little to no meaningful connection to their work. In this section, I look at the relevant literature that describes how vocational formation occurs (or does not occur) within contexts that are implicated in the Sunday-Monday gap for Christian young adults. Therefore, I will document the range of vocational formation related experiences in three primary U.S. social institutions: the church, college, and the workplace. At the end of each of these subsections, I will describe how some within each context have attempted to provide resources to support the vocational formation of Christians in general, and Christian young adults in particular.

Church. Given the centrality of work in adults' lives, and the priority that vocation and calling have held in Christian theology, ethics, and formation, one might assume that churches have actively and effectively supported the vocational formation of their congregants. The related literature challenges this assumption by demonstrating how Christians have struggled to find church-related resources and supports to help them integrate their faith and work.

In studying the Faith-at-Work (FAW) movement, Miller (2007) found that large numbers of Christian workers feel "unsupported by their Sunday church in their Monday marketplace vocation" (p. 24). After conducting extensive research on a wide range of Christian churches and Christian workers, Miller concludes that the FAW movement has largely developed independently of most churches, primarily due to "a lack of perceived support or interest from the clergy" (p. 7). Similar experiences have been reported by Christian young adults. For example, over 66% of Christian young adults say it has been over 3 years since they heard

church teachings on work and career (Barna, 2012). This has led some Christian young adults to abandon their church affiliations, and in some cases their faith altogether (Kinnaman & Hawkins, 2011). For example, in a recent study of "de-churched" Christian Millennials (i.e., young adults who have left their Christian church and/or faith), Kinnaman & Hawkins (2011) found that many of these young adults believed that church did not "prepare them for real life", and described their Christian faith as "shallow" and "disconnected from their real lives" (p.42). Most relevant for this study, 31% of these young adults believed their "faith was not relevant to the career interests". Of the de-churched young adults surveyed, only a handful indicated that their experiences in church had positively contributed to their vocational formation. Fairly low numbers of these de-churched young adults indicated that their church helped them to learn about how Christians can positively contribute to society (28%), to view their gifts and passions as part of God's calling (25.5%), and understand how the Bible applies to their career (13%). Only 24% of these young adults said they better understood their purpose because of their experiences in church (Kinnaman & Hawkins, 2011).

Church based-initiatives. Partly in response to the negative experiences of Christian workers, some ministers and congregations have made vocational formation a core aspect of their mission and vision for ministry (Keller, 2012; Nelson, 2011). While church-based vocational formation initiatives often differ in their specific structure and pedagogical strategies, each program locates the local church as the central and essential context wherein Christian young adults can explore the connections between their faith and work. For many of these churches, members are encouraged to engage in vocational reflection and discernment as a function of being involved in the congregational life of the church, and participants represent a wide range of ages and career fields. Vocational formation initiatives are found in a wide range

of churches and denominations, including notable vocation-oriented ministries within Redeemer Presbyterian Church's Center for Faith & Work (Presbyterian Church in America) in New York City, The Falls Church (Anglican Church in North America) in Falls Church, VA, and Christ Community Church (Evangelical Free Church) in Kansas City, MO.

While some church-based programs emerge out of a local congregation's commitment to the vocational formation of their members, other programs utilize a networking strategy to partner with individual churches while coordinating their program on a national level. One such program is "The Fellows Initiative", a national network that coordinates "Fellows Programs" which are purposefully designed to foster the vocational formation of recent college graduates (The Fellows Initiative, 2015). Currently, there are 23 Fellows Programs across the country, in locations ranging from Boston, MA to Macon, GA to Salt Lake City, UT. The aim of these programs is to develop Christian leaders who "live their Christian faith seamlessly" (The Fellows Initiative, 2019), including the seamless integration of the Fellows' faith and work. Each Fellows Program is designed to provide an integrated educational experience, where participants' spiritual and vocational formation occur in tandem. Prior to this study, no scholars have conducted empirical studies on these programs, so there is no peer-reviewed research to determine the effectiveness or outcomes of church-based vocational formation programs.

College. Historically, college was a place where students could explore questions addressing truth, meaning, and purpose through their studies (Kullberg, 2007, Marsden, 1992). Many scholars continue to argue that college remains an ideal context for young adults to explore related issues of meaning, purpose, calling and vocation (Astin, 2004; Astin et al, 2011; Chickering, et al., 2006; Clydesdale, 2015; Cunningham, 2015; Parks, 2000). Some scholars describe students' pursuit of purpose and meaning in college as an endeavor in "spiritual

development" (Astin, et al., 2011; Dalton, 2001; Strange, 2001) because it is a process wherein students identify their inner values and personal beliefs in order to connect them to their future goals and career choices (Arnett, 2006, Bok, 2006; Dalton, 2001). For this reason, some scholars have argued that vocation should become an "organizing principle" for undergraduate education (Cunningham, 2015; Clydesdale, 2015). Higher education often provides an ideal environment for vocational formation because it provides students with the necessary time and a safe space for vocational reflection (Cunningham, 2015). The collegiate context also provides mentors to inspire young people to engage in vocational exploration and reflection, as well as mentoring communities to help students explore life's big questions of meaning and purpose (Parks, 2000).

Students' expectations & experiences in college. Many college students report that their expectations of college are in line with the traditional purposes of college listed above. For example, 80% of college students reported that they considered themselves to be spiritual and that matters of spirituality were important to them (Astin, et al, 2011). Another study found that "Students want to use their time in college partly to find meaning and purpose in their personal lives and their academic studies" (Society for Values in Education, 2005, p. 5). Students' purpose-laden expectations of college also translates to the area of career development. For example, in a recent survey of 5,000 college students, 44% believed they had a "calling", and 28% said they were actively searching for a calling while in college (Duffy & Sedlacek, 2010). These findings underscore the claim that these concepts of calling and vocation are extremely important to/among college students (Hunter, Dik & Banning, 2010), and that college students expect for their colleges to create an environment that fosters their spiritual and career development, both of which are necessary for vocational formation. While many college students' have expectations for colleges to support their spiritual development and vocational

formation, these expectations vary greatly from their actual experiences in college. For example, of the 80% of students who said spirituality was important to them, 60% also reported that spiritual matters are never discussed in the classroom and 45% of these students said that they were dissatisfied with how their college experience has given them opportunities for spiritual growth (Astin et al., 2011).

Critiques from scholars. Echoing students' disappointment with their spiritual development experiences in college, several prominent scholars have critiqued U.S. higher education for moving away from valuing and promoting college students' explorations of purpose and meaning (Astin, et al., 2011; Chickering, Dalton, and Auberbach, 2006; Strange, 2001). Astin (2004) critiques higher education for judging itself in strictly materialistic terms (e.g., enrollments, funding, publication records, and popularity polls) which emphasizes students' outer development (e.g., professional skills and test scores) while simultaneously ignoring their inner development (e.g. values, beliefs, spirituality, and self-understanding). For these reasons, Dalton (2001) also critiques colleges for marketing the economic and career advantages of higher education as its most important outcomes, which encourages students to become increasingly self-focused and private about their values, while inhibiting their quest for "the good life" and making it less likely that graduates will be "engaged citizens willing to do the long and arduous work of creating a good society" (p. 22). Although college commencement speeches are often filled with lofty speeches about graduates' purpose and calling (Clydesdale, 2015), this message is essentially, "too little, too late" (p. 1), because many colleges and universities regularly fail to consistently talk to students about their purpose and vocation in the critical years between their convocation and commencement.

Christian college students. The disappointing experiences of college described above are

supplemented by several studies that have described the difficult and negative experiences that some Christian students have experienced in collegiate contexts. It is important to understand the perspectives of Christian students, especially since 35% of college students identify themselves as "born-again Christians" (Calhoun, Aronczyk, Mayrl & VanAntwerpen, 2007). A significant number of Christian students report that their experiences in college are detrimental to their faith, and by proxy, to their vocational formation. For example, several studies have shown that some Christian college students feel that their public higher education environment was incongruent with, and even antagonistic towards, their religious beliefs, values, and practices (Lowery, 2001; Moran, Lang, & Oliver, 2007). Many of these Christian students described experiences of being stereotyped, mocked, critiqued, and marginalized in a variety of settings on campus (Moran, et al., 2007). Other Christian students consider themselves to be "outsiders" on public campuses, constantly feeling misunderstood, and expecting negative responses from people on campus because of their religion (Lowery, 2001; Thompson, 2009). As a result, some of these Christian students have chosen to keep their religious identities and beliefs hidden (Moran, et al, 2007; Lowery, 2001). While hiding one's religious identity is problematic in general, it is also fundamentally incongruent with and harmful for these students' vocational formation as it prevents the effective exploration of the connections between their faith and work.

Many Christian students report negative experiences in private Christian colleges as well. Hall, Edwards, and Wang (2016) conducted an extensive nationwide study of Christian students in Christian higher education and found that spiritual decline among Christian students increased across every semester they attended a Christian college. 53% of these students reported feeling either distant from God or disengaged from a Christian community, both of which were negative indicators for a lack of spiritual development in students (Hall, et al., 2016). Based on the

research above, it is clear that many colleges and universities are not effectively fostering the vocational formation of young adults in general, and Christian young adults in particular.

College-based resources. Partly in response to the critiques from students and scholars alike, some religiously-oriented colleges have begun to offer programming aimed at fostering vocational formation among college students. The impetus for many of these vocationally-oriented programs began in 2000, when the Lilly Foundation provided 225 million dollars of funding to 88 church-affiliated higher education institutions to create Programs for Theological Exploration of Vocation (PTEV). One of the primary goals of each PTEV institution was to provide undergraduates with a range of resources to support the exploration of the relationship between their faith and work (PTEV, 2017). To date, few published studies have assessed the impact of PTEV programs. One notable exception, is Clydesdale's (2015) research which interviewed almost 3,000 young adults, staff, and faculty across 24 institutions that received PTEV grants and developed vocational-oriented programming. Clydesdale (2015) found that students who participated in PTEV programs experienced significantly higher levels of success in college (e.g., retention, academic engagement, holistic development, and career planning) and after college (e.g., intentionality, resilience, civic engagement, and life satisfaction). In a smaller study, Moretto (2011) found that many PTEV participants' experiences played a critical role in their career decision-making processes. Although Lilly is no longer offering PTEV funding, several schools have continued and/or expanded their vocational formation programs. To support these ongoing initiatives, the Council of Independent Colleges launched the Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education (NetVUE) in 2009 (Council of Independent Colleges, 2017). NetVUE currently has over 200-member institutions, demonstrating that vocational formation programs continue to be an important resource that some colleges are using to promote

the spiritual and vocational development of their students.

Workplace. Although Americans spend more time working than doing anything else in their lives, many work in environments they believe are not supportive of integrating their faith and work. However, many Americans also believe that faith is a core part of their identity, and that the expression of their spirituality is a basic human right (Campbell, 2006). As a response, some workers in the United States have pushed for more opportunities to integrate their faith and work, fueling Faith-At-Work (or Spirituality-at-Work) as a bona fide social movement (Miller, 2007; Miller & Ewest, 2013a). Miller & Ewest (2015) argue that many organizations are realizing the Faith-At-Work (FAW) movement is "not a simple or binary matter of bringing your faith to work or not, it is an issue of personhood…whether you can bring your whole self to work or not" (p. 310). Given the increasing rates of racial and ethnic diversity in the workplace, employers can no longer afford to ignore these issues, legally or otherwise.

David Miller is an Associate Research Scholar at Princeton University and the Director of Princeton's Faith and Work Initiative. Miller is also one of the leading scholars who has extensively researched and written about the FAW social movement which is organized around Christian workers' "quest for integrating faith and work" (p 6). Miller's (2007) body of research began by analyzing the various ways that individual Christian workers have attempted to integrate their faith and work, and more recently, his work has analyzed the variety of ways that organizations have responded to American workers' growing desire to integrate and express their faith at work (Miller & Ewest, 2015).

Faith-at-Work movement: Workers' approaches. When describing his research, Miller (2007) laments the theological and practical problems that language often creates when describing the ways workers think about and manifest the integration of their faith and work. He

also notes the lack of a comprehensive and nuanced framework by which to locate the critical analysis and dialogue within the FAW movement. As a remedy, Miller (2007) offers a new conceptual framework: The Integration Box (TIB), which is based on his research about the ways that organizations and individuals with the FAW movement manifest their quest for the integration of their faith and work. Below, I include a fairly detailed explanation of Miller's theory, because it provided me with a helpful framework which helped me to focus the analysis and discussion sections of my study.

Evangelistic Type (ET)	**Experiential Type (EX)**
Ethics Type (ET)	**Enrichment Type (EN)**

Figure 1. "The Integration Box"
(Miller, 2007)

Miller's TIB framework is organized around the "Four Es", (e.g., Ethics, Experience, Evangelism, Enrichment), which represent a wide range of diverse modalities (i.e., "types") or ways, that people pursue, understand, and manifest their quest for integrating faith and work. The first modality is the "Ethics Type (ET)", which sees the primary connection between faith and work through the lens of personal virtue, business ethics, and social and economic justice (Miller, 2007). Ethical considerations can focus on the micro (personal), mezzo (corporate), and macro (societal) levels. The "Evangelistic Type (EV)" sees the primary way of integrating their

faith and work through the expression / sharing of their faith with colleagues, customers, and suppliers (Miller, 2007). EVs see the purpose of their work and workplace primarily as a mission field. These evangelistic efforts in the workplace are often supported by a wide variety of formal and informal structures and programs. The "Experience Type (EX)" views the integration of their faith and work primarily through the theological lenses of vocation and calling. EXs see work as a way to find greater purpose in life, which is often pursued by addressing larger societal needs through one's work (Miller, 2007). As a result, EXs tend to focus on experiencing meaningful work, and view their work as a calling, emphasizing various ways their work has (extrinsic and intrinsic) meaning and purpose (Miller, 2007). The "Enrichment Type (EN)" sees the primary connection between faith and work through the ways that their faith enriches their work, often on a micro (i.e., personal) level. Expressions of enrichment include prayer, self-affirmation and improvement, and personal transformation through work (Miller, 2007).

Finally, Miller (2007) identifies a meta-type: the "Everywhere Indicators (EI)". EIs are groups and individuals in the FAW movement which "…address several, if not all of the four manifestations of integrating faith and work" (p. 138). This type is called "Everywhere Indicators" because they view several, if not all, ways of integrating faith and work as part of a "mature or aspirational state" (p. 139). EIs are typically grounded in one primary type, but freely and regularly move between/among other quadrants, possibly all other quadrants. (Miller, 2007). Although Miller locates the work-as-calling/vocation perspective primarily within the EX type, the EI's aspirational motivation, integrative emphases, and regular movement among other types could also signal that a young adult is continually engaged in vocational formation. The EI type could also indicate that a Christian young adult is experiencing an evolving (i.e., maturing) perspective on how their faith and work are and could be integrated (Miller, 2007).

Faith-at-Work movement: organizational responses. To date, much of the related literature has focused on articulating the potential benefits of bringing spirituality and religion into the workplace; as a result, there are few empirical studies that document the successes and/or struggles that workers experience as they attempt to bring their spirituality and religion in the workplace (Exiline & Bright, 2011). However, by drawing upon related research in management literature, Exiline and Bright (2011) introduce several types of religious and spiritual struggles that people commonly experience at work, specifically highlighting potential conflicts that could arise within the organizational, interpersonal, and intra-personal domains of the workplace. For the purposes of this sub-section, which examines how the context of the workplace impacts Christians' vocational formation, a focus on organizational domain will be most relevant. In the organizational domain, Exiline and Bright (2011) note how common interpretations about the separation of church and state could likely create issues for workers who want to express their personal religious beliefs, but find their workplace to be unwelcoming of such explicit displays of religion. In fact, many workplaces actively implement policies of tolerance and strict rules against proselytization or other explicit forms of religious expression from their employees (Exiline & Bright, 2011).

Faith-at-Work organizational frameworks. To compensate for some of the deficiencies within other earlier frameworks (e.g., Mitroff & Denton, 1999; Ashforth & Pratt, 2010; Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2010), Miller and Ewest (2015) offer a faith and work organizational framework to "describe corporate actions and attitudes towards workplace spirituality and religion" (p. 305). In their analysis, Miller and Ewest identify four organizational approaches for addressing faith and spirituality in the workplace: faith-based, faith-friendly, faith-safe, and faith-avoiding. Miller & Ewest (2015) describe the "faith-avoiding" (p. 316) organization as taking an

“adversarial stance” (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2010) towards faith and work by attempting to suppress all personal and communal expressions of religion, spirituality, or faith at work. The faith-avoiding organization is often deeply rooted in secularization theory, seeing religion and faith as inherently problematic and counterproductive to the aims of the workplace (Miller & Ewest, 2015). This modality encourages a “fatal dualism” (Johnson, 2007) that “forces employees to leave their faith, and therefore part of their identity, outside the workplace” (p. 316). In doing so, the faith-avoiding organization offers the most obvious example of a workplace environment that does not support vocational formation of its workers.

At the other end of the spectrum is a “faith-based” organization, which is overtly grounded or rooted in a specific faith or religious tradition (Miller & Ewest, 2015). Faith-based workplaces have been referred to as being “religion based” (Mitroff & Denton, 1999) and/or “directing organizations” (Ashforth & Pratt, 2010), given how this type organization imposes its worldview on individual workers through the integration of faith-based convictions and values via the mission and practices of the organization. For this reason, faith-based organizations tend to be privately owned and reflect the religious traditions of the organization’s founder and/or family (Miller & Ewest, 2015). Although faith-based organizations promote the faith-work integration of their employees, this type of workplace can also marginalize some workers’ expressions of religion or spirituality, particularly if/when a worker’s faith tradition differs from the official faith tradition of the organization.

Miller and Ewest (2015) also identify the “faith-safe” organization as a workplace that tolerates employees’ desire to integrate their faith and work and does not actively suppress workers’ expressions of religion or spirituality (Miller & Ewest, 2015). While faith-safe organizations are open to workers’ interest in faith at work, their primary motivation is to fulfill

basic legal requirements of nondiscrimination and freedom of religion/expression. As such, a faith-safe workplace does not proactively encourage workers' expressions of faith at work, assuming a "parallel stance" (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2010) that does not avoid religion altogether (e.g., faith-avoiding), nor does it impose a specific faith tradition upon workers (e.g., faith-based). Instead, faith-safe workplaces have been described as "socially-responsible" (Mitroof & Denton, 1999) and/or "enabling organizations" (Ashforth & Pratt, 2010) due to their responsive (yet passive) posture towards workers' desire to integrate their faith and work. For this reason, Miller and Ewest (2015) describe the faith-safe workplace as taking a laissez-fair attitude towards faith at work, "accepting it, but taking a hands-off approach" (p. 318).

Miller and Ewest's (2015) framework also identifies a relatively new (and rare) posture that some organizations have adopted towards faith at work. A "faith-friendly" workplace proactively engages employees' desires for and expressions of faith at work (Miller & Ewest, 2015). Faith-friendly organizations stand in stark contrast to a faith-avoiding workplaces, as faith-friendly organizations intentionally and strategically embrace faith and work for the good it brings both to workers and within the workplace. The faith-friendly organization is also unique from a faith-based workplace, because it welcomes religious diversity by actively promoting "policies [that] are welcoming and inclusive, and do not privilege one tradition over another" (p. 319), including atheistic worldviews. The faith-friendly organization not only respects workers' desire to integrate faith and work (e.g., faith-safe modality), but also goes beyond mere tolerance and legal compliance to "proactively welcome and perceive employee and business benefits in appropriate manifestation of faith at work" (p. 319). For these reasons, faith-friendly workplaces have been described as "integrative organizations" (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2010), because they proactively avoid the faith and work bifurcation and compartmentalization of other types.

Workplace resources. Miller (2007) argues that contexts like the faith-avoiding workplace are one reason why many Christian adults report that they are living "increasingly bifurcated lives," where their faith has little to no meaningful connection to their work (Miller, 2007). Miller's research also shows that today's workers, regardless of job level or salary, want their work to be meaningful and "are no longer content to leave their souls in the parking lot" (p. 6). As a response to these sentiments among Christian workers, the Faith-at-Work (FAW) movement has emerged and is "organized around a quest to integrate one's personal faith teachings with one's professional work responsibilities" (Miller, 2007, p. 6). The FAW movement is a loosely coordinated initiative of marketplace (e.g., para-church) ministries that aim to "bring marketplace issues and religious, spiritual, and ethical teachings into conversation with each other" (Miller, 2007, p. 14). Examples of workplace programs include newer initiatives like At Work on Purpose (At Work on Purpose, 2017) and larger, more established groups like Christian Business Men's Connection (Christian Business Men's Connection, 2017).

Based on the research above, it is clear that three of the primary social institutions in the U.S. do not intentionally or effectively promote the vocational formation of Christian young adults. While many scholars have argued that the contexts of church, college, and the workplace should welcome and support Christian young adults as they attempt to integrate their faith and work, the literature suggests that the negative experiences of Christian young adults in these contexts may actually contribute to (or exacerbate) the Sunday-Monday gap for these workers.

General Impressions and Gaps in the Literature

After reviewing the related literature, I have come to six primary conclusions about the current state of the literature as it pertains to my study: 1) A number of long-term national studies show that work is a central and important aspect within the lives of many adults, but a

majority of U.S. workers claim to be dissatisfied and disengaged from their work; 2) Meaningful work is associated with a host of positive outcomes and, for Christians, is often linked to issues of faith, religion, spirituality, and the concepts of calling and vocation; 3) Vocational formation represents important processes within faith development and spiritual formation wherein emerging Christian adults learn to integrate their faith commitments and workplace responsibilities; 4) Engaging in a process of vocational formation increases the likelihood that Christian young adults will experience their work as being meaningful, satisfying, and engaging; 5) While much of the vocational formation literature emphasizes the potential and responsibilities of U.S. social institutions to help young adults engage in vocational development, many Christian young adults lack the necessary resources to effectively engage in vocational formation in their churches, colleges, and workplaces. Furthermore, related research suggests that many Christian young adults' negative experiences in college and church may exacerbate their experience of the Sunday-Monday gap; 6) As described in chapter 1, the Sunday-Monday gap presents a number of serious problems for the vocational formation and general well-being for Christian young adults. The negative impact of the Sunday-Monday gap is represented within Miller's (2007) findings on the "bifurcated life" which many Christians lament experiencing at work, and in Johnson's (2007) description of the "fatal dualism" which forced on many Christian workers, and in Palmer's (2004) critique of the "pathology of the divided life" (p. 7), where a person's inner soul (e.g., faith commitments) is suppressed in favor of one's outer role (e.g., workplace responsibilities). In these ways, the Sunday-Monday gap, and the divided life it represents, is likely to foster serious theological, psychological, and personal problems for Christian workers (Dik & Duffy, 2013; Garber, 2007; Palmer, 2004; Schuurman, 2004; Sherman, 2011).

Gaps in the research. Much of the literature on Christian vocational formation has been largely persuasive, historical, conceptual, and/or theological in nature (Keller, 2012; Nelson, 2011; Schuurman 2004; Sherman, 2011). Most of this literature persuasively argues that vocational formation is a critically important process for Christian young adults to engage in, because it promotes their spiritual formation and enables them to explore and articulate the myriad of connections (e.g., theological, practical, personal) that exist between their faith and their work. While scholarship on work as calling and vocation has doubled in the last decade, most of this scholarship has come from the fields of vocational psychology and management (Dik & Domene, 2015). As a result, there are currently no qualitative research studies that explore or describe *how* the vocational formation process occurs for Christian young adults. This is one reason why, after a thorough review of the related research, vocational psychologists Duffy and Dik (2013) describe the literature on vocation/calling to be "like a toddler—developed to the point of being able to stand on her own two legs, but with much room for future growth" (p. 435).

Semantic ambiguity. The most obvious (and serious) problem in the research literature is the semantic ambiguity within the field which prevents a lack of well-defined and mutually agreed upon basic terms (Miller, 2007; Nash & McLennan, 2001). Given the semantic ambiguity of key terms, and the wide range of disciplines that have taken up research on these issues, the study of work as vocation and calling is currently facing an "identity crisis", which further complicates the likelihood of semantic clarity in the field heading forward (Rosso, Dekas, & Wrzesniewski, 2010).

Sparsity of empirical research. Currently, only a small amount of empirical research has focused on the vocational formation of Christian young adults. In response to this deficit in the

literature, the Journal of Psychology and Christianity published a special issue dedicated to Christianity and calling in 2015. In the introduction, Dik and Domene (2015) argue that while the concept of calling has roots in Christian tradition "research that approaches calling from an explicitly Christian perspective and explicitly Christian context or with Christian research participants has been sparse" (p. 292). This is not a new problem, as almost a decade earlier, a similar study stated that “too few studies have explored the unique role of religion and spirituality in the career development process of the general college population” (Constantine, et al., p. 227). While several scholars, practitioners, and ministers have called for the development and research of new ecosystems that supports young adults in their vocational formation (Cunningham, 2016; Kinnaman, 2011; Miller, 2007), only two published research studies have answered this call to date. Both of these studies empirically measured the effectiveness of faith-based vocational formation programs. The first, an article published by Dik, Scholljegerdes, Ahn, and Shim (2015), assessed the impact of a faith-work career counseling group intervention for Christian college students through a randomized controlled trial. The second, Clydesdale’s (2015) book *The Purposeful Graduate,* utilized a mixed methods study to measure the impact the PTEV programs had on participating students, faculty, and schools.

Conflicting findings. Interestingly, while Clydesdale’s study found that the PTEV programs had a very positive impact on all participants (see above), Dik et al., (2015) found that their religiously-oriented career intervention had no discernible impact on the Christian students. While Dik, et al., (2015) noted that their findings could have been reflective of the particular pedagogical contours of the specific career intervention program, it still highlights some controversy among very limited research on vocational formation programs. The conflicting

findings identify a question that remains unanswered: do faith-oriented vocational formation programs have a positive impact, given all the resources and energy that is spent on them?

Lack of theory. Given the sparse empirical evidence that adequately describes what Christian young adults' vocational formation looks like, there is also a lack of theory within the scholarship on work as calling and vocation in general (Dik & Duffy, 2013). The lack of evidence-based theories would necessarily have a negative impact on programs which aim to promote Christian young adults' vocational formation. Therefore, developing theory will be imperative to guide high-quality vocational formation scholarship and programming heading forward (Dik & Duffy, 2013).

This study addresses several of the research gaps and problems listed above. Through my research, I am seeking to better understand how Christian young adults engage in a process of vocational formation within social contexts that often promote the bifurcation of one's inner (e.g., faith commitments) and outer (e.g., workplace responsibilities) lives. Since I draw upon 'vocational exemplars' who come from a particular vocational formation context (e.g. TFI Fellows programs), I also discuss what I discovered about the effectiveness of this specific vocational formation program. However, my primary focus for this study is upon how these Christian young adults were able to effectively engage in the process of vocational formation. Therefore, my study addresses three specific gaps in the literature by providing: 1) empirical evidence that describes how Christian young adults successfully engaged in vocational formation (Dik & Duffy, 2013); 2) research that investigates the concept of work as calling and/or vocation which utilizes explicitly Christian constructs and Christian participants (Dik & Domene, 2015); and 3) insight on the effectiveness of a particular vocational formation program and curriculum (i.e., TFI Fellows Program).

CHAPTER 3: Research Methods & Design

As demonstrated in chapters 1 and 2, there is a widespread lack of resources to effectively support the vocational formation of Christian young adults. The related research literature is largely conceptual, persuasive, or quantitative in nature, which has left a gap in our knowledge about *how* Christian young adults effectively and meaningfully engage in a process of vocational formation. Creswell (2014) argues that "if a concept or phenomenon needs to be explored and understood because little research has been done on it, then it merits a qualitative approach" (p. 20). Therefore, to better understand *how* Christian young adults learn to meaningfully integrate their faith and work, I use a qualitative research approach aimed at understanding and articulating how my participants have engaged in a process of vocational formation. Since one of the purposes of qualitative research is to help researchers better understand "how people make sense of their lives and their experiences" (Merriam, 2014, p. 23), a qualitative research design was ideal to help me better understand how vocational formation occurs from the perspectives and lived experiences of my participants. More specifically, I strategically chose to utilize a hybrid qualitative methodology, drawing on both phenomenology and narrative inquiry, as a way to explore how some Christian young adults have learned to integrate their faith and work in meaningful ways. In this chapter, I will outline how this narrative-phenomenology design helped me to more effectively reach the goal of my research project and more thoroughly answer the three primary research questions that frame my study:

1. *How do participants describe the **relationship** between their faith and work?*
2. *How do participants describe the **process** of **learning** to integrate their faith and work?*
3. *What were some of the **primary catalysts** that helped participants learn how to integrate their faith and work in meaningful ways?*

Research Design: Narrative-Phenomenology Bricolage

To answer the research questions above in a comprehensive way, I utilized an interdisciplinary qualitative research methodology that combines elements of both phenomenology and narrative inquiry. In this way, I follow in the footsteps of Claude Levi-Strauss' (1966), who offered the analogy of "intellectual bricolage" (p. 17) as a way to conceptualize how researchers could combine aspects of different qualitative methodologies to more adequately address complex research contexts and questions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). I also draw upon Kincheloe (2001), who argues that we should see "bricolage as deep interdisciplinarity: the synergy of multiple perspectives" (p. 686). I argue that the narrative-phenomenological bricolage that I utilized within this study is synergistic because both methodologies offered overlapping and complimentary ways to explore the diverse and complex set of research questions I posed for this study, and combining them helped to achieve a depth of insight that could not have been achieved by using a singular method. Throughout the rest of this chapter, I will describe the contours of the interdisciplinary qualitative research design that I utilized for this study and, in so doing, I will also offer a rationale for my decision to employ a narrative-phenomenology bricolage to more effectively answer my research questions. However, for the sake of clarity and brevity, I will offer a short summary of a) why the emphases of phenomenology and narrative inquiry are both important for answering my research questions, and b) why combining them enabled me to more effectively meet the goals of my study.

Phenomenology. When conceiving of this study, my primary interest was fundamentally phenomenological - the "abiding concern" (van Manen, 1990, p. 31) of my project was to better understand how Christian young adults experienced of the phenomenon of 'vocational formation', a process of learning to integrate their faith and work in more meaningful ways. For

this reason, a phenomenological approach was ideal to help me to learn more about my participants' "lived experience" (Husserl, 1917/1981) and understand how their perceptions, memories, judgments, assumptions, and beliefs impacted their experiences of vocational formation (Husserl, 1970). While some forms of phenomenology attempt to describe the objective essence of an experience, my goal was more interpretative: I wanted to know what the experience of vocational formation was like from the point of view of my participants. For this reason, I was immediately drawn to more hermeneutical forms of phenomenology (Heidegger, 1927/1962 ; van Manen, 1990). More specifically, I was drawn to the interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) approach, particularly for its emphasis on the "double hermeneutical cycle" (Smith & Snell, 2009) wherein my participants would be asked to describe their own experiences (first layer), which I, as the researcher, could then offer my own interpretation of (second layer), to mediate between the different meanings of their lived experiences of vocational formation (van Manen, 1990).

Narrative inquiry. However, while I wanted to understand more about the essential elements of Christian young adults' vocational formation experiences, I was equally interested in *how* they learned to integrate their faith and work. By framing vocational formation as a *learning process*, my primary interest was to gain an in-depth understanding how my participants grew and developed over time and within a particular context. Biographical forms of narrative inquiry appeared to be an ideal approach because of their foci on growth and development (Denzin 1989; Kim, 2016), chronological and causally-linked processes (Cortazzi, 1993; Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002), and the role of context or 'place' (Clannadin & Connelly, 2000). Since my participants would be drawn from a particular shared vocational formation context (e.g., TFI

Fellows Programs), biographical narrative inquiry offered a helpful way of understanding how this context shaped and impacted their vocational formation experiences (Kim, 2016).

Narrative-Phenomenology. I chose to create a hybrid narrative-phenomenological bricolage methodology to address some of the limitations of each of the research methods outlined above. While the IPA approach nicely aligns with my critical realist research paradigm (see below), it has also been critiqued by some scholars as focusing too much on "simple description" (Madill, Gough, Lawton, & Stratton, 2005). To study this phenomenon, I wanted to pursue a deeper level of analysis that is the hallmark of biographical narrative inquiry. However, to gain the requisite depth of analysis, biographical forms of narrative inquiry typical focus on the stories of 1-2 individuals (Kim, 2016). Yet, I was interested in learning how a larger number of Christian young adults had learned to integrate their faith and work. As a general rule, phenomenological research focuses on uncovering what a group of people have in common as they experience a particular phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). Since the phenomenon of vocational formation was what drove my study, a phenomenological approach also enabled me to identify some common themes within the vocational formation experiences of my participants.

In sum, creating a narrative-phenomenological bricolage design helped me to more holistically understand vocational formation experiences of a group of Christian young adults, and gave me an in-depth understanding of how these experiences changed over time within a specific context. This hybrid methodology also enabled me to re-tell a composite story about my participants' experiences of learning to integrate their faith and work in more meaningful ways. This narrative-phenomenology bricolage approach impacted every part of my study's methods and design, including my data collection, analysis, and presentation methods. I describe this impact in greater detail within each of the following sections of this chapter.

Data Collection

Based on the goals and design of my research study, I followed a data collection strategy which compiled a wide range of "field texts" (Clandinin & Connelley, 2000). The primary forms of data collected were participant interviews, but I also conducted observations of my participants' vocational formation 'spaces' (described below), and compiled a series of 'vocational artifacts' from each of my participants and the sites I visited.

Context. Since the phenomenological context of my study centers around Christian young adults who have engaged in a process of integrating their faith and their work, I needed to identify people who had a shared context for their vocational formation. Doing so helped me to more effectively analyze and represent my participants' particular vocational formation experiences within a relatively similar context. Therefore, I spent a long time researching national programs aimed helping Christian young adults learn to integrate their faith and work. The largest and most established of these programs is the The Fellows Initiative (TFI), a national network that coordinates "Fellows Programs". TFI was founded in 2006, in response to growing national interest in the original Fellows program model which began in The Falls Church Anglican in Falls Church, Virginia. As of 2019, there are 23 Fellows Programs across the United States, and while they are quickly spreading across the nation, these programs are currently concentrated within Mid-Atlantic and Southeastern states. Throughout my initial screening interviews, I spoke with TFI alumni from nine different Fellows programs, and my final participant sample represents five different Fellows programs, including some of the more established TFI programs. While each of these Fellows Programs has some unique features that distinguishes it from other TFI programs, I describe some common contextual features shared among Fellows programs in the following chapter.

Participant selection. As described earlier, I wanted to gain a deeper understanding about some of the common vocational formation experiences of a group of Christian young adults. So, in keeping with a typical number of participants within a typical phenomenological study, I aimed to recruit a participant sample of 10 'vocational exemplars' to tell me about their experiences of learning to integrate their faith and work.

To ensure that my participant sample was composed of people who had experienced a fairly similar phenomenon of vocational formation, I created a set of criteria to define what I meant by 'vocational exemplar'. For this study, each of my participants had to possess all six of the following characteristics: they must a) identify as a Christian, b) be a young adult between 23-35 years old, c) be a TFI Fellows alumni, d) have at least 1 year of full-time work experience (in a non-ministry career), and e) be identified as a "vocational exemplar" (e.g., a person who has engaged in vocational formation by integrating their faith and work) by one of my 'vocational gatekeepers'. To identify and gain access to participants for my study, I utilized a snowball sample method, where I selected a few reliable gatekeepers (Keesling, 2008) who also helped me to identify and connect with people who were either good participants for my study, or who helped me find people who were. To identify potential participants for my project, I initially contacted three gatekeepers with close ties to and a long history with TFI programs. Each of these gatekeepers also holds a high level of expertise on and experience with facilitating vocational formation of Christian young adults. I sent a formatted email (Appendix A) to each of these gatekeepers, outlining my selection criteria and asking them to help me to identify 'vocational exemplars' and provide me with the requisite contact information. Upon my request, each gatekeeper helped me spread the word about my project to others who were also interested in my research and/or could connect me with potential participants (Creswell, 2014).

My gatekeepers helped me to identify 83 Fellows program alumni who fit the criteria of 'vocational exemplars' outlined above. I sent a formatted email (Appendix B) to each of these potential participants to gauge their interest in participating in my study. I received responses from 40 of these exemplars and was able to conduct 27 screening interviews from those who responded. From this group of 27, I chose 10 people for more in-depth interviews. I chose these 10 participants based on criteria including demographic diversity (e.g., race, age, gender, SES), diversity of Fellows program experiences (e.g., representing a variety of different Fellows Programs and cohorts), professional fields (both a range of different professions and a number of participants in similar professions), convenience factors (those who lived in close proximity with others and who were available for interviewing during similar times), and those who demonstrated a compelling vocational formation story. In the following chapter, I will provide a table outlining some of the key demographic characteristics within my participant sample.

Interview procedures. In both narrative inquiry and phenomenology, the primary sources of data are interviews, the first-person oral telling of an individual's experiences and ideas (Creswell, 2009; Smith, 2009). However, my primary strategy for these interviews accented a more narratively-oriented approach, as I set out to collect stories from my participants that were deeply personal, meaningful, and related to their vocational formation experiences. So, throughout my data collection process, I asked my interviewees to engage in a form of "narrative thinking" (Kim, 2016, p. 156), wherein they reflected on their past experiences to construct life stories, with a particular focus on their vocational formation (Robinson & Hawpe, 1986). Through narrative thinking, I encouraged my participants to engage in a form of "autobiographical reasoning" (Habermas & Bluck, 2000) that engaged their thoughts, memories, and imaginations to describe their vocational formation experiences (Kim, 2016).

Protocols. Based on the goals for my study, and the biographical narrative approach, I utilized two sets of interview protocols for my study. My screening interview protocols (Appendix D) were designed to gather basic information about my participants' vocational formation experiences and faith and work perspectives. My in-depth interview protocols (Appendix E) were adapted from the Foley Center's Study of Lives at Northwestern University (McAdams, 2005). This latter set of interview protocols were modified to foster the telling of particular kinds of narratives, with specific questions asking my participants to share particular stories about their life, faith, and faith-work relationship. By asking my participants to describe their vocational formation experiences within a semi-structured narrative schema, my protocols offered a procedural way to identify essential narrative information (e.g., who, what, where, how, and why) and link them by causal relationships (e.g., What happened? To whom? Why so?). In this way, my protocols helped me better understand how my participants' past experiences with vocational formation led to their present outcomes and perspectives (Kim, 2016; Robinson & Hawpe, 1986).

Pilot. After IRB approval, I piloted the interview protocol with one of my participants (who currently lives overseas) via Skype. This pilot interview helped ensure that my screening and in-depth interview protocols were effective for answering my interview questions and helped troubleshoot issues before my subsequent data collection trips (Cresswell, 2014).

Interviews. Data collection occurred over the span of three months, wherein I conducted a series of three semi-structured, one-on-one interviews (Kvale, 1996), consisting of an initial screening interview and two in-depth interviews. All of my screening interviews took place via video conferencing, and ranged from 30-60 minutes for all my participants. All subsequent interviews were conducted in person, with one exception: one of my participants became ill after

our first in-person interview, so we also conducted our second interview via Skype. These in-person interviews were 90 minutes each and were conducted at a place and time of my participants' choosing. With my participants' consent, all video conferences were recorded in a video format, and all in-person interviews were captured in audio recordings.

In sum, all of my participants participated in three rounds of interviews, averaging four hours total, resulting in the collection of approximately 40 hours of interview data. While all participants expressed a willingness to continue to talk with me in subsequent interviews, I determined I had reached a 'saturation point' after my final round of in-person interviews. My practice was to re-listen to each interview immediately after it occurred and I found that, after the third round of interviews, I was primarily gathering data that confirmed existing information without hearing data that offered substantively new insights (Guest, Bunce, and Johnson, 2006).

Artifacts. While stories from interviews were the primary sources of my data, I also drew upon Kim's (2016) concept of the "cabinet of curiosities" (p. 144) to conceptualize the collection of a variety of artifacts that I hoped would help to trigger my participants' memories/thoughts and help me to re-tell their story of vocational formation. Therefore, to help my participants prepare for our in-depth interviews, I asked each of them to bring 1-3 artifacts which they believed reflected the relationship between their faith and work in the past, present, or future (or all three). Each of my participants shared three artifacts with me, including items like journal entries, photographs, art, formal/informal documents, books, legal decisions, educational curriculum, and other personal belongings (Clandanin & Connelly, 2000; Kim, 2016). These artifacts were often given in the final interview, either as a way to illustrate a story they wanted to tell me, or as a reflection on a poignant story they shared with me in a previous interview. I use these artifacts to augment my data analysis and continue to utilize them in subsequent

chapters, as a way to represent how my participants described the evolving relationship between their faith and work.

Fieldwork. To conduct these in-person interviews, I took two data collection trips, resulting in a total of 14 days in the field. Over these two trips, I was also able to interview one of the current TFI assistant directors, observe an annual TFI "Mercy & Justice Conference", and attend two worship services at churches who currently host TFI programs. All of these experiences provided me with the opportunity to collect additional field notes, artifacts, and gain more contextual understanding about my participants shared sense of 'place': Fellows programs.

Throughout my data collection process, I also kept a field note journal to record some of my own observations and reactions to my participants' interviews and my in-field experiences. These field notes became a reflective journal of sorts, a place to foster reflexive practice as a researcher by identifying potential areas of bias and noting recurring topics, interesting themes, and questions that arose throughout my data collection. After each interview, I also recounted some of the major themes, non-verbal cues, and repeating topics that I had observed during my subsequent interview. As a result, this field journal also became an essential component within my data analysis.

Data Analysis

My initial data analysis took place as I re-listened to the audio recording of each interview within 24 hours after it occurred. During this time, I used my field journal to identify and/or expound on some of the major themes, ideas, and quotes referenced by my participant. I also identified statements and references that were unclear to me and wrote down follow-up questions that I wanted to ask in subsequent interviews. After I finished collecting all of my data,

I began a more intense process of analyzing my field texts, which included multiple phases of transcription, coding, and writing (Cresswell, 2015; Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009).

Transcription. My transcription process occurred over two interconnected phases. In my initial transcription phase, each audio interview was initially transcribed into text format using "Trint", an encrypted anonymous online service which utilized voice recognition technology for transcription. In the second phase, I manually reviewed each of the Trint transcriptions to ensure accuracy, make corrections, indicate laughter/other sounds, and mask any confidential information. Throughout this second phase, I also referred back to my field journal notes to add supplemental information about relevant non-verbal gestures, body language, and/or background information that would more accurately depict our interviews. This lengthy two-phase transcription review and editing process took approximately six weeks, and allowed me to become very familiar with my participants' words, ideas, and stories (Cresswell, 2015).

Analysis and coding process. Whereas my data collection emphasized a more narrative-focused approach, my data analysis process employed a blend of narrative and phenomenological analytical methods. Below, I describe how I engaged in three primary phases of data analysis, the specific methodologies which influenced each phase, and how I blended these forms of analysis together to form my interpretations and frame my findings. While the process outlined below represents an attempt at describing the narrative-phenomenological hybrid method I used for this study, this strategy is fundamentally rooted in a standard qualitative approach to data analysis. In this way, my basic analysis process utilized standard elements of codes, categories, patterns, and themes to engage a typical qualitative data analysis spiral of description, classification, and interpretation (Creswell, 2007; Saldaña, 2007).

Phase 1: Narrative analysis. Broadly speaking, a narrative analysis approach seeks to highlight the particular and special characteristics of human experience that take place in a specific setting by *re-storying* participants' narratives (Kim, 2016). A distinctive of narrative analysis is that it works in tandem with the interpretation of the researcher to find "narrative meaning" (p. 190), which is "a cognitive process that organizes human experiences into temporally meaningful episodes" (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 1). Since narrative analysis provides a narrative framework for understanding past events and planning for future actions, it helped to understand how my participants engaged in a process of vocational formation (i.e., past events) and how their experiences have, and will continue to, shape their attempts to integrate their faith and work (i.e., present and future actions). The goal of my narrative analysis was to combine the disconnected data elements of action, event, and happenings into a coherent plot (Kim, 2016).

Therefore, in this initial phase of my research, I analyzed and described my participants' lives in a chronological manner, identifying a series of events, actions, and experiences which composed their story of vocational formation (Cortazzi, 1993). Throughout this first phase of analysis I coded for the narrative elements of *time* (e.g., Pre-Fellows, Fellows, Post-Fellows), *place* (e.g., Fellows program, church, college, workplace), and *interactions* between the basic elements of faith and work (e.g., faith-work relationships). During this phase also coded for my participants *self-evaluations* of their faith, work, and faith-work relationship (e.g., positive, negative), and some of the key *supports and challenges* they identified within their faith, work, and vocational journeys (e.g., relationships, experiences, ideas, beliefs, practices).

Phase 2: Phenomenological analysis. While this study began as a fairly traditional narrative inquiry, over the course of my initial analysis, I began to identify some emerging categories and patterns which caused my interest to shift from my participants' individual

narratives to some of the shared common experiences that were reflected across their stories. After a considerable amount of thought, I decided to pivot my analysis to focus on my participants' shared experiences of vocational formation. For this reason, I began to employ some more phenomenologically-based methods in subsequent stages of data analysis. This second phase of analysis provided me with deeper insight about some of the core themes and clusters of meaning which composed my participants' experiences and interpretations of their vocational formation journeys (Moustakas, 1994).

After my initial narrative-oriented round of coding, I began to code for what my participants described as some of their most significant experiences (e.g., high, low, and turning point stories). I also identified some of the repeating topics and "significant statements" (van Manen, 1990) within their stories, explanations of their core beliefs/values, and 'vocational artifacts' which described the evolution of their faith and work relationship. IPA encourages researchers to utilize theoretical knowledge when inductively analyzing data (Smith, et al., 2009), so in this second phase of analysis, I drew upon Miller's (2007) integration box to code for my participants' faith and work manifestations (e.g., ethics, expression, enrichment, and experience) within these significant experiences. Using Miller's framework allowed me to gain a better picture of the faith and work modalities which were most commonly represented with my participants' significant statements/experiences. From these codes, I identified a number of emergent patterns, categories, and themes among my participants' vocational formation stories.

However, it was also during this phase of analysis that I began to struggle with the sheer volume of data I had collected from my 10 participants. To help make my analysis more manageable, I decided to re-focus my analytical efforts on the half of my participants who were showing up most frequently in my prior coding processes. From there, I conducted mini-case

studies of each of these five 'exemplars' to look for areas of convergence and divergence between each of their narratives (Smith & Eatough, 2007). As a result of this process, I was able hone my analysis and identify some common themes within my 'exemplars' experiences of vocational formation. Next, I grouped these themes into superordinate themes (Smith & Osborn, 2004) which identified a handful of core experiences within my participants' vocational formation. Drawing upon these superordinate themes, I revisited and re-coded the transcripts of my other five participants to confirm the shared nature of these experiences and, when possible, to identify supporting evidence for these core experiences of vocational formation.

Phase 3: Integrated narrative-phenomenological analysis. In my third phase of data analysis, I took the superordinate themes I identified in phase two and brought them together with some of the narrative codes I identified in phase one. Doing so, helped me to more re-conceptualize my participants' vocational formation experiences. Placing their core experiences and significant statements within a narrative structure helped me to more deeply understand the chronological processes and causal relationships between them.

In this final round of analysis, I created an analytical matrix to identify when and where each of these significant statements referred to and/or significant learning experiences occurred (e.g., pre-Fellows, Fellows, post-Fellows). Once I did this, I began to see how my participants' core vocational formation experiences and perspectives had changed before, during, and after their Fellows year. Placing these superordinate themes into a narrative structure helped me to connect my data to my primary research questions by identifying a) the chronological *process* in which these core vocational formation experiences unfolded, b) the impact that these experiences had on their faith and work perspectives and *relationships*, and c) the primary *catalysts* that were responsible for helping my participants learn to integrate their faith and work in more meaningful

ways. While somewhat unconventional, the hybrid data analysis process described above enabled me to better understand my participants' shared experiences of vocational formation.

Data Representation

Similar to my data collection and analysis, I also represent my data in a way that reflects a blend of narrative and phenomenological approaches. As is typical to most qualitative research, my primary goal is to present my findings in a way that foregrounds my participants' experiences (Cresswell, 2015). To represent my participants' experiences of vocational formation in a clear and compelling manner, I utilize a hybrid data representation approach which features a basic narrative structure supplemented by phenomenological strategies.

Narrative structure. Drawing on a typical narrative approach, I will *re-story* participants' vocational formation experiences within Clandinin & Connelly's (2000) three-dimensional space of *situation*, *continuity* and *interaction.* To provide an overall frame for participants' narratives, I use chapter 4 to describe participants' *situation* or contexts. I begin by offering a basic demographic chart that describes some of the relevant the background information that shapes all of my participants' experiences. Next, I focus on the context of their vocational formation experiences: TFI Fellows programs. Since many people are unfamiliar with these programs, I provide a brief overview in chapter 4 to highlight some of the core components and curricular emphases which framed participants' experiences of vocational formation.

In chapters 5-7, I employ a technique called "narrative smoothing" (Spence, 1986) to frame participants' experiences within a descriptive narrative structure. This strategy helps to represent the *continuity* of participants' stories by placing their experiences within a chronological format. Therefore, chapter 5 features participants' pre-Fellows narratives, while chapter 7 focuses on their post-Fellows narratives. As a way to bridge their pre-Fellows and post-

Fellows narratives, I use chapter 6 to focus on their Fellows experiences. The purpose of this chapter will be to describe how their *interactions* with other people, perspectives, and points of view during their Fellows year functioned as catalysts which deeply formed their perspectives on and relationships between their faith and work (Creswell, 2015). This basic narrative structure will help readers to "understand why and how things happened in the way they did, and why and how my participants acted in the way they did" (Kim, 2016, p. 197).

Phenomenological strategies. Drawing upon strategies within IPA, I also present my data in a way that that aligns with the "double hermeneutical cycle" (Smith & Osborn, 2004, p. 53) described above, being careful to distinguish between what participants said and my interpretations of what they said. This end, and to ensure that participants' perspectives, experiences, and stories remain foregrounded within chapters 5-7, I will begin each chapter by presenting my findings *before* moving to a discussion of what they mean.

However, to complete the IPA "double hermeneutical cycle", I also provide my own interpretation about the core themes I identified within participants' narratives. In these discussion sections, I offer a deeper analysis of participants' experiences, and link these finding to the larger body of literature. Since these findings and discussions are presented in a chronological format, they will iteratively build upon each other to make an in-depth argument for how and why I think my participants' faith and work relationships and perspectives changed before, during, and after their Fellows year.

Additionally, throughout chapters 5-7, I introduce all core themes within my participants' experiences of vocational formation by using verbatim "significant statements" (Moustakas, 1994) from my five 'experiential exemplars'. While I will focus on exemplars' stories to focus the presentation of my findings, I will also draw upon stories from other seven participants as a

way of demonstrating that these are composite experiences of the phenomenon of vocational formation, and as such, are representative of the experiences of other participants as well.

Confidentiality

Since qualitative research in general, and narrative inquiry in particular, often uncovers detailed deeply personal stories about a study's participants (Kim, 2016), I have taken special care to ensure that my participants cannot be personally identified within my research report. As a conscientious researcher, I respect my participants' willingness to share the knowledge that they possess and sought to protect their confidentiality through three primary strategies.

First, I obtained participants' informed consent by electronically sending an informed consent form (Appendix D) at least 48 hours before our scheduled interview. I also stated the potential risks and benefits that may occur as a result of this study and informed them of their right to withdraw their consent at any time in the study without penalty (Kim, 2016). As we began the interview process, I asked each interviewee if they had any questions about my project and re-confirmed their consent before we started each interview. I also allowed each participant to choose their own pseudonym to mask their identities (Kim, 2016).

Second, I de-identified all of my participants during the transcription process, using their chosen pseudonyms, and changed the names of each Fellows program referenced in this study. To further protect my participants' confidentiality, I either removed or masked the names and locations of all employers, people, and organizations that were identified in the interview data.

Third, I further ensured participants' confidentiality by protecting all sensitive data, including all interview recordings and digital transcripts. I recorded all interviews on an encrypted mobile device (e.g., iPhone/MacBook) and stored all recordings on an encrypted

laptop, hard drive, and cloud storage service. I also used MaxQDA software on an encrypted laptop computer to analyze and store all of my participants' information (Cradit, 2017).

Limitations

There are a few limitations that impact the design, findings, and implications of my study. I have identified three primary limitations, and describe each in more detail below. I also discuss some of the strategies I pursued to minimize these limitations whenever possible.

Homogenous participant sample. While my participant sample is not completely homogenous, it does lack diversity in three important ways that impact the focus of my study.

Confessional Evangelical Christians. While my participants claim to hail from a number of different Christian denominational backgrounds (e.g., Presbyterian, Anglican, Charismatic, and Non-denominational), all hold broadly Confessional Evangelical beliefs and values (see chapter 1). While focusing on this particular population of Christians is not a limitation of my study per se, it does impact the generalizability of my findings. While I am framing my study as an exploration of 'Christian young adults', I and my participants, are primarily drawing on perspectives and emphases within a theologically conservative faith tradition. Therefore, some of the particular theologically-oriented themes, concepts, and catalysts within participants' vocational formation experiences may not be as explicitly applicable to those who hold different faith commitments, or no faith commitments at all. This said, I do provide suggestions of some transferrable implications for public higher education institutions in my final chapter.

White collar workers. Also, it should be noted that all of my participants come from career fields that are typically described as being 'white collar'. None of my participants are currently working in a so-called 'blue collar' job (e.g., skilled trades, manual labor). Therefore, some participants' experiences of integrating their faith and work may be less applicable to those

within different professional fields. However, many of my participants' insights address the idea of work more broadly, so they should translate into any kind of job.

Predominantly white. While my participant sample is not exclusively white, it is predominantly white (80%), reflecting the demographics of a typical TFI Fellows program. Therefore, this lack of racial/ethnic diversity represents a limitation for my research. However, it should also be noted that one of my five 'exemplars' is a black woman, which was an intentional decision on my part, to ensure that my analysis and reporting did not (inadvertently) further marginalize underrepresented participants' stories, experiences, and words in this study.

Esoteric theological concepts. Some of the particular theological concepts that function as primary catalysts within participants' vocational formation are fairly esoteric, and would likely by difficult to fully understand or appreciate by those who have not experienced a degree of formal theological education. However, based on my own theological training, I recognize how some of these concepts are deeply important to my participants. While I will provide a basic explanation of some of these theological concepts when necessary, it is beyond the scope of this study to provide an in-depth theological treatise on the details of every concept referenced by my participants. However, for those who wish to gain a deeper understanding, I have provided a detailed summary of the core theological concepts that my participants referenced and encountered during Fellows year (Appendix F).

Trustworthiness

At their core, phenomenology and narrative inquiry are collaborative and interpretive processes between participants and the researcher (Kim, 2016; Smith & Eatough, 2007). While it is critical to foreground the interpretations and experiences of my participants, I also recognize that I was heavily involved in the co-construction of my participants stories of vocational

formation. Yet, to increase the trustworthiness of my analysis, I engaged in a number of strategies to ensure greater trustworthiness of this study and my interpretations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). First, I collected multiple field texts, triangulated multiple forms of data (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002; Maxwell, 2013), and searched for disconfirming evidence (Creswell, 2015). Also, I employed common qualitative validation techniques like the use of "thick description" through extensive participant quotes (Creswell, 2015), using the precise language of my participants, and carefully re-presenting the context within which their story takes place (Creswell, 2015; Geertz, 1973). I also utilized member-checking to lessen any potential gap between the narrative as it was told and the narrative as it is being reported (Clandinin & Connelley, 2000). Finally, I had a peer-reviewer look over my manuscript to ensure that my data was presented accurately, my conclusions were sound, and my writing depicted my participants' words and my findings.

Researcher Positionality

Since qualitative research design is always shaped by the philosophical assumptions that researchers hold (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003), it is important for me to make my epistemological positions clear and to be aware of how these are influencing my research design and process (Creswell, 2007; O'Reilly & Parker, 2013) Therefore, I will explicitly identify my specific epistemological perspectives and my own relevant spiritual and vocational formation experiences as a reflexive way of acknowledging how my own assumptions and experiences are shaping this "backyard" research project (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

Epistemological assumptions. My own research positionality is best described as "Christian Critical Realism" (McGrath, 2008; Wright, 2013). During my doctoral studies, I began to look for alternative research paradigms for education research because, as a Christian, I

cannot subscribe to a strict positivism or to a "hard constructivism" (Wright, 2013, p. 13) that asserts both knowledge and reality are constructed by language and the human mind. The "hard" form of constructivism described above not only challenges my realist ontological commitments, but I also take issue with how positivism and constructivism commit the epistemic fallacy by conflating and limiting what we can know about the world with reality itself (Wright, 2013). Conversely, I am drawn to critical realism because it aligns nicely with the nuanced views on the nature of reality and the limitations on human knowledge I hold as a Christian. As a Christian, I am an ontological realist (Bhaskar, 1975), because I believe in a real world (created by God) that exists independently of human thought or language. As a Christian, I am also an epistemic relativist (Bhaskar, 1975) because I believe that humans are finite and fallible creatures, lacking the capacity to know everything perfectly, which necessarily means we will always have an imperfect and relative knowledge about reality (Wright, 2013, p14).

The way that critical realism combines ontological realism with epistemic realism has caused some scholars to refer to critical realism a "media via" research paradigm (Wright, 1992), offering a third option and a way forward through the academic gridlock between the positivist and interpretivist camps in educational research (Creswell, 2014). Likewise, Naugle (2002) refers to epistemological relativism as a "golden mean epistemology" because it offers:

> "…a blend of objectivism and subjectivism, acknowledging both a real world and yet real human beings in all their particularities attempting to know it. It places neither too much nor too little confidence in human reason, but recognizes what human cognitive powers can and cannot do. This position avoids the arrogance of modernity and the despair of postmodernity, but instead enjoys a rather modest, chastened view of knowledge marked by epistemic humility". (pp . 324–325).

I appreciate how Critical Realism's epistemic humility promotes the type of intellectual curiosity commonly associated with constructivist positions, without denying an ontological

realist perspective. My embrace of epistemic relativism (Bhaskar, 1975) is a way of acknowledging the limits of my own knowledge, without denying the existence of real knowledge or the possibility of establishing better knowledge in the future (Wright, 2013). Therefore, my Christian Critical Realism convictions lead me to place limits on human knowledge and still be deeply interested in how human beings interpret meaning from their experiences. So, while I will have confidence the trustworthiness and transferability of my findings, I will hold those findings with an open palm, recognizing the possibility for developing deeper and truer knowledge as I continue to investigate this topic in future research projects.

Spiritual and vocational formation experiences. As I embarked on this research, I knew that I would share some things in common with some of my participants and with their stories of vocational formation. As I have reflected on my own experiences throughout this project, I think the two most pertinent themes that influence my engagement with this research revolve around my spiritual formation experiences in college and my vocational formation experiences after college.

Spiritual formation experiences in college. I have often referred to my undergraduate college years as a 'rollercoaster ride', partly because I flunked out of Bible college my freshman year and dropped out of community college (twice) before eventually graduating from University of South Carolina with a Bachelors in English and a minor in Religious Studies. As I have reflected on my undergraduate years, I realize my early struggles in college correspond closely with a 'crisis of faith' that I was experiencing at the time, while my later success flowed from a 'spiritual awakening' that I experienced halfway through college.

A crisis of faith, a spiritual awakening. I was born and raised in South Carolina, which means that I grew up in what is commonly known as 'cultural Christian' environment. Like some

of my participants, I had uncritically accepted some of the core tenants of the cultural Christian faith that I was surrounded by. For a variety of reasons, during my early college years I began to uncritically reject and rebel against the faith I had grown up. However, after 'bottoming out' halfway through college, I experienced a 'spiritual awakening' which caused me to develop a newfound appreciation for the Christian faith which I had first embraced when I was 10 years old. After my spiritual awakening, I decided that wanted my faith to assume a higher priority and a place of primacy in my life. As a result, I began to regularly pray, read the Bible, attend church, and volunteer in my church's youth ministry. My newly re-discovered faith also led me to quit partying, pursue spiritual mentors, become more academically focused/disciplined, get out of financial debt, and pursue healthier dating relationships. In sum, my re-discovered understanding of 'the Gospel' and God's grace in college completely changed my life for the better, and has continued to guide my decisions, shape my perspectives, and orient my life to this day.

Vocational formation experiences post-college. Since graduating college in 2002, I have held three careers and nine significant jobs. For the most part, these transitions have represented positive developments and meaningful experiences within my professional journey (e.g., promotions and/or career transitions). However, directly after college, I experienced a profound 'crisis of calling' which led to a 'vocational awakening' that completely transformed my perspectives on my faith, my work, and the relationship between them.

A crisis of calling, a vocational awakening. My first job after college was working for my family's outdoor lighting business. This meant that I was regularly climbing trees and digging ditches in the hot Georgia sun. While this job was a 'safe bet' for me, it was not what I, a Career Consultant, would call a 'good fit'. And it was during this time that I experienced what I now refer to as 'crisis of calling', as I was deeply confused about what God was calling me to do with

my life and for my career. My spiritual awakening in college meant that I wanted my faith to be meaningfully informing every part of my life, including my work. So, like many of my peers who also grew up in Evangelical circles, I assumed this meant that I should go into a full-time ministry career to 'share the Gospel' and 'win souls' for Christ. After consulting with some of my mentors, I believed I was being called by God to a ministry career, and moved to St. Louis to attend Covenant Theological Seminary (PCA), a Reformed, Evangelical, and theologically conservative school. When I first went to seminary, I viewed this transition as a relief, based in the belief that I was now going start doing 'meaningful' work. However, to my surprise, after I finished my first year of seminary coursework, I had developed a very different perspective. Over the course of my seminary year, I experienced a 'vocational awakening' as I was exposed to a number of Reformed theological concepts on vocation. These theological concepts transformed my perspectives on non-ministry work, and caused me to see the intrinsic meaning of work within the framework of Biblical theology. Like many of my participants, I have come to believe that all work can be 'sacred' and, when done well, can also be a way to glorify God and bless the world. This new perspective helped me to develop a deeper appreciation for the intrinsic value of all kinds of work, including non-ministry work (and even outdoor lighting).

The 'vocational awakening' I described above was one of the most transformative experiences of my life and it has caused me to be deeply interested in the phenomenon of vocational formation ever since. For over 15 years, I have been immersed in academic research and professional roles which have focused on topics around faith and work, calling and vocation, and purpose and career development. In my previous career, I was a campus minister for eight years, helping Christian young adults wrestle with and engage in developmental processes of vocational discernment and formation. While I am no longer in full-time ministry, my current job

title is “Purpose and Career Design Consultant”, and I help Michigan State University students articulate what they want to do with their lives and explore how to find meaning in their work.

My ongoing interest vocationally-oriented topics is the impetus for this current research project, and I anticipate that my passion for vocational formation will continue to shape my research into the foreseeable future. While my theological training and experiences with vocational formation have undoubtedly shaped the insights I bring to this study, I have also been consciously reflective about how my assumptions and experiences with vocational formation are influencing this research project.

Reflexivity

As described above, I have a fairly significant experience with vocational formation and a long-standing interest in studying topics of faith, work, and vocation from a Christian perspective. One of the appealing features of qualitative research to me is how the researcher engages with participants in the co-construction of knowledge in the research process (Creswell, 2015). This is especially true within narrative and hermeneutical phenomenological forms of research, which leverage the researcher’s experiences to foster a collaborative form of inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Smith & Eatough, 2007). However, while my personal, professional, and academic experiences with vocation formation do lend a certain degree of expertise to guide my scholarship and inform this study, I also realize the importance of pursuing strategies which enable me to maintain my reflexivity and attempt to restrain inappropriate influence of my prior perspectives and experiences on my study.

One reflexive strategy I regularly used was writing reflective memos throughout each step of my research study to create an audit trail to explain why I have made specific decisions.

These reflective memos have also helped me to remain reflective and critical, not only about the choices I made, but also the assumptions I bring to this research project (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

I also employed other reflexive strategies to enhance the trustworthiness of my findings. For example, while I developed a high level of trust and rapport with my interviewees (Kim, 2016), I did not proactively disclose my seminary or ministry background to them. I also 'scrubbed' and/or concealed my social media accounts so as to not bias my participants into telling me what they might think I want to hear. Additionally, I asked two of my peers to review a manuscript of my findings to ensure that I was accurately representing my participants' words and experiences. Taken together, these reflexive strategies should give readers greater confidence that the findings I present in this study, while shaped by my own perspectives and experiences, accurately represent the vocational formation experiences and perspectives of my participants as well.

Conclusion

Utilizing the data collection procedures outlined above enabled me to collect some incredibly thick and rich descriptions about my participants' experiences of vocational formation. The hybrid narrative-phenomenological analysis method also enabled me to identify some of the most common and impactful experiences within participants' narratives. Throughout the analysis process, I also identified how my participants' experiences of vocational formation involved a deeper, more transformative kind of learning than I had previously anticipated (i.e., vocational *trans*formation). Therefore, in chapters 5-7, I provide three composite narratives of my participants' experiences of *vocational transformation* before, during, and after their Fellows year. But first, in chapter 4, I offer a brief description of my 10 participants and the context of their vocational transformation: TFI Fellows programs.

CHAPTER 4: Participants & Context

By participating in a Fellows Program, you will discern how your story fits into God's story. You will start your post-college years with a strong foundation for a cohesive life of faith — a full life that seamlessly weaves together your career, your personal life, and your place in God's story.

– The Fellows Initiative, *Starting Well Guide* (2018)

In this chapter, I will provide the necessary background information to adequately frame the 'place' within which participants' experiences of vocational development occurred. This contextual information is required for my readers to adequately understand and appreciate much of what will be presented in the following chapters as my participants describe how they learned to meaningfully integrate their faith and work. Therefore, I will begin with a brief description of my participants, highlighting and summarizing some of their most pertinent characteristics and the demographic information of the participant group as a whole. Next, I will describe their shared context for vocational development: The Fellows Initiative (TFI) programs, often simply referred to as "Fellows programs". To this end, I will describe the overall goals and structure of these TFI programs as well as some of the core pedagogical emphases and experiences that unite them. While the next three chapters focus heavily on my participants' words to describe their lived experiences within their Fellows programs, in this chapter I will sketch out a more objective picture of Fellows programs. While I do not include any participant quotes in this chapter, I draw heavily upon some of TFI's core marketing materials (e.g., TFI website, Fellows program brochures) and training manuals that I was given access to by TFI leadership.

Description of Participants: 10 'Vocational Exemplars'

As described in the previous chapter, I chose my group of 10 'vocational exemplars' based on the selection criteria I outlined earlier. While I intentionally selected alumni who attended a wide range of different Fellows programs, my participant sample intentionally

represents a typical TFI cohort in terms of its size, interest in a variety of professional fields, and demographic representation. For example, of the 10 exemplars I interviewed, only 20% were minorities and 60% were female. While all 10 of my participants are TFI alumni, they represent 5 different Fellows programs located within the Mid-Atlantic & Southeast regions of the U.S. Although my participants range in age from 27-36 years old, each attended their TFI program between 22-24 years of age. This means that their Fellows experiences all took place between 2003-2014, but none of my participants attended the same Fellows program during the same year. Among TFI programs, my participants were primarily drawn from programs where I received the most responses, and the more well-established and well-attended programs yielded the most interest. As a result, most of my participants were alumni from the Apostles Fellows (40%) and First Christian Fellows (30%) programs, while the remaining 3 participants attended the Central, Eastern, and Western Fellows programs respectively. All TFI program names have been disguised to protect my participants' confidentiality.

Among my participant sample there are also several clusters of related careers and professional fields. All of my participants are either currently working as, or have most of their professional experience in, the fields of teaching (30%), urban planning and community development (20%), business and consulting (20%), and non-profit / higher education organizations (20%). Only one person was in a career field that did not overlap with any of my other participants (e.g., law / state government). Additionally, while some of these participants may know each other, I am only aware of one pre-existing relationship among them: MacKenzie and Mikhael are sisters. This said, I do not believe either was aware that I was interviewing the other at the time of our interviews.

Below is an alphabetized chart that summarizes all of my participants' basic demographic information outlined above.

Name	Sex	Age	Race	Fellows Program	Cohort Year	Current (and Former) Occupation	Professional Field
Acacia	F	33	White	First Christian Fellows	2006-07	Special Education Elementary Teacher	Education
Anastasia	F	36	Black	Apostles Fellows	2003-04	Principal, Community Development Consulting Firm (Urban Planning)	Urban Planning / Community Development
CJ	M	27	Black	Western Fellows	2013-14	Creative Manager, Downtown Commission	Urban Planning / Community Development
Gerard	M	30	White	Central Fellows	2011-12	Assistant District Attorney	Law / State Govt
Julie	F	32	White	First Christian Fellows	2007-08	Homemaker, freelance writer (High School English Teacher)	Education
MacKenzie	F	31	White	Apostles Fellows	2011-12	MBA Student (Program Director, R1 University)	Non-profit / Higher Education
Marie	F	31	White	Apostles Fellows	2008-09	5-6th Grade History Teacher	Education
Mikhael	F	27	White	First Christian Fellows	2013-14	Senior Manager, Large Foundation / Think-tank	Non-profit / Higher Education
Thomas	M	32	White	Eastern Fellows	2008-09	Lead Business Consultant & Entrepreneur	Business
Will	M	35	White	Apostles Fellows	2004-05	Accounts Director, Creative Marketing Firm	Business

Table 1. List of Participants

Description of Context: Fellows Programs.

As described earlier, all of my participants are alumni of TFI Programs. As I was researching programs aimed helping Christian young adults learn to integrate their faith and work, I learned about several programs that focused on vocational development. The largest and most established among them is the The Fellows Initiative (TFI), a national network that coordinates the aforementioned "Fellows Programs". TFI was founded in 2006, in response to growing national interest in the original Fellows program model which began in The Falls Church Anglican in Falls Church, VA. As of 2019, there are 23 Fellows Programs across the United States, and while they are primarily concentrated in Mid-Atlantic and Southeastern states, interest in TFI programs is spreading, leading to the establishment of new programs in diverse locations like Boston, MA and Salt Lake City, UT. While each of these Fellows Programs has some unique features, all TFI programs hold a number of core features in common. Core features of TFI programs include their vision, mission, partnerships, fellows, and basic curriculum.

TFI Vision. The vision of TFI is stated clearly on their website: "TFI's Vision is for a world impacted by leaders who live their Christian faith seamlessly, informing all areas of their lives and transforming the culture for the glory of God and His Kingdom" (TFI, 2018).

TFI Mission. TFI's mission expounds their vision: "TFI's Mission is to foster a community of flourishing church-based Fellows Programs that equip the rising generation of Christian leaders to live their faith seamlessly in all areas, recognizing that all of life is ministry, resulting in personal and cultural transformation" (TFI, 2018). Elsewhere, TFI describes its Fellows programs as being a "spiritual and vocation leadership program" that equips its participants to have a "thoughtful impact on the world" by developing a "holistic understanding of faith that transforms culture" (TFI, 2018).

In the vision and mission statements above, two particular emphases are clear: TFI programs aim help young Christian leaders a) develop a cohesive life of faith, and b) to promote personal and cultural transformation. The first emphasis is on helping young Christian leaders to have a cohesive life of faith. This can be observed through the stated goals of TFI to help Fellows to "live their Christian faith seamlessly", develop a "holistic understanding of faith", and "recognize that all of life is ministry". The promise of developing a "strong foundation for a cohesive life of faith" is one of the primary ways TFI appeals to potential participants. For example, consider the following excerpt taking from a TFI brochure:

> "By participating in a Fellows Program, you will discern how your story fits into God's story. You will start your post-college years with a strong foundation for a cohesive life of faith—a full life that seamlessly weaves together your career, your personal life and your place in God's story" (TFI, 2018).

The second emphasis is on participants' personal and cultural transformation; it is clear that TFI programs seek both forms of transformation, implying that one leads to the other. Personal transformation occurs as Fellows learn to "live their Christian faith seamlessly" which results in faith "informing all areas of their lives" (for which their work/career is a primary area of focus). Cultural transformation is also linked to the personal transformation described above and is described as flowing from it. Therefore, Fellows will have a "thoughtful impact on the world" by developing a "holistic understanding of faith that transforms culture" (TFI, 2018).

Partnerships. While each TFI program relies heavily on a number of interconnected networks to provide their Fellows with a comprehensive vocational development experience, the core partnership is with a local church. As such, all Fellows programs are "church-based", meaning they must be deeply connected to at least one church. In most cases, TFI programs are sponsored by a single church congregation, but occasionally Fellows programs employ a multi-church or a non-profit / 401c(3) model. Through their partnership with local churches, Fellows

programs are also able to identify additional partners such as host families, vocational and spiritual mentors, and professional/employer partnerships (e.g. internships).

Fellows. The length of each program is 9-10 months and the schedule generally follows the typical collegiate academic calendar (e.g., August to May). All TFI programs utilize a cohort model and typically limit each cohort to approximately 8-12 Fellows. While each cohort features a degree of diversity among its members, all Fellows share some things in common. Typically, Fellows are between 22-24 years old and all have recently graduated from college. Frequently, the Fellows Program represents a 'gap year' experience for Fellows, many of whom plan to attend graduate or professional school after their Fellows year. Most importantly, all Fellows must be deeply committed Christians who are "eager to experience seamless lives of Christian faith" (TFI, 2018). According to the TFI website, a Fellow is expected to demonstrate their commitment to their Christian faith by exhibiting characteristics that show them to be teachable, humble, and committed to service (TFI, 2018). Furthermore, an ideal Fellow is described as someone who is unafraid of asking tough questions, taking risks, and assuming leadership responsibilities. Most of all, "Fellows love because Christ loved us" (TFI, 2018).

Despite these common features, Fellows program cohorts also feature a degree of diversity. For example, some Fellows come in as "life-long followers of Christ", while others are "brand new believers" (TFI, 2018). Fellows cohorts are also made up of Christian young adults from a mixture of private and public colleges and often have a wide range of vocational interests. In congruence with the mission/vision of TFI, most Fellows come into their program with an interest in pursuing lay (i.e., non-ministry) professions. This said, on occasion, some Fellows choose to come into their program as a way to help them discern a potential call to full-time career in ministry. This was the case with at least two of my participants.

When applying to a TFI program, each Fellow must submit a rigorous application and agree to a keep a series of commitments if accepted. Each Fellow commits to a) being accountable to their Fellows cohort-mates, leaders, church, and internship, b) adhering to the schedule and guidelines of their particular Fellows program, and c) embracing mentoring relationships, as those who both "disciple the young and are students of the wise" (TFI, 2018).

Curriculum. While each one of TFI's 23 Fellows programs is customized to address the local needs and opportunities within their respective communities, all Fellows programs must commit to a implementing some core pedagogical emphases (TFI Director's Manual, 2017). TFI requires all Fellows Programs to seek to "transform the lives of young adults and strengthen the local church by offering teaching and practice in six essential areas: work, theological study, service, hospitality, community, and cultural engagement" (TFI Directors Manual, 2017, p. 3). Below, I will elaborate on these of these six curricular emphases and describe some ways they are commonly manifested within Fellows programs. But first, I should offer a quick description about the "teaching & practice" described above. Throughout TFI's training and marketing materials, a commonly repeatedly pedagogical conviction was the belief that the transformation of a Fellow's life must occur through both "teaching and practice" within the six essential areas listed above. This inter-connection between teaching and practice is a central aspect of TFI's pedagogy, which posits that "life-changing, mature spiritual formation happens by learning-and-practice" (TFI, 2018). TFI claims that this "knowing and doing" model of education reflects the kind of experiential education that Christ gave to His first disciples, and as such, can be observed within the pedagogical strategies employed by all Fellows programs. Therefore, in the following pages I will describe how TFI programs attempt to design an experiential learning environment as a way to help fuse together Fellows' "beliefs-and-behaviors" about vocation (TFI, 2018).

Work. TFI's mission is to equip Christian leaders to "live their faith seamlessly in all areas, recognizing that all of life is ministry", including a Fellow's work. Since work is one of the most important and consuming parts of person's life, special focus is given to helping Fellows think through what difference their faith should make on their work. Helping Fellows to discern and fulfill their vocational calling at work occurs primarily through professional internships and vocational mentoring.

Professional internships. Every Fellow is assigned to a professional internship, which is often an entry-level position in their professional field of interest. This internship offers Fellows an opportunity to gain real-world professional experience, transferrable skills, develop a professional network, and learn to "serve as Christ would" (TFI, 2018) through their work.

Vocational mentors. To aid their professional development, Fellows are also assigned a vocational mentor, a more mature Christian who also works in their chosen professional field. This vocational mentor is there to help the Fellows think through some of the challenges and opportunities they will face as they try to faithfully and seamlessly connect their faith and work.

It should also be noted that the primary goal of Fellows programs is to equip Christian leaders to "embrace the Church" and also to "engage God's world in all expressions of God's given work" (TFI, 2018). Because these two goals are seen as being complimentary aims, TFI programs primarily focus on preparing their Fellows to engage in a wide range of professions, with a special focus lay (i.e., non-ministry) forms of work. However, it is not uncommon for a participant to come into the Fellows program in hopes of discerning a potential call to vocational ministry. To accommodate these participants, some TFI programs will offer one or two ministry-focused internships and mentors to help them to gain experience with/in ministry contexts.

Theological study. In order to promote the "seamless faith" and "personal transformation" that is at the core of TFI's mission, theological study is a core component within each Fellows program. In TFI programs, Fellows' vocational formation is rooted in their theological studies which occurs in two primary ways: seminary courses and Bible study.

Seminary courses. Each Fellow is required to take a series of graduate-level classes at a local seminary. These classes are typically taught by seminary faculty and focus on core subjects such as Biblical theology, spiritual formation, theology of vocation, and ministry leadership. Since these seminary survey courses are taken for credit, Fellows are required to complete assigned readings, attend/participate in weekly classes, and submit assignments for a grade. On occasion, some Fellows may transfer these seminary credits in to other graduate programs after their Fellows year (TFI Directors Manual, 2017).

Bible study. In addition to seminary classes, Fellows are expected to study the Bible both personally and alongside their cohort-mates through weekly roundtable dinner-time discussions. Occasionally, other resources (e.g., books, guides) are used to deepen and supplement Fellows' individual Bible studies and group discussions. In many cases, Fellows cohorts are guided through a process of connecting their Biblical and theological studies to their personal lives through a series of semi-regular spiritual formation classes/meetings with pastors from their host church's staff (TFI Director's Manual, 2017).

Service. Each Fellow is also expected to spend a set number of hours serving others each week. These service requirements include a wide-range of volunteer commitments that Fellows establish either in the church or in the community. When Fellows serve in the church, it is common for them to volunteer in one of the ministries of the church (e.g., serving in the youth group, co-leading worship services, assisting with congregational care). When fellows serve in

their local community, a wider range of options and opportunities exist, including volunteering in community development programs and with local non-profits. (TFI Director's Manual, 2017).

Hospitality. Since a local church must express a desire to host a TFI program, hospitality is built in to the DNA of every Fellows program. As such, all Fellows programs emphasize the value, priority, and practice of hospitality for their Fellows through shared living experiences and mentoring relationships.

Shared living experiences. Most Fellows programs place their Fellows within host families that are drawn from their sponsoring church, and Fellows live with their host family for the duration of their Fellows year. When placed with a host family, Fellows are expected to participate in the life of their host family (as they are available), by regularly attending family dinners, helping with the household chores, and whatever else a host family invites them into (this varies from family to family and Fellow to Fellow). A select few programs promote shared living experiences through more traditional dormitory arrangements where Fellows live with each other and are responsible for sharing the household duties (TFI Director's Manual, 2017).

Mentoring. Mentoring is another way that Fellows programs promote the practice of hospitality among their participants. Each Fellow is assigned a series of mentors (e.g., vocational, professional, and spiritual) and in turn, they are expected to be a mentor to others. In some cases, they will serve as a mentor to one of the children in their host family, and in other cases they will mentor to youth from their church or community (TFI Director's Manual, 2017).

Community. Every TFI program seeks to instill the value and practice of community involvement into each Fellow and within each Fellows cohort. While community building occurs throughout the curriculum of the Fellows program (e.g., host families, volunteering, church participation), special emphasis is placed on helping Fellows learn to practice community within

their peer cohort. Peer-to-peer forms of community building are facilitated through a range of activities including weekly dinners with cohort members, retreats, and accountability to the commitments they make with other members of their cohort (TFI Director's Manual, 2017).

Cultural Engagement. Since one of the primary goals of TFI is to promote Christian leaders with a "holistic faith that transforms culture", cultural engagement is a core pedagogical emphasis within each and every Fellows program. To this end, Fellows are trained in the practice "Christian discernment" (TFI, 2018), learning how to faithfully and thoughtfully engage with people and ideas within an increasingly secularized culture. Cultural engagement occurs through a variety of different means including special events, readings, concerts, political events, etc. Specific cultural engagement events are decided upon by each Fellows cohort and each event's focus are often reflective of their members' interests and values (TFI Director's Manual, 2017).

As stated earlier, TFI considers each of these six pedagogical emphases is to be an essential element that every Fellows program must reflect in the design and implementation of their curriculum. These six curricular emphases are deemed critical because each element is seen as being "essential to a full life in Christ" (TFI, Director's Manual, 2017). As described in detail above, these six pedagogical emphases do more than promote the rote memorization of Biblical facts; rather, all together, they ensure that each Fellow will engage in a holistic experience of vocational formation during their Fellows year. Taken together, these curricular emphases help TFI to make this promise to potential participants: "You'll begin to answer some of life's most important questions: How do you think 'Christianly' about work, culture, friendships and experiences?" (TFI, 2018). This promise also an apt description of my participants' experiences in, and outcomes of, their Fellows year, which I will describe in more detail in the following chapters 5-7.

CHAPTER 5: Pre-Fellows Narratives – Revealing the Sunday-Monday Gap

I would feel like my life was kind of compartmentalized. I would feel like certain things that I do matter more to God than others. And that there was this hierarchy of ways that I engage with Him and serve Him…I would probably feel disjointed because of that.

- *Mikhael, Senior Manager*

As described in chapter 3, I conducted a series of in-depth interviews with participants to learn more about their experiences of vocational formation. I collected a wide range of stories and artifacts that illustrated some of my participants' basic orientations towards, perspectives on, and relationships between their faith and work. As I analyzed these narratives, it became clear to me that the vast majority of participants experienced a major shift in their faith and work relationship after attending their Fellows program. To more effectively tell their stories, I use this chapter as an introduction of sorts, a way to describe and discuss participants' primary perspectives on and experiences with faith and work prior to their Fellows year. As an introduction, this chapter sets the scene for the subsequent narratives in chapters 6-7 (e.g., Fellows, post-Fellows), by introducing the core conflict(s) and motivations that that led participants to seek out and attend their Fellows programs. This chapter also serves as an introduction to the basic structure and emphases of the following two chapters. To help orient readers, I will briefly describe the core focus and frameworks which organize chapters 5-7.

Phenomenological Focus: Vocational Transformation

While I assumed that my 'vocational exemplars' would share stories of vocational formation illustrating how they had learned to more meaningfully integrate their faith and work, I came to realize that participants had engaged in a deeper and more impactful form of learning than I anticipated. Upon deeper analysis of their narratives, I realized that participants had engaged in a type of transformative learning which caused them to reflect, critique, and revise

some of the core perspectives they held about their faith, their work, and the relationship between them. The revision of these vocational perspectives completely transformed participants' vocational experiences, and helped them learn to integrate their faith and work in more meaningful ways. For these reasons, I argue that my participants experienced a complex phenomenon which resulted in what I am referring to as their '*vocational transformation'*. Therefore, the focus of chapters 5-7 is to re-tell my participants' *narratives of vocational transformation*, to describe and discuss exactly how they were engaged in a vocationally-oriented transformative learning process before, during, and after their Fellows year.

Theoretical Frameworks: Lenses for Vocational Experience & Transformation

To help represent participants' vocational transformation narratives in a clearer and deeper way, I draw upon two primary theoretical frameworks for this study: 1) David Miller's (2007) faith and work "Integration Box" theory (p. 125), and 2) Sharon Parks' (2000) faith development-based theory about the "transformative process of imagination" (p. 105).

Faith & Work Integration Box. Since my primary research question asks about learning to integrate faith and work in more *meaningful* ways, I drew upon on Miller's (2007) faith and work "Integration Box" as a theoretical framework to limit the scope of my analysis. For this study, I focus on the "experience" domain of Miller's (2007) theory, which is characterized by a Christian's "search for meaning in their work, purpose for their work, and value in the work itself" (p. 17). Therefore, drawing upon this framework, I focus on how my participants learned to *experience* greater meaning, purpose, and value in their work. This is significant, because when viewed through this particular lens, it becomes clear that my participants' pre-Fellows experiences with integrating their faith and work were primarily negative, and illustrate how they were deeply struggling to find meaning, purpose, and value in their work. However, this lens

also shows that, post-Fellows, participants' experiences had been transformed, becoming much more positive as they learned to integrate their faith and work in more meaningful ways.

Transformative Process of Imagination. While Miller's theory helps to demonstrate that participants' vocational experiences had been transformed before and after their Fellows year, it does not help to describe *how* this process occurred. For this deeper level of analysis, I draw on aspects from Parks' (2000) theory about the "transformative process of imagination" (p. 105). In particular, I focus on three "moments" within her theory: "conscious conflict", "image/insight", and "re-patterning and release" (p. 109), to help explain *how* participants were engaging in transformative learning throughout their narratives. Parks' theory, with its' emphasis on the "power of imagination" (p. 105) and the role of "revelatory images" (p. 115) to foster transformative learning, will enable me to clearly discuss *why* Fellows was such an important *catalyst* within participants' vocational transformation, and specifically *how* their time in Fellows helped them to experience more meaning, purpose, and value in their work.

A Model of Vocational Transformation

I offer the following model as a way to visually summarize some of the core findings of this study. This model is designed to visually depict a composite narrative about my participants' vocational transformation process before, during, and after their Fellows year. For this reason, it is intended to be read left-to-right as the arrow indicates. I chose the particular ideas, findings, and diagrams presented in this model based on how they provided answers to the research questions identified at the outset of my study. While the particular meaning of each of the components within this model may not be evident to readers at the outset of this chapter, it does provide readers with a preview of the basic structure of my participants' vocational transformation process as well as some of the core themes presented within chapters 5-7. I will

re-introduce a larger version of this model again at the end of chapter 7 (p. 227) as a way to summarize my overall findings. There, I will also provide a more in-depth explanation of each component within this model and describe how these elements relate to the model as a whole.

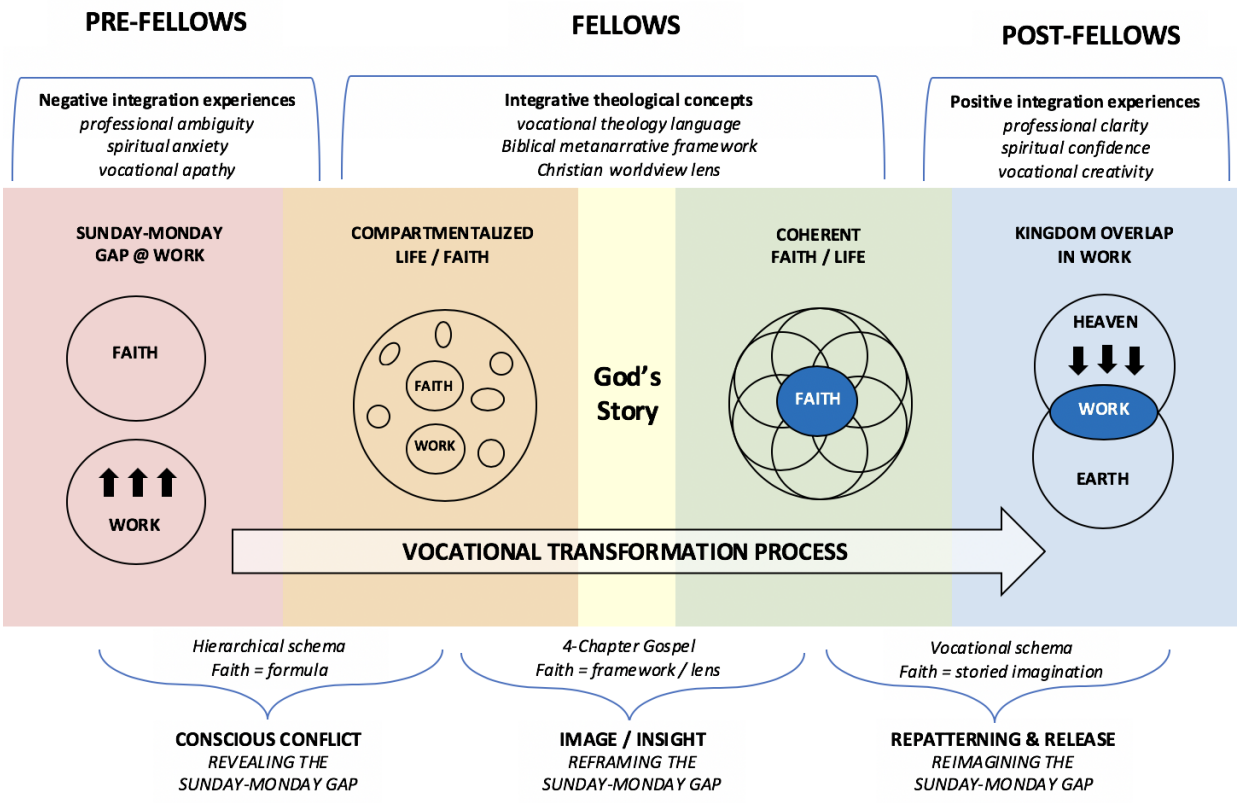

Figure 2. Model of Vocational Transformation (small)

Pre-Fellows Narratives

As participants described their vocational journey to me, most told stories that framed their pre-Fellows experiences, perspectives, and assumptions as having a detrimental impact on their faith, work, and life. These narratives often highlighted a) a series of negative experiences based on their attempts to integrate their faith and work in deeper ways, and b) critical evaluations about their former vocational perspectives and approaches.

Negative faith & work integration experiences. As I analyzed participants' pre-Fellows narratives, a number of negative themes emerged around their experiences with integrating faith and work. I have organized these negative themes into three superordinate themes, which I refer to as experiences of *professional ambiguity*, *spiritual anxiety*, and *vocational apathy*. Below, I use my participants' words to describe each of these core negative integration experiences in detail, and to identify some of the primary themes and assumptions which undergird them. While these three negative experiences were shared among all participants to differing degrees, I have selected three 'experiential exemplars' whose overall narratives most clearly represent one of the three negative themes listed above. While I primarily focus on the narrative of a single 'exemplar' to more clearly illustrate their experiences with one of these themes, I also use the words and experiences of the other participants to supplement the stories of these exemplars, when appropriate.

Professional ambiguity. I refer to this first negative integration experience as *professional ambiguity* because it describes a common set of themes that I observed in participants' pre-Fellows narratives. These themes include a) a general lack of professional direction, b) the assumption that serious Christians should go into full-time ministry, and c) a nagging sense of uncertainty about pursuing a career in ministry. These three themes combined to give many participants a sense of *ambiguity* about their future *professional* plans and career goals. The experience of *professional ambiguity* is most clearly seen in Anastasia's narrative, and as such, she will serve the 'experiential exemplar' for this theme.

"So, I'm wondering…where do I fit?". In each screening interview, I asked participants the question 'Why did you go into your TFI program?', and many of them indicated they decided to participate in a Fellows program because they were struggling, to different degrees, to

articulate and commit to clear professional goals and plans. Some participants claimed that their general lack of professional direction was the primary reason they applied to their Fellows program. For example, Acacia said:

> …I had a friend in Dallas who had applied to a Fellows program…and she said "Oh I'm applying to this thing". I was like "Well, I don't know what I'm doing after college" …I had no idea like vocationally what I wanted to do. I wasn't totally convinced that I wanted to go into teaching. My undergrad [degree] was in English, so [I thought] "Maybe I'll write grants…[but] I don't want to do that right away. So…what should I do?"

While some participants didn't know what they wanted to do after college, some also had clear ideas about what they didn't want to do. Acacia explains: "I wasn't totally sure what I wanted to do for work, but I knew I didn't want to do something really cookie cutter. [By that] I guess I mean I didn't want to sit in an office".

While some participants had little career direction outside of what they did not want to do, others went into Fellows with the intention of taking a 'gap year' to sort through their professional interests and reflect on how those interests might influence their future career plans. Mikhael describes this motivation as she explains why she applied to Fellows:

> …the biggest part for me was…[I had] so many different academic interests and professional interests that I was trying to sort through...and I just really, really in my spirit, felt like I needed that year to just hunker down, and deeply reflect, and have that year of introspection….to slow down a little bit and see where the Lord had taken me thus far…and maybe have a little bit of discernment about where I was going [next].

Like Mikhael, a few participants saw Fellows as an opportunity to gain "discernment" about what God was calling them to do career-wise, and where they were "going next". And, like Mikhael, they could not always articulate clear professional goals, but also believed that their Christian faith should play an important role in directing their future career plans.

Anastasia's story combines several of the motivations mentioned above. For example, before her Fellows year, she could clearly articulate some of her professional interests:

> Yeah, I think my commitment to social justice and racial reconciliation have been consistent parts of my life. So, service became important to me in high school and while I was in college. I spent two years working in [her college's] Volunteer Center, and I went on alternative spring breaks…so service was always a part of what I wanted to do.

Throughout her interview, Anastasia described how her long-standing professional interests have always centered around the themes of community service, social justice, and racial reconciliation. However, before Fellows, she was not clear about how she would pursue these interests within a particular career. During her senior year in college, she decided to "explore community service as a potential career", and went to Seattle to participate in a post-graduate program that "took recent graduates that are interested in service and policy work [to] learn all about hunger and poverty both from a policy level and from an on-the-ground level for six months". Several times over our interviews she described how this internship experience was a 'turning point' in her life, not because it gave her specific career direction, but because it was a "transformative religious experience" that provided her with some strong motivations about the central role that her faith should play in her life and her career goals:

> So anyway, I did the [internship] program and that really took my faith to another level. …So, I really, really got [the Gospel] and I then I was like, 'I really want to be a Christian and really want to incorporate my faith, and really want to put on the mind of Christ in thought, word, and deed...and to help transform people's lives'…so, that totally was always wrapped up in my vocation, because it was like 'who am I going to be in the world?'...I wanted to change lives…I wanted to change lives by changing communities.

Anastasia described how her internship in Seattle not only gave her a strong desire to incorporate her faith into all aspects of her life, including her professional goals, but it also confirmed her desire to "transform communities" through her "vocation". She also described how her year in Seattle gave her some important insight into her specific career plans:

> I did that [internship] for a year in Seattle, and I had a significant religious experience there, and I was like 'well, I don't want to do direct service, and I really don't want to do policy work either'…so I'm wondering…'where do I fit?'

Like some other participants, Anastasia had some clear ideas about what she didn't want to do professionally before Fellows. While her time in Seattle helped her to develop a clearer passion for her faith, it also created a lack of clarity for understanding of how her interest in community development could fit into a career. In this sense, her question "Where do I fit?", indicates that, pre-Fellows, she was also experiencing a lack of clear professional direction.

"How do I do this work?...I must need to go to seminary". Despite experiencing a lack direction in their career plans, most participants had some very basic ideas about how to combine their passion for faith with their professional interests. Anastasia explained:

> …so I started reading stuff on John Perkins and Christian Community Development. I was really interested in that...and then I was like, 'how do I do this work?'…[I thought] 'well maybe I'm supposed to go to seminary'. I just had a transformative religious experience in Seattle, and I was like 'Oh yes...I'm on fire for God and this Christian Community Development stuff really resonates with me…I must need to go to seminary'.

Anastasia's answer to the questions "Where do I fit?" and "How do I do this work?" of Christian Community Development, was that she should go to seminary. Anastasia's conclusion represents a very common assumption that most participants held before Fellows: the assumption that serious Christians should connect their faith and work by pursuing a career in "full-time ministry". Another participant, Acacia, elaborated on this assumption:

> These were some of the bigger ideas that [Fellows] was framing for us, and we got to really think about 'what are we going to actually do vocationally?' and 'how do we sort that out?', and 'how do we connect to our faith to our work?', because we didn't know. And I think we're all coming to the table with this understanding that if you're really serious about being a Christian, then you go into full-time ministry.

Acacia claims that the assumption that "serious" Christians should go into full-time ministry was so common that her entire Fellows cohort came into their program with this perspective. This idea, that truly devoted Christians should give priority to a ministry career, was so pervasive, influential, and detrimental for participants, that I will continually refer back to it as a core

component within participants' pre-Fellows experiences. For this reason, I will identify this idea as the 'full-time ministry' (FTM) assumption.

Another common idea that undergirds the FTM assumption, was the belief that a career in full-time ministry is the primary way that a Christian could participate in doing "the Lord's work". For example, as Will described his pre-Fellows perspectives on faith and work, he stated:

> And I don't think I was raised in such a way that was explicitly communicating this…but I absolutely came out of college before the Fellows program with a sense that to do the "Lord's work" [air quotes] was to go into the mission field or some kind of ministry…and maybe that wasn't what I was called to.

Will's final statement also identifies another common concern among participants, and a reason why I identified the FTM assumption as a core component within participant's experiences of professional ambiguity. While many of them tacitly agreed with the FTM assumption, most of them also concurrently wondered "maybe that is not what I'm called to". This nagging uncertainty about pursuing a full-time career in ministry is the final component participants' experiences of professional ambiguity.

"I could not finish my seminary essay…something didn't click". While the assumption that serious Christians should go into full-time ministry to do the Lord's work offered clear professional direction and career options for participants, it actually did not bring more clarity to many of their career plans. This was especially true for the participants who a) knew they generally did not want to work in ministry, as well as those who b) specifically desired to work in a non-ministry profession.

Some participants were generally hesitant about the prospect of pursuing a career in ministry. For example, MacKenzie recalls talking with a trusted mentor about her career options after college, and while she was not sure what she wanted to do, she knew that she "did not feel wired for ministry". As we will see later in this chapter, MacKenzie's hesitancy further clouded

her professional options and decision-making process. Additionally, despite Anastasia's religious awakening in Seattle, she was also hesitant to completely embrace a career in ministry:

> And I was like [going to seminary]…'that's a big decision... I need something to help me think about that'. And I heard about the [urban-based] Fellows program, but they didn't have any room, so they sent me to the [suburban-based] Fellows program and I thought 'this is going to be terrible!' (laughter)

Anastasia's hesitation to go into ministry is obvious in the excerpt above, as is her desire to attend a Fellows program to help her "think about" if she should go to seminary. However, the reason(s) for her hesitation about pursuing a ministry career are less clear, but she offers a clue within her reservations about going into the suburban Fellows program. Recall that her professional interests and passions were always aimed at doing community development in cities (i.e., an urban context). Going into ministry, and into the suburban Fellows program, represented a way for her to connect her work and faith, but not in a way that she saw as clearly connected to her own professional interests. This reasoning becomes more evident as Anastasia describes her experience of filling out an application to attend seminary:

> So, when I was applying for seminaries, I could not finish my seminary essay. I had my recommendations filled out and my transcript…I was gonna apply…but I couldn't finish my essay…it was on the role of the church in community building, or community transformation, or something like that…but that to me said there was not energy around this space…I mean 80% of the essay was written…but something didn't click.

While "something didn't click" as Anastasia was filling out her seminary application, she had a very different experience around the same time as she was filling out an application to an Urban Planning graduate program at a large public university. She recalls that experience:

> And the [Urban Planning graduate program] essay was essentially the same, but I got that one done in like a day….and that said to me that I was less interested in being clergy, but more interested in bringing my faith to this particular arena, because the essay didn't change…[but] I was still interested in the role of faith in community transformation.

Anastasia's contrasting experiences of filling out graduate school applications illustrates her hesitation to commit to a career in ministry. This story highlights how the FTM assumption was mismatched with her own professional interests and goals, which created a professional dilemma for her. She could not understand how her passion for her faith and her interest in community development fit together outside of ministry, but she was also learning that she did not want to go into ministry. Therefore, this dilemma led to a lack of professional direction and an experience of professional ambiguity for Anastasia. A similar dilemma was experienced by many participants, including those who came into Fellows with clearer professional goals.

A few participants came into their Fellows year with a desire to go into a particular non-ministry profession. For these participants, the FTM assumption actually created more ambiguity for their professional ambitions to pursue a non-ministry career. For example, during our interviews, Julie claimed that one of the things that set her apart from other members of her Fellows cohort was that she had a clear desire to pursue a career in education:

> In my Fellows class...I was the only one who went in knowing [that] I wanted to be an English teacher. Like that has been something [I wanted] since high school, I was pretty certain of… my giftings…. like gifts of being with people, telling stories, and teaching.

However, despite Julie's clear desire to be an English teacher, she also experienced some uncertainty about her career goals before attending her Fellows program.

> You know there were times in college that I thought like 'OK, I love high schoolers. I love the Kingdom of God, and Jesus…should I be a youth group leader? Like is this a more natural fit? Like could God be calling me to youth ministry?' So, I was sitting with that question…I was entering the Fellows program with that question in my head.

Here, it is clear how Julie's clear non-ministry career goals were made less clear by the FTM assumption, which led her to wonder if ministry might be a more "natural fit" for her. While Julie's story will be unpacked more below (e.g., spiritual anxiety), she was clearly experiencing uncertainty about whether she should choose a career in "youth ministry" instead of a pursuing a

lay (i.e., non-ministry) teaching job. The experience of feeling uncertainty about pursuing a career in full-time ministry was a common theme among many participants before Fellows. In fact, MacKenzie claimed that this was also a common experience among many of the Christian young people that she talks to:

> I talk to a lot of college students and people who kind of become paralyzed by trying to identify that job that's going to feel like they're explicitly doing 'God's work'.

Here, MacKenzie identifies that the experience of professional ambiguity is fairly commonplace among Christian young adults who are serious about their faith. As outlined above, this includes most of my participants before they attended their Fellows program. Like Anastasia, many of them experienced a general lack of professional direction pre-Fellows, primarily due to the FTM assumption that serious Christians should go into a full-time ministry career. The FTM assumption also had a negative impact on participants who had more specific professional goals and desires. For these participants, the FTM assumption caused them to question or doubt their clear career goals, making them less clear, and leading them to a similar experience of professional ambiguity about their professional plans.

Spiritual anxiety. *Anxiety* is commonly understood to be a negative response to stress, and this is an appropriate description of the experiences that some of my participants had when attempting to connect their faith and work pre-Fellows. For participants who were struggling with *spiritual anxiety*, the psychological impact of their conflict was much deeper and pervasive than merely lacking clear career direction. While their concern is partly focused on their professional choices and behaviors, it also entails a deeper more *spiritually*-oriented struggle that, unchecked, would have caused them to experience serious consequences such as "lingering guilt", "fear of failing", and "lack of joy" in their lay work. This deep inner-conflict can be observed in the core themes that make up participants' experience of *spiritual anxiety*: they were

often a) concerned about the spiritual value of non-ministry work, b) confused about how their faith informs their work outside of evangelism, and c) worried about disappointing God through their lay work. Julie is the 'exemplar' for spiritual anxiety, because her pre-Fellows journey most clearly represents the deep spiritual struggle and psychological consequences that this experience created for some participants.

"If I'm an English teacher, can that still be good…like good work in God's Kingdom?". As described in the previous section, some participants went into their Fellows program with a clear desire to pursue a non-ministry career. Some went into Fellows to help them think through whether or not they should pursue a career in ministry, while others went into Fellows to think through how their faith should be informing their non-ministry work. For example, Julie described some of the questions she hoped to answer in Fellows:

> I went into the Fellows program with this question of 'what does it look like to be an English teacher who's a Christian, [but] not a Christian English teacher?' Do you know what I mean? Like…'I'm not going to be a Bible teacher…and if I'm not a Bible teacher, but I'm an English teacher, can that still be good? Like good work in God's Kingdom?'.

In the excerpt above, it is obvious to see how Julie is wrestling with the FTM assumption, but it is also clear that her desire is to think through what it looks like to be an "English teacher who is a Christian" (i.e., in a public-school setting) and not just a "Christian English teacher" (i.e., in a faith-based context). Her question about the "good"-ness of teaching English in a public-school is essentially a question about the spiritual *value* of her desired profession. Furthermore, the heart of her question: can a non-ministry career be "good work in God's Kingdom?", was a concern that several participants voiced as they shared their pre-Fellows experiences with me. Like Julie, these participants were concerned about the spiritual value of their lay work and desired to reconcile this question in their mind and with their faith.

While the FTM assumption is a value-laden idea common within many Christian circles, it was far from the only theological assumption that participants held as they came into Fellows. Likewise, it was not the only value-laden assumption that caused anxiety for participants as they wrestled with questions about the spiritual value of lay work. For example, when I asked Julie about the core values that composed her faith, she described a number of common Evangelical doctrines and practices which have been a consistent part of her life:

> I was raised in a....pretty conservative view of Christianity. I mean like, the first Bible verse I learned was John 17:17: "Thy word is truth". So Scripture has been held up as infallible for my whole life. And like sin...I've been taught like that man is fallen…[and] like the idea that Jesus calls us to repentance, that God pursues us in a personal way, and that we are to be 'lights in the world.' Those are things that, at 5 and 33 [years old], remain the same. I think that a lot of my early life was more like 'Evangelism, share the gospel, invite a friend to church, ask them…' like... the invitation of 'ask Jesus into your heart'…which is true…that's the 'Great Commission'.

While all of the Evangelical doctrines that Julie describes above are shared among all of my other participants, so too was the value and priority of evangelism for those who grew up in Christian contexts, particularly those who were involved in Evangelical churches and para-church ministries. For example, when reflecting on her testimony, Julie describes how an emphasis on evangelism was consistently reinforced in her Evangelical campus ministry:

> [In] college I was really involved in [large Evangelical para-church campus ministry] which was a really wonderful ministry and…I made really wonderful friends [there]. I feel like I grew...I think the way I said it to someone [awhile] ago is like "in [this campus ministry] you learn a lot about the Great Commission"…and that was really good for me

Several other participants, like CJ, also described how their Evangelical campus ministries helped them learn about and value the 'Great Commission' by having them engage in "street evangelism" and "evangelistic training" workshops. This emphasis on evangelism was also indirectly communicated within Christian contexts that were less intentional about training their

members to be evangelists. For example, as Gerard reflected on his testimony, he described the kind of church he grew up in, and the picture of faith it offered to him:

> Yeah. It was a [small Evangelical denomination] church, but you know growing up with the…you know…pray a 'sinner's prayer' and then you are saved, and then you kind of wait until you die at that point (laughter). Oh…and try to save as many other people as you can, and live a good life.

As the excerpts above show, within a wide-range of Evangelical churches and para-church ministries, participants were often taught to regard the 'Great Commission' as a primary value of their faith and a primary responsibility that God was calling them to pursue in their lives. For this reason, many participants held the belief that a faithful Christian is always looking for opportunities to explicitly share their faith with unbelievers so they could "try to save as many people as you can".

Participants who grew up in Evangelical contexts also described how they were conditioned to view evangelism as a way that Christians demonstrate their faithfulness to God and a strategy they could use to impart spiritual value into their lay work. Gerard notes this when he says, "I think for a number of Christians you know faith and work is, how do I evangelize at work, right?". Thomas also describes how using lay work as a "platform" for evangelism is a highly regarded practice among serious Christians who want to take their faith and work relationship to the "next level":

> They would view the next level as 'well now I'm going to leverage my earthly [work] to create Kingdom impact or Kingdom good'…and there's really two ways I can do that. One is by generating wealth and putting it into the church, and the other is by leveraging this platform, when I'm stuck next to people on airplanes, to proselytize [them]

The strategy that Thomas describes above, leveraging one's lay work as a platform for evangelism (PFE) is a way that many Evangelical Christians attempt to "create Kingdom good" and impart their lay work with spiritual value. While all participants went into their Fellows

program because they were serious about their faith and wanted to take their faith and work relationship to the "next level", some struggled to apply this PFE strategy within their workplace. For these participants, their hesitation to consistently and explicitly proselytize others at work actually caused them to become more anxious and confused about the value of their work.

"I know I want to teach in a public school, but…like how does that work? I'm not going to evangelize my students". Another theme within participants' experience of spiritual anxiety stems from a confusion about how their faith should inform their work outside of leveraging their lay work as a platform for evangelism. For example, Julie identifies this confusion directly after talking about how her campus ministry helped her "learn about the Great Commission". She continues:

> …and then…I think because I have wanted to be an English teacher for such a long time…by the end of college, I was wondering like 'how the evangelism focus of a lot of the Christian para-church ministries that I've been involved in, fit with the idea of teaching in a public school?'. And so when I heard about the Fellows program, it felt like a really nice fit to answer some of those questions.

Like Julie, some participants could not see how the PFE strategy "fit" with their lay work, but they could see that the Fellows program was a "nice fit" to help them clear up their confusion. This idea emerged again when I asked Julie about why she chose to attend her Fellows program. She said:

> Well, when I looked at the [Fellows] program I thought 'wow this is a lot of what I love - like youth ministry, seminary classes, speakers that are talking about what it means to grow up in Christ and integrate your faith into your everyday'. And like I said, at the end of college I did have this feeling of like: '[campus ministry], I think that they do tons of good work and I know I want to teach in a public school…but, how do I...like how does that work? I'm not going to evangelize my students...but…I *think* that like God can use me as an instrument of His goodness in schools?'. So…I entered with those questions.

In the excerpt above, Julie acknowledges that she thinks it would be inappropriate to attempt to explicitly "evangelize" her students in a public-school setting, but this statement immediately

follows a bigger question: “But how does that work?”. This clearly shows that she cannot imagine how her faith could inform her work in other meaningful ways beyond the PFE strategy. Also, I italicized the “*think*” to better capture the tone she employed while making this statement. Her tone was not a confident declaration, rather it was spoken as a hopeful, albeit uncertain, question (e.g., “I *think* God can use me as an instrument of His goodness in schools?”).

While Julie hoped these questions would be answered in her Fellows program, she also described how the topic of connecting faith and work was never discussed in her evangelical campus ministry. When I asked her about a ‘vocational low point’ in her life, she hesitantly said:

> I mean…I think...so...(long pause)...the reason I'm pausing is… like I think part of it was…I mean…I was asked to go on staff with [evangelical campus ministry] at the end of college and...I didn't. But, like I *loved* [campus ministry] in college. But, they didn't talk a ton about faith and work, and so I felt like [this] was a question that I had lingering as I was doing my student teaching my senior year…[I was] in a classroom and you know...loving it, loving it! Yeah, I mean I think there was not much talk [in her campus ministry] about...like...faith and work fitting together.

Although Julie offers an honest critique of how her campus ministry contributed to her confusion by not explicitly teaching about how her faith and work could “fit together” beyond the PFE strategy, she was also very careful to present a balanced view of her experiences in campus ministry and in Fellows. She repeatedly told me how she much “loved” her campus ministry and how it taught her “important things” that the Fellows program ultimately built upon. She said:

> And I don't know...it's like I go back and I don't want to sell [campus ministry] short or like, edit it to make it neat like - ‘so my college ministry didn't talk about this, but then the Fellows program came in and...’

Julie’s careful acknowledgement that her campus ministry taught her important things (e.g., the value of Great Commission), which the Fellows program subsequently built upon and expanded, represents another common experience among participants. While no participant ever explicitly discounted the value of evangelism as an expression of their Christian faith, many of them were

critical about seeing the PFE strategy as the primary way to instill their lay work with spiritual value. Like Julie, some participants described how Fellows expanded some of the things they learned in their pre-Fellows ministry contexts. However, it is also clear that their experiences in these contexts contributed to their spiritual anxiety by leaving them confused about how faith should inform their lay work beyond the PFE strategy.

"Am I somehow...disappointing God?'. The final theme that makes up participants' experience of spiritual anxiety is rooted in a deep fear of disappointing God in and through their lay work. Since many participants grew up in Evangelical contexts, they were deeply influenced by the heavy emphasis on evangelism described above. In fact, some of them had so deeply internalized the primacy of their responsibility to evangelize that the idea of not successfully proselytizing others caused them to experience negative psychological consequences. Julie describes this experience:

> I think that there was probably a time in my life that I believed that if someone who I came in contact didn't become a Christian, and say like 'I accept Jesus into my heart', that I had somehow failed...or like that my work was somehow incomplete or something, that I had somehow disappointed God in not fulfilling the 'Great Commission'.

While not as serious as the fear of disappointing God, the prospect of not being able to evangelize at work was also a major part of what caused Julie to doubt her long-standing desire to become a high school English teacher:

> ...admittedly, I think as I was organizing it in my head [I was thinking] like..'I've always wanted to be an English teacher...and yet...I love talking about the Gospel...will it be frustrating for me to be in an environment where I have to stop before I share the whole Gospel? Like…could God be calling me to youth ministry?'

This theme came up again when I asked Julie to imagine an alternative journey where she did not attend her Fellows program, and she described how she would likely have continued to experience anxiety about disappointing God through her decision to become an English teacher:

> Um...(pause)...like I think maybe I would have some lingering guilt like 'I should have become a missionary' or like 'I should have gone into full time ministry', or [wondering] 'am I somehow...like disappointing God?' Or you know missing out on years of getting to be an English teacher with...freedom (laughs nervously).

In this quote, and in many of the excerpts above, Julie describes the fairly serious negative impact that her spiritual anxiety would have had on the enjoyment of her lay work. Throughout our interviews, several other participants described how the implications of the FTM assumption and the PFE strategy often combined to cause them to experience degrees of spiritual anxiety, which robbed them of the ability to experience confidence about and enjoyment in their professional actions and goals.

I have described my participants' anxiety as being inherently *spiritual* in nature because it is centered around a fear of disappointing God because they were a) not going into a ministry career, and b) not leveraging their work as a platform for evangelism. Like Julie, their anxiety was based on not fulfilling the narrow set of options that the FTM assumption and PFE strategy offered them for connecting their faith and work. Had this continued, some imagined that their experience of spiritual anxiety would have either continued or increased, causing them to doubt their calling to and enjoyment of their lay work. However, it is also possible that these assumptions might have led to the third negative integration experience described below.

Vocational apathy. I refer to this final negative pre-Fellows experience as *vocational apathy*, because it represents how some participants struggled with feeling *apathetic* about the possibility of connecting their faith and lay work in meaningful ways. In this sense, *vocational apathy* describes how some participants were experiencing a toxic blend of the following themes: a) having access to a limited number of simplistic options for connecting faith and work, b) dissatisfaction with these common "linear" faith and work narratives, and c) a resignation to exclusively look for meaning in life outside of their lay work. MacKenzie is the 'exemplar' for

this experience because her journey most clearly demonstrates the negative impact that vocational apathy had on participants.

"If your faith connects to your work, this is how you can think about it". While some participants found themselves struggling with vocational apathy, none of them started out with an apathetic approach to connecting their faith and work. In fact, over the course of my interviews, each of my participants described a season in young adulthood wherein they realized a desire to have their Christian faith inform their lives in a more significant way. For example, when I asked MacKenzie about a low point in her vocational journey, she reflected back on a "spiritually dry" season during her freshman year of college. Looking back, MacKenzie realized that it was during that time that she began to express a desire for her faith to inform her life in a more comprehensive way:

> I think like this whole idea of integrating your faith, not just with work, but like with life in a way that it's not just hyper-personal…that was probably my first season of life where I started to ask a question like - 'Ok, clearly my faith should be informing my decisions or sort of playing out in my life in a way other than just me like sitting in my dorm bed reading my Bible and praying…like [my faith] has implications, but what are those implications?' And I just think [this] was probably my first season to really articulate or think about that in a way that made me curious.

Like MacKenzie, many participants became curious about the implications that their Christian faith should be having on their life during their college years. A number of other participants described how, in college, they also held fairly simplistic "black and white" or "hyper-personal" ideas about what it meant to be a faithful Christian. For example, Acacia described the formulaic understanding of faith that she had before going into Fellows:

> I think before [Fellows] faith was 'do these things, check these boxes, this is what it means to be a good person of faith'….maybe your Sunday and your Monday aren't connected, but maybe they are. I don't know…maybe some people are just more Christian? Maybe that's just it.

While many participants held fairly simplistic understandings of their faith pre-Fellows, they believed that "good" Christians should experience a meaningful relationship between their faith and work. Despite their desire to explore the implications of their faith on their lives, and to more deeply connect their Sunday and Monday, most participants only had access to some fairly simplistic options for connecting faith and work. For example, MacKenzie described some of the common and "incredibly linear" vocational narratives that were offered to her pre-Fellows:

> I think for me, vocationally, like at whatever point in my growing up that I thought 'man, I want my faith to be a part of my work'… I think that the point at which I like started to think 'I want these things to be connected in some way', the narratives that were offered, [were] only ones that had like an incredibly linear kind of connection. So, like doctors healing people and teachers educating children…and hopefully sharing Christ with them or whatever…or like being a missionary or working in the church…

Here, Mackenzie identified three of the common "incredibly linear" narratives she encountered about how Christians can connect their faith and work pre-Fellows. Two of these narratives have already been described in/through the other participants experiences: the FTM assumption and the PFE strategy. However, MacKenzie also introduces a new narrative, a variation of the FTM assumption, when she suggests that, in addition to ministry, Christians could also connect their faith and work by pursuing a career in a so-called 'helping profession' which provides direct help to other people (e.g., doctors, teachers). However, it should be noted that she immediately qualifies these non-ministry career options, with the caveat of using them as opportunities to "share Christ" (i.e., the PFE strategy). I heard similar ideas from a few other participants as well. For example, Will shared that at various points in his 20s he struggled with the idea that, instead of working in business, he should be working in a more meaningful non-profit career.

> I remember distinctly having this thought working at [his first job in business] and having to push against the dualism that always creeps in about 'does my work matter?', 'Does my life matter?'…and I was thinking to myself 'don't give into the dualistic story that so easily tells us that if you only could work in a cool place, or sell shirts for a nonprofit so

> that they can make more money and save the poor, then you're actually doing something that matters' (chuckles).

Like Will, MacKenzie's professional interests were centered in the field of business, and she continued to describe some additional common narratives she encountered about how Christian businesspeople can connect their faith and work:

> …again, these are just like super common narratives, but like just the idea of people in business, Christian businessmen, being people who make a lot of money and give it away. And maybe the way they conduct business is slightly different, maybe they make a few different [ethical] decisions, but kind of overarchingly they look the same as other [non-Christian] business people… and so sort of just these linear kind of [narratives] - 'if your faith connects to your work, this is how you can think about it'

Here, MacKenzie identifies another common narrative she was offered for how Christian businesspeople can connect their faith and work. This is the common narrative of Christian businesspeople who "make a lot of money and give it away". This idea was expressed by several other participants as well. For example, Gerard describes how he absorbed this narrative from his Evangelical church:

> You know I grew up in a church community that had a very narrow view of calling, right? Some people are called to be pastors or missionaries or work in the church. And the rest of us just get a job and make money to finance the work that matters.

Gerard shows that this common narrative is also linked to the FTM assumption, because when Christians are encouraged to give away their money it is to support the "work that matters", the work of ministry. Thomas offered a more detailed explanation of how this common narrative connects to the FTM assumption:

> I would say [this perspective] is: 'you know what, business is common. Some people think it's dirty, but it's probably really just secular, it's probably just common'. And so the best thing you can do in order to sort of redeem and sanctify business is to generate wealth and leverage your vocation in order to put money and time into the Kingdom of God, into "God's work" [makes air quotes].

> …and so this is how you expiate the guilt for choosing a life that's about making money…[thinking] 'I can leverage it to make good things happen for people who have gotten into clergy ministry, you know, like missionaries and stuff'

Here, Thomas identifies a number of additional assumptions about a career in business which reflect similar ideas from some other participants as well. These include the secularity of business work and the need for Christians to "redeem and sanctify" (i.e., clean up and make holy) a career in business. He also identifies how the strategy of giving money to support "God's work" (i.e., ministry) and people who are doing this work (e.g., clergy, missionaries) is another strategy that Christians can use to relieve (i.e., "expiate") some of the guilt and anxiety they feel about choosing a career in business that is focused on "making money". Throughout their descriptions of these narratives, we can observe an implicit tone of critique as my participants lament the limited scope and lack of creativity that these simplistic approaches offered for integrating faith and work. MacKenzie makes this implicit critique more explicit below.

"But that doesn't seem like the fullness of what it means to be faithful, right?". Several participants described how they felt very dissatisfied by the common "linear narratives" and the simplistic strategies they were offered for combining their faith and work pre-Fellows. Some of them did not feel like these linear career options were a good fit for them and were dissatisfied with having a limited set of career options to choose from. For example, MacKenzie recalls her desire to do something "outside these normal boxes" as she reflected on a 'turning point' conversation she had with a mentor about her post-college career plans:

> …when I had that conversation with [her mentor] that I told you about, I think I was probably saying all these things, I was like "I don't really want to be a teacher. I certainly don't think I'm wired to be in ministry", and "there's got to be a more cohesive way for me to think about my work and end up doing something that's like outside these normal boxes"

Here we can observe MacKenzie giving insight into what she was wrestling with pre-Fellows. She is dissatisfied with the limited and linear career options that are presented to her for combining her faith and work, and she longs for a more cohesive way to think about her faith and work relationship. She continues:

> And I think that's when [her mentor] sent me to [her Fellows Program], because I just told him lots of my interests. And I was like "I'm interested in history and politics and also kind of academics, but I don't know that I want to do a Ph.D., and I'm interested in like arts and culture…and like maybe I want to work in a museum". And I'm like, "But what if I worked in a museum? Do you think like that is me wasting my [life]...you know like is there purpose to that? Is there a way to be faithful other than just like treating my coworkers well?" You know just none of those really simple things were that compelling to me. I was like, "I could go work in a museum and be nice to my coworkers", but like that doesn't seem like the fullness of what it means to be faithful, right?

Like MacKenzie, some participants wondered if pursuing non-sanctioned work would lack purpose and cause them to "waste their life". Many participants also wanted to pursue ways of combining their faith and work that were "outside these normal boxes", because the common linear narratives were too simplistic and not compelling enough for them.

All of my participants also saw their Fellows program as a potential opportunity to develop a more comprehensive understanding of their faith and a chance to experience a more compelling faith and work relationship. In this way, Fellows represented a welcomed alternative to the formative Christian contexts they grew up in. For example, MacKenzie describes how she enjoyed her time in her Evangelical para-church youth ministry because it "kept her engaged during high school", but she was also dissatisfied with the simplistic version of faith that was presented there:

> And the thing about [evangelical para-church youth ministry] is like, it's 'seeker-friendly' and so like what they are offering is like a really basic vision of Christianity. That's like a really easy entry point, but I think that it didn't capture my imagination in a way that was like super compelling.

MacKenzie's dissatisfaction with the "basic version of Christianity" that she grew up with, represents another common theme shared among several participants: that many of their most formative Christian contexts presented them with a version of Christianity that was not compelling to them as they matured and left those contexts. For example, Gerard describes how the simplistic version of Christianity that his home church presented to him was neither comprehensive nor compelling for him as he went off to college:

> You know growing up with: pray a sinner's prayer and then you are saved, and you kind of wait until you die at that point (laughter). Oh, and try to save as many other people as you can and live a good life...that wasn't...just like that wasn't really compelling to me and it probably wasn't compelling to my brothers either, and it left a lot of questions unanswered. And you know...they left [faith] behind. And so I was aware that I had three older brothers that left [Christianity] behind. And I was in a position to leave my faith behind as well...but I wasn't really ready to do that.

Like Gerard, most of my participants were frustrated with the simplistic versions of faith they were presented with growing up, but they were also not ready to walk away from their faith.

"I would see work as a means to another end and find the richness of life in other places". As a result of having limited access to simplistic narratives for combining faith and work, some participants described that, without Fellows, they would have likely become resigned to finding meaning in life primarily outside of work. All of the responses below are how participants imagined what their life would be like had they experienced an 'alternative life journey' without Fellows. Although the following reflections are not strictly about their pre-Fellows experiences, I chose to include them in this section because they represent the logical conclusion and imagined outcomes of a continuation of their pre-Fellows experiences and perspectives. For example, MacKenzie imagined:

> Yeah. Vocational journey…I guess the biggest thing is…I could see a vocational journey where my vocation was highly compartmentalized. I watch a lot of my peers have that experience, and I think it's not hard for me to imagine that…like I can totally see where

> people kind of do their work and see their work as a means to another end….and they kind of like find the richness of life in other places.

Although MacKenzie did not articulate where else in life she would look to find richness, some participants described specifically where else they would look to find value and meaning. For example, Will described how he would likely be a "weekend warrior", finding happiness and value in his experiences outside of his work. Will imagined a life without Fellows like this:

> I think I would be a 'working for the weekend' kind of guy. I would just live for the vacation, and for Saturday and Sunday. I would wake up on Monday with dread in my gut about 'oh gosh just got to get through a couple days and finally get to hump day'…and you know the whole the whole cultural narrative around work being like 'I got a bad case of the Mondays', 'thank God its hump day', and 'T.G.I.F.!' (Laughs). And [I'd be] looking forward to happy hour at 5:00 on Friday, because 'now we're finally having the life we always wanted'. You know, I think I would be in that world, and I would do whatever job I was doing, but I would be looking for value elsewhere...I would be you know gruntin' through it until I could get to the cool thing…the vacation or weekend…

Some other participants also described how they would attempt to find meaning in life outside of work by volunteering in ministries. For example, when I asked Mikhael what would be different if she hadn't attended Fellows, she replied:

> Yeah, it's probably a lot more of my time and energy outside of work. I would always think that my career seems really important to me and it's really appealing to me, but if I didn't find that real sense of meaning and that sense of calling through my job, I would be looking for it somewhere else. And I would probably spend a lot more time in ministries, you know? Most likely ministries or relationships. And I would look for meaning and fulfillment and my "sense of calling" [air quotes] in those things as opposed to what can happen in my career. Yeah. Which would probably lead me to different careers because I don't have a lot of extra capacity right now. If I wanted to serve in a youth group right now, I'd barely have time for it.

Several other participants also described how, without Fellows, they would likely look for meaning, purpose, and their sense of calling in avocational ministry. Mikhael imagined how, without attending Fellows, she would have likely wrestled with the belief that her professional skill-set lacked spiritual purpose and was not "useful" for her faith:

> I would also probably feel kind of like there were certain things that I had to offer that had less purpose. Like certain skills that I have…maybe this strategic way of thinking and working, that they were less useful because those skills are sometimes less needed in just like quote-unquote "evangelism" or quote-unquote "relational ministries". Um, would maybe feel like those talents were wasted or not useful.

Without Fellows, Mikhael imagines feeling that her skills, which are useful for her current career, would be less valuable to God and to His mission, because they are often less valued within a perspective that is framed by the FTM assumption and PFE strategies.

While all participants wanted to experience a more meaningful faith and work relationship pre-Fellows, without Fellows, they often imagined themselves living a life where they would be resigned to finding spiritual meaning and purpose outside of work. The resignation to find meaning primarily in avocational contexts is the ultimate expression of vocational apathy. For this reason, the experience of vocational apathy, and the faith and work compartmentalization it promotes, were universally and repeatedly described as being a completely undesirable outcome by all participants.

Participants' evaluations of pre-Fellows perspectives and experiences. As described above, all participants offered critical evaluations about the harmful impact that their pre-Fellows experiences of professional ambiguity, spiritual anxiety, and vocational apathy had on their life, work, and faith. Their harsh critiques center around three core themes: that their Pre-Fellows approach to integrating faith and work was a) not effective or sustainable, b) not consistent with orthodox Christianity or Biblical theology, and c) not satisfying, because it created an experience of faith-work compartmentalization. Thomas is the 'conceptual exemplar' for this section, because his experiences and theological acumen offer an insightful evaluation the negative impact that participants' pre-Fellows vocational approach had on their lives.

Not effective or sustainable. Many of participants described how their pre-Fellows approach to integrating their faith and work was neither effective, nor sustainable, if pursued or applied to its fullest implications.

"It makes you lose favor…and not do your job". Some participants described how their pre-Fellows assumptions and strategies for connecting faith and work were not effective, even for reaching their stated goals. For example, Thomas described how his pre-Fellows approach was not an effective way of connecting faith and work, primarily because it focused way too much on his goal of integrating faith and work, often to the exclusion of focusing on actually doing his work well:

> I think years ago I was strategizing [too much]...I was pontificating and trying to apply principles about my faith in my work, and it just was never super effective. It makes you stick out. It makes you lose the favor of [your colleagues] and it makes you not do your job (laughs).

Thomas also described how the PFE strategy was often not an effective way of proselytizing one's colleagues. He described how it often imposes pressure on Christians to give their work meaning and value by evangelizing at work, which causes them to see evangelism as a "duty" they must perform. In this way, the PFE strategy often has a negative impact on their colleagues:

> So, no I don't think it is leveraging your platform...though it is being a human...and having human relationships. The thing that's busted is the pressure [to evangelize]. That's what makes you do weird inauthentic things and leverage things...leveraging is never honoring somebody, you're leveraging! (chuckles) You are using, it's usury….I think all the B.S., and all the awkwardness, and all the inauthenticity, comes from pressure...because nobody feels loved when you are performing a duty…when it's out of a duty and you are doing it out of your pressure, it's the most freakin' awkward thing ever and it gives everybody a bad name (laughter).

Thomas also described how these pre-Fellows strategies for connecting faith and work are not sustainable, because if these strategies are maximized, they will cause him to eventually "go out of business":

> I guess the even shorter version is - if faith and work integration is going to be limited to evangelizing to people on the airplane and leveraging my business to give…and I try to maximize that...I'm going to go out of business! There must be a path for me to maximize the Kingdom impact of my business in such a way that my business doesn't die (chuckles). So…I believe in integrated...truly integrated Kingdom impact through my business as opposed to leveraging my business for the Kingdom.

While Thomas outlined many participants' major critiques about the practical ineffectiveness and unsustainability of their pre-Fellows strategies for connecting faith and work, he also offered some deeper, more theological critiques as well.

Not consistent with Biblical / orthodox Christian theology. Throughout my interviews, another primary critique that my participants described was focused on theological insufficiency of the FTM assumptions and PFE strategies. Thomas frames these pre-Fellows assumptions and strategies as being a developmental or theological "rut" because they were not aligned with a Biblical or orthodox Christian theological perspective.

"I've often said that this is the nasty one". Thomas also critiqued his pre-Fellows approach for lacking of developmental value and theological accumen by explicitly critiquing some of the underlying assumptions that framed his former perspectives towards work:

> ...I feel like [this kind of perspective] is almost like a rut....but you can get in the ditch (chuckles) and get stuck over here thinking that 'this is no good, and I have to clean it up by you know by leveraging [my work] for the Kingdom...utilizing it'.

Thomas identifies that the pre-Fellows approach and underlying assumptions outlined in the experiences participants above represents a type of theological or developmental "ditch" that causes Christian young adults to get "stuck" believing that their lay work lacks intrinsic spiritual value and needs to be "cleaned up". He continues:

> ...I've often said that [this perspective] is the nasty one...because there is a shame in [your] work and an attempt to clean it up by doing X, Y, and Z for the Kingdom [of God]

Thomas harshly critiques the perspective which assumes that lay work does not have any value. He calls this view "the nasty one" because it creates a feeling of "shame" in non-ministry work, which leads to a desire to "clean it up". Here, Thomas makes an explicit connection between some participants' pre-Fellows assumptions and their negative experiences of spiritual anxiety.

Several other participants echoed Thomas' critique about their pre-Fellows theological assumptions about faith and work. Half of my participants specifically linked their pre-Fellows assumptions to some type of theological "dualism" that framed faith and work as occupying discrete parts of their lives. Earlier, Will described his struggle with "having to push against the dualism that always creeps in about 'does my work matter?', 'Does my life matter?'" and MacKenzie connected her pre-Fellows vocational perspectives with growing up in Texas, where "some of the cultural Christianity there is pretty dualistic". Thomas further developed this critique as he claimed that these "nasty" dualistic pre-Fellows perspectives on faith and work resulted from sources that were antithetical to the Bible and/or orthodox Christian theology:

> [Fellows] really shed a lot of light for me on the scriptures...and one of them has been, I just don't think I would have ever asked this question and had a problem with this idea of [faith and work] dis-integration. I think that's…post-platonic dualism…you know where we start really compartmentalizing and parsing up the created world in all these different facets and categories.

Above, Thomas identified "platonic dualism", a Greek pagan philosophy, as being a primary source of some of his pre-Fellows perspectives which divided up the world, including faith and work, into discrete categories. Finally, he describes the implications that this dualistic perspective has had on many Christians' theology of work:

> [a dualistic] theology of work says...you know what, business is common. Some people think it's dirty, but it's probably really just secular, it's probably common'. And so the best thing you can do in order to sort of redeem and sanctify business is to generate wealth and leverage your vocation in order to put money and time into the Kingdom of God, into "God's work". And I think that that is incredibly destructive.

Here again, Thomas connects a platonic (i.e., pagan) dualistic theology of work to the assumptions that undergird many of the pre-Fellows approaches for integrating faith and work. He claims that this approach is "incredibly destructive", mostly because it does not actually represent the kind of Christian faithfulness it purports to offer, but also because of the negative impact that it has on many Christians' perspectives on and experiences in their lay work.

Not satisfying. Consistent with Thomas' critique of his pre-Fellows dualistic assumptions, many participants described how their pre-Fellows perspectives caused them to experience their faith as being compartmentalized from the rest of their lives and work. Some described how their dualistic perspectives led them to take a "hierarchical" view of their faith and work relationship, which led them to be dissatisfied with their life and their relationship with work.

"I would feel like my life was compartmentalized…[which] would lead to a hierarchy of ways that I serve and engage with God". Some participants identified that their most formative spiritual contexts were heavily influenced by various forms of dualism, which limited their understanding about the scope of their faith, and their experience of how faith could impact the rest of their lives. For example, MacKenzie describes how growing up in a dualistic "cultural Christian" context limited her understanding about the connection between her faith and her professional interests:

> I think about the dualism that can be part of Christian faith, and particularly for me in Texas, some of the cultural Christianity there is pretty dualistic. And I've always been really interested in the arts, and I studied art at University. I had a double major and art was one of them, and I just [loved] arts and culture and fashion and there were lots of things that I've always been super drawn to for a lot of my life. It's not like I grew up thinking like all those things are bad or anything, I just didn't really see how they fit in. I was like… 'my faith is kind of over here (points to her left side) and like I can fit a few little things into there but like there's all this other stuff that I like love and experience (points to her right) and I just don't get how it's like connected'.

Here, MacKenzie represents a common line of critique among participants - that their pre-Fellows theological assumptions led them to see and experience compartmentalized relationships between their faith, life and work. For example, Acacia describes how her pre-Fellows perspectives led her to view the world as a series of disconnected boxes:

> Before [Fellows], it was…you can think about work…you can think about play…you can think about creation, and good design, and relationships, like all these different little boxes. Sexuality, food, like all these different compartments.

Like Acacia and MacKenzie, many participants described how their pre-Fellows vocational perspectives led them to experience their faith, life, and work as occupying a series of disconnected "compartments". Many participants also described that this experience of compartmentalization was unsatisfying. For example, Mikhael describes how her pre-Fellows assumptions and strategies would likely lead her to feel like she was living a "disjointed" life:

> Um…[I] would feel like my life was kind of compartmentalized. I would probably feel like certain things that I do matter more to God than others. And that there was this hierarchy of ways that I engage with Him and serve Him. I would probably feel disjointed because of that.

Mikhael's reflection on the implications of her former dualistic assumptions and strategies offers an important insight into her pre-Fellows experiences with faith and work, and the experiences of many other participants as well. As we will see in the discussion below, her comments are insightful because they offer an overarching frame for us to understand how these pre-Fellows dualistic assumptions conceptually led her, and many participants, to adopt a 'hierarchical' perspective about faith and work. Below, I will argue that this hierarchical perspective was the core reason my participants had so much difficulty trying to imagine how their faith and work could be meaningfully integrated outside of the linear options of going into full-time ministry (FTM) and/or using their lay work as a platform for evangelism (PFE).

To conclude this section on participants' evaluation of their pre-Fellows perspectives and experiences, I again draw upon Thomas' keen insight. When I asked Thomas to describe his orientation to his work, he claimed:

> And so my orientation...and the connection between my faith and work is: 70% of my waking life is going to be my occupation...and if that's not where I manifest [God's] Kingdom, then I believe I've missed out entirely on the mission of Jesus.

Thomas' sharp critique aptly summarizes many of my participants' current evaluations of their pre-Fellows relationships between faith and work. As described above, most participants now view their pre-Fellows approach to integrating faith and work as being ineffective, unsustainable, unsatisfying, and ultimately disconnected from a Biblical / orthodox Christian theology. Likewise, they also identified that their dualistic assumptions led them to experience a hierarchical and compartmentalized relationship between their faith, work, and life. In the following section, I will argue that their pre-Fellows perspectives also led to their negative experiences of professional ambiguity, spiritual anxiety, and vocational apathy as well.

Discussion of Pre-Fellows Narratives

The purpose of this pre-Fellows discussion section is to provide a deeper interpretation of the findings and narratives presented above. My goals here are threefold: 1) to show how participants' pre-Fellows perspectives about faith and work deeply impacted their negative experiences and evaluations described above; 2) to link these findings to a wider body of literature that will frame their pre-Fellows struggles as an experience of the "Sunday-Monday Gap"; and 3) to argue that these narratives demonstrate that my participants were already engaged in a process of transformative learning before attending their Fellows program.

I draw upon Parks' (2000) theory of imagination as a helpful framework to more deeply analyze participants' pre-Fellows narratives and to accomplish the goals listed above. Within

Parks (2000) theory, she identifies "conscious conflict" (p. 109) as the first moment within a "transformative process of imagination" (p. 105), because it is the moment where a person becomes uncomfortable with their current situation and identifies the issue that is the source of their discomfort. This initial moment is critical within Parks' theory, because only after a person *consciously* identifies the source of their internal *conflict*, can they begin to pursue resolution of said conflict by seeking out other potential options and solutions (Loder, 1989; Parks, 2000).

Before entering their Fellows programs, each participant was a deeply committed Christian who looked to their faith for direction, meaning, and purpose in their lives. Although faith was deeply important to each participant, all of them were also struggling to understand how their Christian faith could meaningfully connect to and inform the rest of their lives, particularly their work. Therefore, pre-Fellows, the main inner conflict that participants were engaged in centered around establishing a more meaningful relationship between their faith and work. This was a struggle, because their pre-Fellows understanding of their Christian faith (e.g., values, priorities, goals) was in direct conflict with some of their own professional goals, desires, values, and responsibilities. Since the core issue stems from a perceived conflict between participants' faith and work, I situate their struggle within the common experience of the "Sunday-Monday Gap" (Nash & McLennan, 2001), which describes how many Christians feel that their faith has little to no meaningful connection to their work (Miller, 2007).

Most participants became acutely aware of this conflict as they were finishing up college and looking ahead to their lives post-college, which led them to pursue their Fellows program in search of a solution. However, while participants entered into their Fellows programs as a way to potentially resolve their experience of the Sunday-Monday Gap, I argue that the critical first step participants' journey of vocational transformation was learning more about the specific contours

of their inner conflict (Loder, 1989). Although my participants went into Fellows with desires to "explore a call to ministry", to "make sense of teaching within their faith", or to figure out if working in a museum was "wasting their life", along the way they also gained a deeper understanding of the assumptions and beliefs that framed their conflict. I refer to this set of beliefs and assumptions as the 'hierarchical schema', and assign it a place of primacy within participants' pre-Fellows experiences of the Sunday-Monday Gap.

For the remainder of this section, I argue that participants' experience of the Sunday-Monday Gap was made up of three primary components: a) a 'hierarchical schema', b) negative faith and work integration experiences, and c) a series of undesirable outcomes, culminating in a compartmentalized life. More specifically, I argue that the hierarchical schema provided a dualistic conceptual framework that formed and fueled participants' negative experiences of integrating their faith and work, which caused them to have a compartmentalized life.

Hierarchical schema under the Sunday-Monday Gap. As I analyzed participants' interviews and artifacts, I identified a common set of assumptions and beliefs that were shared by almost all participants pre-Fellows, and I refer to this collection of shared perspectives as the *hierarchical schema*. I chose the term *schema*, because schema is defined as describing a pattern of thought or behavior that organizes categories of information and relationships between them (Cambridge Dictionary, 2008). In the section below, I summarize some of my participants' primary patterns of thoughts and behaviors about the domains of faith, work, and the relationship between them. Additionally, a *schema* is often described as a mental shortcut, or a structure of preconceived ideas, a framework representing some aspect of the world, or a system of organizing and perceiving new information (Mezirow, 1991). This usage of the term schema is also appropriate, because I will be discussing how participants came into their Fellows year with

a shared set of preconceived ideas and assumptions that formed a philosophical framework that shaped the way they saw the world (and their work).

I have chosen to label this schema as *hierarchical* because a hierarchy is defined as "a system in which people or things are put at various levels or ranks according to their importance" (Cambridge Dictionary, 2008), which is an apt description of my participants' pre-Fellows perspectives on faith and work. Throughout our interviews, participants described how their faith and work perspective was built upon a set of hierarchical theological assumptions that certain parts of life and kinds of work are "more important" and "mattered more to God than others". One of my participants made this clear when she was asked to imagine an alternative vocational journey where she had not attended Fellows, and she claimed, "I would think that some things are more important to God than others, which would lead me to see a hierarchy of ways I could engage with Him and serve Him". Another definition of hierarchy is "sacred order" (Cambridge Dictionary, 2008), which is also a fitting description of what participants' believed mattered most to God – namely, the parts of life and types of work that are commonly deemed to be "sacred" (e.g., faith, ministry). This second definition also perfectly describes the hierarchical schema, because it illustrates how participants gave preference and priority to so-called "sacred" workers/work (e.g., ministers/ministry) above so-called "secular" workers/work (e.g., laity/non-ministry work) in their pre-Fellows narratives. In this way, the hierarchical schema had a deep impact on participants' vocational relationships and experiences. Below, I outline the two core components that made up participants' pre-Fellows hierarchical schema: dualistic worldview assumptions and limited integration opportunities. I also describe how these components combined to create a conceptual framework for the Sunday-Monday Gap.

Dualistic worldview assumptions. When describing their previous perspectives on faith and work, several participants referenced how "dualisms" were a major component of their pre-Fellows worldviews. While several forms of dualism were mentioned, the two most common were "Platonic" and "Christian". I will describe each below to explain how they both contributed to participants' former perspectives about faith and work.

Platonic dualism: spiritual > physical hierarchy. Ancient Greek philosophers like Plato and Aristotle argued within a dualistic worldview that elevated the spiritual aspects of existence above the physical ones (Hardy, 1990). For this reason, the major Greek philosophers often saw the contemplative life as the highest and more desirable life that humans could aspire to and achieve. Aristotle's strong preference for the contemplative life, and the work of philosophy, can be seen throughout *Nicomachean Ethics*, where he claims "the life according to the intellect is the best and pleasantest, since the intellect more than anything else *is* man. This life therefore is also the happiest" (Aristotle, 1925, n.d.). This statement reveals much about the dualistic logic that framed Aristotle's perspective towards life and the world. First, Aristotle's claim that "The intellect, more than anything else, is man" is representative of the overarching worldview of the Greek philosophers, which saw God as being akin to a celestial philosopher (e.g., intellectual, contemplative, calm). Second, this view of God had a deep impact on Aristotle's anthropology, profoundly shaping his ideas about the "happiest" human life as one which resembled God's essence and activity (Hardy, 1990).

Drawing upon this dualistic perspective, the ancient Greeks viewed the material world as being inferior to the "ideal" (i.e., spiritual) world and often saw the physical world as being merely a "shadow" of reality (Plato, 1943), and the physical body as being a prison house for the soul (Plato, 1911). This dualistic worldview also had a major impact on how the Greeks viewed

work, seeing physical labor in a very undesirable way, often describing work as a curse and an exercise in futility (Hardy, 1990). This platonic dualistic worldview, with its extreme elevation of the spiritual over the physical, formed the basis of a hierarchical framework which continues to have a major influence on common cultural perspectives on work and on Christian forms of dualism (Hardy, 1990).

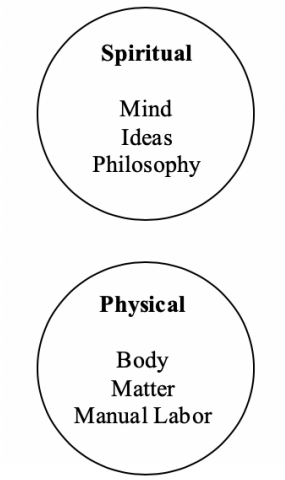

Figure 3.
Platonic dualism

Christian dualism: sacred > secular hierarchy. Several participants described how this platonic form of dualism was also represented within some of their formative "cultural Christian" contexts. While various forms of Christian dualism have been roundly rejected as an unbiblical perspective by orthodox Christian creeds and confessions for millennia, "Gnostic" dualistic worldviews persist as "the perennial Christian heresy" (Cunningham, 2014, p. 24). The pervasiveness of Christian dualism appears to be particularly prevalent within so-called "cultural Christianity" where Christian faith is more of a representation of a particular cultural tradition than of a robust orthodox faith. Regardless, Christian forms of dualism often uncritically import the basic hierarchical framework which undergirds platonic dualism, while simply changing the language of *spiritual* to *sacred* and *physical* to *secular*. While these new terms reflect more

‘Christian’ sounding language, the general framework is similar: elevating the so-called ‘sacred’ parts of life above the ‘secular’ (Welchel, 2012).

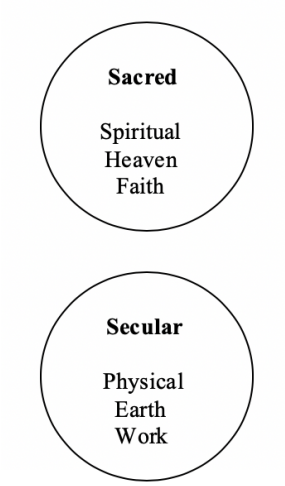

Figure 4.
Christian dualism

Within a Christian dualism framework, people draw upon basic Biblical concepts and language to identify which parts of life belong in the higher and lower dimensions of the hierarchical schema. That which is considered to be ‘sacred’ includes things which are commonly considered to be ‘spiritual’; for example, things which are associated with ‘Heaven’ and the ‘Kingdom of God’, and aligned with activities of ‘faith’. As in platonic dualism, these aspects of life are given more importance and value than some of the more ‘secular’ parts of life, which include the physical world, with its locus on the ‘Earth’, and entails ‘vulgar’ activities like sex, eating, and work (Hardy, 1990). While it may seem superfluous upon first glance, it is important to understand the assumptions which undergird Christian dualism, because these were the core ideas which framed a hierarchical and bifurcated relationship between my participants’ faith and work before Fellows. As such, these dualistic assumptions also formed the basis for participants’ pre-Fellows vocational perspectives and experiences as well.

Pre-Fellows perspective: faith > work hierarchy. These platonic and Christian forms of dualism were often identified by participants as the basic philosophical frameworks they held as they entered into their Fellows year. As they reflected back on their pre-Fellows experiences, many participants identified how they had uncritically inherited a Christian dualistic framework from "cultural Christianity" and within some of their most formative Christian contexts (e.g., Evangelical churches, para-church campus ministries, youth ministries, and camps).

My participants also described how these Christian dualistic perspectives led them to a) assume a bifurcated relationship between their faith and work, seeing each as occupying distinct, discrete, and even competing parts of their lives; and b) adopt a hierarchical perspective towards their faith and work. This hierarchical perspective assigned faith, and faith-related people (e.g., pastors), occupations (e.g., ministry) and activities (e.g., evangelism) into the upper sphere, while assigning less value to non-ministry people (e.g., laity) occupations (e.g., lay professions) and work-related activities (e.g., basic job duties). The basic hierarchical framework outlined below was the primary lens through which many participants viewed their faith, work, and the relationship between them prior to attending their Fellows program.

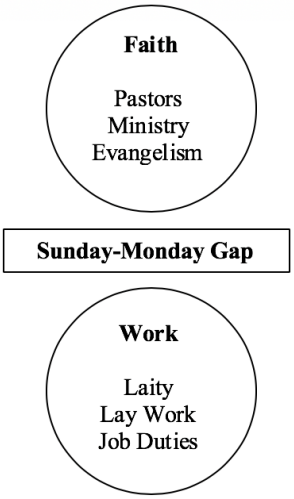

Figure 5.
Pre-Fellows perspectives

Therefore, I argue that these dualistic worldview assumptions framed a conceptual "Sunday-Monday Gap" which fueled my participants' desire, as "serious" Christians, to close this gap by actively and intentionally attempting to integrate their faith and work. Despite their noble intentions, this hierarchical perspective also framed participants' understanding of the limited kinds of strategies they could employ in an attempt to bridge the gap between the sacred (e.g., faith) and secular (e.g., work) parts of their lives.

Limited integration options. The hierarchical perspective outlined above also framed a limited number of opportunities that participants could pursue when attempting to more deeply connect their faith and work. In my interviews, several participants identified and lamented some of the limited and "incredibly linear narratives" that were offered to them for integrating their faith and work. I have categorized these limited integration opportunities into three categories: prioritized career choices, prescribed sanctification strategies, and an individualized ethical approach.

Prioritized career choices. The first integration option is rooted in the 'full-time ministry' (FTM) assumption, the belief that "serious" Christians should go into a full-time career in ministry. This assumption was an incredibly prevalent and powerful belief among participants pre-Fellows, as almost all of them described how it had a major impact on their career decisions. Some participants identified a few additional preferred career choices, should a full-time career in ministry not be pursued. These other "linear" career options included going into "non-profit work" or a 'helping profession' (e.g., doctor, teacher). While careers in ministry were universally revered, careers in business were often described as being undesirable, because they were about "making money" instead of pursuing "more important" (i.e., spiritually-focused) goals. However, despite the primary hierarchical assertion that faith and work could be most

meaningfully connected by pursuing a full-time career in ministry, participants also outlined some common sanctification strategies for those who chose to go into a non-ministry career.

Prescribed sanctification strategies. If a Christian did not to go into a full-time ministry career, participants identified two additional prescribed strategies for sanctifying (i.e., making holy) their less-desirable lay work. These strategies were a way of imparting spiritual purpose, value, and meaning into a non-ministry career. These sanctification strategies included "leveraging" their lay work a) as a "platform for evangelism" (PFE) and/or b) as an opportunity to finance ministry work. Of these two, the most prevalent and impactful strategy was leveraging their lay work as a platform for evangelism. Nearly all participants referenced how, pre-Fellows, they felt pressure to view their lay work as an opportunity to evangelize people they encountered through their work (e.g., colleagues, customers, students). While less common, some participants also described how they believed they could sanctify their lay work by giving away the fruit of their labor to support "the work that matters" more to God (e.g., financially "supporting ministers and missionaries"). Two participants also described how this sanctification strategy was frequently pursued by Christian businesspeople as a way to "expiate the guilt" they felt for choosing a career about "making money" over pursuing a career in ministry.

Individualized ethical approach. The final faith and work integration option that participants frequently referenced focused on connecting faith and work through a micro-level ethical approach (Miller, 2007). This individualized ethical approach emphasized "personal piety" which was guided by basic principles like "what would Jesus do?". This micro-ethical emphasis included basic goals like "being nice to colleagues" and "not doing evil". However, this "hyper-personal" approach was not sufficient to provide participants with a meaningful faith and work relationship, and was often described as being "hyper-personal", "simplistic" and

"shallow". Often this approach was correlated with the PFE strategy, and was viewed as having value by some of participants, primarily because they viewed "being nice" and ethical at work as providing them with another opportunity to "witness" to their colleagues.

Before Fellows, participants viewed the limited set of options described above as the primary ways that Christians could attempt to connect their faith and work. The diagram below helps to conceptualize their pre-Fellows perspectives on integrating faith and work in the three ways: 1) these three arrows represent each of the strategies outlined above (e.g., FTM assumption, PFE strategy, and personal piety), 2) these options primarily originate from the worker (i.e., the work circle), as a way of attempting to give their work more spiritual meaning and value by connecting it to their faith (e.g., the arrows are pointing up), and 3) these limited and linear integration options were often ineffective for connecting faith and work in meaningful ways for participants (e.g., the arrows do not actually connect the faith and work circles). In fact, my participants claimed that these limited integration options often came into conflict with their professional goals, responsibilities, and interests, causing a deeper experience of the Sunday-Monday Gap in their work.

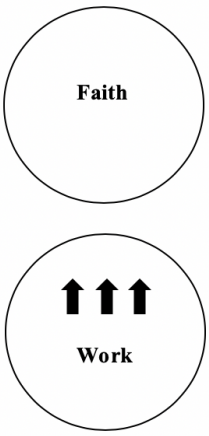

Figure 6.
Pre-Fellows faith and work integration strategies

Negative experiences of the Sunday-Monday Gap. The hierarchical schema's dualistic worldview assumptions and limited integration opportunities formed a philosophical and conceptual context which fostered participants' negative pre-Fellows faith and work integration experiences. This claim is based on the psychological research which shows that religious and spiritual meaning systems provide the primary frameworks through which people perceive themselves and their worlds, including their work and themselves as workers (Park, 2012). While the hierarchical schema is not an explicit form of religion per se, it's basic assumptions stem from the ancient Greek dualistic worldview assumptions described above. These dualistic worldview assumptions were shaped by the Greek philosophers' metaphysical beliefs about the nature of reality, a form of faith, including the dualistic / hierarchical view towards the physical world, the body, and work itself (Hardy, 1990).

I also described how these dualistic beliefs and assumptions have been adopted by some gnostic forms of Christianity and are regularly transmitted within some 'cultural Christian' and ministry contexts like those that participants grew up in/around. Throughout their pre-Fellows narratives, participants described how they uncritically inherited some of these Christian dualistic beliefs, and I argue that these assumptions formed a hierarchical framework that deeply shaped their pre-Fellows perspectives on faith and work. By framing their faith and work as occupying discrete parts of life, participants felt the need to attempt to close this conceptual gap, yet the dualistic frameworks also appear to have framed the limited number of opportunities participants were presented with for integrating their faith and work. However, when these limited integration opportunities came into conflict with some of my participants' own professional goals, desires, and responsibilities, it caused them experience a range of negative emotions when attempting to integrate their faith and work.

For this reason, I argue that the hierarchical schema should be understood as the primary lens which formed and fueled participants' negative experiences of *professional ambiguity*, *spiritual anxiety*, and *vocational apathy*. This is consistent with research that shows that a person's religious/spiritual frameworks often have a profound impact on their career choices and development, their on-the-job conduct, and their overall experience of work-related well-being (Park, 2012). Since the hierarchical schema created the conditions for participants' negative integration experiences, I also argue that it led to their pre-Fellows experiences of the Sunday-Monday Gap, including some of the associated undesirable outcomes.

Undesirable outcomes of the Sunday-Monday Gap. The hierarchical schema was primarily responsible for my participants' negative integration experiences because they could not understand nor imagine how their dualistic Christian faith could be meaningfully connected to their professional interests, goals, and responsibilities. If unchecked, the hierarchical schema and these negative integration experiences would have likely produced some extremely undesirable outcomes for participants' faith, work, and lives. The arguments I offer are primarily based on participants' alternative vocational journeys narratives, wherein they imagined they had not attended a Fellows program.

Faith. Many participants were clear that their pre-Fellows perspectives caused them to have a formulaic, "shallow", and "two-dimensional" relationship with their faith. Some described how, pre-Fellows, their faith was framed as a series of "cascading hierarches" and a belief that "some things I do matter to God more than others". Some imagined these dualistic assumptions would lead them to see faith primarily as a "hierarchy of ways that [they] engage with and serve God". Therefore, I also argue that Christian dualism is "incredibly destructive", a

theological "rut" which keeps Christians "stuck" in their faith development. In this way, it could also lead to undesirable outcomes like spiritual apathy and/or apostasy.

Spiritual apathy. Unlike vocational apathy, my conception of spiritual apathy has to do less with compartmentalizing faith and work, and focuses more on a dissatisfaction with faith itself. This is evident as participants described their pre-Fellows understanding of faith as being formulaic, a "list of dos and don'ts", "simplistic", "shallow", "hyper-personal" and concerned primarily with "personal piety" and/or "going to heaven". Some participants claimed that the hierarchical and "basic version of Christianity" they were presented with growing up was "unengaging" and "didn't capture my imagination in a way that was super compelling".

Spiritual apostasy. Apostasy, the renouncing of one's faith, represents a more serious form of spiritual disengagement. While no participants imagined an alternative vocational journey that clearly saw them walking away from their Christian faith, I contend that this is a likely outcome of the spiritual apathy described above. In fact, Gerard describes how all of his older brothers "left faith behind" as they went to college, partly because they saw dualistic Christianity as being irrelevant for their lives. This reflects research which shows that some Christian young adults have left their Christian church and/or faith, seeing both as disconnected from their 'real lives' and irrelevant to their career interests (Kinnaman & Hawkins, 2011).

Work. Many participants were also clear that their pre-Fellows perspectives caused them to have a fraught relationship with their lay work. Based on participants' evaluations of their pre-Fellows perspectives, the hierarchical schema would likely result in higher levels of professional dissatisfaction and disengagement from their lay work.

Professional dissatisfaction. When considering what their life would be like without Fellows, some described how they would likely be experiencing "lingering guilt" and be fearful

of “disappointing God” by not going into ministry. Others described how their pre-Fellows perspectives would lead them believe that they needed to “clean-up” or “sanctify” their lay work through some of the limited options outlined above. In these ways, I argue that hierarchical schema perpetuated participants’ experience of *spiritual anxiety* about their lay work, framing it as being less valuable to God than ministry. This would likely lead them to be increasingly dissatisfied with their lay work, placing them within the majority of U.S. workers who have reported feeling dissatisfied with their work for over a decade (Conference Board, 2016).

Professional disengagement. Without Fellows, some participants described how they would likely be dissatisfied with their lay work, and others described how the hierarchical schema would lead them to see their work primarily as a “necessary grind” and a “means to an end”. Some imagined this perspective would cause them to disengage from their lay work and “look for the richness of life outside of work”. While some participants claimed this would lead them to “spend more time volunteering in ministries”, others believed they would become a “weekend warrior”, embracing a “TGIF” mentality and “dreading Mondays”. Therefore, I argue that the hierarchical schema perpetuated participants’ experiences of *vocational apathy* and would likely lead them to have an increasingly disengaged relationship with their lay work, similar to the 65% of workers in the U.S. who feel disengaged at work (Gallup, 2015).

Life. Many participants were also clear that, had their pre-Fellows perspectives remained intact, the relationships between their faith, work, and life would likely be “disconnected”, “disjointed”, and “compartmentalized”. When imagining what their life would be like without Fellows, some participants described how their hierarchical perspectives would likely have continued, and possibly increased, the negative experiences of ambiguity, anxiety, and apathy described above. Therefore, I argue that the hierarchical schema would have likely perpetuated

participants' experience of the Sunday-Monday Gap and promoted a deepening sense of compartmentalization in their lives.

Sunday-Monday Gap. Throughout this section, I have referred to participants pre-Fellows narratives as an example of the "Sunday-Monday Gap", where Christian workers report that they are living "increasingly bifurcated lives" (Miller, 2007, p. 17), where their faith has little to no meaningful connection to their work. This Sunday-Monday gap could lead Christian young adults to experience a negative psychological state that Palmer (2004) called the "pathology of the divided life" (p. 7), wherein a person attempts to separate their "soul" (e.g., personal meaning, purpose, and values) apart from their "role" (e.g., public world of work). He argued that divided life is pathological because it is a) "a failure of human wholeness" (p. 7), and b) because living a non-integrated life can lead to a host of negative psychological issues (Jung, 1962). Based the pre-Fellows narratives, I also frame the hierarchical schema as the root of this "pathology", because it framed and fueled participants' experiences of the Sunday-Monday gap: *professional ambiguity*, *spiritual anxiety*, and *vocational apathy*. I argue that the dualistic assumptions that undergird the hierarchical schema would likely create a "fatal dualism" (Johnson, 2007) wherein participants would eventually "leave their faith, and therefore part of their identity, outside the workplace" (p. 316).

Compartmentalized Life. While Palmer's conception of the divided life focused on the separation between one's faith and work, this final undesirable outcome refers to a more comprehensive type of compartmentalization. Some participants imagined that, without Fellows, the hierarchical schema would have led them to experience a "highly compartmentalized life" where their faith was not only disconnected from their work, but also from every other area of their lives. Several of them mentioned how they saw their peers living this kind of life, and that it

was “easy to imagine” themselves experiencing this as well. I argue that a compartmentalized life was easy for my participants to imagine because it was the ultimate and/or inevitable outcome of their pre-Fellows perspectives and experiences. The figure below illustrates the pre-Fellows narratives above by framing faith as occupying a single/discrete part of participants’ lives. Unchecked, this perspective would likely have promoted a perpetually compartmentalized life, preventing participants from achieving a more integrated relationship between their faith and every other area of their lives, including their work.

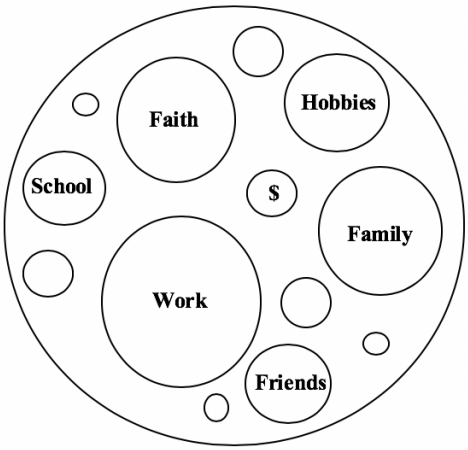

Figure 7.
Pre-Fellows narratives: A compartmentalized faith and life

Conclusion. Clearly, I side with other scholars who have argued that the Sunday-Monday Gap is fundamentally a theological problem (Miller, 2007; Schuurman, 2004). So, when a participant stated “there has to be a more cohesive way for me to think about my work”, I argue that they were beginning to engage with a deep theological inner-conflict. In this way, these pre-Fellows narratives also reveal that participants were already engaged in an early stage of transformative learning (Parks, 2000), as they began to consciously identify some of the dualistic assumptions that were framing and fueling their experiences of the Sunday-Monday Gap.

CHAPTER 6: Fellows Narratives – Reframing the Sunday-Monday Gap

One of the exciting things that I began to learn in my Fellows year in terms of cultivating a theology of vocation was to realize that the mission of God in the world is bigger than what I've imagined it to be, that it touches my work, you know, what God has called me to do... or God's call in my life has something to do with the work I do... that my work is not incidental to the mission of God in the world.

- *Gerard, Asst. State District Attorney*

Fellows Year Narratives

In this chapter, I present narratives about participants' Fellows experiences to provide a chronological link between their pre-Fellows narratives (chapter 5) and their post-Fellows narratives (chapter 7). While the purpose of chapters 5 and 7 is primarily to demonstrate that participants experienced a process of vocational transformation, the purpose this chapter is to frame *how* and *why* this transformation occurred. Therefore, I will demonstrate how participants' Fellows year was the primary catalyst which helped them to transform their negative pre-Fellows experiences into more positive ones. To this end, I describe some of most impactful experiences and ideas that helped participants learn to find more meaning, purpose, and value in their lay work. I also present participants' in-depth explanations about some of the core theological concepts which have had lasting transformative impact on the relationship between their faith and work. I conclude this section with a discussion about how these particular theological concepts merged to enable participants to develop a new understanding of the world, work, and faith itself. In these ways, I will discuss how Fellows helped participants to take the next step in their vocational transformation process by encouraging them to critically identify, evaluate, revise, and reframe some of the core dualistic assumptions and beliefs that led to their previous experiences of the Sunday-Monday Gap.

Context of vocational transformation: Fellows program. While not all participants enjoyed their Fellows year in the same way, or to the same degree, every one of them described their Fellows program experiences as an extremely important part of their life journey. For example, when I asked Julie to describe her Fellows experiences to me, she said: **"**You know I think like...if I were to be dramatic (chuckles) I would say like 'Gosh, like a lot of my life pivoted on that year'". Later, she expounded on this claim when she described how Fellows was a big 'turning point' in her life:

> I really loved the people in my Fellows class. And yeah I just had a heart connection with them…and the questions they were asking about the world, I think this was really interesting to me and attractive to me… And yeah, I mean [without Fellows], I probably wouldn't have married my husband…and the friendships I had with the girls in my Fellows class were so deep [that] I lived with them for the next three years

Many participants also described how Fellows was a pivotal year for their faith development. For example, as Mikhael was sharing her Christian 'testimony' with me, she described the critical impact that her Fellows program had on her faith:

> And then the Fellows Program was probably the most solidifying experience for my faith, in terms of feeling like it was a year to... take ownership of my story and be kind of vulnerable and transparent about what my relationship with Lord had looked like, and I was probably the most open about that with people that I've ever been

Other participants also described how Fellows was a deeply formative experience for their faith. For example, when I asked Gerard about his Fellows year, he said:

> And I'm not sure what my expectations were going into it...but I would say that once I got into my Fellows year, it was probably the most formative year of my life. And I would say that, during my Fellows year, I really began to cultivate an understanding of not 'what am I saved *from*?' but 'what am I saved *for*?'…and that kind of exploded how I understand my faith and God and my place in the world…and where this [points around him] is all going. And...and since Fellows I've just been working all that out (chuckles).

Like Gerard, many participants described how their Fellows year was not only formative for their faith, but was also transformative because it helped to "explode" (i.e., significantly expand)

their understanding of the scope and implications of their faith. For example, when I asked Acacia to tell me about a 'turning point' in her vocational journey, she said:

> It's like, should I just say 'Fellows program'?. I'm just kidding, because it is…that's the answer…it's like when you say 'faith and work', I'm like, "Fellows!". It's like my brain only has like one box for it (laughter). Which is not true…but um…I like thinking about the Bible and the world in a more nuanced way because I feel like the Fellows program helped me have a paradigm shift.

Like Acacia, many participants described how their Fellows year helped them to experience a "paradigm shift" in the ways they viewed their faith, their work, and the world. For example, when I asked Anastasia about a 'turning point' in her life, she told me about her experience of filling out the seminary and Urban Planning graduate school applications described earlier. She continued to reflect on how Fellows informed that 'turning point' for her:

> The [turning point] I was telling you about, applying to schools…I was thinking about what it means vocationally to love God and…[I thought] "Oh, I need to be clergy", but [I learned], "No I can, have all these desires of my heart!"…that was the end of the Fellows program. Yeah. I think [Fellows] just gave me a sense of freedom that [this idea] was that was right and true. The whole point of Fellows is like not about making clergy folks, but making Christians that can operate in the marketplace with a Christian worldview… So I think [Fellows] gave me a foundation for that, a language and permission to give myself over to do [Urban Planning], and still love God…and try to integrate those things.

Like Anastasia, many other participants described how Fellows gave them a sense of "freedom" and a "foundation" for integrating their passion for God with a non-ministry profession. For example, CJ described how Fellows helped him to transition into a non-faith-based workplace.

> And so...the Lord blessed me with a full-time job right after the [Fellows] program…once I got into that, it was a lot different because my internship was at a faith-based place, and where I was coaching was faith-based, and then [I was] going to work where it was completely…secular. I mean 100% secular. So that was very good, because I needed that change and needed that shake up...and I was very prepared for it. Nothing really shook me because of things that I learned in the Fellows program, and I was very ready to work…well. To work well…I was fully ready for that transition to the secular workplace.

Like CJ and Anastasia, all participants described how the things they learned in Fellows helped them to more fully embrace a non-ministry career. While participants referenced a wide range of

impactful experiences within their Fellows year, I will focus on the most commonly mentioned component within their Fellows curriculum: their theological education.

Curriculum for vocational transformation: Theological studies. While each participant went into their Fellows year with some theological understanding, all of them claimed that Fellows strengthened and expanded their understanding of their Christian faith. For example, Mikhael described how the theological studies in Fellows helped to "solidify" her faith:

> And then the Fellows Program was probably the most solidifying experience for my faith…building so much on the foundation I had established and feeling like…I didn't answer all my questions necessarily, but…my faith was at a point where I wasn't always coming back to the fundamentals, and I was actually building on what I was learning in Fellows…and the theological education of [my] Fellows Program was mostly responsible for that.

Like Mikhael, many other participants referenced the impact that theological studies had on their understanding of their Christian faith. For example, Gerard also referred to Fellows when I asked him to describe a 'high point' scene of his faith journey:

> Yeah, I guess there's no one scene that sticks out in my mind. I think...a high for me was my whole Fellows year...because that really gave me a new language for understanding my faith in many different ways. And that was just an exciting year, and I remember coming off that year and just feeling like that whole year was a high of sorts.

In addition to solidifying the foundations of their faith, all participants also described how their theological education in Fellows expanded their understanding of their faith. For example, MacKenzie described how Fellows gave her some new theological language and concepts which helped solidify a "bigger picture" of her Christian faith:

> And so it wasn't until being at [Christian University]…that was the beginning of this like bigger picture of Christianity [of] like the Lord and his work in the world currently and...it was the very beginning of basically this integration between all these parts of my life and my faith and how they are all coherent…and [faith] wasn't just about my personal relationship with Christ…and that salvation, it was…something bigger than that. And so [college] was sort of the beginning of that for me and then Fellows is what really gave me the language and solidified a lot of that for me.

Like MacKenzie, most participants credited their Fellows programs with giving them a more expansive understanding of their faith and a theological "language" which fostered a more meaningful and "coherent" relationship between their faith and the rest of their lives. For example, as Anastasia continued to discuss the impact that Fellows had on her life, she said:

> So, I think [Fellows] gave me a foundation…a language and permission to give myself over to do [Urban Planning] and still love God, and try to integrate these things. And just looking at work, the centralized ideas we talked about [were] calling and vocation. So I just think [Fellows] gave me a language and a foundation to move off of and build upon.

Throughout the quotes above, participants described how their theological studies in Fellows gave them a "bigger picture" of their faith and a stronger theological "foundation" by giving them new "language", "permission", and "freedom", which enabled them to experience greater "coherency" by identifying more ways to "integrate" their faith, life, and lay work. Next, I describe some of the most common theological "ideas" and transformative concepts they encountered in Fellows.

Concepts for vocational transformation: Theological language, frameworks, and lenses. Throughout our interviews, participants repeatedly described how learning about particular theological concepts in Fellows was an instrumental part of helping them learn to integrate their faith and work in more meaningful and coherent ways. The three most commonly referenced theological concepts were: a) vocational theology, b) the Biblical metanarrative framework, and c) a Christian worldview lens.

Vocational theology: a language for faith and work coherency. When asked to describe the relationship between their faith and work, all participants repeatedly drew upon the language of "calling" and "vocation". Many claimed that developing a more robust "theology of vocation" gave them a "language" that was very encouraging and empowering for their faith and life. This is evident as Gerard continued to reflect on the 'high point' of his Fellows year:

> A high for me was my whole Fellows year...because it really gave me a new language for understanding my faith in many different ways…I felt very empowered coming off that year and excited about all the new things that God might continue to show me going forward. And you know I feel like I'd just begun to press into different things during my Fellows year…cultivating a theology of vocation… you know pressing into questions of desire and stewardship and... and I realize that those themes and ideas would take on new shape as time went on. And so that was a high of sorts.

Many participants often used the terms "calling" and "vocation" interchangeably. However, some were also quick to point out that they viewed their "vocation" as encompassing more than just their faith and work. Anastasia clarified this idea in her definition of "vocation":

> Well, I would say that what's important to me in my vocation…and I define vocation as not just the work that I do, but the person I am in my life…[it] is who I am embodied in the way I walk, talk, my relationships, [and] my life as a whole. So, am I being the person that God created me to be at work, at home, at church? And…how am I offering my gifts, skills, and talents, perspectives, convictions…to all of my life? And so I see vocation like in a broad sense of just who I am and how that's represented in the world.

Like Anastasia, most participants viewed their "vocation" in this holistic manner and, as such, were intentional about cultivating an integrated relationship between their faith and every other part of their lives. For example, one of the 'vocational artifacts' that Gerard gave me was an excerpt from a book, *Visions of Vocation* (Garber, 2014), which articulates a very holistic perspective on a Christian's "vocation". He read this passage to me during one of our interviews:

> The last artifact I picked out...this is from Garber's more recent book…I just think it's a reflection that I come back to...quite a bit. [Garber] says "On vocation: the word vocation is a rich one, having to address the wholeness of life. The range of relationships and responsibilities, work yes, but also families and neighbors and citizenship locally and globally. All of this and more is seen as a vocation, that which I am called to as a human being, living my life before the face of God. It is never the same word as occupation, just as calling is never the same word as career. Sometimes by grace the words and the reality they represent do overlap, even significantly, sometimes in the incompleteness of life in a fallen world, there is not much overlap at all."

After reading the excerpt, Gerard reflected on why this book, and this definition of vocation, continues to be a significant artifact for his faith and work relationship:

> And that [passage] resonates for me, you know… some days... I feel like I can catch that greater vision….you know, the skies are clear and I can see far...and some days the clouds hang low. And some days there seems to be a lot of overlap between my work and the story God is telling, and some days it's just like 'well this particular assignment isn't that inspiring at all!'...but to have an understanding of vocation that's bigger than just job or career, right?…[vocation] includes that and also includes the relationships I'm called to, the ways I'm being called to…community. [That's] all mine to take up. I think that's the way I've come to understand my vocation.

This expanded, holistic understanding of vocation is the conceptual backdrop of another term that my participants frequently used when describing their current faith and work relationship: "coherence". For example, Gerard described how his theological education in Fellows helped him develop a desire and language for a coherent faith and work relationship:

> Coherence…if I have an integrated understanding of my life, there has to be a seamlessness. And so my work is part of that. Of course I work…we all have to work, just for the utilitarian reason to make money so that we can financially support ourselves...but do you see that as part of your story? I think…maybe the language of 'coherence' kind of gets us there, having a seamlessness to our lives.

Like Gerard, several other participants used the term "coherence" when describing an ideal faith and work relationship. This idea of "coherence" describes a "seamless life", which includes a fully integrated faith and work relationship. Therefore, when participants talk about how Fellows helped them to develop a vocational theology, this includes a deeper desire for and goal of experiencing a more coherent faith and work relationship.

The Biblical metanarrative: A framework for God's story . While participants' vocational theology created a language for faith and work coherency, most of them learned to conceptualize this vocational coherency primarily by linking their life and work to "God's story". For example, when I asked Gerard to describe his 'overall orientation' to his Christian faith, he described how the "substance" of his faith is his ability "make sense" of God's story:

> Well (takes a drink of tea)...I mean for me, I think my faith is how I make sense of who I am and what I'm doing every day and having a vision for where I'm going. I think...you know there's a narrative that makes sense of all of our lives…and sometimes some people

> might be able to articulate what that is and other people might not be able to...but…it's just like no one is 'values neutral', right? Well no one is 'narrative neutral' either. And I think for me the substance of my faith is being able to make sense of that narrative, and being able to situate myself in the narrative that God is telling...and I think theology is sort of a language for being able to make sense of that story. I guess that's sort of the frame that I would use to talk about my faith.

Like Gerard, when participants talked about the role of faith in their life and work, they often drew upon the theological language of vocation, but they were also quick to "situate" their lives, and their understanding of vocation, within a larger theological framework: "the narrative that God is telling". The technical term for this theological framework is 'the Biblical metanarrative'.

The Biblical metanarrative. Throughout the rest of this study, we will see how the Biblical metanarrative framework was an incredibly powerful and prevalent concept within participants' vocational transformation, primarily for how it helped them to make sense of themselves and their work within "God's story". For example, when I asked Gerard to describe the impact the Fellows had upon him, he referenced learning about the "Biblical metanarrative":

> Yeah...one the big themes that I learned, that I really pressed into in my Fellows year, was having an understanding of the metanarrative that unifies the Bible, right? These aren't just a bunch of books that are tossed together, that there is actually a metanarrative here. And the metanarrative that was articulated in Fellows [was] the story of 'creation', 'fall' 'redemption', and 'restoration'…[and] I'd never heard that until my Fellows year.

Like, Gerard, most participants described learning about the Biblical metanarrative framework for the first time during their Fellows year. They also claimed that it helped them to better understand the Bible as a unified story made up of four parts (e.g., "creation, fall, redemption, and restoration"). For example, MacKenzie describes how learning about this "4-part Gospel" framework helped her to see the Old and New Testaments as telling a coherent story in the Bible:

> Fellows was a huge part of introducing [this idea]… the '4-part gospel': 'creation', 'fall', 'redemption', [and] 'consummation'…I remember being introduced to that [and] having someone talk about the Old Testament and help draw some of those parallels to the New Testament and [I'm] just thinking…for 20 years, I'm reading the Old Testament, and like

> so many people, [I'm] saying like "what is this?"…like what, other than like a few Psalms, like what are you supposed to do with this?

While some participants, like MacKenzie, referred to the "Biblical metanarrative" as the "4-Part Gospel", others preferred the term "4-Chapter Gospel", and others simply used the phrase "God's story". In accordance with my participants' usage, I also use these four terms interchangeably throughout this study. Yet, despite these mild semantic variances, whenever participants referenced the Biblical metanarrative, they were referring to a theological story that includes four interconnected chapters of 'creation', 'fall', 'redemption', and 'consummation' (occasionally this final chapter is also referred to as 'restoration'). It is also significant to note that every one of my participants referenced the Biblical metanarrative, either in part or (more often) as a whole, when describing how Fellows helped them learn to integrate their faith and work in more coherent and meaningful ways. For example, MacKenzie described how the 4-part Gospel helped expand her imagination for work and faith:

> And yeah I think that the 4-part Gospel for me…it was just this idea of the metanarrative of the Bible, and this idea that we begin in a garden and end in a city, and that we are kind of meant to be working and creating and that we are sort of co-creators [with God]. That whole narrative and theology around the Bible...just kind of expanded my imagination for what our role is in the world and how we interact with the broader world.

The 4-Chapter Gospel: A summary. Many participants referred to the 4-Chapter Gospel framework when talking about how they learned to see their work as connected to God's story. This framework was also frequently mentioned as participants articulated some of the core values and beliefs that made up their Christian faith. For example, when I asked Will to describe the contours of his Christian faith, he immediately referenced the 4-Chapter Gospel:

> Yeah, I would probably go to a common framework for thinking that we talk a lot about in our church, just the idea of 'creation', 'fall', 'redemption', 'consummation'…

When Will claims that the Biblical metanarrative is a "common framework for thinking", he is describing how this framework shapes the ways he makes sense of his faith, life, and the world. While it is beyond the scope of this study to give a detailed account of all that the Biblical metanarrative entails, I am including two of the more succinct explanations of the 4-Chapter Gospel for the sake of context. The first explanation comes from Will, who offered me a general summary about each of the four chapters within the Biblical metanarrative. He began his explanation by outlining the beginning chapter, 'creation':

> Being created…created out of love and for love and by a God that loves me and [made] me in his image. I think a lot about that with 'creation' and enjoying being out in nature. And I think a lot about that with the way I'm made and you know the body that I have and the beauty of just being embodied...[being] me, you know? (laughs), [and] that God has been intentional in this...and his intention is to commune with me in all of this created-ness…So God intentionally planned this work of creation, and put us here, and gave us work to do, and said "be fruitful and multiply"

Next, Will outlined the 'fall' chapter and explains how it presents the perfect world described in the 'creation' chapter as having become distorted, where "everything is upside-down":

> And then like a deep awareness of the 'fall' and sin in my life. And the depravity of [the fall] and seeing it all around, and decay - that things aren't the way they were meant to be, or things aren't the way now that they were made intentionally to be. And that plays out every day, everywhere, you know, everything is upside down…my relationship with God, myself, other people and my relationship with the world is broken because of it….

Here, Will describes how the "fall" chapter of the Bible explains how the world and everything in it "aren't the way they were meant to be". He describes that the impact of "sin" is "decay" which plays itself out "every day, everywhere" and in "everything". For this, He focuses specifically on the "broken relationships" between himself, God, other people, and the world. Next, Will explained how the 'redemption' chapter is a direct response to the 'fall':

> And then in Jesus all things are made new. He is restoring my relationship with God, restoring my relationship with myself, you know [the] broken relationship…the shame, the self-talk, the confusion of who I am...He is giving me life by being in Him. [He is]

> restoring my relationship with other people…and restoring my relationship with the world. Yeah, that's a common framework and so I think about...I do think about that a lot.

Here, Will describes how the 'redemption' chapter of the Bible shows that "in Jesus all things are made new". To explain this, he uses the language of "restoration" to emphasize how the Bible presents Jesus as restoring all of the broken relationships described above. Will finished his explanation of the 4-Chapter Gospel with a description the final chapter, 'consummation':

> Yeah. And then 'consummation'...when [Jesus] comes again…that one's a harder category, but just...I think it's a place to situate hope…that it can be true now that Jesus is making all things new, but they're not all made new now. And we're still waiting for a future hope...that when Christ returns there's a completion…what he has started with these relationships being righted, [it] will be in the flesh.

Here, Will describes how 'consummation' presents a conclusion of the Biblical narrative, where Jesus "comes again" and "completes" the redemption He "started". Will also claims that it is a story of "hope", because it depicts the world as being completely "righted" and restored.

While Will's summary is not an exhaustive explanation of all that participants told me about the 4-Chapter Gospel, it does provide a basic outline of what I heard about the Biblical metanarrative. Throughout Will's explanation, we can also observe an implied narrative structure within the 4-Chapter Gospel. The second re-telling of the Biblical metanarrative is from Julie, who makes the plot (and implications) of the 4-Chapter Gospel more explicit:

> I think that…through like the beginning of the [Bible] story, like the exposition...like laying out creation, through the fall, the rising action, and like you know like maybe we do say [the] climactic moment is Jesus's resurrection beating death, and here we are in the falling action before Jesus comes back and restores everything.

Julie, a high school English teacher, appears to be drawing upon Gustav Freytag's (1965) pyramid to describe the plot structure of the Biblical metanarrative. Freytag's pyramid is a common framework that divides a dramatic narrative into five parts and provides function to each part; these parts are: exposition (introduction), rising action (conflict), climax, falling

action, and resolution (ending). Above, Julie describes the 4 chapters of the Biblical story within Freytag's pyramid: she depicts the "creation" chapter as "exposition" (introduction), the "fall" chapter as "rising action" (conflict), the 'redemption' chapter (e.g., "Jesus resurrection") as the "climatic moment", and 'consummation' (e.g., "Jesus' return / restoration of everything") with the "resolution" or ending of the story. To better visualize Julie's description of the 4-Chapter Gospel plot, I have placed her explanation within a standard model of Freytag's pyramid below:

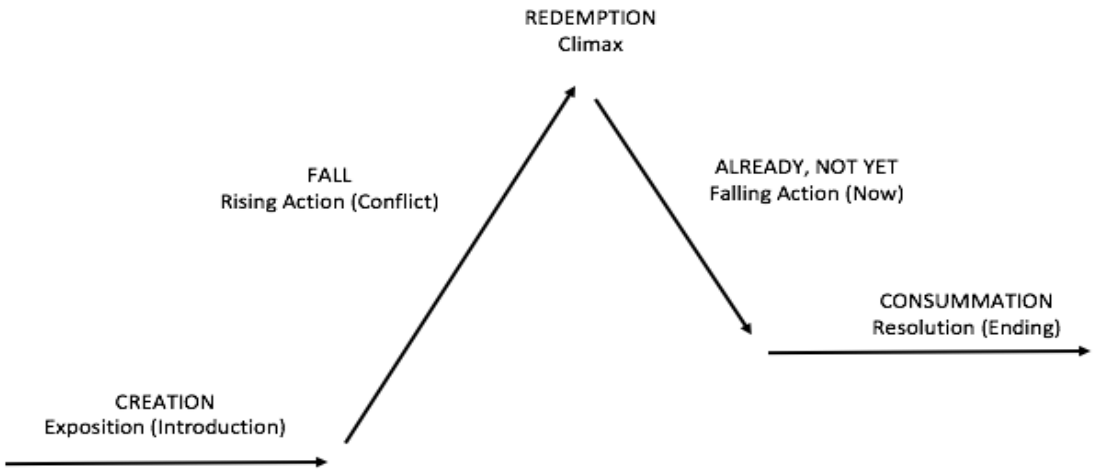

Figure 8.
Plot structure of the Biblical metanarrative

This plot structure of the 4-Chapter Gospel narrative is important for us to understand because it frames how participants see the world, and how they "situate" themselves (and their work) within this still unfolding narrative. For example, Julie identifies that her own life/experiences are located within the "falling action", between the redemption and consummation chapters, "before Jesus comes back and restores everything". She will later refer to this as the "already, not yet" part of God's story, the part in which she, and all Christians, currently inhabit. For example, when I asked Julie to describe her overall orientation to her faith, she framed her response within the basic 4-chapter Gospel plot structure she laid out above:

> Yeah so... like the idea that the world, like that there is a God and a God who is personal, and cares about the universe…who created the universe and specifically like the planet on which we find ourselves [creation]. Also, evil is something that is here and we have to deal with…and it came into the world and everything fell as a result [fall] And like, um... through that all, there has been a plan, an arc…a story that is unfolding …and even from the moment the 'fall' happened, God began redeeming the world [redemption], and the great act of redemption happened on the cross…and then on Easter with Jesus' resurrection and the idea that like God is making all things new now…and he will make all things entirely new when Jesus comes back and restoration comes to consummation [restoration / consummation]. Um, and... yeah, so God's Kingdom is here *and* still coming, so we find ourselves in this unique 'already and not yet' moment in time (chuckles). And, um...in that God calls us to be image bearers in His world and... Kingdom builders. [So] we all have unique jobs and get to partner with God in the work that He's doing in the world to make things new.

Like Julie, Will, and Gerard, almost all participants described how they learned to "situate" themselves, and their work, within the still-unfolding story they claim God is telling. Doing so, helped many participants to find greater meaning, purpose, and value in their work. For example, Julie described how this story continues to help her to see that God has "called" her be an "image bearer" and a "Kingdom builder", and that she has a "unique job" which allows her to "partner with God" in the work He is doing "in the world to make things new".

While it is beyond the scope of this paper to provide a more in-depth analysis of the theological contours and implications of the Biblical metanarrative, the 4-Chapter Gospel was such an important catalyst for helping participants learn to connect their faith and work, that I purchased a copy of a Fellows curriculum entitled *Living the Story* (Cunningham, 2014) to learn more. This book was recommended to me by a Fellows program director who uses it as the basis of their program's theological studies curriculum. Cunningham was also a seminary teacher for a Fellows program for many years, so his curriculum offered a helpful summary of some of the main theological ideas and concepts that were taught to Fellows. While immersing myself more deeply into this curriculum, I created a more detailed summary of the Biblical metanarrative to

highlight some of the core theological doctrines and concepts within each chapter (Appendix F). This in-depth exploration gave me a better understanding of participants' explanations, and helped me to gain more clarity on how/why the 4-Chapter Gospel was such a powerful catalyst within their vocational transformation. Below, I continue to describe how learning about the Biblical metanarrative framework helped my participants to develop a more complex, nuanced, and expansive understanding of their Christian faith (and how it connects to their work).

The 4-Chapter Gospel: An expanded understanding. While all participants had some familiarity with some parts of the 4-chapter Gospel before entering their Fellows program, the 4-part framework *in total*, was an entirely new concept for almost all of them. For example, Gerard described how Fellows helped to expand his understanding of the Gospel (i.e., Biblical) story:

> And...I grew up being able to articulate, 'this is what I'm saved from', you know having what I now would call a "2-Chapter Gospel"...but one of the areas that we pressed into during my Fellows year was to have a "4-Chapter Gospel". Often we think we understand 'fall' and we understand 'redemption' in the church, but we don't really understand what this 'creation' bit is doing in the story and what this 'restoration' or 'consummation' part at the end is doing...

Like Gerard, many participants described how, pre-Fellows, their understanding of the Bible, and their Christian faith, focused primarily on the 'fall' and 'redemption' chapters. Gerard refers to this as a "2-Chapter Gospel" which he claims helped him to articulate "what I'm saved from". In this way, Gerard claims that many Christians do not have a good understanding of the complete "4-Chapter Gospel" because they don't understand the narrative purpose of the 'creation' and 'consummation' chapters that frame the whole the Bible story. Gerard explained the impact that learning about 'creation' and 'consummation' had on his faith and understanding of the Bible:

> …and so pressing into that metanarrative during my Fellows year...realizing that what we're driving toward here is *not* flying off to some cloud world…if that's your understanding of Heaven that's very unsatisfying on many levels…but actually, the final scene [of the Bible story] is God coming down to the earth restored and made new. We start in a garden, we finish in a city...and a city is the apex of culture and cultivation…

Here, Gerard describes that while the 'creation' chapter is often neglected by many Christians, it is important because, as the beginning story of the Bible, it provides a context and direction for the rest of the narrative. Also, Gerard describes how the 'consummation' (or restoration) chapter provides a coherent ending to the Biblical metanarrative, which involves Gods "earth" (i.e., creation) completely "restored and made new". He also explains that a Christians' understanding of the beginning and ending of the story could help them to "realize" how their work was already intrinsically and meaningfully connected to God's story and to His mission in the world. Gerard continued:

> …and one of the exciting things that I began to learn in my Fellows year, in terms of cultivating a theology of vocation, was to realize that the mission of God in the world is bigger than what I've imagined it to be, that it touches my work, you know, what God has called me to do...or God's call in my life has something to do with the work I do…that my work is not incidental to the mission of God in the world.

Many other participants also described how the 4-Chapter Gospel helped them realize that mission of God was connected to their work. For example, MacKenzie describes how learning about the 4-Chapter Gospel was a "huge shift" because it enabled her to see how her actions and work "matter" and have "implications" on bringing God's Kingdom:

> To step back and kind of see this vision for like the way the world was created, and like the 'fall', how we're like we are in this sort of in the wilderness…[but also] like helping redeem the world. And that like literally all of our actions, like our relationships and our work, and…just kind of anything we do kind of matters and has implications on bringing God's Kingdom. That to me…that shift was huge because it just kind of…it like massively expanded my imagination for God and also my faith.

As described above, the Biblical metanarrative often helped participants to imagine and envision a bigger story of the world that the Bible was telling, a story which they saw themselves as currently inhabiting. Below, we will see how this expanded understanding of the Biblical story helped participants to make more sense of the world and find more meaning in their work.

Christian worldview: A lens to see the world and work. The third theological concept that participants most frequently linked with their vocational transformation was the idea of a "Christian worldview". Before Fellows, many of them had seen their faith as a "black and white list" of "dos and don'ts", a series of "check-boxes", or a "hyper-personal" plan for salvation. However, within their theological studies, participants began to adopt a more complex and Biblically-based understanding of the world. For example, Anastasia describes the impact that her theological education in Fellows had on the way that she sees the world:

> So I did the Fellows program, and that was really good because we had seminary classes, and that gave me an even deeper understanding [of fsith]. Which is great, because that is kind of why I wanted to do [Fellows]… and I feel like it gave me some knowledge grounded in theological understanding…that depth really shaped my worldview.

Some participants went a step further, describing their faith *as* their worldview. For example, when I asked Julie about her Christian values and beliefs, she said:

> So, I think about like 'worldview'…like a lens through which I see everything else in the world. So like the Christian worldview, like thinking Christianly about the world, [this is] a lens or the framework through which I filter everything else as I traverse the world.

Many participants described their current perspective on faith as a "lens" and/or a "framework" through which the viewed everything else in their lives. For example, when I asked Thomas about his beliefs and values, he also described how his Christian faith currently functions as an "central lens" which influences and integrates every part of his life. He also contrasts this "hub-and-spokes" view of faith with a "cascading hierarchies" view.

> And so as far as a belief set...I believe that Jesus is not [just] a 'first priority', He's a lens by which all of my priorities are organized and aligned and influenced. I don't think He's sequentially important in my life (taps on table in a sequential order). He's central, more of a hub-and-spokes as opposed to cascading hierarchies.

While almost every participant depicted their current relationship with faith as a "worldview lens", many of them also explicitly linked this idea with the Biblical metanarrative framework.

For the remainder of this section, I will describe how participants have adopted the 4-Chapter Gospel as a primary lens they draw upon to a) make sense of the world, and b) discover meaning in their lay work.

4-Chapter Gospel: A lens to make sense of the world. While participants discussed how their Christian faith was an integrative "lens" which helped them make sense of the world, many of them explicitly described how this worldview lens was shaped by the Biblical metanarrative. For example, when I asked Mikhael about her beliefs and values, she claimed:

> I have a lot of faith and put a lot of my faith into church history and tradition, and I really value the wisdom of Scripture and wiser people's interpretations of Scripture…I [also] have an idea of the narrative of 'creation'…the creation of humanity, and 'fall', and 'redemption' and what's going to be restored…ultimately this kind of 4-part Gospel is very much the framework through which I see the whole world. So 'creation', 'fall', 'redemption', 'restoration'…there's implications of that for everything.

Like Mikhael, many participants described how the 4-Chapter Gospel framework has become "the framework through which I see the whole world", a lens which has "implications for everything" in their lives. In fact, many of them described the Biblical metanarrative as the primary catalyst which helped them form a more holistic/integrated worldview. For example, when I asked Acacia about the impact that Fellows had on her, she said:

> I remember one of our [seminary] professors said "Listen, the purpose of all of this is for you to connect to your Sunday to your Monday"…One of my favorite things that [he] taught us was this lens to kind of see the world…I think he threw a newspaper at us one morning and just said "Ok, I want you to highlight every time you see the words *ought, is*, *can*, and *will be*". And he was really teaching us this 4-Chapter Gospel, and he's like "these are the words and the language in which all people speak, so whether you're meeting with your priest or your friend or you're talking to somebody you're dating…like the language of 'this is how it *ought* to be', 'this is how it *is'*, 'this how it *can be'*, and 'this how it *will be'*…those are all indications of 'creation', 'fall', 'redemption', and 'consummation'…and I was like "What?!" I was like 'mind blown!' (Laughter)

Acacia also described how that this language from the 4-Chapter Gospel framework was "hugely transformative" because it helped her to see the world in a more integrated way:

> [Fellows Professor] was like "just put any subject area like into that language…like think of it as these buckets that we get to fill up". So, you can think about sexuality, or food, or your job, or your relationship with your parents, like those are all things [and] that language is still going to apply....and I don't know, I think that was a hugely transformative thing for me and…I've had that same dialogue with people and they're like "Oh yeah?!"", cause that's the language that we all speak. And I really liked that takeaway from the Fellows program…it was [faith] in a way that I hadn't ever heard in the pews.

Throughout our interviews, Acacia continued to demonstrate how the 4-Chapter Gospel framework has become the primary lens that she uses to make sense of her life and her experiences. For example, when I asked Acacia if there was anything else I needed to know about the relationship between her faith and work, she drew the diagram below:

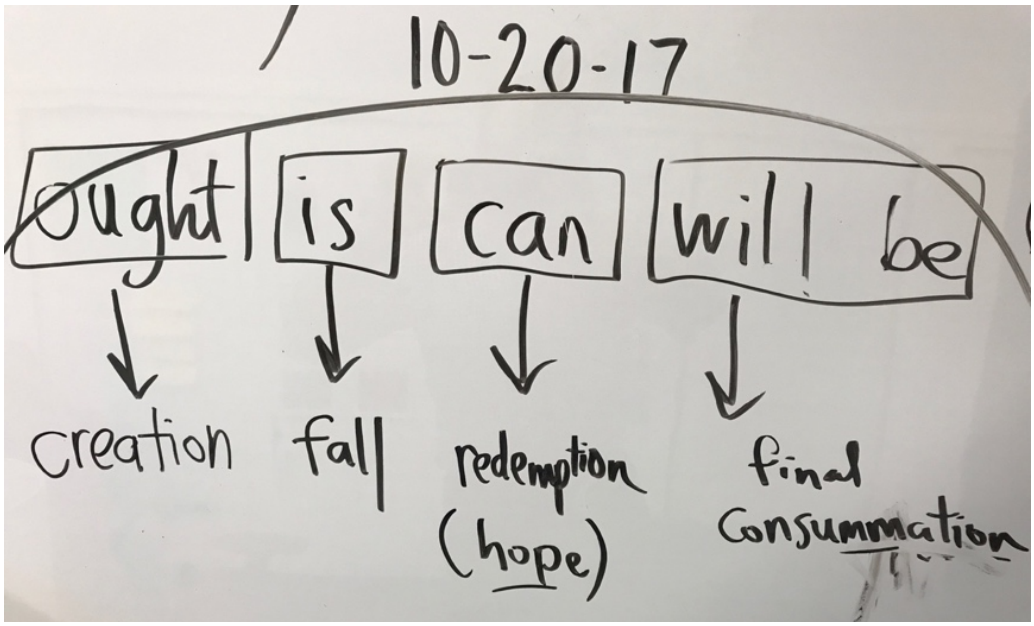

Figure 9.
Acacia's diagram:
"The 4-Chapter Gospel…ought, is, can, and will be"

As Acacia drew this diagram, she also provided an in-depth explanation of how the concepts / language of the 4-Chapter Gospel continue to function as a lens through which she makes sense of the world:

> I think the 4-Chapter Gospel I alluded to yesterday, that [I] wanted to revisit…I can show you that a little...So the way that one of the teachers explained it to us in Fellows, was

> just the four words: 'ought', 'is', 'can', and 'will be'…and those four words will be words you could look for or listen for with anyone around any subject…So this language of 'ought' would point you towards 'creation'. The 'is' would point you toward the 'fall'. The 'can' would point you back toward some idea of 'redemption', slash hope…and the 'will be' would be this kind of final 'consummation'…Ok, but this idea, I really love the language behind it, I guess as it connects to faith…and it resonated really deeply with me when I heard it…[I am] able to shift some of [my] thinking around this 4-Chapter Gospel.

While Acacia was the only participant who drew a specific diagram, several other participants also described how the language of "ought, is, can, and will be" was a way that the 4-Chapter Gospel practically frames their worldview (more on this later). Later in her description of the 4-Chapter Gospel framework, Acacia also echoed an important point that Gerard made earlier:

> "I think some churches just tell a story like this [points to *is / fall* and *can / redemption*] and don't back it up to here [points to *ought / creation*].

Here, Acacia describes how many churches focus primarily on the 'fall' and 'redemption' narratives and do not root their explanation of the Christian faith in the beginning of the Biblical story. Acacia also described how understanding the 'creation' chapter should have a big impact on a Christian's view of their work:

> So this [points to *ought / creation*] is really important (chuckles). Like I'm going to read Genesis over and over and over…that part of [the Bible] is where we're called to have dominion right? And I feel like that's a really hopeful promise when we think about it…that's an invitation [from God]. That's how we get to be co-creators [with God] that's…that really fits into the way world 'ought' to work. That we get to be co-creators, not that we're like enslaved to anyone else and…not that our work is meaningless. But that's like a cool place to start the story…so anyway, that's my little visual (laughter)…

By referring to the 'creation' chapter of the Biblical metanarrative as a "hopeful promise" and an "invitation" from God to be "co-creators", Acacia claims that the beginning of the 4-Chapter Gospel helped her to find more meaning in her work. This was a common theme among participants: that, in addition to helping them make sense of the world, the 4-Chapter Gospel also helped them to more clearly identify the inherent spiritual value of work (in general) and find deeper meaning within their lay work.

4-Chapter Gospel: A lens to make meaning of their work. Like Acaica, some other participants were also explicit about how the Biblical metanarrative, and the 'creation' chapter in particular, re-framed their theology of work, which helped them to discover more meaning and purpose in their work. For example, when I asked Julie to describe her overall orientation to work, she also framed her answer within the 'creation' narrative:

> OK. So like in the beginning, before there was anything God created the world...and in the beginning before there was any sin, man had work to do...like God let Adam name all the animals, He told him to go work the land...and so like the first man without any sin, was given responsibility and like God in his design of people knew that it would be good for us to have work and so um...work is not just a result of the fall. And so like I don't have like a...'I work to live' theology. I have a 'my work is an integral part of my life and there is purpose to my work...and it matters' [theology].

Many other participants also talked about how the 'creation' chapter gave them a theology of work which helped them see their work as an "integral" part of their lives that "matters" and has "purpose". However, Julie did not simply situate her theology of work within the 'creation' chapter, she also described how work is represented throughout the entire Biblical metanarrative:

> …work is present through all of [the Bible story] and work is not like an anomaly in this fallen part of the story. Work was at 'creation', work will exist after the world is redeemed and because of that...like I can be excited about work on a daily basis and know that I'm getting a taste of what it was meant to be...and like I'll get to know work more fully in eternity to come…

Again, Julie describes how the 4-Chapter Gospel, especially the 'creation' and 'consummation' chapters, helped her to become more "excited" about her work on a daily basis. Julie continued to expound on how the "Bible story" helps her to be motivated about her lay work:

> All of humanity, whether they know it or not is looking for a worldview...and has a worldview to make sense of the craziness of a fallen world. And I think I have found such comfort in the story that the Bible tells to makes sense of the world...and the way that the Bible story has framed my life motivates me to tell little stories to get people ready for the big story.

When Julie claims that the Bible story motivates her "to tell little stories", she is referring to her work as an English teacher. Like Julie, many participants described how the Biblical metanarrative had a positive impact on their relationship with their lay work. For example, after Acacia finished drawing her diagram (above), I asked her if the 4-Chapter Gospel continued to influence her relationship with work, and she replied:

> Oh absolutely! I mean I think [the 4-Chapter Gospel] makes me kind of feel the highs and the lows that much more intensely too, where I'm like 'oh this is not the way like education *ought* to be' or…writing a lesson plan…I think just knowing 'this is the way education *ought* to look, you know in an ideal place, if I had all the resources and all the time, this is the it way *ought* to be'. Or 'Gosh, this is the way education *can be*' when you have just a great day, you know? Or 'wow, this is really broken and if I have three more days like this in a row, I going to quit!' (chuckles). I think this language is probably more in my subconscious than my day-to-day, but yeah…I try to see it that way.

Like Acacia, several participants described how they have internalized the 4-Chapter Gospel framework, so that it has become a "subconscious" lens through which they view the world. In this way, the Biblical metanarrative has become the primary filter through which they make sense of their experiences in the world and in their work. Julie described this phenomenon:

> I guess, what I'm trying to say is that I experience like 'creation' – 'fall' – 'redemption' – 'restoration' in macro and micro levels over and over again…that framework is so helpful for living.

Many other participants also described how the 4-Chapter Gospel framework has helped them to develop a more coherent Christian worldview, which has been "so helpful for living" a more coherent life. In this way, learning about vocational theology and the Biblical metanarrative enabled my participants to a) identify the inherent meaning and purpose within their work, and b) connect their faith and work in more complex, meaningful, and imaginative ways. In the following section, I will discuss in greater detail *how* and *why* these three theological concepts were so impactful for my participants' vocational transformation.

Discussion of Fellows Narratives

The purpose of this discussion section is to provide a deeper interpretation of the findings and narratives presented above. My goals here are twofold: 1) to summarize how the theological concepts that participants learned during their Fellows year helped to transform their perspectives about faith and work; and 2) to argue that learning about these theological concepts, and the Biblical metanarrative in particular, represented the next step in participants' process of transformative learning, helping them to more deeply connect their faith and work.

Once again, I draw upon Parks' (2000) theory of imagination as a framework to more deeply analyze participants' narratives and to accomplish the goals listed above. Within Parks (2000) theory, the moment of *image* is the turning point of the imaginative process, the "Ah-ha!" moment of *insight* where a person develops "a wholly new outlook, a new take on reality" (p. 115). In this moment, a person forms an *image* which functions as a metaphor for explaining the new insights they have gained. These images often become symbolic, serving as "the architecture of our thoughts and affections" (p. 117), and can include a concept, an event, a person, things, gestures, or as I argue below, a *story*.

In my pre-Fellows discussion section, I demonstrated how participants had entered into their Fellows year hoping to resolve their experiences of the "Sunday-Monday Gap" (Nash & McLennan, 2001), a deep inner-conflict that was causing them see their faith and work as occupying discrete and even competing categories in their life. They went into their Fellows program because they were "stuck" in a theological "rut" where they could not imagine how their Christian faith could be meaningfully connected to their work outside of some limited options which were in conflict with their own professional interests, goals, and responsibilities. However, as the narratives above illustrate, over the course of their Fellows year, participants

were introduced to a series of theological concepts which provided them with some revelatory *insights* and completely transformed their perspectives on faith, work, and the relationship between them. For this reason, I have identified their Fellows year as the primary catalyst for participants' vocational transformation because, over this year, they engaged with a theological curriculum that gave them a new theological language, framework, and lens which enabled them to take the parts of their inner-conflict (e.g., faith and work) and re-frame them. This reframed perspective provided participants with a "new outlook" on faith and work, which they identified as a more coherent and "fitting conviction of reality" (Parks, 2000, p. 116).

Below, I argue that, within participants' narratives, the *insights* of three core theological concepts (e.g., vocational theology, Biblical metanarrative, and Christian worldview) merged into a single revelatory *image*: "God's Story" and/or the "4-Chapter Gospel". I will demonstrate how this image often functioned as a metaphorical *symbol* for all participants learned over the course of their Fellows year. I begin by drawing upon Gerard's distinction between the "2-Chapter Gospel" and the "4-Chapter Gospel" as a way to illustrate how these new theological concepts challenged and transformed participants' dualistic assumptions, and provided them with a new perspective on (and relationship between) their faith and work,

2-Chapter Gospel: Pre-Fellows perspectives. When Gerard described a "2-Chapter Gospel" perspective, he was referencing his pre-Fellows understanding of faith, which focused primarily on "morality management", "praying a sinner's prayer to get saved", "saving as many other people as you can", and then "twiddling your thumbs and waiting to die" so you can "go to Heaven". As discussed in Chapter 5, this perspective is often framed by a 'hierarchical schema' common within many Evangelical Christian contexts. In this way, Gerard's "2-Chapter Gospel" is synonymous with the dualistic assumptions many participants unconsciously held pre-Fellows.

Sunday-Monday Gap. In my discussion of participants' pre-Fellows narratives, I argued that their former perspectives were rooted in a form Christian dualism which viewed parts of the world, life, and work as occupying discrete and often competing spheres of life. I also argued that these dualistic perspectives led to a hierarchical schema which elevated matters of faith (e.g., ministry, evangelism) over matters pertaining to work. This hierarchical schema led participants to conceptualize (and experience) a Sunday-Monday gap between their faith and work that, as a "serious" Christian, they needed to intentionally and actively attempt to bridge.

Gerard's description of the "2-Chapter Gospel" also extends my previous interpretation. By linking his pre-Fellows perspectives with a particular theological understanding, Gerard implied that a "2-Chapter Gospel" theology, which begins with the 'fall' (e.g., what is wrong with the world), and ends with 'redemption' (e.g., how the things can be fixed), is insufficient to challenge the dualistic assumptions embedded within the hierarchical schema. Extending Gerard's logic, and building upon my own previous interpretation, I now argue that a "2-Chapter Gospel" theology is directly linked to participants' negative experiences with integrating faith and work (e.g., ambiguity, anxiety, and apathy) pre-Fellows.

4-Chapter Gospel: Transformation of pre-Fellows perspectives. In contrast to the "2-Chapter Gospel" approach, Gerard described how Fellows taught him to view his faith through a more comprehensive theological lens: the "4-Chapter Gospel". While the "2-Chapter Gospel" approach derived a theology of the world, work, and faith almost exclusively by focusing on the 'fall' and 'redemption' chapters of the Bible, the "4-Chapter Gospel" approach includes the 'creation' and 'consummation' chapters in its theology of vocation. In the following section, I discuss how learning about the Biblical metanarrative *in total* and *in order,* helped to transform participants' theological perspectives on the world, work, and their faith. Below, I also

demonstrate how learning about 'creation' and 'consummation' enabled participants to resolve their faith-work conflict by a) challenging some of their dualistic assumptions within the hierarchical schema, and b) re-contextualizing their understanding of 'fall' and 'redemption' in the Biblical narrative. Finally, I conclude this section with a discussion about how learning about the "4-Chapter Gospel" fundamentally transformed participants' faith and work relationship.

Transformed view of the world. By situating my participants' understanding of the world within 'creation' and 'consummation', the 4-Chapter Gospel transformed their dualistic understanding of the world by highlighting the inherent goodness and value of God's creation.

Creation: The world as God's 'very good' creation. Most participants described how learning about the 'creation' chapter was a revelation because it helped them to see that the Bible unequivocally presents the physical world as an inherently "very good" part of God's "creation". They also described how learning about 'creation' helped them to see that God has "been intentional about communing with me in this created-ness", which caused them to "enjoy creation" and "being embodied". These 'creational' ideas were transformative for participants because they challenged many of the platonic dualistic assumptions which elevated the 'spiritual' world over the 'physical' world, and viewed a person's physical body as having less value than their soul (Hardy, 1990).

Fall re-contextualized: The world as a "glorious ruin". Learning about the 4-Chapter Gospel also re-contextualized participants' understanding of the 'fall'. Instead of seeing it as the beginning of God's story, they began to understand the 'fall' as the "rising action/conflict" part of the Biblical narrative. As described above, learning to re-frame the Bible from the starting point of 'creation' completely transformed participants' view of the world; while their re-contextualized understanding of the 'fall' still pictured the world as being "upside down", and

filled with "corruption" and "broken relationships", participants also began to adopt a more differentiated and nuanced perspective about the nature of the world itself. For example, many came to see the 'fall' as explaining the "way things are" currently in the world, but "not the way they were meant to be" originally. This idea was revelatory for participants because it caused them to view the world, not as being fundamentally wicked/evil, but as being a "glorious ruin" (Schaeffer, 1986, p. 33) which, although corrupted, also maintains its intrinsic dignity and value as God's "very good" creation.

Consummation: *The complete restoration of the physical world.* The revelations described above were also augmented by participants' new understanding of the 'consummation' chapter, which they described as the "final scene" that the Bible story was "pressing towards", where "Jesus comes back" and His work of "restoration comes to consummation". Participants also described consummation as giving them a picture of the way the world "will be", which includes all broken "relationships being righted" as "God comes down" to a physical "earth restored and made new". Participants referred to this story both as a "future hope" and as the "coherent ending" of the Bible, a return to the way "things were supposed to be" (Plantinga, 1997).

Redemption re-contextualized: More than saving souls. Pre-Fellows, participants' viewed redemption as being exclusively focused on so-called 'spiritual' things like a person's soul, prayer, and Heaven. However, re-contextualizing 'redemption' within 'creation' and 'consummation' helped participants' to see how the Bible framed the climax of redemption (e.g., Jesus' death and resurrection) as God's deep commitment to "making *all things* new", not just to "saving souls". For this reason, they described 'redemption' as the restoration of all broken relationships between "God, myself, others, and the world". Some described how their former

dualistic "understanding of Heaven" as "flying off to some cloud world" was "very unsatisfying on many levels", while the idea of a fully restored earth was "deeply motivating" and "exciting".

While participants did not enter into their Fellows year with the intention of learning more about the nature of the world *per se*, learning about the 4-Chapter Gospel transformed their dualistic assumptions about the world and brought them more in line with Biblical theology. Similarly, learning about the Biblical metanarrative also transformed their theology of work.

Transformed view of work. By situating participants' understanding of the work within the entire Biblical narrative, the 4-Chapter Gospel also transformed their dualistic understanding of work by highlighting that work was a good part of God's design of the world, and that their work was also integrally connected to God's mission of redemption.

Creation: Work as a good part of God's good world. My participants described how learning about 'creation' was significant because it showed them that work was an integral and good part of God's creational design. Several of them described how it was "really important" to "start with creation" because "in the beginning" God gave people "work to do", to "name the animals", "work the land" and "be fruitful and multiply". Referencing 'creation', Julie claimed that "God, in his design of people, knew that it would be good for us to have work". Other participants were motivated by how the 'creation' chapter showed them they were called to be "co-creators" with God, bringing "goodness" and "His Kingdom" to earth. In these ways, the 'creation' chapter challenged their pre-Fellows dualistic theology of work, which relegated work to the lower part of the faith and work hierarchy. The 'creation' chapter showed them that, like the physical world, work itself had inherent meaning, purpose, and value in God's story (Schuurman, 2004).

Fall re-contextualized: Christian work as good work, done well. Learning about work in the 'creation' chapter also helped to re-contextualize participants' theology of work. They began to

understand that "work is not just a result of the fall" or an "anomaly" within the 'fall' narrative. Seeing the world and work as being corrupted, while also maintaining their inherent dignity and purpose, challenged participants to revise their dualistic perspectives about work. Instead of seeing work as a "curse" or a "necessary evil" (Hardy, 1990), they began to see work as an integral part of being human, and an inherently good part of God's world. As we will see more in the Chapter 7, this transformed perspective of work helped participants to dismantle the FTM assumption and to begin to believe that "Christian work" was not limited to full-time ministry work, but was better understood as "good work, done well" (Sayers, 1949, p. 108).

Consummation: Work as way to bring God's Kingdom. Gaining a deeper understanding of 'consummation' also reinforced participants' emerging appreciation for the enduring value/role of work. Reflecting on 'consummation', several participants claimed that "work will exist after the world is redeemed". This idea motivated many of them because they began to see work as something they would "get to know more fully in eternity to come". This expanded view of the 4-Chapter Gospel also enabled participants to believe everything they did "mattered", seeing work as a way they could "partner with God" in "bringing His Kingdom" to earth.

Redemption re-contextualized: Work is integral to the mission of God. The "2-Chapter Gospel" described above, presented God's mission of redemption in the Bible as focusing primarily on "saving souls" and getting people "into Heaven". However, learning about 'creation' and 'consummation' as the bookends of God's story was "exciting" for participants because it also re-contextualized and expanded their understanding of the scope of God's mission. They described how learning about the 4-Chapter Gospel helped them "realize that the mission of God in the world is bigger than what I've imagined it to be", primarily because "it also touches my work". The 4-Chapter Gospel was revelatory for participants because it enabled

them to see the inherent redemptive potential for work itself, which helped them to understand that their work was integral, "not incidental to the mission of God in the world".

It should be clear that the 4-Chapter Gospel provided participants with new theological insights, which enabled them to identify their former dualistic perspectives about the world and work, and revise these uncritically inherited assumptions (Mezirow, 1998). For this reason, I argue that the theological education in Fellows was the primary catalyst which facilitated a kind of vocationally-oriented transformative learning for my participants. This new Biblical view of the world and work caused participants to see how their views about faith also required revision.

Transformed view of faith. Pre-Fellows, many participants also viewed their Christian faith as being fairly formulaic, either as a "hyper-personal" plan for salvation, or as being mainly concerned with specific actions and behaviors, offering them a "black and white list" of "dos and don'ts", through a series of disconnected "check-boxes". However, during their Fellows year, participants' understanding of their faith was also transformed, which enabled the transformation of the relationship between their faith and work. Below, I discuss how these transformations occurred as participants learned to see the 4-Chapter Gospel as both a *narrative of the world* (i.e., the story they inhabit), and as a *narrative worldview* (i.e., the story that inhabits them).

Faith as a narrative of the world: The 4-Chapter Gospel as the story they inhabit. Throughout the Fellows narratives above, participants repeatedly described how they came to understand the 4-Chapter Gospel, not just as the narrative of the Bible, but as the narrative of the entire world. For them, the four chapters of 'creation', 'fall', 'redemption', and 'consummation' became "the story" which explained how the world *ought* to be (creation), currently *is* (fall), *can be* (redemption), and *will be* (consummation). For this reason, many participants described how Fellows introduced and invited them into a "rich story" that they "could grab on to and love".

The 4-Chapter Gospel had such a deep impact on participants that some claimed the "substance of their faith" was "learning to make sense of and situate themselves in the story God was telling". Throughout their Fellows narratives, it is clear that they viewed the 4-Chapter Gospel not just as the narrative of the world, but also as a story they currently inhabit. Some described themselves as living in a "unique" part of God's story: the "already, not yet", which is located within the "falling action" between the climax (i.e., redemption) and end (i.e., consummation) of the Biblical metanarrative. This "already, not yet" part of the story was described as still "unfolding", currently moving forward, but "not yet" complete.

Earlier, I argued that learning about the 4-Chapter Gospel was a revelatory *insight* because it expanded participants' understanding of the nature and purpose of the world and work within God's story. Here, I argue that the 4-Chapter Gospel has also become a revelatory *image*, a symbol that participants draw on to see their stories within the context of God's story. In this way, the narrative of the world also became the "narrative that made sense of [their] lives". As participants began to situate themselves and their work within the 4-Chapter Gospel, it was transformative, helping them to see how they have an important part to play in the "unfolding" story of the world. In this sense, participants saw themselves as characters in God's story, characters who were given an important role to play in how the story ends. This perspective helped them find and forge a deeper connection between faith and work, seeing their work as having the potential of "partnering with God" to bring "redemption" and "His Kingdom" to earth. This signaled a transformation from their pre-Fellows perspectives, because it helped them understand not just "what I am saved from", but also "what I am saved for". In this way, participants began to theologically resolve some of their inner-conflict about faith and work,

helping them to find greater intrinsic purpose, meaning, and value for their work (and their lives) by situating themselves within God's unfolding story of the world.

Faith as a narrative worldview: The 4-Chapter Gospel as the story that inhabits them. When discussing their current orientation to faith, several participants referenced the idea of narrative in a slightly different way. They described how "no one is narrative neutral", that "everyone is looking for a story" to "make sense of the craziness of a fallen world", and that they have "found comfort in the story the Bible tells to make sense of the world". Reflecting back on their Fellows year, other participants described how the core elements of the 4-Chapter Gospel (e.g., *ought, is, can, and will be*) have become the "framework through which I see the whole world". In these ways, participants were describing how the 4-Chapter Gospel has become their *narrative worldview*, "a big story of the world" (Naugle, 2000; Wright, 1992) that "frames my life". Several of them also described how they have internalized this understanding of God's story, causing the ideas and language of the 4-Chapter Gospel to become embedded within their "subconscious", and shape "the way they see everything". For this reason, I argue that the 4-Chapter Gospel has become, not just a story they inhabit, but also a story that inhabits them.

I also argue that learning to see their faith as a narrative worldview signaled another major transformation in participants' understanding of their faith. Pre-Fellows, many of them had conceived of their faith as occupying a compartment of their lives, and their desire was to act in ways that more deeply connected their faith-compartment with their work-compartment. However, during Fellows, this idea was dismantled and replaced by a more "coherent" understanding of faith. Instead of seeing faith as a discrete compartment of their lives, it became a narrative-oriented lens through which they viewed the entire world. This is evident as Thomas described how his faith was not just a "first priority" in his life, but had become a lens "by which

all of my priorities are organized, aligned, and influenced". Thomas conceptualized his new relationship with faith through the image of a "central hub and spokes". The figure below is an attempt at representing this faith-as-narrative worldview approach. This diagram illustrates how, during Fellows, participants' learned to view their Christian faith (i.e., the 4-Chapter Gospel) as the central lens through which every other part of their lives was organized and understood.

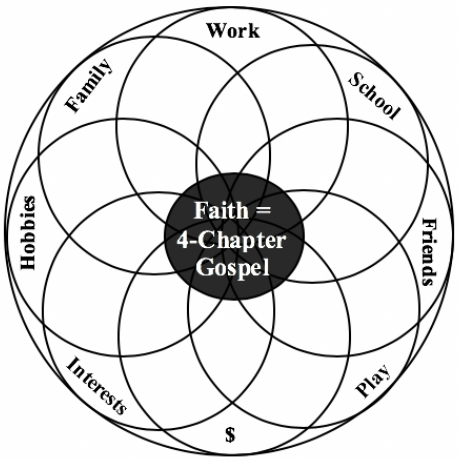

Figure 10.
Fellows narratives: A more coherent faith and life

Therefore, learning about the 4-Chapter Gospel in Fellows enabled many participants to understand their Christian faith as providing them with a coherent way of being and seeing the world. For example, recall Acacia's diagram presented earlier (e.g., *ought, is, can, will be*), to illustrate how the concepts and language of the 4-Chapter Gospel provided participants with a heuristic framework for "thinking Christianly" about every area of life. In Fellows, Acacia learned that she could put "any subject" (e.g., work, relationships, sexuality, etc.) into this framework to help "shift my thinking around the 4-Chapter Gospel". The diagram above helps us to more deeply understand and appreciate how and why learning about the 4-Chapter gospel was a "mind blowing" and "hugely transformative" moment of *insight* for Acacia. Several other

participants also claimed that learning to see the world through Biblical metanarrative framework was transformative. One claimed that it "exploded my faith", seeing how their faith "had implications for everything" in their lives. Others described how the 4-Chapter Gospel "massively expanded my imagination" for how their faith and work could be connected. One participant stated that the 4-Chapter Gospel continues to shape her daily life, as she "experienced 'creation', 'fall', 'redemption' and 'restoration' in macro and micro levels over and over again". This participant also claimed that, as a narrative worldview, the 4-Chapter Gospel provided her with a "framework that is so helpful for living".

Conclusion. In all the ways listed above, it is clear that learning about the 4-Chapter Gospel was a transformative *insight* for participants, because it helped them to develop "a wholly new outlook, a new take on reality" (Parks, 2000, p. 115). It should also be clear that the 4-Chapter Gospel has become a *symbol* for participants' vocational transformation, as it continues to shape the "architecture of their thoughts and affections" (p. 116). In these ways, the Biblical metanarrative helped participants to conceptually resolve their previous faith-work conflict, by theologically dismantling and reframing the hierarchical schema and the faith-work gap it presented. For these reasons, I argue that the narratives presented in this chapter illustrate how participants had taken the next step in their vocational transformation by theologically reframing the previous perspectives that led to their experiences of the Sunday-Monday Gap.

In chapter 7, I will present a final set of narratives to describe how participants' revised theological perspectives helped them to transform their former negative faith-work integration experiences into more positive ones. I will also demonstrate how this expanded theology of vocation continues to help participants practically connect their faith and work, and imagine a wide range of ways their faith and work could become even more deeply integrated.

CHAPTER 7: Post-Fellows Narratives – Reimagining the Sunday-Monday Gap

I think about how I worship the Lord on Sunday and I work on Monday,
but those are two different ways of really participating in the same activity.
And, you know, often Christians see Sunday as charged, right? But actually,
all week is charged…all week is charged by the story that God is telling…

- *Gerard, Asst. District Attorney*

Post-Fellows Narratives

In chapter 5, I identified some of the primary experiences, perspectives, and assumptions that had a negative impact on participants' work, faith, and life prior to their Fellows year. I also described how these negative faith and work integration experiences caused many participants to feel like they were living a "compartmentalized" life, which led them to be dissatisfied with both their work and their faith. In chapter 6, I demonstrated how participants' Fellows year was the primary catalyst for their vocational transformation, because it offered them a set transformative theological concepts which enabled them to better understand how their faith and work were/could be more meaningfully connected. In this final set of post-Fellows narratives, I present findings that describe: a) how participants applied these theological concepts within their lay work contexts, b) the impact that these concepts had upon their faith and work relationships, and c) what participants think about their revised/current approaches to connecting faith and work. Next, I will offer a discussion about these post-Fellows narratives and link them to participants' current perspectives on faith and work. Finally, I will conclude this chapter by revisiting this study's primary research questions, expounding on the visual model introduced in chapter 5 as a way to summarize some of the core experiences, themes, and phases within my participants' process of vocational transformation.

Positive faith & work integration experiences. As I analyzed participants' descriptions of their current faith and work relationships, a number of positive themes emerged about their post-Fellows experiences with integrating faith and work. The most prevalent positive experiences were directly related to, and a represented a major transformation of, their previous negative integration experiences. In this section, I describe how the theological concepts participants learned during their Fellows year, and the 4-Chapter Gospel in particular, helped to transform their faith and work integration experiences from *professional ambiguity into clarity*, *spiritual anxiety into confidence*, and *vocational apathy into creativity*. To clearly demonstrate the positive impact of participants' vocational transformations, I will focus on the same 'experiential exemplars' from chapter 5.

Professional clarity. Whereas many participants experienced degrees of professional ambiguity prior to attending their Fellows program, these same participants often described having a greater sense of clarity about their professional plans after their Fellows year. Below, I describe how the 4-Chapter Gospel helped to transform participants' experience of professional ambiguity into *professional clarity*. This post-Fellows experience is composed of developing greater clarity on a) lay work as a legitimate calling from God, b) which kinds of lay work God was calling them to, and c) how their lay work is connected to God's Kingdom. As before, Anastasia will serve as the 'exemplar' for this experience of vocational transformation.

"My relationship to my work? Well, I feel like it's a calling". The most fundamental theme of professional clarity focuses on how participants gained a clearer understanding that lay work could be a legitimate calling from God. For example, when I asked Anastasia to describe her orientation to her Urban Planning work, she replied, "Well, I feel like it's a calling". Later, I asked how her time in Fellows influenced this perspective and she said:

> So, [Fellows] gave me…the language and permission to give myself over to do [non-ministry work] and still love God and try to integrate those things. And just looking at work, the centralized ideas we talked about all the time were calling and vocation. So I just think it gave me a language and a foundation to move off of and build upon.

As described earlier, most participants derived their theology of 'calling' from the Biblical metanarrative. For example, CJ described how the Biblical 'creation' story gave him a theology of 'calling' which enabled him understand work as a way to fulfill God's call on his life:

> I love work, man! I love the *idea* of work! I think we were designed to work because the Lord works. And it's just a little taste of how we get to see Him. Like we're made in His image, we're a reflection of Him. And so work is an opportunity to reflect everything He did. He created the earth, He created us, He gave us…gave Adam…He was like, "Name these animals like, do these things". He gave Adam and Eve a call to work. You know, He gives people tasks all throughout Scripture…so, I think of work as an opportunity to fulfill His call…I don't have that specific like God coming down, saying "do this thing". But I very much do have a call to work. And I do hear Him saying "[work] because you will be fruitful and this is what I designed you to do". So, I love work!

Like CJ, many participants described how the 'creation' chapter helped them to understand that all people have a general "call to work" from God. Seeing work as part of God's intended design for humans caused them to experience a deeper love for and joy in work more generally. This understanding of 'calling' also helped participants to realize they could be doing "the Lord's work" in a non-ministry profession. Again, CJ explained:

> And so [Fellows] changed my outlook on work because it would always hit on, 'You are all working for the Lord, you are doing His work'…And so when I go to work, I try to keep the mindset that 'I am working for the Lord...literally...He is my boss'. So it just totally changes my whole outlook on work, and doing things well, and putting in long hours…I think because I really understand that I'm working under the Lord, and I'm doing His work, even though I'm not a pastor or something, you know?

After Fellows, participants more clearly understood how God's call on their lives also included their lay work. For example, Gerard explained how Fellows helped to widen the "narrow view of calling" he grew up with:

> This idea of 'calling'….you know, I grew up in a church community that had a very narrow view of calling, right? Some people are called to be pastors or missionaries or

> work in the church…what I stepped into in Fellows year was to realize 'whoa! whoa! the mission of God in the world is way bigger than that!'. So, I don't get to check out in whatever job I have. There is a calling...I am implicated as well...there is a call on my life as well.

Anastasia also described how Fellows helped her to re-define and broaden her understanding of what it meant to be 'called' by God to a specific career:

> [Fellows] dug deeper for me in defining what 'calling' was and what 'vocation' is…so what does it mean to be called? We studied different callings of people and what it means to be led by God…because when you say that somebody, in general language, is "called" [does air quotes], sometimes you think that 'called' word is like [to] a religious life. And [Fellows] broadened that [for me], like "no, you could be called to be city manager or to open up a business that's really going to change and impact lives".

Like Gerard and CJ, Anastasia described how Fellows helped her to theologically dismantle the assumption that God only calls people into a "religious life" or full-time ministry (i.e., FTM assumption). This expanded view of calling had practical implications for my participants who, like Anastasia, began to view their desired non-ministry careers as a legitimate calling from God. For example, Acacia claimed that Fellows gave her the language to "think about work" differently, which helped her "realize" that teaching was a "high calling" from God:

> And I think the way that the [Fellows] program helped me think through the different types of work you can have and the ways you can think about work…I think realizing that regardless of the vocation that I was going to choose…I think I felt more equipped than I ever had...to go forth and seek delight in that job…and I felt grateful to feel like I knew more or less that teaching is a high calling. I felt like I could commit to it....and I just feel like I had never heard in the church or from like youth group. And I think not everybody gets to hear that message enough. And just hearing, even just the same language over and over and over was really healing for me, and it felt like an invitation I think to say 'OK I'm going to pursue this work and I know that there will be will be meaning that births out of this…knowing that's how the Lord designed work to be…especially like it not being 'explicitly Christian'.

Many other participants also claimed that learning about God's creational design for work gave them more confidence about their ability to find meaning in non-ministry work. By legitimizing

lay work as a "high calling" from God, the 4-Chapter Gospel also offered them more clarity about their potential career options.

"I am called to seek the peace of the city…to rebuild the ruins…to be a re-builder". The second theme within participants' post-Fellows experience of professional clarity focuses on how they gained greater clarity on their future career plans. While many participants were struggling with a general lack of professional direction pre-Fellows, all participants gained more clarity about their future career plans during their Fellows program year. For example, when I asked Anastasia about the about a 'turning point' in her faith and work relationship, she described how Fellows helped her to have more clarity about her career plans:

> Literally the reason why I did the Fellows program [was] because I was like 'Oh I think I want to go to seminary, but that seems like a big decision. I need a year to think about that'. So, what happened at the end of that year was that I wasn't going to seminary, but I was going to pursue this more marketplace career. I think [Fellows] really informed and freed me to say 'Ok, I've been learning about vocation and what that means, and this seems like the right next step'…I think that was a turning point for me.

Similarly, many participants described how Fellows was a "turning point" for them because "learning about vocation" also "freed" them to more clearly reconsider their professional "next steps" without the career limitations imposed by the FTM assumption. In fact, this broader view of calling helped some participants to gain more professional clarity by confirming their reservations about pursuing a career in ministry. For example, although Julie went into Fellows wondering if "youth ministry was a better fit?" for her career, her Fellows internship (working in her church's youth ministry program), helped her to gain clarity on this question:

> [Fellows] was good for me… it was really great to work there because I really enjoyed my [youth ministry internship]...*and* I learned that I didn't want to do that! (chuckles)

In addition to clarifying that she did not want to go into a career in youth ministry, Julie also described how her Fellows experiences confirmed her calling to be a teacher:

> And I you know throughout the [Fellows] year you know, we're being presented with stories of like 'no, like God sends people into like to do Kingdom work, not just in the church'... So that was really good for me. It was a confirmation of my call to education.

Like Julie, Fellows also gave many other participants theological "permission" to explore how their long-standing professional interests could be pursued outside of ministry. For example, Fellows helped Anastasia to realize that ministry was not a good career choice for her, and that her calling was more closely aligned with urban planning and community re-development:

> So I feel like the Fellows program gave me language and permission to be a Christian in the larger world and make change, and [helped me see] to be a good Christian wasn't necessarily to go to a seminary and work in a church and be a preacher and pastor, which is great because what I learned is like mmm, I can't see myself in those roles…but I can see myself working to change the form and shape in both physical and social environment of cities…and that's what I felt called to.

Anastasia also described how the sense of calling she began to articulate in Fellows has become more "crystallized" throughout her career journey:

> I feel like, professionally, Nehemiah is like my Biblical mentor…like 'let us go rebuild walls and the ruins. The city is in ruins'. [I felt called] to be a 'rebuilder of ruins', per se….and that's why I got interested in urban development and redevelopment. So vocationally, the line around social justice, and particularly as it relates to the city, that's been a continuous thread for the past 15 years, probably since I graduated college. So it's gone from hunger and poverty and its morphed and kind of crystallized, but [it is] the same thing: 'Peace in the city', 'rebuilding ruins', and interested in race and how it plays out in the urban environment… So, I feel like [I'm] called to 'seek the peace of the city', called to 'rebuild the ruins'…to be a re-builder.

The calling that Anastasia began to articulate in Fellows continues to frame her understanding of her work as an urban planner, and gives her a broader sense of professional purpose that transcends a particular career (e.g., "I am called to seek the peace of the city…to rebuild the ruins") For example, when I asked Anastasia to share an 'vocational artifact' that illustrated the relationship between her faith and work, she gave me several scripture passages from some of her "Biblical mentors" who were also charged by God to "rebuild the ruins" around them (e.g.,

Nehemiah, Isaiah, and Jeremiah). One of these Biblical mentors is connected to the picture below, which is another vocational artifact she gave me:

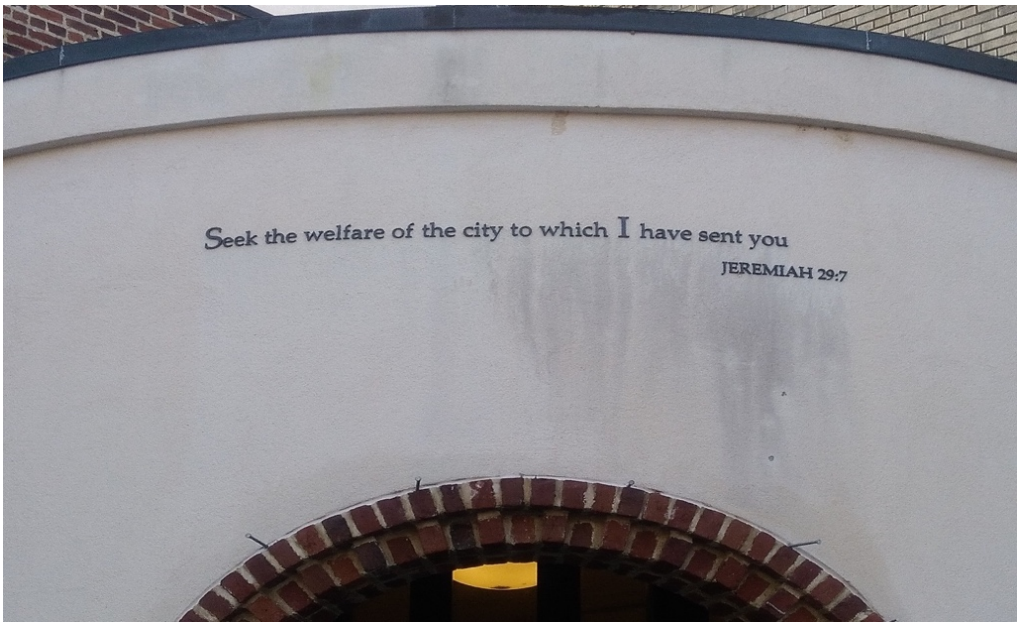

Figure 11.
Anastasia's vocational artifact: *"*I am called to seek the peace of the city"

Anastasia told me that she chose this vocational artifact for two primary reasons: a) it is God's charge to Jeremiah to "seek the peace of the city" which Anastasia describes is a core lens for her faith and work relationship, and a key component of the calling that she began to articulate in Fellows (n.b.,"welfare" is another translation of the Hebrew word "Shalom", which is also commonly translated as "peace" in Jeremiah 29:7); and b) it shows how her professional purpose to "seek the peace of the city" continues to impact her professional decisions and career plans. To be more specific, this picture was taken at one of her previous places of employment, a job which she decided to pursue based on how its mission was aligned with her sense of calling to "rebuild the city". Anastasia described why she decided to take that job:

> I feel called to cities or the city. I feel called to be a part of the rebuilding of the city. You know, that's why I really went to [her previous employer]…I decided to go there, because on their door, it said "Seek the peace of the city", Jeremiah 29, and so that was a

> draw for me. [Because] I'm seeking to in whatever I do to "seek the peace of the city". That can be [done] either through building coalitions or working with leaders to think about 'how do we improve our organizations so that we can improve the work that we do which is to improve our communities'. …And so I felt like taking that job would be doing that, [it] would be 'seeking the peace of the city' [by] working in neighborhoods, working in community development, and thinking about working towards revitalization and rebuilding areas that were distressed and in some ways left in ruins.

Many participants began to articulate a similar sense of calling in Fellows, a calling which provided more direction for their professional plans. For example, during her Fellows year, Anastasia not only re-confirmed her desire to pursue "Christian Community Development" as a career, but also learned how she could do this outside of going to seminary or into ministry:

> I did the Fellows program, of course I thought about vocation and stuff...and...I was like 'Yeah I don't think I want to go to seminary, but I still want to do this Christian Community Development stuff, so how do I do it?'. My mentor in the program was an Urban Planning professor and I was like 'That's what I want to do! That's a degree that would help me to do community development stuff. I am a Christian, so I can always do [community development] from a Christian perspective, but I really wanted to get that expertise and know how, [because] I can apply it anywhere.

While the FTM assumption (serious Christians should go into full-time ministry) often created ambiguity around participants' professional plans, their transformed views of calling offered more clarity about their career goals. Anastasia's quote, "I can always do [community development] from a Christian perspective", describes the final theme which makes up professional clarity: that her faith continues to inform not just *what* she decides to do career-wise, but also *how* she engages in her work. Fellows did not simply give her clarity on her career options, it also helped her gain clarity about how she could engage her lay work from a "Christian perspective".

"What does God have to do with public transportation? A lot to me". The final theme of professional clarity focuses on how the 4-Chapter Gospel framework functions as a lens which helps participants see how their lay career is deeply connected to "God's Kingdom". For

example, when Anastasia revisited the 'turning point' of filling out her seminary and urban planning graduate school applications in a subsequent interview, she described how the 4-Chapter Gospel gave her greater clarity about the redemptive value/potential of urban planning:

> So essentially all of this happened in three days and [the Urban Planning graduate school application] was done and it felt right. And I think that was a pivotal moment of like 'Oh! I don't have to be a clergy person to bring my faith to bear in community and for community change. I can be a person who knows and understands and is trained in this particular vocation [of Urban Planning]'…that is to say, that I can use my faith as fuel and as glasses per se, for *clarity*…a lens through which I look at this work. And I can be free to just be myself and bring my gifts and skills and talents to this particular work because it's good work. And it's a part of 'redemption'. You know…it's 'creation' 'fall' and 'redemption' [and consummation]. And so it just helped me think about what's moving. [like] 'How can I be a part of moving the world or the spaces that I am in towards greater reconciliation and redemption?' And I think that I learned that I could do that better as a trained urban planner than as a clergy person in the ways I am shaped. And I think that was one of the best decisions I could have made.

Here, Anastasia makes three claims that I consistently heard from almost every participant. They often claimed that the 4-Chapter Gospel gave them a greater sense of professional clarity by helping them see that 1) their decision to pursue a non-ministry career was a "good decision"; 2) they can bring their faith into their work as a "lens" through which they see their work (this also shapes the ways they go about doing it) ; and 3) their faith can be "fuel" or motivation for their lay work. Their increased motivation for their work is deeply connected to an understanding of their career as "good work" that is connected to God's story of "redemption'". This clarity motivated Anastasia to pursue graduate school and enjoy a 13+ year career as an urban planner. When I asked Anastasia to recall a 'high point' between her faith and work, she told this story about a time when she realized how deeply Urban Planning was connected to her faith:

> Well the [story] that comes up…so a lot of what we did when I was on transit stuff [at previous job] was trying to get churches organized around or excited about improving public transportation, and then having them going to their local policy makers, counselors, or board of supervisors, to put pressure on them to improve transportation…so we went to into this Catholic Church and we had our little table…and then this guy came up and was like "What does God have to do with public

> transportation?". So, I went on my little spiel, and he didn't pay attention to me, but it got me riled up and thinking about, 'Well, it has a lot to do to me with the thriving of the city and how we connect to one another literally and figuratively'. So that just got me thinking about how the flourishing of the city was so interconnected with my faith in a way that's just not apparent to other people. And that was a moment where I'm just like 'Yes! This is so connected for me!', because it's just part of who I am and my calling. I can articulate it and bring back to scripture, but that's not true for everybody. So I think it was a moment for me of saying 'This feels really true for me'.

When Anastasia claims that her faith is "so interconnected with the flourishing of the city in a way that is not apparent to other people", she is describing how her Fellows experiences continue to have a deep impact on the way she thinks about and engages with her work as an Urban Planner. As with many participants, Anastasia claims to experience greater levels of purpose, meaning, and value in her lay work by being able to clearly connect it "back to scripture", particularly the "redemption" part of the Biblical metanarrative.

The 4-Chapter Gospel continues to help Anastasia find meaning in her work as an urban planner. The final vocational artifact(s) she gave me were two pictures that she claimed represented her calling and the purpose of her lay work [see below]. To explain these artifacts, Anastasia told me the following story about how the 4-Chapter Gospel helps her to more clearly see how her urban planning work is integrally connected to God's mission of "redemption":

> So I'm doing this project for a strategic plan that is for [a community development organization]. And so this is emblematic of the things I want to be involved in…it was literally a vacant thrift store on a corner that had this like oasis of an intersection…So I'm working on a project where [we] took that vacant building and now it's like a beautiful colorful youth center….And it's gone from this abandoned thrift store to this thriving dynamic community center…it now has a colorful mural on the side of the building that this muralist worked with youth to paint…It's bright and it's colorful…you go in there and there's this energy. Youth are building, youth are learning how to capture stories of the community, youth are learning about music and art and poetry. There's also community organizations coming there doing trainings and housing events. And so it's gone from this…to me it looked dead and vacant…and so to me I look at those spaces and it's like looking at the field of Ezekiel, looking at the field of dry bones and [I hear] God saying, "can these dry bones live?". And, I love that! It's like two years ago…I know what this building looked like, and now it's a completely different place and space. I mean the whole intersection is different. There are flowers…there are benches…there is

more order. When the [way a] physical environment looks, changes, it creates movement for the social environment to change….So I'm like 'Yes! This is work that is a part of transformation…it's a part of redemption!'…people need a change they can see sometimes in order to bring about the more intangible changes that are changing people's lives. So, I love that! And want to be a part of that particular work.

Figure 12.
Anastasia's 2nd vocational artifact:
"Can these dry bones live?"

Figure 13.
Anastasia's 3rd vocational artifact:
"Yes! This work is part of God's redemption"

From the story and pictures above, it is evident that Anastasia currently has more clarity about how her lay work is connected to God's mission than she did before Fellows. Previously, she believed she needed to go seminary to do "God's work", but now she clearly sees how a career in community development is deeply connected to, and an opportunity to participate in, God's unfolding story of "redemption". The 4-Chapter Gospel has become a lens which allowed her to more clearly see that urban planning is "good work" and is a legitimate "calling" from God. In this way, Anastasia's story illustrates how the Biblical metanarrative enabled many participants to more clearly see the purpose and value of their lay work.

Spiritual confidence. Before Fellows, some participants were experiencing a form of 'spiritual anxiety' about disobeying and disappointing God by following their desire to go into a non-ministry profession, and/or by not leveraging their work as a platform for evangelism (PFE). Julie continues to be the 'exemplar' for this experience, because the spiritual anxiety that she experienced about her faith and work pre-Fellows was transformed into a humble confidence about her decision to become a public high school English teacher.

After Fellows, Julie taught in a public high school for over eight years. As described earlier, Julie believes that Fellows was "good for [her]" because it "confirmed [her] call to education". This said, at the time of our interviews, Julie was intentionally "taking a break" from teaching to be a stay-at-home mother for her two small children. Yet, she also remains *confident* that God will provide her with opportunities to teach again in the future. For example, when I asked her to imagine an 'idealized scene' in her future, she said:

> I think teaching feels very core to who I am, and so to imagine a life where I'm not in the classroom again someday feels sad. So, I think there's like a sense of like completion of how the story is supposed to be, or the way I imagine it…but I think that there'd be a sense of fulfillment and it would make sense of the arc of the way that the story of my life has gone thus far...I trust and feel *confident* that God has some sort of teaching thing for me still…I don't think that chapter is done in my life.

Other participants also described how, post-Fellows, they have become more confident about their decision to pursue a non-ministry career. For example, CJ described how Fellows helped him to experience a greater sense of confidence about his lay work:

> I mean [Fellows] brought confidence, it brought joy, it brought connections, like people into my life, a passion...a sense of confidence that I was doing the Lord's work and that He was proud….I was confident this was where the Lord wanted me and it's what he wanted me doing

During Fellows, many participants became more confident that they were "doing the Lord's work" and that God approved of their decision to pursue lay work. In this sense, Fellows had a drastic impact on how some participants viewed and experienced their lay work. For example, although she previously felt conflicted and anxious about her desire to pursue a career in public education, Julie describes how her experiences of work (both as a teacher and now as a mother) have become much more meaningful. When I asked Julie about her overall orientation to work, she said:

> I guess I'd say…like in a nutshell…like I wake up every morning and feel like my days are full of meaning. And I can't say I do this every morning, but on my good mornings (laughs), I wake up and I say 'Lord what do you have for me?'. And…whether that was when I was waking up and driving to [her former] High School or in this season of life where I'm waking up to two kids and...other adventures and maybe some writing…it's like 'God what do you have for me? How do I get to be in your world today and like partner with you in what you're doing?' And I do think it's really important….to be training up young people with this lens for seeing the world [so] that their days have meaning. Like that's...that's huge! Like to be able to wake up and think like 'what I'm doing matters!'

The "lens for seeing the world" that helps Julie to confidently declare "what I'm doing matters!", is the 4-Chapter Gospel. Below, she and several other participants will describe how, the Biblical metanarrative helped them to have more *spiritual confidence* about their lay work. This transformation from *spiritual anxiety to confidence* is composed of four primary themes: a) a shift in their overall orientation from self to God, b) affirmation about the spiritual value of lay

work, c) belief that their lay work presented them with an opportunity to glorify God, and d) an expanded understanding of how to meaningfully connect their lay work to God's Kingdom.

"Lord what do you have for me today? How do I get to be in your world today and partner with what you are doing?". The 4-Chapter Gospel had profound implications on participants' spiritual confidence, and one of the fundamental transformations was a shift in their overall orientation from self to God. For example, when I asked CJ to describe the impact that Fellows had on his life, he referred to how Fellows taught him how he "fit" into God's story:

> So [Fellows] was very good because of what [his Fellows mentor] was teaching us was the Bible and God's story from A to Z, and how we fit in it…and how the story is not about us, but it's all about Him and redemption...it's the redemptive story of the world.

Like CJ, a number of participants described how developing an expanded understanding of "God's Story" deepened their spiritual confidence because it facilitated a realization that "It's not about us, it's all about Him and redemption". Learning about God's story also fostered a shift from focusing primarily on their actions to God's actions. This can be observed in Julie's comments at the outset of this section: "Lord what do you have for me today? How do I get to be in your world today and partner with what you are doing?". While Julie's anxious pre-Fellows mentality focused more on 'what can I do for God?' in her life and work, her current perspective focuses more on attuning to and joining with the work that God is already doing in the world. She described how this shift had additional implications:

> I guess part of this [is] also having the humility to believe that like...I am such a small part of God's great story...and so it is not my responsibility in a high school or in life to convert everyone I meet...I have no idea where God has people and God doesn't ask us to take on that responsibility...So when we are called to evangelize, we need to be obedient to that...but we can be doing work that is of value that isn't evangelism, as teachers.

Like Julie and CJ, many participants came to realize that they were a "small part of God's great story", which both humbled and emboldened them. They were humbled to see that God's story

was much bigger than just their own life and work, but as we will see below, this "great story" also helped them to become more confident about the value of their lay work.

"It was freeing to me, that like I could be doing God's work...I could be obeying God without sharing the Gospel every day in my English classroom". Another theme within participants' experience of spiritual confidence focuses on how the Biblical metanarrative affirmed the intrinsic spiritual value of their lay work. Recall that Julie was deeply conflicted about the spiritual value of lay work prior to attending her Fellows program. One of the primary ways that she, and many Christians, tried to resolve this conflict was by attempting to sanctify (e.g., give spiritual value) their lay work by leveraging it as a platform for evangelism (PFE). Julie explains that the emphasis on evangelism that she learned growing up in her Evangelical church and campus ministry caused her to be conflicted: "I think because if you thought that there was nothing of value outside of [saving souls] it would be really unmotivating to go into a high school and not be just proselytizing". However, most participants described how the PFE strategy, and the assumptions that undergird it, were repeatedly challenged and transformed by their time in Fellows. For example, CJ described how his Fellows internship helped him to see that "faith-based work" entails more than evangelizing at work:

> So I was doing these things and then like seeing them actually have an effect on the organization [he was interning in]. And I was like 'OK. Doing Christian work or faith-based work is not just, like talking to kids, and like only doing [Discipleship] groups, and talking to adults, and like sharing my faith constantly…like it's doing the work!

Many participants described how Fellows helped them learn to integrate their faith and work in a myriad of ways beyond simply "sharing my faith" with colleagues. For example, as Gerard reflected on his pre-Fellows perspectives, he described how many Christians do not understand that their work inherently matters to God and His mission:

> And I think for many Christians you know faith and work is, how do I evangelize at work, right? And I don't mean to be dismissive of that…but I think for a lot of people they don't realize that the work itself matters, the work itself matters to the mission of God in the world.

Julie also described how Fellows and the 'creation' chapter helped her to become more confident about how "evangelism "and "good work" are both equally important in God's Kingdom:

> I mean this is like the Fellows program…and this was new for me, [but] a lot of my early life was more like "Evangelism, share the gospel", which is true...like that's the 'Great Commission', but I think like in the last 11 years or 10 years, like the idea of the 'cultural mandate' has become a more important part of my life... the idea that, with evangelism, you can also have good work, and both are important in God's Kingdom.

Here, Julie connects her transformed perspective, and her increased certainty about the spiritual value of lay work, to a "new" and increasingly "more important" theological "idea" she was introduced to during her Fellows year: the "cultural mandate". While it may not be immediately obvious from the quote above, the "cultural mandate" is an idea that emerges from within the 'creation' chapter of the Biblical metanarrative. Unfortunately, while Julie and several other participants frequently referenced the importance of the cultural mandate for finding value in their lay work, no one laid out a clear and simple definition for all this theological idea entails. To solve this problem, I went to Cunningham's (2014) TFI curriculum and consulted the chapter on "Creation Continued: The Cultural Mandate" to gather a more succinct definition. He writes:

> "The creation is called by God seven times: 'good', indicating that it matters and should be engaged and stewarded. Likewise, the command for humans to establish a culture of God's rule and goodness on earth is mandated by God in Genesis 1:28. Somehow the church is to participate in the redemption of all things: including that which is usually deemed 'secular'" (pp. 103-104)

Aspects of this definition of the cultural mandate were also reflected in some of the responses from other participants. For example, when I asked Mikhael to describe the relationship between her faith and work, she articulated some of core ideas of the cultural mandate presented above:

> So, in terms of how my faith informs [my work]…this is like is a really helpful mentality for me when I'm thinking about the broader narrative of what the Lord is trying to do in creation. And the point of our work in a lot of ways is just to be an instrument and a tool that the Lord uses to cultivate his creation to bring about the kind of change and restoration and redemption that He's trying to do. We're very much a part of a broader narrative that is His story and not our story

As many participants learned more about the "cultural mandate" in the 'creation' account, they became more confident that their work had intrinsic spiritual value, which had major implications for how they attempted to engage with their work. For example, Julie identified that learning about the cultural mandate helped her to realize how her passion for the classroom could "fit hand-in-hand" with her commitment to obey the 'Great Commission' (i.e., to evangelize):

> And this idea of [the cultural mandate], to go and do good work in the world and use your gifts to...to redeem the world, [this] was a way for me to understand like my passion for the classroom in tension with the Great Commission...or, or actually *not* in tension, but *together* with the Great Commission. Like, that the cultural mandate and the Great Commission fit hand-in-hand and that it can be both-and…and that was freeing to me, that like I could be doing God's work...I could be obeying God without sharing the Gospel every day in my English classroom.

Similarly, learning to frame work through the 'creational' lens of the "cultural mandate", helped many participants to dismantle the belief that they needed to "sanctify" their lay work through the PFE strategy. These creational lenses also gave participants greater confidence they could be "obeying God" through work without constantly attempting to proselytize their colleagues.

"In God's economy, I believe that writing well matters, and that God values excellence, so I can take pride in that kind of work…I can do that to the glory of God". The 4-Chapter Gospel also helped participants become more confident about how their lay work presented them with an opportunity to serve, honor, and glorify God. For example, when I asked Mikhael about her overall orientation to work, she described how her lay work provided her with a structured way to "serve the Lord":

> I love work in terms of a profession because I can channel some of [my energy] and do something that I think has meaning and value...work helps to order my life, and helps order my relationships, my experiences. It provides a kind of structure and meaning to how I serve the Lord and things like that.

Some other participants also described how the 'creation' narrative helped them to see their lay work as an opportunity to glorify God. For example, CJ said:

> So, I think of work as an opportunity to fulfill [God's] call. I very much do have a call to work…[and] I think there's always a job to do, there's always a job to do to the glory of God.

Here, CJ introduces another important idea that all participants reflected in some form or fashion: that their lay work was not just an opportunity to serve and obey God, but was also something they could to "glorify" and "honor God" as well. For many participants, the idea of honoring God through their lay work was linked to working with "integrity" and "excellence". For example, when I asked Gerard to imagine an 'ideal future scene' pertaining to his work, he claimed:

> "I don't know what my grand work as a lawyer will be…but I try to do my work with excellence. I want to do my work with integrity, not covering things up…making sure I do the very best with my work. I think that is honoring to the Lord and it allows me and those around me to do the best with what we are working on.

Some participants expounded on this idea by framing "excellence" not simply as doing their best in their work, but also as "doing good" in the world. For example, Julie claimed that a deeper understanding of "God's economy" (i.e., the values presented in His story), helps her to see that she can glorify Him by "doing good" in the world through teaching English well:

> As teacher, believing that doing good in the world doesn't necessarily mean that someone becomes a Christian…doing good in the world can look like teaching someone to write a really good sentence knowing that God can use that in ways that I don't know. In God's economy, I believe that writing well matters, and that God values excellence and so I can take pride in that kind of work. And I can do that to the glory of God.

Julie's quote signals a major transformation from her previous perspectives about lay work. Pre-Fellows, Julie's definition of "good work" focused mainly on converting people to Christianity, but equipped with a deeper understanding of the 4-Chapter Gospel (i.e., "God's economy"), she has learned that "writing well matters" to God, and therefore she can "take pride" (i.e., be confident) that "teaching someone to write a really good sentence" is a way she can honor Him.

"How am I bringing beauty, truth, and goodness into the world through the work that I do?". The final theme within participants' experience of spiritual confidence focuses on how the Biblical metanarrative expands their understanding of how they could meaningfully connect their lay work to God's Kingdom. Pre-Fellows, Julie could not conceive of how her faith should inform her work outside of the PFE strategy. However, Julie described how Fellows helped her to develop a theology that gives meaning to her lay work by connecting it to "God's Kingdom":

> So when I say [my work] matters it's because I think that...like right now we do live in a fallen world. And so what I am trying to do is like...take the Holy Spirit in me to a small part of the world that may or may not be God's Kingdom...so like if you understand God's Kingdom as the places in the world where He has power and dominion...there are times that my work might be like right within God's Kingdom and there are times like, in the classroom…I am standing in the middle of all of that...using my gifts to meet the needs of the world in a way that would bring glory to God.

Several other participants also talked about how their current understanding of "God's Kingdom", helped them to better understand how their lay work could be deeply connected to God's mission. For example, Anastasia described how Fellows transformed her understanding of what it means to build God's Kingdom through her work:

> And so it's like building the Kingdom of God doesn't necessarily have to always come through some super religious kind of church thing. It can just be pursuing 'beauty', 'truth', and 'goodness' in the world. Those things are in accordance with some of the universal principles of 'community' and 'humanity' and 'flourishing' and 'thriving' that are emblematic of what I associate with the 'Kingdom of God', this human flourishing and this goodness. So [I think], 'how is my work bringing goodness to the world?' Or '[how am I bringing] beauty, truth, and goodness into the world through the work that I do?'

Several other participants also described how pursuing 'beauty', 'truth' and 'goodness' was an important way of establishing a more meaningful connection between their faith and lay work. For example, Julie described how the values of goodness, beauty, and truth informed her work as a teacher:

> Well, like I think…something that is woven into my life and probably has been increasingly so in the last decade, is this 'goodness', 'beauty', 'truth'…'goodness', 'beauty', 'truth'….Yeah, that was from [Fellows teacher's] seminary class we took the second half of our [Fellows year]…He would talk about…the idea that things that are good, beautiful, and true have lasting impact…and so I think, as someone during my Fellows year that was thinking about teaching English, the idea that you could teach literature that was good and beautiful and true…I really connected to those words as a way to evaluate the things that I fill [my work] with.

Here, Julies identifies that "goodness, beauty, and truth" have become the values that she uses to "evaluate" her work by. However, these values were not simply a way she assessed her work, they also impacted how she attempted to integrate her faith with her work as an English teacher. For example, one of the 'vocational artifacts' she gave to me was a sample of her high school English curriculum and she explained how "goodness, beauty, and truth" became a set of rubrics which influenced her curricular choices and pedagogical strategies for teaching literature:

> There's a lot of literature that I think is good, beautiful, and true…but like some of my favorites to teach were *King Lear*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*…*Huck Finn*...*Romeo and Juliet*, *The Odyssey*…um...*Lord Of The Flies*, [that] is a really good, beautiful, and true book. Um, yeah so not explicitly Christian books, but books that teach Christian themes, or teach the opposite [of those themes]. Like what happens when someone operates in a worldview totally other than [the Bible] and the consequences of that, like *The Great Gatsby*. Like that's what I talked about with Daisy and Tom [Gatsby], as they pursue their hedonistic lifestyle, you just see the emptiness and sadness and shallowness of their life. So, you can teach that in a public school and have these really great conversations without reading, you know…Hebrews…even though I think Hebrews is really wonderful.

Here, we can see how the rubrics of "goodness, beauty, and truth" have re-framed Julie's understanding of how her faith informs her work as a teacher. Pre-Fellows, she was confused and anxious about how her faith connected to her teaching outside of evangelism (i.e., PFE strategy)

or teaching the Bible (i.e., FTM assumption). However, this quote demonstrates how she has developed a much more nuanced and complex understanding of how her faith and work connect. Julie went from wondering "can teaching English still be good work in God's Kingdom?", to confidently teaching her students to critically engage with the great works literature, helping them to engage in "great conversations" about life's big questions and the consequences of different worldviews. In this way, Julie has become much more confident that, as a public high school English teacher, she is still doing work that is meaningful and spiritually valuable by having her students engage with "good, beautiful, and true" ideas.

Vocational creativity. In chapter 5, I described how some participants were dissatisfied with the limited and linear options they were offered for combining faith and work pre-Fellows. This dissatisfaction was causing some of them to experience the early stages of vocational apathy, by becoming increasingly resigned to look for meaning in life outside of their work. However, Fellows year was a turning point for these participants, and helped to transform their experiences of *vocational apathy* into *vocational creativity*. In particular, learning about the Biblical metanarrative facilitated this vocational transformation for participants by expanding their understanding of and imagination for their faith. Pre-Fellows, a big part of participants' experience of vocational apathy was rooted in their frustration with "dualistic" and "simplistic" versions of faith that were presented to them within their formative Christian contexts. For example, MacKenzie alluded to this when describing a 'low point' in her faith journey:

> And I think especially at that point I was living in Texas and I was like going to a Christian school and I think the kind of cultural Christianity felt very black and white and kind of…just like a list of 'do's and don'ts'.

As described earlier, MacKenzie's experiences in Fellows helped her to develop a "bigger picture of Christianity":

> This bigger picture of Christianity…of the Lord and His work in the world currently…that was the very beginning of this integration between like all these parts of my life and my faith and how they are all kind of coherent…and it wasn't just about the sort of personal relationship with Christ…and salvation like it was something bigger than that…Fellows is what really gave me a lot of the language and solidified a lot of that for me.

Most participants identified the 4-Chapter Gospel as the primary catalyst which helped them solidify a more expansive view of faith. For example, MacKenzie described how the 4-Part Gospel "massively expanded" both her faith and her "imagination for God":

> Yeah so it's hard for me to like remember when I was introduced to some of these things, but Fellows was a huge part of it. But yeah…the 4-part Gospel: 'creation', 'fall', 'redemption', 'consummation'. To step back and kind of see this vision…that like literally all of our actions, our relationships, our work…just kind of anything we do kind of matters and has implications on bringing God's Kingdom…that shift was huge because it just like massively expanded my imagination for God…and my faith.

Many participants described how the Biblical metanarrative helped to expand their imagination for their faith, and in this way, expanded their imagination for a wide range of ways that their faith could be more fully integrated with rest of their lives. For example, Acacia described how the 4-Chapter Gospel framework became a lens which gave her "creative freedom" to see how her faith connected with the rest of her life:

> I realized that within [the 4-chapter Gospel] framework that there's so much *creative* freedom. And I guess by that I mean…the [Fellows] program helped me think through the different types of work you can have [and] the ways you can think about work [and] the ways you can think about play [and] that ways you can think about creation and good design and relationships…like all these different little boxes, right? Sexuality, food…like all these different compartments. You can see all [these] through this lens of the 4-Chapter Gospel, right? And I think…the main change [for me] was in thinking in these different compartments [to] seeing nothing is separate from what we're called to think about and invited into.

Like Acacia, most participants described how the 4-Chapter Gospel framework has become their primary worldview lens, enabling them to more coherently connect their faith with every other part of their lives, including their work. I refer to this final post-Fellows experience as *vocational*

creativity, because it represents the transformation of vocational apathy by describing how the 4-Chapter Gospel enabled participants to develop: a) an expanded imagination for faith and work coherence, b) an increased motivation for faithfully engaging in their lay work, and c) a deeper commitment to partnering with God through their lay work. As before, MacKenzie continues to be the 'exemplar' for this experience.

"But I have quite an imagination...a broad imagination for that coherence". Many participants described how their expanded imagination for their faith helped them to more seamlessly and meaningfully connect their faith and work. Most participants were also explicit about how learning about vocation and the 4-Chapter Gospel increased their ability to creatively connect their faith and work. For example, when I asked Acacia about the impact that Fellows had on her, she said:

> I remember one of our [Fellows] professors, said "Listen, the purpose of all of this is for you to connect to your Sunday to your Monday"…and [Fellows] helped me think about….how can [I], in a *creative* way, in many different ways...start to be more seamless about the things I say, and the things I'm choosing to pursue, which can be so varied…and I think [Fellows] was really healing too, to say "hey, listen, like your vocation, like God can be in the spreadsheets". And it can make sense of so many different facets of our lives…one of my favorite things that [her Fellows professor] taught was this lens to kind of see the world…he was teaching us the 4-Chapter Gospel.

Like Acacia, many participants described how the Biblical metanarrative helped them to connect their Sunday and Monday in many "different", more "creative" and "seamless" ways. The desire to more deeply connect their Sunday and Monday was what led many participants to attend their Fellows program, and their desire to experience faith and work coherency continues to be one of their top desires/priorities in life. In fact, several participants described how critically important it was for them to understand how their faith fit in with mission of the organizations they work in. For example, this priority came up when I asked MacKenzie about her orientation towards work. She said:

> I think one sort of thing worth noting in terms of [my] orientation is I definitely have to be motivated by the ideas of what I'm doing and…what I do is less important and what's more important is that I find some coherence with [the] overarching purpose or ideas of the organization….I'm motivated by ideas, so for me I guess the coherence is probably going to end up being my kind of view of the world, or ultimately my faith, and how the purposes or the vision or mission of the organization I'm working for fits in…

While the desire to experience faith and work coherency continues for all participants post-Fellows, their expanded understanding of their faith enables them to now imagine a wider range of opportunities for this coherence. Recall that, pre-Fellows, some participants were experiencing degrees of vocational apathy stemming from their frustration with only having access to limited and "incredibly linear" options for connecting their faith and work. However, post-Fellows, many of them have developed a "broad imagination" for how their faith and work could cohere. MacKenzie continued:

> ...but I have quite an imagination…a broad imagination for that coherence. So like I think I could totally see myself working at Nike at some point. And I think that's because, you know …Nike is such a powerhouse in the retail industry and if they are working [to] have more ethical supply chains in a way that will have implications on human rights, and I ultimately believe that's part of what business should be doing…[that]and thinking about sustainability…then that's enough to motivate me to go work there…even if I'm doing, like you know, analysis for them. So, I think that is kind of how I'm motivated.

Like MacKenzie, many participants described how the expansion of their imaginations for faith and work coherency helped them envision a wider range of viable career options. MacKenzie also described how "knowing God" and "the work He is doing", helps her to understand how her faith and work are/could be deeply "connected" as she works within non-ministry contexts:

> I'm really interested in helping other people think about [the common good] and like what it looks like in lots of different sectors and to me, what would be so fun about a foundation or a VC…and an arts organization…helping them think about what it means to exist in their community and promote the common good….and what it would look like for an arts organizations to partner with a corporation, and you know some of those things. So I think...all that ultimately for me is like a question of what does it mean to bring [God's] Kingdom to earth? And ultimately [it] is like knowing God and His character and...the work He's doing, and being sort of sensitive and clued in to that. And so all those things feel kind of connected to me.

"My faith presents me with the most compelling beautiful vision of what I want to work towards". The next theme within participants' experience of vocational creativity focuses on how the 4-Chapter Gospel helped to increase their motivation for engagement with both their faith and their lay work. For example, MacKenzie talked about how learning the 4-Chapter Gospel in Fellows was a "huge paradigm shift" because it helped her to re-engage with faith:

> So I think just yeah I got to sort of have to have that [4-Chapter Gospel] paradigm expand to where it like not only…all of a sudden it encapsulates everything but actually there's even more than that, there's all this mystery around it...[this paradigm] totally re-engaged me in a way that has defined a lot of my life.

Like MacKenzie, many participants talked about how the 4-Chapter Gospel framework helped them to re-engage their faith. For example, Acacia described how learning about the 'creation' narrative expanded her understanding of what it looked like to be a faithful Christian:

> So…this idea of being co-creators…that's so fun! And I think that got me like super jazzed in a way that I hadn't thought of...I think before [Fellows] it was 'do these things', 'check these boxes', 'this is what it means to be a good person of faith'…

In addition to re-engaging their faith, many participants also talked about how the 4-Chapter Gospel helped them to find more satisfaction in their lay work. Earlier, Acacia claimed "I am going to read Genesis [i.e., 'creation' narrative] over and over and over…that's an invitation. That's how we get to be co-creators". Like Acacia, many participants described how the beginning of the Biblical metanarrative helped them to see their work as an invitation from God. For many of them, God's invitation to be co-creators caused them to be more motivated to work. For example, Will described how God's invitation to work motivates him to work hard:

> I'm motivated to work hard because God is inviting me into this work and He takes joy in [my work]. I'm giving *Him* glory, I should be...He's watching me all the time, you know (chuckles). He's with me in this...it's the whole like 'putting in a good hard day's work' thing. I'm communing with God in this work. And He's inviting me into [work]…just because a client's not calling doesn't mean you can just beg off for the day. You know what...go find something to do, you know…get after it! (chuckles)

My participants were often deeply motivated, not just by God's invitation to work, but also by the potential for their work to be part of God's unfolding story of redemption. For example, when I asked Mikhael about a 'turning point' in her vocational journey, she said:

> When I came to [her current job] it was kind of this turning point where I was like 'oh my gosh like I am actually seeing transformation!'…a kind of "redemption" [does air quotes] happening as a result of the work that I get to be a part of…and that was very...it was something that I had read in Christian theology books, and in Tim Keller books, right? But this was one of the first times I experienced that, and it kind of informed the way I did my work because I actually could feel the impact of it…it definitely made me more motivated and excited, and also more patient, and more focused on what was important, and not on was unimportant, in my work...

Many other participants also described how they were deeply motivated by seeing how their work was connected to God's story. Some of them also talked about how having a more comprehensive view of their faith led them to be more excited about the redemptive potential for their work. For example, I asked MacKenzie to imagine an 'alternative life' without faith and she described how she would likely struggle to find motivation to work:

> I don't know how people do it. Honestly. I think that all the time…and I have talked to people quite a bit about this this year…but it is so hard to imagine facing things that are hard with no kind of ultimate hope of resurrection, and of Christ. And I think like I also just think I'd be like highly unmotivated…this is kind of getting into work stuff too, but...I'm so motivated by this broader sense of bringing God's Kingdom and like helping people...because I think ultimately my vision for like the world and what it could be, and how beautiful it could be…like my faith presents me with the most compelling beautiful vision of what I want to work towards. And if I didn't have that…I just don't...[pause]…I'm not sure what would be that compelling…

Like MacKenzie, many participants described how their expanded faith, and the 'redemption' and 'consummation' narratives in particular, helped them to find meaning in and motivation for their lay work. In this way, the 4-Chapter Gospel framework gave them a deeply moving vision for "how beautiful the world could be", which also became "the most compelling beautiful vision" of what they are working towards, which is "bringing the Kingdom of God".

"I can begin to imagine - 'what does it look like for God's Kingdom to press into what I'm working on?'". The final theme within the experience of vocational creativity focuses on how the 4-Chapter Gospel gave participants a deeper commitment to creatively explore how God's Kingdom gives meaning to their lay work. Recall that a major theme within participants' experience of vocational apathy was a resignation to look for meaning in life primarily outside of their lay work. Recall also, that this apathetic resignation was rooted in a frustration with the "incredibly linear narratives" offered to them for combining faith and work. However, learning about the 4-Chapter Gospel helped participants to understand that their lay work offered a wide variety of ways to meaningfully and creatively partner with God in building His Kingdom. For example, MacKenzie described how the broadness of 'redemption' in the Biblical metanarrative offers her a constantly expanding "vision" and range of opportunities to "discover" and "explore" what God's Kingdom "could be", and what it could "look like". She explains:

> Another thing that I love is that if you were to ask me right now 'what is [your] vision?', like 'what does [building the Kingdom of God] look like?'. That's what I learn about every day! That's what I feel like, in my quiet times…this what art does for me, and good stories…I'm constantly gaining a vision of what the Kingdom is and what it could look like embodied of earth right now. And I [know] very basic things like there will be no poverty and that the earth will be taken care of...And you know, there won't be grieving and things like that...but also more than that…I get really excited about technology and science for these reasons, I just think they're kind of like mirrors of God's brilliance and He lets us discover and explore [the world] in a way that's just so cool...

The creative theological perspective that MacKenzie describes above is in direct opposition to the limited narratives that caused her so much frustration before Fellows. Many participants drew inspiration from the 'redemption' and 'consummation' narratives, because they enabled them to creatively imagine how the Kingdom of God "could be" manifested in / through their lay work. For example, Gerard described how the 4-Chapter Gospel helps him to explore and "imagine" what 'consummation' and the Kingdom of God could look like within his work as a lawyer:

> And...you know it can be hard to imagine 'heaven'. What is that? But I can imagine, I can imagine what justice looks like on this Earth. We can all think of broken systems and broken situations and you can imagine - 'what would it look like for there to be justice in that situation?' 'What would it look like for that to work the way it's supposed to work?' 'What would it look like for there to be equity in that regard?' And as a lawyer, I can't provide all of those things, but I can begin to imagine - 'what does it look like for God's Kingdom to press into this corner and that corner where I am and what I'm doing here and what I'm working on?'

This quote clearly highlights how the 4-Chapter Gospel creatively informs Gerard's work as lawyer. The deep questions he asks are also clearly framed by a Biblical metanarrative lens: from the way justice is "*supposed* to work" (creation) to engaging with "*broken* systems and situations" (fall) to what would it look like for there "to be *justice* in this situation" (consummation) to what does it look like for "God's *Kingdom* to press into what I am working on" (redemption). Like Gerard, many participants described how the 4-Chapter Gospel gave them a framework which has enabled them to creatively explore and understand how their work is connected to the Bible, God's mission, their faith, and their hope for the future of the world.

Julie also explained how knowing God's story helped her to remain committed to her work as a teacher in spite of some of the "frustrating parts of school" and "injustices" within the public education system. When I inquired about the impact Fellows had on her work, she replied:

> I think I was able to hold the tensions of teaching in an imperfect system in a sinful world, together with the beauties of being a teacher…[because] there are days when the copier breaks, there are days when kids are late to school, or the fire alarm gets pulled with 10 minutes left in your lesson…or like kids show up hungry, or like English language learners that can't access standardized tests…Yeah, [these] things are like injustices and the results of a 'fall', of sin. And then there's like these beauties, like these breakthrough Kingdom moments that I could see and I could imagine better the way that God was allowing me to be his instrument…[thinking] like 'today this student slept through my whole class!' (chuckles)...that didn't feel great, but I know that because I have hope toward a happy ending in [God's] grand story, I can deal with the frustrating parts of school…and even for this student, like they had a bad day, but I'm going to show up tomorrow, and he's going to show up tomorrow and maybe we'll do better'. And that's 'redemption'.

Like Julie, many participants described how the 4-Chapter Gospel enabled them to identify "breakthrough Kingdom moments" within the challenging parts of their work. In this way, Julie claims that her post-Fellows faith enabled her to "imagine better the way that God was allowing me to be His instrument" in her classroom. Similarly, several other participants described how their current faith perspective expanded their imagination for how their work was connected to God's Kingdom, which helped them remain committed to their work despite challenges.

However, some participants also admitted to occasionally struggling to find inspiration in their work. Earlier, Gerard claimed: "Some days there seems to be a lot of overlap between my work and the story God is telling and some days it's just like 'well this particular assignment isn't that inspiring at all'". Despite experiencing occasional struggles to connect their work to God's story, participants were often unfazed and unsurprised by this challenge. For example, Will claimed that he is not surprised when he feels challenged to understand how God's Kingdom is connected to some of the more mundane parts of his life and work:

> If you don't see the influence of your work, if you can't connect this thing to the Kingdom, don't be surprised, you know? A lot of times you're cleanin' poopy diapers and washin' dishes and you're not doing hospitality. You're like trying to keep humans alive in your house who are telling you that "you're the worst dad ever!" (laughter)…you know? I think you're far from what *feels* like changing the world, you know? You're like…changing diapers! (laughter).

While participants were not surprised by an ongoing struggle to see/feel how their work is connected to God's Kingdom, they also talked about how they feel better prepared to "push back against" the apathetic temptation to compartmentalize their worship and work. For example, MacKenzie talked about how Fellows helped her learn to "embrace the mundane" parts of life and work:

> [I learned] we're called to like embrace the mundane parts of life and like to be disciplined and to do whatever work we're doing with excellence…and those first years at [first job post-Fellows], like I was doing work that I felt overqualified for and I felt not

> that excited about. But again, there was some sort of coherence for me with the [first workplace's] ideas…[I thought] I believe in this work and I really love learning from my boss…so I'm going to like do Excel spreadsheets for him as much as I can…

Fellows, and the 4-Chapter Gospel, also helped participants to become energized by the opportunity to creatively explore the "unexplored territory" in their work. For example, when I asked MacKenzie about the impact that Fellows had on her, she said:

> [I learned] just that faith is way more undefined and dynamic and like our expression of God's love is...not like a formula, basically…the [idea] that was really compelling for me during Fellows was this idea of us beginning in a garden and ending in a city, and like the work of humans is to sort of like cultivate and kind of tend the garden, but also to like build and grow and create and co-create. And that kind of perspective...means that undoubtedly there's going to be unexplored territory and there's going to be kind of like unknowns and paths that are like messy and confusing…it's like unexplored territory and you need the Lord to give you wisdom [in it].

While many participants came into Fellows frustrated and demotivated by seeing their faith as a prescriptive "formula", like MacKenzie, they learned to see their faith as a more of dynamic "creative framework" and not just "a bunch of boxes to check". In this way, the 4-Chapter Gospel was critical in transforming participants' early experiences of vocational apathy by providing them with a theological framework which enabled them to imagine a wider range of creative options for connecting their faith and work in meaningful ways.

Participants' evaluation of post-Fellows perspectives and experiences. While participants' evaluations of their pre-Fellows experiences of integrating their faith and work were predominantly negative, their evaluations of their post-Fellows experiences were overwhelmingly positive. This can be observed in participants' narratives above, specifically in their descriptions of how the 4-Chapter Gospel has enabled them to experience greater clarity, confidence, and creativity in their lay work. Below, I briefly identify how participants' evaluations of their pre-Fellows experiences contrasts with their current evaluations of the relationship between their faith and work. Their positive evaluations centered around three core

themes: that their post-Fellows approach to integrating faith and work was a) more effective, b) coherent with vocational theology and God's story, and c) deeply satisfying, primarily because it helped to eliminate their experience of faith-work compartmentalization. I have chosen Thomas and Gerard as the 'conceptual exemplars' for the section, because their theological acumen offer a very helpful lens for analyzing the impact that participants' post-Fellows approach had on their experiences.

More effective. Many participants described their current approach to faith and work as being more effective for reaching their goals when compared to their previous strategies. This current evaluation represents a transformation of participants' stark critiques about their pre-Fellows strategies (as presented in chapter 5). For example, Thomas claimed that the PFE strategy was ineffective for converting colleagues, because compelling Christians to constantly proselytize turns evangelism in a "duty", which often has the opposite effect by turning their co-workers away from Christ. He explained that the PFE strategy caused many Christians to "ignore their work", causing it to suffer and further harm their witness. Thomas also argued that if he were to maximize the pre-Fellows approach, it would cause him to "go out of business" by scaring away all his clients and giving away all his money to ministry. For this reason, he claimed "there must be a path where I can maximize Kingdom impact without going out of business". Based on his evaluation below, Thomas believes he has found that path.

"Because I'm an ambassador of God's Kingdom, there is there is redemptive quality to the very work of my hands, to this spreadsheet I'm in". When comparing the differences between his current and former approaches to integrating faith and work, Thomas claimed "What differentiates them is... [a] mindfulness of the redemptive qualities of work itself". He elaborates on the differences between his current and former perspectives:

> Well...I believe that there is another level of understanding [about faith and work] which is that because I'm an ambassador of [God's] Kingdom, there is redemptive quality to the very work of my hands, to this spreadsheet I'm in…not just because I use [work] as a moment and a captive audience to have a conversation about my faith...that may happen. I'm not saying that you stop doing that, or that you stop putting wealth into the nonprofit world, but the but the fallacy is that you're not transferring anything from outside the Kingdom into the Kingdom...the Kingdom is right here (points into his chest)

Thomas claimed that his current understanding about faith and work is the result of him learning to "redefine Kingdom impact" during his Fellows year. He also claimed that this new perspective transformed his motivations for work from "doing a ton *for* the church" to "doing everything *for* and *from* the Kingdom". Thomas also described the positive practical impacts of his new Kingdom-centric perspective.

> I think that you radically get out of the way…and be an excellent worker. You get to focus on your work, and everybody begins to see that you are on a different OS [operating system]...[thinking] 'this guy has hope and his work is excellent!' (chuckles)

Thomas' post-Fellows view, which sees redemptive value in lay work, led to a significant transformation, causing him focus more on his work instead of feeling an overwhelming duty to "constantly evangelize" his colleagues. In this way, Thomas believes that this current vocational perspective has enabled him to be more effective in his work, and as a result, to also be more effective in his Christian witness at work.

Aligned with vocational theology & God's story. As described within the narratives above, many participants believe their current faith and work approach is coherently aligned with their vocational theology and with God's story in the Bible. This evaluation signals quite a shift in participants' assessment of their pre-Fellows approach, which some critiqued as being misaligned with orthodox Christian and Biblical theology. Some referred to their former approach as being a theological "ditch" primarily because it was rooted in Gnostic dualistic assumptions which caused them to feel "shame" about their non-ministry work. Their pre-

Fellows approach framed their lay work as being "secular" (at best) and "dirty" (at worst). For this reason, many of them believed their work needed to be "redeemed", "sanctified", or "cleaned up" to make it more coherent with "God's work". While several participants described how their old approach caused them to see a "hierarchy of ways I engage with and serve God", their current vocational approach represents a significant transformation by framing their faith and work and life in a more holistic and integrative manner.

"My vocation includes all of that. It's not that some things are holier than other things". When comparing the differences between participants' pre- and post-Fellows perspectives on faith and work, it is clear my participants currently see their life in a more integrative way. Many of them attribute this to the vocational theology they learned during their Fellows year. For example, Gerard describes how "vocation" gives him a "language" to "make sense" of how God's "call" includes every part of his life:

> And I think you know vocation is another word for calling…[and] there are a lot of things we [are called to] cultivate. Sometimes we cultivate things through our job, sometimes we cultivate things through relationships or service or community involvement or hobbies and things like that. And I think it's just having a language to make sense of all of it, right? My vocation includes all of that. It's not that some things are holier than other things.

Pre-Fellows, some participants were discouraged by the dualistic assumptions that caused them believe that "some things were more important to God than others". However, Gerard notes that his current approach rejects the idea that "some things are holier than other things", which enables him to see every part of his life as being equally important to God.

Several participants also claimed that their current faith and work relationship is more closely aligned with "God's work", primarily because it is aligned with God's story in the Bible. For example, Gerard described how the narrative of the Bible enabled him to see how his work is a way he can "participate" in the "work that [God] is doing":

> I think knowing the heart of God and his will for my life [is] less about 'morality management'…and I don't mean to disparage that in any way…. but…following Fellows year, I had a narrative, right? I was able to situate myself in a narrative [that told me] 'this is what I'm saved for'. It's not just so that I can make...you know all the right choices today, it's believing that God has redeemed me to participate in the work that He's doing. Redemption serves an end. And this end is the fourth chapter of the Gospel, the 'consummation', the coming of the Kingdom…[I] have learned to be ready, to enter into that, and to participate.

Here, Gerard demonstrates how his post-Fellows perspective is deeply aligned and intertwined with the Biblical narrative. While Gerard's previous faith perspective emphasized "what I am saved *from*", and focused on a "morality management" (i.e., the individualized ethical approach), his current faith perspective emphasizes "what I am saved *for*" by enabling him to identify his role and purpose within God's story. He continues:

> I understand my faith as part of this larger metanarrative that the Lord is telling and I'm caught up in that story and the Kingdom of Heaven is pressing in...and that's where we're headed...and, you know, the Lord's design is to make all things new and to bring the Kingdom of Heaven into its fullness...and I understand my faith in that context.

Like Gerard, many participants' current faith perspectives enabled them to see how they too are "caught up in [God's] story". This new view enabled many of them to more clearly see how they can participate in God's mission "to make all things new" and "bring the Kingdom of Heaven into its fullness" through their lay work. For example, Julie also claimed that she sees her work as a teacher as being deeply aligned to God's redemptive work in the world.

> …because I believe that God is redeeming the world, [I can] enter into people's lives and do the work of redemption. Whether it's redeeming someone's belief of themselves as a writer, or a reader, or a person, or like redeeming someone's fallen view of literature...like if I could make someone love stories in a different way, like that would be a huge win.

The quote above also represents a major transformation in Julie's understanding of the connection between her work and God's work. Pre-Fellows, she could not imagine how her work as a public High school English teacher could be aligned with the Bible outside of explicitly "sharing the whole Gospel" with her students, but her current vocational perspective enables her

to see how the basic job duties of an English teacher are inherently and deeply aligned with God's story of redemption.

Deeply satisfying. Many participants also described how their current vocational perspectives have enabled them to experience a much more satisfying faith and work relationship. Pre-Fellows, many participants described how their lives felt deeply compartmentalized: they did not understand how their "interests" or professional "skills" fit in with their faith, often causing them to see their professional skills as being "not important" because they were not "required" for evangelism or "relational ministry". Others described how their Pre-Fellows perspectives caused them to see the entire world as a series of "disconnected boxes", which included individual boxes for their faith, work, play, family, etc. While these former perspectives left participants feeling "dissatisfied" and "disjointed", they also claimed that their current vocational approach causesq them to feel deeply satisfied by experiencing more integrative and coherent relationships between their faith, work, and life.

"All week is charged by the story that God is telling…because the work I'm called to is good". As participants were evaluating their post-Fellows perspectives on faith and work, several of them talked about how their new vocational perspectives have enabled them to connect parts of their lives that were previously disconnected. For example, as Thomas evaluated the difference between his pre- and post-Fellows perspectives, he claimed that his current view helps him to understand how his professional gifts and calling are deeply connected with his faith and with God's story:

> Yeah, I would say [the difference] would be a true understanding of what the Kingdom is. It's stuff like 'Hey you realize we're not floating on clouds in Heaven, right? You realize we've got jobs, right? (chuckles) And you realize that your gifts and your calling…those are going to be at their maximum...in the New Heavens and New Earth. You're really going to be finding out what they are then.

The final four (long) quotes in this chapter all illustrate a major transformation in the ways participants have come to evaluate their post-Fellows vocational experiences and perspectives. Each of these quotes was given by participants in response to my prompt to share a 'turning point' scene within their faith or vocational journeys. Therefore, each of these responses also describes a positive transformation in their approach to connecting faith and work. Many participants described how they have come to see that their former ways of thinking about faith and work were insufficient and/or flawed. For example, one of Gerard's major 'turning points' was talking with one of his Fellows mentors about the concept of "work-life balance":

> [His Fellows mentor] is one of the wisest women, I know. And she would just kind of start reflecting out loud, you know…and [she] said, "you know this whole idea of 'work-life balance', what's up with that?". As I was like "well, what *is* up with that?"…that seems like a normal sensible concept. And she said, "You know, I've been thinking about that"...she said, "work-life balance. It just seems conceptually wrong". I was like "why do you think it seems conceptually wrong?". And she said. "because it assumes a dichotomy between work and life. That there's work and that there's life. And the key is to have them in balance...to have the right amount of each one"…She said, "I think the better word is coherence…do the different parts of your life cohere? Do they make sense of each other? Are they part of an integrated story? Does your work make sense of your relationships and your relationships make sense of your work? Does your work make sense of your hobbies and your leisure and does your leisure and hobbies make sense of your work? And do your relationships make sense of your community involvement and vice versa? Coherence". And she said, "In different seasons, there may be more one thing and less of another. But 'balance' isn't the right word it's, 'coherence'".

Gerard continued to reflect on how this conversation, and the concept of "coherence", had a "profoundly helpful" impact on the how he viewed the relationship between his faith and work while in law school:

> And I thought [the concept of coherence] was profoundly helpful, particularly when I got to law school and I realized 'there is a lot of work right now and there's not much else'. And you know there were times where, you know maybe in retrospect...the more flourishing choice would have been to you know carve out more Sabbath time or invest in a relationship or a service opportunity in ways that I didn't. But I'm so grateful I had a lens for making sense of this thing called 'law school', that I suddenly found myself in...coherence. Coherence. 'Right now, this is what God has put in front of me to steward faithfully'. That was…very helpful.

Here, Gerard describes how the idea of "coherence" helped him to be satisfied amidst a very challenging and all-consuming season of law school. Like Gerard, several participants described how the theological concepts they learned in Fellows enhanced the coherency between their faith and work. For example, Will described how Fellows helped him embrace the "idea" that the Gospel should and could be "penetrating every part" of his life:

> Certainly the...the idea of the Gospel penetrating every part of my life that...when I think about 'work' in the study of vocation [it shows] that God is about what happens on Monday too. And…I absolutely came out of college before the Fellows program with a sense that to do the 'Lord's Work' was to go into the mission field and or some kind of ministry…so I hadn't really formed a sense [of vocation]...I would've said work is important outside of those specific things - roads need to be built, and water needs to be treated, and buildings need to be secure, and firefighters need to take care of issues, you know? So I would have been able to name that...but I wouldn't have had a language for it. That was a big part of [Fellows] for me.

Again, many participants described how, pre-Fellows, they assumed that doing the "Lord's work" meant going into full-time ministry, and they could explain why this work was important. Some of them, like Will, could also "name" that certain types of lay work were important (e.g., firefighting, water treatment), but they did not have the theological "language" to explain why this was the case. For many participants, the concept of "vocation" has continued to be transformative, because it enables them to understand how and why their lay work has meaning, purpose, and value to God. Like Will, the vocational perspective these participants developed in Fellows continues to help them be more satisfied with their lay work, primarily by helping them to understand that God is about "what happens on Monday too". Gerard echoed this idea as he reflected on another 'turning point' conversation in Fellows:

> You know the other work idea that we talked about in my Fellows year…one of our instructors said "as Christians we often think that our purpose is to worship God", and he said, "It's not that this is wrong, it's that it's just one color of the rainbow". The word in the Old Testament which is often translated 'worship' is the word 'avodah'. And that's actually a word that can be translated in different ways, it can be translated as 'work' and 'worship' and 'ministry' and 'service' and 'craftsmanship'. And [he said] "these are all

> colors of the word 'avodah'. Our purpose is avodah". And…as I reflect on Fellows, this has been a very helpful frame as well. You know, I think about how I worship the Lord on Sunday and I work on Monday, but those are two different ways of really participating in the same activity. And you know I think often Christians see Sunday as charged, right? But actually, all week is charged, all week is charged by the story that God is telling...[because] the work I'm called to is good.

I saved this quote until now because it offers an incredibly helpful summation of and conclusion to the presentation of my findings. Here, Gerard brings together many of the ideas presented within this chapter, and across all of the previous chapters, as he describes how "the story God is telling" and the vocational concept of "avodah" that he learned in Fellows has become a "helpful frame" for thinking about his faith and work in a more compelling and coherent way. Previously, he, and many other participants, saw "worship on Sunday" and "work on Monday" as occupying compartmentalized and competing spheres of life, but their current vocational perspectives enable them to see worship and work not as competing priorities, but as "two different ways of participating in the same activity". In this way, Gerard's quote above is an insightful representation and summary of all of the narratives of vocational transformation presented in chapters 5-7. Throughout these narratives, participants have described how Fellows helped them to reveal, re-frame, and reimagine their perspectives, relationships, and experiences around integrating faith and work. Like Gerard, many participants' developed a deeper understanding of the Biblical metanarrative, which helped them to see that "the work I'm called to is good", and to embrace the vocational conviction that "all week is charged by the story God is telling".

Discussion of Post-Fellows Narratives

The purpose of this final discussion section is to provide a deeper interpretation about the findings and narratives presented above. My goals here are threefold: 1) to show how participants' current perspectives about faith and work have had a major impact on the positive experiences and evaluations described above; 2) to link these narratives to a wider body of

literature which frames participants' current faith and work relationship as having the characteristics of a 'vocational calling'; and 3) to demonstrate how participants have continued to engage in a vocationally-oriented transformative learning process after their Fellows year.

Once again, Parks' (2000) theory of imagination offers a helpful framework to analyze participants' narratives (and to accomplish the goals listed above). Within Parks' (2000) theory, two interconnected events compose the next moment within the transformative process of imagination: *re-patterning* and *release*. The first event focuses on a "*re-patterning* of reality" that is "required in light of the new image or insight" (p. 120). The other event describes how the transformative image or insight also provides "new energy" that is "*released* for this [re-patterning] task by the relaxation of the earlier conflict" (p. 120). The events of re-patterning and release are interconnected because the unconscious *release* from the old conflict gives a person new mental bandwidth and emotional energy which is then channeled for the conscious *repatterning* activity described above (Loder, 1989; Parks, 2000). Below, I use both of these events as theoretical lens to offer a more nuanced interpretation participants' post-Fellows experiences of vocational transformation.

In my discussion of participants' pre-Fellows narratives (chapter 5), I demonstrated how they had entered into Fellows hoping to resolve their experiences of the "Sunday-Monday Gap" (Nash & McLennan, 2001), a deep inner-conflict which caused them to experience their faith and work as occupying discrete and competing compartments of their lives. I argued that this perspective was embedded within the 'hierarchical schema', which framed participants' faith and work within a compartmentalized and hierarchical relationship. In my discussion of their Fellows experiences (chapter 6), I demonstrated how the '4-Chapter Gospel' had become a transformative image which enabled my participants to critique and revise some of the dualistic

assumptions which composed the hierarchical schema. I also showed how the 4-Chapter Gospel became a faith-based lens which reframed participants' faith and work in a more integrated and coherent manner. Below, I continue to discuss how the "revelatory symbol" (Parks, 2000) of the 4-Chapter Gospel continues to help participants to theologically reimagine how their work is / could be more deeply connected to God's Kingdom, effectively transforming their negative pre-Fellows faith and work integration experiences into significantly more positive ones (e.g., professional clarity, spiritual confidence, vocational creativity).

Parks' (2000) *re-patterning* event refers to a transformative "rippling effect that recomposes the former pattern into a new way of seeing the whole" (p. 120). This re-patterning process perfectly describes how the 4-Chapter Gospel helped participants to critically transform their former (uncritically inherited) dualistic assumptions into their current theological beliefs and convictions. I refer to participants' current set of Biblically-based beliefs and convictions as the 'vocational schema', and assign it a central place within their positive post-Fellows faith and work integration experiences. The vocational schema represents the outcome of an iterative *re-patterning* process, wherein participants' former dualistic assumptions were revisited and revised in ways that are more consistent with a Biblical theology of the world, faith, and work. However, as the post-Fellows narratives show, participants' vocational transformation was not limited to an abstract theological reframing of their faith and work, but also had concrete, practical, and personal implications for how they experienced and engaged with their faith and work.

Vocational schema: Reimagining faith, work, and the Kingdom of God. In previous chapters, I identified some of the primary patterns of thought which led to the hierarchical schema and created a conceptual framework for participants' experiences of the Sunday-Monday Gap. Below, I discuss how participants came out of Fellows with a set of transformed beliefs and

convictions based around new theological frameworks (e.g., 4-Chapter Gospel) which helped participants begin to reimagine their faith, their work, God's Kingdom, and the relationships between them.

I have intentionally labeled participants' current faith and work schema as 'vocational', because every participant described their work as either being a "calling" from God and/or a core component of their overall "vocation". Participants commonly drew upon the theological term 'vocation' to describe how their faith was deeply interconnected with every other part of their lives, including their work. This approach is consistent with a wide range of Christian literature which defines "vocation" as an integrative theological concept addressing "all that I am called to as a human being, living my life before the face God" (Garber, 2014, p. 2). In this way, the term 'vocation' is also an apt description of how my participants developed a more "seamless" faith and work relationship in/after their Fellows year. This usage of 'vocation' is also consistent with the broader literature on work as calling, which defines it as being "an approach to work that reflects the belief that one's career is a central part of a broader sense of purpose and meaning in life, and is used to help others or advance the greater good" (Dik & Duffy, 2013, p. 430).

For these reasons, I have chosen to use the term 'vocational schema' as a way to describe how participants' current views on faith and work are rooted in an integrative theological framework which claims that *every* part of life (including their lay work) is equally important and connected to God's mission (Cunningham, 2015; Garber, 2014; Hardy, 1990; Schuurman, 2004; Sherman, 2012). In this way, the vocational schema continues to have a deep impact on participants' current relationship and experiences with faith and work. Below, I outline two core components which make up participants' current vocational schema: Biblical theological convictions and an expanded Kingdom imagination.

Biblical theological convictions. Since I gave a detailed description of the Biblical metanarrative in chapter 6**,** I will focus this discussion on how the 4-Chapter Gospel enabled participants to revisit and revise (i.e., *re-pattern*) their understanding of their place in God's story, their role in God's Kingdom, and their work in God's mission.

Revising their place in God's story. Most of my participants described how learning the 4-Chapter Gospel caused them to revise their understanding of their place in God's story. First and foremost, the Biblical metanarrative challenged some of their former dualistic notions about "Heaven". Specifically, several participants described how they used to believe that Heaven was a kind of immaterial plane of existence, "some cloud world" they went off to after they died. However, the 4-Chapter Gospel caused them to critique their dualistic beliefs about the afterlife and begin to see that the Bible never describes Heaven as a place where disembodied souls "fly off in the clouds and play a harp". Instead, participants began to understand how the end of the Biblical story (i.e., consummation) was coherently connected to the beginning (i.e., creation) and offered a prophetic future vision of the material world (i.e., God's creation) completely restored and renewed. This non-dualistic narrative caused many participants to also revise their understanding of the enduring nature of work as well, helping them to "realize we're not floating on clouds…we've got jobs…in the New Heavens and New Earth". Finally, the 4-Chapter Gospel also caused participants to revise their understanding of "Heaven" and "Earth" as being two completely different and disconnected realms. After Fellows, they talked about how the end of the Bible culminated with the image of a physical world where Heaven and earth completely overlapped in perfect harmony. Some referred to this completely restored and overlapping world as the "New Heavens and New Earth" and described it as the place they would "live" and "work" after "Jesus returns" and God's work of "restoration comes to consummation".

Second, several participants talked about how the 4-Chapter Gospel also helped them to revise their understanding of their place in God's story by reframing their lives within a "unique" part of the story they called the "already, not yet". Here, participants were referring to the part of Biblical metanarrative (e.g., "falling action") between 'redemption' and "consummation', where "God's work of redemption has *already* begun" but is "*not yet* complete". This idea, combined with a revised understanding of Heaven and earth, caused many participants to believe that the "Kingdom of Heaven is [already] pressing in" and that God's story of redemption had *already* begun, but was *not yet* fully complete on earth. This revised understanding of their place in God's story was very different than the dualistic "2-Chapter Gospel" they were presented with pre-Fellows, which depicted Christians as "twiddling their thumbs as best they can" while "waiting to die" so they can "go up to Heaven". As described earlier, seeing their place in God's unfolding story helped participants to believe they (and their work) had an "important role" to play in God's plan of "bringing together Heaven and earth".

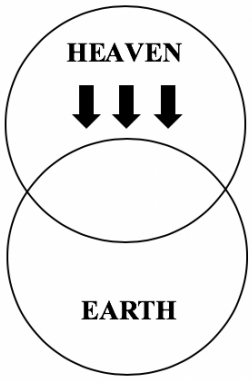

Figure 14.
Already, not yet: "The Kingdom of God is pressing in"

The figure above illustrates some of the core ideas within participants' revised perspectives on God's story. When compared to their former Christian dualistic perspectives, several differences are apparent: 1) there is a current and growing overlap between the upper and

lower spheres of Heaven and earth (instead of a widening gap); 2) As the direction of the arrows indicates, the primary momentum for this merger is top-down, focusing primarily on God's activity to bring Heaven down to Earth (not on human attempts to connect their work up to God); 3) As also indicated by the arrows, the relationship between Heaven and earth is not static, but continues to be dynamic, as the upper sphere (i.e. Heaven) is "already" overlapping, but has not "not yet" fully aligned with the lower sphere (i.e., earth).

Revising their role in God's Kingdom. All participants also described how learning about the 4-Chapter Gospel caused them to revise their understanding of their role in God's Kingdom. First, it revised their dualistic understanding of God's Kingdom from being synonymous with an immaterial realm of Heaven, to being everywhere that God's "reign and rule" was established. While participants continued to describe "Heaven" as the place where God's reign and rule was perfectly established, they also came to believe that God's Kingdom was currently "manifesting" on earth in the places where His "dominion and authority" was being established. For this reason, participants often described God's Kingdom as "coming to earth" in and through His followers as they "obey His commandments" and "share His love" with others.

Second, the 4-Chapter Gospel caused participants to revise their understanding of God's Kingdom from being only concerned with "some super religious kind of church things" to being synonymous with "God's character" and the "universal principles of flourishing", including "community", "human thriving", and "justice". Combined with their revised understanding of their place in God's story described above, they also began to believe that God's Kingdom was both "here now" and "still coming".

Third, Fellows helped participants to realize that they were called by God to be his "Kingdom Ambassadors", which involved "bringing", "building", and "establishing" His

“Kingdom on the Earth”. The 4-Chapter Gospel also revised their understanding of what God’s Kingdom looked like “embodied on earth right now”, including some “basic things” like “no poverty”, no “injustice”, no “grieving”, and much more. For this reason, some participants claimed that this revised understanding of the Kingdom of God gave them the “most beautiful and compelling picture of what the world could be” presently, as well as a picture of what the world “will be” like at the end of God’s story. Several participants repeatedly described how their revised perspective on the Kingdom of God also gave them an inspired vision of what they were “working towards”, which helped them to stay deeply motivated for and engaged with their lay work.

Revising their work in God’s Mission. Almost all of my participants also talked about how the 4-Chapter Gospel enabled them to revise their understanding of their work in God’s mission. They described how, in Fellows, they learned God’s mission “was bigger than [they] had imagined it to be” in three ways: First, they saw that God’s mission was bigger than just “saving souls”, but was the work of complete cosmic restoration which they described as God “making all things new”. This revised view of restoration is different than their pre-Fellows ideas of the world being “evil”, totally consumed by sin, or ultimately abandoned by God. This transformed perspective enabled them to see God’s “mission of redemption” as a way He was “pushing against” the consequences of the ‘fall’, and “pushing towards” the “consummation of restoration”.

Second, the 4-Chapter Gospel also helped participants to see that the expanded mission of God “implicates” every part of their lives and “touches [their] work as well”. This enlarged understanding of God’s mission caused them to revise their prior understanding of work being less important than their faith. Many participants described how they have come to believe that

their work is important to God and "not incidental to the mission of God in the world". This transformed perspective caused them to believe "we all have unique jobs" and get to "partner with God in the work that He's [currently] doing in the world".

Third, this expanded understanding of God's mission also led participants to revise their perspectives about how God could use them as "instruments of redemption" in their spheres of influence at work. In this way, the 4-Chapter Gospel enabled participants to understand how their lay work was intrinsically and deeply connected to God's mission as they intentionally pursued vocational goals of "reconciliation and redemption" through promoting the social/economic "flourishing of the city", "rebuilding the ruins" of neglected communities, "teaching [students] to write a good sentence", "pursuing justice" within the legal system, helping major trans-national companies to value "environmental stewardship" and promote "more ethical supply chain practices", and much more.

Revised perspective on faith and work: Kingdom overlap in work. My participants' revised understanding of God's story, Kingdom, and mission completely transformed their former perspectives on their faith and work. Learning about 4-Chapter Gospel caused participants to revise their former dualistic worldview assumptions and replace those old views with the theological beliefs and vocational perspectives described above. Participants' current theology of vocation helps them to more clearly, confidently, and creatively see how their lay work offers them opportunities to partner with God in His mission of re-uniting Heaven and earth. While the hierarchical schema focused more on participants' perception of a faith-work gap, the vocational schema (illustrated below) draws upon participants' faith as a narrative worldview lens which enables to them better "understand", "imagine", and "explore" the ways that God's Kingdom is/could be "pressing into the world" through their work. This shift in focus,

from a perceived Sunday-Monday gap, to an emerging Kingdom overlap is the primary outcome of the *re-patterning* process within participants' vocational transformation.

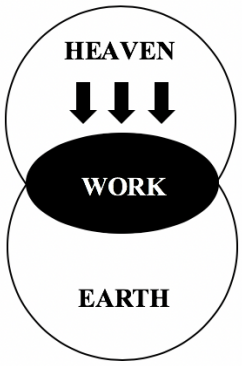

Figure 15.
Current perspective: Kingdom overlap in work

Expanded Kingdom imagination. While the hierarchical schema led participants to see a limited number of "incredibly linear" options for integrating their faith and work, the vocational schema had the opposite effect. After learning about the 4-Chapter Gospel in Fellows, participants began to describe how it expanded the narrow scope of faith framed within the hierarchical schema. They claimed the 4-Chapter Gospel enabled them to see a) that God was already actively working to bring his Kingdom to earth, and b) everything in their lives also had "implications on bringing God's Kingdom [including] our actions, our relationships, our work". Some participants claimed that this new vocational view also "massively expanded [their] imagination" for ways their faith and work could be meaningfully connected to God's Kingdom. The positive impact of participants' expanded 'vocational imaginations' was manifested as they began to critically and creatively reimagine their views on Kingdom work, values, and ethics.

Reimagining Kingdom work. Pre-Fellows, the hierarchical schema framed a set of preferred careers choices for participants, and focused primarily on elevating full-time ministry (FTM assumption) above all other forms of work. From the post-Fellows narratives above, it

should be clear that the 4-Chapter Gospel enabled participants to revise their former "narrow views of calling" by re-imagining how other kinds of non-ministry work were valuable and meaningfully connected to God's Kingdom work. Fellows helped participants to dismantle the FTM assumption, which "freed" them and gave them the "language" and "permission" to choose a non-ministry career, and begin imagine how they could be doing the work of redemption better "as a trained Urban Planner than as clergy". Fellows also helped participants to realize that lay work was a "high calling from God" and they could be doing "good work" outside of ministry by doing their work from a "Christian perspective". One participant even talked about how their current vocational perspective gave them "quite an imagination for coherency" between their faith and different forms of work (e.g., business analysis) and work environments (e.g. Nike).

Some other participants also talked about how the 4-Chapter Gospel helped them to reimagine how "mundane" work could be meaningfully connected to God's Kingdom. They talked about how "God is in the spreadsheets", that there was inherent "redemptive value to the spreadsheet I'm in", and how they were "going to do spreadsheets the best I can". Other participants talked about how their vocational perspectives enabled them to imagine how challenging forms of work could be a way they were partnering with God in "peeling back the darkness" in some of the difficult places they worked. In this way, the 4-Chapter Gospel helped participants to embrace a vocational perspective on work, and re-imagine a wider range of ways that their Christian faith could guide and fuel their work.

Reimagining Kingdom values. Pre-Fellows, the hierarchical schema framed a limited set of prescribed sanctification strategies that Christians could draw on to "sanctify" (i.e. give spiritual value to) their non-ministry work. The primary strategy emphasized that a "serious" Christian should leverage their work as a platform for evangelism (PFE strategy). However,

Fellows and the 4-Chapter Gospel helped participants to reimagine how they could pursue Kingdom values in their lay work beyond the PFE strategy. Some participants talked about how the 4-Chapter Gospel helped them understand that the 'Great Commission' and the 'cultural mandate' work "hand-in-hand", and to reimagine how "evangelism" and doing "good work" were "both important in God's Kingdom". Similarly, several participants were clear that Fellows helped them to learn that their lay work had inherent spiritual value, and therefore, there was intrinsic Kingdom value in "focusing on the work" itself and doing it with "excellence" and "integrity". The 4-Chapter Gospel also helped them to reimagine how doing work with excellence was a valuable way that they could "serve", "obey", "honor" and "glorify God". Several participants also described how the 4-Chapter Gospel helped them to identify "goodness, beauty, and truth" as core values emblematic of the Kingdom of God. Drawing upon these values helped them to reimagine how their lay work was connected to God's Kingdom as they asked: "how am I bringing beauty, goodness, and truth into the world through the work that I do?".

Reimagining Kingdom ethics. Pre-Fellows, participants often tried to connect their faith and lay work through an individualized ethical approach that focused primarily on "personal piety" and "morality management" in the workplace. However, learning about the 4-Chapter Gospel enabled participants to reimagine how their faith could inform their work beyond just focusing on the "micro ethics" (Miller, 2007, p. 126) of "treating my co-workers well". Several participants described how their current vocational perspective helped them to connect their faith and work through systemically influencing their work environments to better "pursue the common good" by creating "more ethical supply chain practices", "promoting human rights", "caring for the environment", "working for racial reconciliation", and much more. In this way,

Fellows helped participants to reimagine how their faith and work could be meaningfully connected by also promoting macro-level Kingdom ethics through their work (Miller, 2007).

While Fellows and the 4-Chapter Gospel transformed many of the ways participants viewed their faith and work, the 'vocational schema' should be seen as an expansion of their vocational imaginations, not a wholesale change. To be clear, even as many participants critiqued their former FTM assumptions, PFE strategies, and individualized ethical approaches to connecting faith and work, they did not completely reject or abandon these approaches *in total*. Some participants claimed that "we still need to be faithful to evangelize" when appropriate and that being nice to colleagues is "a form of faithfulness". For this reason, we should see participants' vocational transformation as a critical re-prioritization and expansion of their former limited approaches towards integrating faith and work.

Positive integration experiences: Work as a vocational calling. It is clear throughout participants' narratives that they began to experience a much more positive relationship between their faith and work after their Fellows year. I argue that this transformation was rooted in and reflects the vocational schema described above. Drawing on Parks' categories of *re-patterning* and *release*, participants' positive integration experiences represented an interconnected process which focused on both the cognitive (e.g., re-patterning) and affective (e.g., release) impacts of their transformative learning.

Specifically, the vocational schema's Biblical theological convictions and expanded Kingdom imagination formed a conceptual context which fostered participants' positive post-Fellows faith and work integration experiences. This claim is consistent with Parks' (2000) description of the core of the transformative process of imagination as "the power of realization, to make real" (p. 121). Viewed through this lens, participants' experiences in Fellows, and

learning about the 4-Chapter Gospel in particular, were responsible for them realizing (i.e., "making real") that their faith and work were more meaningfully connected than they previously understood. In short, it enabled them to 'reimagine' the Sunday Monday Gap, and to discover more meaning, purpose, and value in their lay work.

Participants' lay work was *re-patterned* as overlapping with God's Kingdom, leading them to reimagine a wide range of ways their faith and work were/could be more meaningfully connected. While the limited integration opportunities framed by the hierarchical schema caused ambiguity, anxiety, and apathy as they came into conflict with participants' own professional goals, desires, and responsibilities, the vocational schema presented no such problems for participants. Based on the narratives presented above, the vocational schema should be understood as a catalyst which helped to transform participants' experiences from *professional ambiguity* to *clarity*, *spiritual anxiety* to *confidence*, and *vocational apathy* to *creativity*.

However, participants' vocational transformation was not simply the result of cognitive re-patterning alone, it also reflects their deep affective engagement with the idea of bringing God's Kingdom through their lay work. In her theory, Parks (2000) claims that, upon encountering a new insight, "new energy is released" and this event is not purely cognitive in nature. Parks (2000) explains, "new vision combined with the gift of new energy recomposes and exhilarates the soul and affectively grounds a sense of confidence, assurance, and new strength" (p. 121). Therefore, while the hierarchical schema's dualistic assumptions and limited integration options were "frustrating" and de-motivating for participants, their transformed Biblical theological convictions and expanded vocational imaginations were deeply "motivating", "engaging", "exciting" and "cool". These positive emotions demonstrate the emotional impact of participants' vocational transformation process, and also illustrate how this release of energy

(Parks, 2000) was critical for enabling and fueling the cognitive *re-patterning* processes described above. The importance of this release can be observed as participants described how the "4-Chapter Gospel "massively expanded their imaginations for God and faith" and enabled them to "better imagine how God was using me as an instrument of His redemption" at work. As a result, participants claimed that their expanded imagination for faith and work has "defined a lot [their] life" and helped them to "imagine what God's Kingdom could look like" in any area of life, including what they are "currently working on".

Desirable outcomes of the vocational schema: Whereas the hierarchical schema fostered a number of undesirable outcomes for participants before Fellows, their transformed vocational schema enabled them to develop an expanded faith, experience satisfying work, and live a more coherent life.

Expanded faith. Pre-Fellows, many participants lamented how the hierarchical schema caused them to see their faith as a being narrow (e.g., "hyper-individualistic") and shallow (e.g., a "formula", a "black and white list of dos and don'ts", focusing on "morality management"). However, their post-Fellows narratives show that, within the vocational schema, participants faith has been "massively expanded". Participants described how their current expanded faith had "implications for everything", functioning as the primary way of "how I make sense of who I am and what I'm doing everyday", and even viewed as offering "the story of the world". These post-Fellows narratives also show that participants' faith has expanded from being a "prescribed formula", to a '*storied imagination'*, a narrative worldview lens through which "[They] see everything". For these reasons, participants described their current faith perspective as being "dynamic", "growing", "imaginative", and rooted in an understanding of God's story which gives them purpose, emphasizing "Not [just] what I'm saved *from*, but what I'm saved *for*".

Satisfying work. While participants' pre-Fellows relationship with work was described as being "disjointed" and "dissatisfying", throughout our interviews participants repeatedly described how they currently have a much more satisfying relationship with their lay work. Throughout their post-Fellows narratives participants talked extensively about how they "love work", get "excited about work", and experience their days and work as being "filled with meaning". Their positive experiences of clarity, confidence and creativity also offer evidence to these claims, and demonstrate how participants currently view their work as being a vocational calling from God, which helps them to find more meaning, purpose, and value in their lay work.

Coherent life. Pre-Fellows, many participants lamented how the hierarchical schema caused them to increasingly experience their faith, and work, and lives as being deeply "compartmentalized" and "disjointed". However, the narratives above show that the vocational schema has helped participants to see their faith as a narrative worldview lens, which enables them to see how every part of their lives can "fit together" in more coherent and meaningful ways. In this way, the 4-Chapter helped participants to re-frame some of the dualistic assumptions and limited integration options that were leading them to view and experience their faith and work as occupying discrete and competing spheres of their life.

Avodah. Fellows and the 4-Chapter Gospel also helped participants to reimagine how their faith, work, and life could be more meaningfully connected in a wider variety of ways. This is evident in Gerard's explanation of the concept of "avodah" which opened and closed my participants' post-Fellows narratives above. I argue that the Biblical term *avodah* should be understood as a "very helpful frame" and a summation of all that Gerard, and the rest of my participants, learned throughout their vocational transformation. Gerard explained how the word *avodah* has multiple meanings in the Bible, being synonymous with "worship", "work",

"service", "ministry", and "craftsmanship". The wide semantic range of *avodah* represents how participants learned that their dualistic pre-Fellows assumptions of a worship-work divide and hierarchy have been replaced by a vocational theology that frames both worship and work as "two different colors of the rainbow/avodah", but are "really [just] two different ways of participating in the same activity". In this way, *avodah* represents how Fellows and the 4-Chapter Gospel, have enabled participants to see how their lay work is connected to God's story, Kingdom, and mission. For this reason, the vocational schema has enabled them to "better imagine" how their lay work was an opportunity through which they can "serve", "obey", "honor" and "glorify" God, while also "caring for others" by "pursuing justice" in the law, "teaching kids to write good sentences" in public school, "rebuilding the ruins" within their cities, and pursuing "racial reconciliation" within their communities. By introducing vocational concepts like *avodah*, Fellows helped participants to re-frame the worship-work divide, helping them to see how they can simultaneously "glorify God", "love their neighbor", and "make money to provide for basic needs" through doing their lay work well.

Conclusion: Vocational Transformation = Closing the Sunday-Monday Gap.

I conclude this chapter by briefly summarizing three of the key findings that were uncovered as I explored participants' narratives of vocational transformation.

First, vocational transformation represents a complex phenomenon of theological meaning-making oriented around the topics of faith and work. The phenomenon of vocational transformation explored in this study was indeed complex, as it incorporated participants' specific theological ideas with their particular professional experiences, and framed both of these through a developmental lens. While I situate this phenomenon primarily within faith development (Parks, 2000), it also intersects with aspects of identity, purpose, and career

development as well (Bronk, 2016; Damon, 2008; Erikson, 1980; Duffy & Dik, 2012). As a form of faith development, vocational transformation describes the outcome of participants' engaging in a theologically-oriented meaning-making process which focused on their deep desire to make sense of the world and find greater meaning in their lay work. The primary motivation of the participants in this study was to explore the "fitting connections" (Parks, 2000) between two of the most important, and seemingly disconnected, parts of their lives: their faith and work.

Second, vocational transformation resulted *in* significant changes to participants' perspectives on, relationships between, and experiences with their faith and work. Before Fellows, participants' desire to integrate to faith and work was often frustrated by their hierarchical perspectives and negative experiences (e.g., professional ambiguity, spiritual anxiety, and vocational apathy) resulting in a compartmentalized faith and work relationship, which I framed as an experience of the "Sunday-Monday Gap". Since Fellows, participants' faith and work relationship has become significantly more coherent/seamless and is primarily characterized by positive integration experiences (e.g., professional clarity, spiritual confidence, and vocational creativity). Participants no longer see a Sunday-Monday Gap between their faith and work, but see their lay work as a vocational calling from God, a calling to work that is deeply and inherently connected to God's story, Kingdom, and mission of redemption.

Third, vocational transformation resulted *from* participants' engagement with transformative forms of learning before, during, and after their Fellows year. Throughout their narratives, participants were (consciously and unconsciously) engaged in a transformative learning process which enabled them to critically identify, evaluate, revise, and/or replace some of the deeper meaning perspectives (Mezirow, 1998) which were causing their experiences of the Sunday-Monday Gap. Many participants had uncritically inherited dualistic assumptions about

the world, work, and faith within some of their most formative Christian environments. These dualistic worldview assumptions were framing their faith and work as having a compartmentalized and hierarchical relationship, which facilitated their negative integration experiences. In Fellows, participants became more *conscious* of this *inner conflict* (Parks, 2000) as they engaged in theological study which challenged some of their dualistic assumptions. Over the course of their Fellows year, participants became exposed to new theological concepts (e.g., vocational language, Biblical metanarrative framework, Christian worldview lens) which provided new *insight* and new *images* (e.g., 4-Chapter Gospel) that transformed their previously held assumptions about the world, work, and faith. As a result, participants began to view their faith primarily as a lens to help them make sense of the world and find more meaning in their work. When combined with their expanded understanding of God's story, participants began to *re-pattern* (Parks, 2000) their faith and work relationship through the lens of the 4-Chapter Gospel. This theological framework enabled them to imagine a wide range of new, creative, and satisfying ways their work was/could be meaningfully connected to God's work.

Revisiting the Model of Vocational Transformation.

I offer the following model as a way to summarize some of the core findings of this study. This model is designed to visually depict a composite narrative about my participants' vocational transformation process before, during, and after their Fellows year. For this reason, it is intended to be read left-to-right as the arrow indicates. I chose the particular ideas, findings, and diagrams presented in this model based on how they provided answers to the research questions identified at the outset of my study. Therefore, I will conclude this chapter by offering a brief explanation of each of the components within this model under the particular research question it most directly addresses (starting on p. 223).

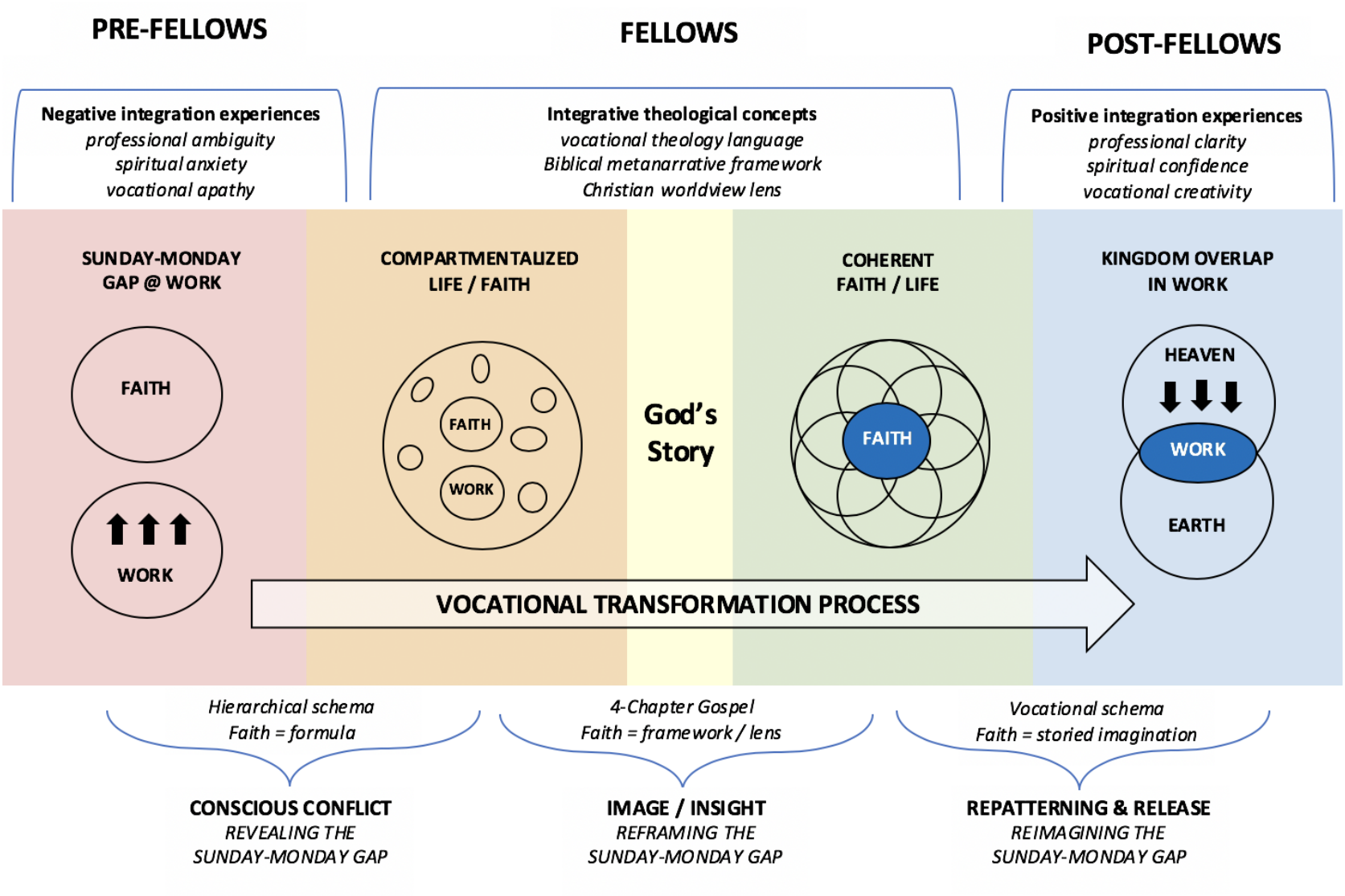

Figure 16. Model of Vocational Transformation (large)

Revisiting the Research Questions

Research question 1: Vocational formation process. This first question guiding this project is: *How do participants describe the process of learning to integrate their faith and work?* The answer(s) to this question are depicted in two different ways in the model above. The top section of the model depicts the chronological narrative process while the bottom section depicts participants' transformative learning process.

Top section: Chronological narrative process. The top section of this model focuses on identifying a) the chronological process of their vocational transformation (e.g., Pre-Fellows, Fellows, Post Fellows), and b) the primary faith and work integration experiences participants described in their pre-Fellows (i.e., negative experiences) and post-Fellows (i.e., positive experiences) narratives. (See RQ3 below for an explanation of the terms underneath the Fellows narratives).

Bottom section: Transformative learning process. The bottom section of this model identifies the three primary moments of transformative learning within my participants' vocational transformation (conscious conflict, image/insight, re-patterning and release). These three moments describe how participants' perspectives on faith, work, and the relationship between them have changed before, during, and after their Fellows year.

Conscious conflict. In the initial moment of "conscious conflict", participants are beginning to become more aware of the theological inner-conflict that is creating their negative faith and work integration experiences. In this stage, faith is viewed as a prescriptive formula, which offers participants ways their faith and work can be connected (e.g., FTM assumptions, PFE strategy, etc.) within the compartmentalized relationships between their faith and work and life. This initial moment of transformative learning intentionally straddles their pre-Fellows and

Fellows narratives to illustrate how participants' entered into Fellows with the hierarchical schema, but became increasingly more aware of it as they engaged in their theological studies.

Image / Insight. In the second moment of "image / insight", participants have been introduced to a series of theological concepts (e.g., vocational theology language, Biblical metanarrative framework, and Christian worldview lens) which have been combined into a transformative image: the 4-Chapter Gospel. This 4-part narrative framework enabled participants to expand their understanding of God's story, which then became a narrative worldview lens through which they viewed the world. This lens helped them to reframe their former perspectives and imagine a more coherent relationship between their faith, work, and life.

Repatterning and release. In the third moment of "repatterning and release" participants' former perspectives and experiences are beginning to be revised in light of the image of the 4-Chapter Gospel. While this re-patterning process begins in Fellows, it also continues post-Fellows, and fosters a new perspective on faith and work: a 'vocational schema'. The vocational schema is framed by Biblical theological convictions as articulated the 4-Chapter Gospel. Here, participants begin to see their faith as a kind of '*storied imagination'*, flowing from their internalized narrative worldview (Cunningham, 2014) and enhancing their capacity to creatively *imagine* how their lay work is / could be more meaningfully connected to God's story, Kingdom, and mission.

Research question 2: Faith and work relationship. The second research question guiding this study is**:** *How do participants describe the relationship between their faith and work?* The answer(s) to this question are illustrated in the diagrams located in the middle section of the model above. These diagrams were explained in detail within previous chapters, so I will only offer a brief summary of each below.

Center section: Faith and work diagrams. These diagrams (read left-to-right) describe how participants' faith and work relationship has changed throughout their narratives.

The first diagram represents participants' Pre-Fellows faith and work relationship, which I described as an experience of the "Sunday-Monday Gap". This diagram shows how, before Fellows, most participants viewed their faith and work as occupying discrete and competing compartments of life. As "serious Christians", this conceptual Sunday-Monday Gap caused participants to want to bridge this worship-work divide through pursuing a set of limited integration options (e.g., full-time ministry assumption, platform for evangelism strategy, and individualized ethical approach).

The second diagram shows how the Sunday-Monday Gap was part of a larger perspective and experience of participants' pre-Fellows faith and life. In this part of their vocational transformation, participants began to understand how their uncritically inherited dualistic assumptions were framing their experiences of a compartmentalized faith, work, and life.

The third diagram illustrates the initial transformation of participants' faith and work relationship during their Fellows year. This shift was primarily theological in nature, and caused them to see their faith, not as an isolated compartment of their lives, but as an integrative lens through which all other parts of life were viewed and understood. Through this shift, participants developed a new holistic framework which enabled them to conceptualize how their faith was/could be deeply integrated with their work (and with every other part of their life as well).

The fourth diagram represents participants' post-Fellows faith and work relationship. This figure illustrates how their current faith and work relationship, as viewed through the lens of the 4-Chapter Gospel, reframes their understanding of the world, and helps them to reimagine their lay work as an opportunity to bring God's Kingdom to earth. This diagram, depicting their

current faith and work relationship, differs from the first diagram based on what it emphasizes. This diagram emphasizes how God's Kingdom is/can be *overlapping* with their work, while former diagram emphasizes a perceived *gap* between faith and work.

Research question 3: Primary catalysts. The final question guiding this research project is: *What were the primary catalysts that helped participants to integrate their faith and work?* Since this research question has already been addressed within the answers above, I will offer a brief summary below. The primary catalysts for participants' vocational transformation are all located within the middle section of this model (Under "Fellows" category).

Top-center section: 3 theological concepts. Participants' Fellows year was the primary catalyst for their vocational transformation, primarily for how it introduced them to three core theological concepts (i.e., Vocational theological language, Biblical metanarrative framework, and Christian worldview lens). As described in great detail above, these three concepts were critical for helping participants find more meaning, purpose, and value in their lay work.

Middle-center section: God's story. Learning about "God's story" helped all participants begin to view their work as a vocational calling from God. As a result, they began to theologically and practically close the Sunday-Monday Gap, believing instead that "all week is charged by the story God is telling".

Bottom-center section: 4-Chapter Gospel. As described above, the "4-Chapter Gospel" functioned as a transformative image for my participants' faith and work relationship. This is consistent, not only with Parks' (2000) definition of a "revelatory symbol", but also with my participants' own words as they described how learning about the 4-Chapter Gospel was a "mind-blowing" "paradigm shift" that "changed everything" about how they viewed / experienced their vocation.

CHAPTER 8: Implications for Theory, Research, and Praxis

I can only answer the question 'What am I to do?' if I can answer the prior question 'Of what story or stories do I find myself a part?'

– Alister MacIntyre, After Virtue (1984)

Chapters 5-7 describe participants' process of vocational transformation, a complex phenomenon of learning to more deeply integrate their faith and work before, during, and after their Fellows year. In this final chapter, I draw on the core findings presented in chapters 5-7 to offer implications this study has upon some of the related theory, research, and praxis. I conclude this chapter with a series of recommendations for future scholarly work on the vocational formation of Christian young adults.

Implications for Theory

The findings of this study confirm, expand, and even challenge, some of the primary theories associated with vocational formation. Below, I discuss some of the implications of this study for theories related to young adult faith development and transformative learning.

Faith development theory. Sharon Parks' (2000) theory of young adult faith development was one of the primary theoretical frameworks employed in this study and the findings presented above confirm and expand her theory in several ways. First, the primary idea that frames Parks' faith development theory is that young adulthood is a time when young adults engage in a process of "meaning-making", and become "obsessed with questions about their purpose, vocation and belonging…. [seeking] to make sense of the world and understand the fitting connections between things" (p. 24). Parks' claims were certainly confirmed by this study's findings, as participants intentionally chose to spend almost a year of their lives after college exploring the connections between their faith and work. While many of their peers

jumped into in their careers immediately after college, these participants decided to take a year to step back and engage with "big questions" (p. 137) about the meaning of faith, work, and life. This study also confirms Parks' assertion that developing a sense of vocation could help young adults to craft a "worthy dream" (p. 146) that successfully integrates their inner beliefs, outward actions, and social commitments (Parks, 2000). This concept of a worthy dream was repeatedly reflected throughout participants' post-Fellows narratives (e.g., "I am called to rebuild the ruins"). Finally, this study confirms Parks' assertation that "young adulthood is birthplace of adult vision" (p. 8). Several participants, now in their mid-thirties, regularly draw upon the ideas and images they were presented with in Fellows. In fact, some of the richest narratives about their Fellows experiences were collected from participants (including all five 'narrative exemplars') who had all attended Fellows between 8 and 14 years earlier. Clearly, the meaning-making process that participants engaged in during their early young adult years continues to have a lasting impact on their faith, work, and life as they move towards middle adulthood.

Process of imagination. This study also expanded Parks' (2000) theory about the "transformative process of imagination" (p. 105). For her theory, Parks' draws heavily upon James Loder's (1989) "grammar of transformation" to serve as a paradigm "for how the process of imagination works" (p. 108). While Parks lightly modifies Loder's theory to frame her own, this 'process of imagination' is not as fully developed, well-known, or widely-used as some other aspects of her faith development theory. To this author's knowledge, this study is one of the first to operationalize Parks' process of imagination as a primary theoretical framework. As a result, these findings confirm and expand aspects of Parks' emergent theory. First, this study confirms Parks' (2000) assertation that the process of imagination is a primary diver for young adults' meaning-making and faith development. As reflected in the model presented in chapter 7,

participants' vocational transformation was framed and fueled by their engagement with three the core 'moments' within Parks imaginative process (e.g., conscious conflict, image / insight, and repatterning and release). Second, this study also expands the role that narrative plays in Parks' theory. While Parks (2000) briefly lists "story" (p. 118) as a potentially revelatory image, she does not go into further detail. One of the primary findings of this study is that the 4-Chapter Gospel became the primary image / insight which helped participants to re-imagine the role of faith, and the potential for faith and work integration, in their lives. As described in chapters 6-7, the 4-Chapter Gospel took on all the characteristics of a transformative image, "giving form to faith" (Parks, 2000) as a narrative worldview framework that acted as a "both a filter and a lens" (p.108) for how participants saw and made meaning of their work. As participants began to "reason" (p. 107) through the lens of the 4-Chapter Gospel, it helped them to see their faith and work in a more integrated manner, focusing less on perceived 'gaps' between faith and lay work, and more on the 'overlaps' between their work and their re-framed perspective of God's Kingdom. In showing how the 4-Chapter Gospel narrative changed the ways participants perceived and engaged with their work, this study highlights the role of 'story' and the power of 'narrative' to facilitate the transformative process of imagination.

Transformative learning theory. The findings of this study also challenge and expand some of the core views within mainstream theories of transformative learning. Chapters 5-7 argued for why participants' experiences before, during, and after Fellows should be understood as an experience of transformative learning. However, this view many not be shared by some mainstream scholars who claim that transformative learning is incompatible with a realist ontological perspective. If this argument is to be believed, it poses a problem for my claim that my participants' narratives demonstrate a form transformative learning. Both I, and all of my

participants, hold orthodox Christian beliefs, including the realist ontological perspective which argues that reality and absolute truth exist beyond human comprehension and construction of reality (Bhaskar, 1975; Wright, 2013). Participants' realist views show up frequently throughout this study as they talked about the Bible as being "Truth" and providing them with "God's story" as "the narrative of the whole world". However, in conjunction with these realist beliefs, participants also described how their theological studies in Fellows caused them to experience a series of "mind blowing" "paradigm shifts" that "changed everything" about how they saw their faith, work, and the world. While I have no issue with framing participants' experiences as a form of transformative learning, the viewpoints of several mainstream transformative learning scholars call this interpretation into question, based largely on participants' realist perspectives.

While Mezirow (1991) was explicit that his transformative learning theory was built on core assumptions gleaned from constructivism, humanism, and critical social theory, he also explicitly stated that his theory "…does not negate the existence of a world external to us" (p xiv). Despite Mezirow's assertion, later scholars began to take a more extreme perspective, claiming that the possibility of an external objective reality would undermine the critical reflection process that is at the core of transformative learning theory (Cranton, 1994). Almost two decades later, this perspective has become more mainstream. For example, in *The Handbook of Transformative Learning Theory,* Taylor and Cranton (2012) claim that "Transformative learning theory is a process of examining, questioning, and revising [our] perceptions. If we were to take the philosophical perspective that there are universal truths and constructs that are independent of our knowledge of them, then the goal of education would be to find those truths" (p. 5-6). I fundamentally disagree with the "hard constructivist" (Wright, 2013, p. 14)

perspective articulated above, and argue it represents a significant departure from, and extension on, Mezirow's original conception of the compatibility of his theory with realist perspectives.

This study also challenges the assumption that realist perspectives are incompatible with transformative learning in two primary ways. First, by operationalizing Parks' "transformative process of imagination" (p. 105) as a theoretical framework, I illustrated how participants were engaged in a process of critically reflecting, examining and questioning their pre-Fellows assumptions and perspectives (i.e., hierarchical schema) and replacing them with revised assumptions and perspectives (i.e., vocational schema) based on their experiences in Fellows year. This process closely reflects the transformative learning process that Taylor and Cranton (2012) describe above. Furthermore, even a cursory review demonstrates how Mezirow's process of transformative learning is remarkably similar to Parks' theory of imagination. For example, the core moments within Parks' theory (e.g., conscious conflict, image/insight, and repatterning) are closely aligned with the steps of 'disorienting dilemma', 'critical reflection', and 'rational dialogue' that make up the core of Mezirow's (1991) theory as well. The obvious synergy between Parks' and Mezirow's theories should re-frame the findings presented in chapter 5-7 for any scholars who might question if participants were truly engaged in a type of transformative learning during Fellows.

Therefore, this study challenges the claim that realist perspectives would undermine the process of critical reflection which is at the heart of transformative learning. Earlier, I argued that learning about the 4-Chapter Gospel represented a form of transformative learning for participants. Based on a basic review of the literature, it appears that few scholars have deeply explored the role of story in transformative learning. However, since stories are cultural artifacts, they (and the assumptions that undergird them) can be uncritically inherited from one's culture

or family of origin (Mezirow, 1991). For this reason, the transformation of these assumptions and narratives should also represent a form of transformative learning (Clark & Rossiter, 2008). This argument is supplemented by theologian NT Wright (1992), who articulates the power of stories to facilitate both formation and transformation; he claims, "Stories provide a vital framework for experiencing the world. They also provide a means by which views of the world may be challenged...Stories are, actually, particularly good at modifying or subverting other stories and worldviews" (p. 39-40). Viewed through this lens, the findings of this study, particularly about the role of the 4-Chapter Gospel as a transformative narrative, offers evidence about the power and role of 'story' in participants' vocational transformation.

Therefore, this study raises some questions for the 'hard constructivist' assumption that realist perspectives are incompatible with transformative learning. These questions need to be more fully explored, and to this end, I recommend that Parks' (2000) and Loder's (1989) theories be brought into conversation with the more mainstream versions of transformative learning theory. Doing so would promote more critical reflection and rational dialogue about some of the core assumptions that undergird mainstream versions of transformative learning theory. Revising these 'hard constructivist" assumptions could also help to provide for the more "inclusive" and "integrative" theory of transformative learning that Mezirow (1991) described.

Implications for Research

This study also offers significant implications for the existing body of research literature focused on meaningful work, work as calling and vocation, and religion and spirituality in work.

Meaningful work. While several of nationwide studies have shown a decade long trend where over half of workers in the U.S. reported feeling dissatisfied with and disengaged from their work (Conference Board, 2016; Gallup, 2015), this study shows how the participants were

able to transform their former dissatisfaction to find more meaning, purpose, and value in their work. In this way, the findings of this study offer several confirmations of and contributions to the research literature focusing meaningful work. This study confirms previous findings that many adult workers desire to have work that aligns with their religious commitments (Lips-Wiersma, 2002) and that, for many Christian adults, their understanding of meaningful work is rooted in their faith (Dik & Duffy, 2012; Hill & Dik, 2012). The vocational transformation process described in chapters 5-7 also confirms the research which frames meaningful work as work that aligns with a person's core values (Dik et al., 2009) and ultimate life goals and aspirations (Steger & Dik, 2010). In this way, participants' experiences show that meaningful work is dependent on more than making a 'good career choice', but also flows from a perceived coherency between a person's commitments (e.g. beliefs, values, orientations) and their life / professional goals (Dik, Byrne, Steger, 2013). Finally, the positive outcomes associated with participants' vocational transformation (e.g., professional clarity, spiritual confidence, and vocational creativity) also confirms research showing that when workers find their work to be meaningful, they experience greater satisfaction in work (Wrzesniewski, et al, 1997) and a deeper sense of purpose and well-being in life (Dik, et al., 2013; Hackman & Oldhman, 1980).

This study also demonstrates that faith, and the 4-Chapter Gospel in particular, were critical for the (trans)formation of participants' meaning systems which shaped the way they see the world and themselves as workers (Park, 2012). For this reason, this study confirms Park's (2012) research which shows that a person's global meaning systems (e.g., beliefs, goals) form a framework for how they make meaning of their everyday experiences with work, and that these meaning systems have a major impact on peoples' career choices and experience of work-related well-being. Finally, participants' post-Fellows experiences also reflect research which shows that

living in a way that aligns with one's core beliefs gives people a stronger sense of meaning and well-being in their lives and work (Baumeister, 1991; Park, 2012; Hill & Dik, 2012).

Work as calling and vocation. This study also confirms and expands some of the existing literature around work as a calling and vocation. First, these findings contribute to the broader scholarly consensus that ideas of 'calling' and 'vocation' are strongly associated with meaningful work (Duffy & Dik, 2009; Duffy & Sedlacek, 2007; Wrzesniewski, et al., 1997). While previous scholarship has shown that shown that vocation and calling are correlated with meaningful work for young adults (Duffy & Dik, 2013) and Christians (Miller, 2007, Sherman, 2011) independently, these findings demonstrate that this is also true for the Christian young adults in this study. Since participants' understanding of work as a vocational calling is deeply associated with their Christian faith, it confirms the value and efficacy of Dik & Duffy's (2012) recommendation to "bring your faith to work" as a way of "making your job a calling" (pg. 75). Additionally, the positive outcomes within participants' vocational transformation adds to the large body of literature showing that when work is viewed as a calling, workers exhibit greater levels of commitment to specific careers (Duffy, Allan, & Dik, 2011), higher levels of motivation for and productivity in work (Duffy & Sedlacek, 2007), and sustained commitment to work that is challenging and where the risk of burn-out is high (Oates, Hall & Anderson, 2005). In the case of these participants, their sustained commitment to work was expressed within the challenging careers of education, law, and community development.

Second, the findings of this study also expand the existing literature on work as calling and vocation. The focus of this study reflects concerns raised by Dik and Domene (2015) who note that, while the concept of calling has roots in Christian tradition, "research that approaches calling from an explicitly Christian perspective and in an explicitly Christian context or with

Christian research participants has been sparse" (p. 292). This study has clearly addressed this gap in the research, but has also answered additional calls for more research by a) examining the unique impact that a particular religious beliefs system (i.e., Christianity) had on young adults' understanding and experiences of career development (Constantine, Miville, Warren, Gainor, Lewis-Coles, 2006), and b) evaluating the impact of a particular religiously-oriented interventions (i.e., Fellows program) in helping young adults to discern and live out a vocational calling (Duffy and Dik, 2013).

In these ways, the findings of this study have also expanded the limited body of literature focused on the vocational formation of Christian young adults. While empirical research focused on this topic is very sparse, it has presented some conflicting findings about the efficacy of religiously-based vocational formation programs. While one study found that programs aimed at the theological exploration of vocation had a very positive impact on all participants (Clydesdale, 2015), other studies found that religiously-oriented career interventions had no discernible impact on the Christian students (Dik et al., 2015). Therefore, the findings of this study build upon the findings of previous researchers by offering evidence to support the claim that faith-based interventions can/do have a positive impact on their participants. However, further research is required to more effectively discern the theological and pedagogical features which are most (and least) effective in promoting the vocational formation of Christian young adults. Finally, this study expands the nascent research literature that describes *how* a process of vocational formation occurs for Christian young adults and, while additional research is certainly needed to corroborate and develop these findings, the model of vocational transformation offered in chapter 7 provides an initial framework to build upon, and potentially guide future vocational formation programs and scholarship (Dik & Duffy, 2013).

Religion and spirituality in the workplace. Research that focuses on exploring the intersections between work and religion is a growing body of literature which encompasses a wide range of topics, including the focus of this study: Christians' orientations towards incorporating "faith at work" (Miller, 2007). Findings from this study confirm, complicate, and expand some of existing research on Christians attempts to integrate faith at work. The study confirms five of the primary claims within the "faith at work" literature: 1) that many Christian workers experience a version of the "Sunday-Monday gap" where their faith has little to no meaningful connection to their lay work (Nash & McLennan, 2001); 2) that when Christian workers experience the Sunday-Monday gap, they commonly describe having a dissatisfying relationship with their work (e.g., professional ambiguity, spiritual anxiety, and vocational apathy) and lament living a bifurcated life "where work and spiritual identity are compartmentalized into disconnected and unrelated spheres" (Miller, 2007, p. 6); 3) that Christian workers are being vocal and proactive about their dissatisfaction and "are no longer content to leave their souls in the parking lot" (p. 6); and 4) that many Christians often attempt to integrate their faith and work through a "primary manifestation" (p. 126). This last point was reinforced in participants' pre-Fellows narratives, where their integrations strategies were focused primarily on evangelism (i.e., PFE strategy) and/or micro-ethics (i.e., personal piety).

The study also expands some of Miller's (2007) research on faith at work. One of the strengths of the Miller's Integration Box is that it is designed to be a "non-linear theoretical framework" (p. 126) which is inclusive of all approaches to integrating faith and work, enabling it to effectively "facilitate ethical, theological, and social analyses" of the Faith-At-Work movement. Miller's Integration Box identifies "4Es" (e.g., ethics, evangelism, experience, and enrichment) as four unique "types" or primary orientations Christians draw upon in their pursuit

of integrating faith and work. Additionally, Miller's view is that "within certain boundaries, all Four E's are legitimate and valid expressions of integrating faith and work…however flawed and insufficient they may be" (p. 126-127). Miller is consistent in his non-judgmental approach towards the 4Es and does not explicitly define what those "certain boundaries" entail.

While this study drew upon Miller's non-linear theory to frame participants' orientations towards integrating faith and work, it also expands this body of research by describing how participants moved within Miller's framework throughout their process of vocational transformation. For example, many participants described how, before Fellows, their exclusive focus on evangelism and micro-ethics had a negative impact on a) their enjoyment of and engagement with their lay work, b) the overall quality of their work, and c) the effectiveness of their Christian "witness" at work. This study showed that, pre-Fellows, participants often felt "stuck" in the 'ethics' and/or 'evangelism' quadrants of Miller's Integration Box. It also shows how, in Fellows, they became pre-occupied with the 'experience' quadrant, focused on finding meaning, purpose, and value in their lay work. The participants were also clear that, in Fellows, their focus on the 'experience' quadrant helped form a new theological "language" (e.g., vocation), which gave them the "permission" and "freedom" to more fully embrace their lay work .These findings also confirm Miller's claim that the "search for existential meaning and purpose in daily work is often rooted in an incorrect or limited theology of work" (p .135). Interestingly, participants post-Fellows narratives also demonstrated their appreciation of, and re-engagement with, all of the other 4Es. Miller describes this as a fifth type, an "everywhere integrator", because they "are grounded in one primary type [but] move among and address the issues found in other [4Es]" (p.140). In the ways described above, the study expands on the faith at work research by suggesting that beneath Miller's descriptive framework, a deeper, more

developmental process is at play as Christians attempt to integrate their faith and work. Based on participants' experiences, this study suggests that the 'experience' quadrant (focused on meaning, purpose, and value of work) could play a more foundational role within Miller's framework. While further research is needed to confidently evaluate the role of 'experience' within vocational formation, this study offers evidence that 'experience' can be both foundational and transformative for the faith and work relationship of some Christians. For this reason, the model presented in chapter 7 could serve as a basis for a theory of vocational (trans)formation, but more research is needed to understand some of the learning and developmental processes that occur beneath and within the confines of Miller's (2007) theory.

Implications for Praxis

Findings from this study also offer significant implications for some of the primary social institutions who have a vested interest in, and responsibility for, nurturing the vocational formation of young adults, and Christian young adults in particular. Therefore, I offer some practical recommendations for both religious and higher education institutions.

Religious institutions. As participants reflected on 'turning point' experiences within their faith journey, more often than not, they reflected on experiences from their year in Fellows, and on transformative concepts they learned at that time (e.g., theology of vocation, Biblical metanarrative, Christian worldview). However, in these reflections, many participants also lamented how they had never encountered these concepts within the religious institutions they grew up in. These findings, combined with research which shows Christian young adults are less likely to engage or hold on to their faith when it feels disconnected to and irrelevant for their 'real lives' and career interests' (Kinnaman & Hawkins, 2011), should lead Christian religious

institutions to pay close attention to the findings of this study. Based on participants' narratives, I offer a series of implications for churches, para-church ministries, and Fellows programs.

Churches and para-church ministries. My participants were quick to attribute their pre-Fellows negative experiences with integrating faith and work to perspectives they inherited from their churches (e.g., 2-chapter Gospel, hierarchical schema, FTM assumption, PFE strategy, etc.). This reflects Miller's (2007) claim that high numbers of Christian workers feel "unsupported by their Sunday church in their Monday marketplace vocation" (p. 24). In response, I offer the following recommendations to churches and para-church ministries who want to more effectively foster the vocational formation of Christian young adults in their care.

First and foremost, given the transformative impact that theological studies had on participants in Fellows, churches and pastors should consider explicitly teaching about the Biblical metanarrative and vocational theology from the pulpit and reinforce it within their worship liturgies. Additionally, the formation a Christian narrative worldview (rooted in the 4-Chapter Gospel), could also become a core emphasis within their ministries (e.g., children, youth, adult) and spiritual formation classes. Doing so could help to prevent and revise the 'evangelical fallacy' (i.e., 2-Chapter Gospel) and hierarchical schema that was so common and so detrimental to participants' vocational formation. Second, churches should be intentional about regularly dismantling the common assumption that serious Christians go into full-time ministry. The high esteem that many Christians have for pastors (especially those Christians who hold the FTM assumption), suggests that pastors should leverage their positions of influence to regularly affirm the spiritual value of lay work and the vocations of the laity in their care.

Fellows programs. Given the positive impact that Fellows had upon participants' vocational formation, I would encourage Fellows programs to continue to build upon the basic

content and features currently embedded within their curriculum. Based on my study, one additional recommendation I offer is that TFI programs be more intentional about increasing the diversity and accessibility of Fellows programs to non-white, non-upper-middle class young adults. Only 2 of 10 of my participants were non-white, reflecting the make-up of a typical Fellows program. Additionally, all participants attended either elite universities, private liberal arts colleges, or Christian schools, and most came from middle/upper middle-class backgrounds. In this way, my study shows that Fellows programs have an opportunity to increase access to and diversity within their programs by intentionally recruiting under-represented participants.

While I am aware that diversification is currently a stated goal within The Fellows Initiative national network, individual Fellows programs could also consider pursuing additional strategies such as a) recruiting from HBCU and HIS institutions, as well as local comprehensive universities and community colleges; and b) establish or expand scholarship programs aimed at recruiting students of color and students who come from lower SES backgrounds. These two strategies may help to increase access to and diversity within Fellows cohorts.

Higher education. While this study did not focus on college students or higher education per se, the findings of the study, combined with this researcher's own interests and experiences, have significant implications for colleges and universities. While scholars have argued that higher education is an ideal place for young adults to explore issues of meaning, purpose, calling and vocation (Astin, 2004; Chickering, et al., 2006; Parks, 2000), 60% of college students reported that spiritual matters are never discussed in the classroom and 45% of these students claimed that they were dissatisfied with how their college experience has given them opportunities for spiritual growth (Astin, et al., 2011). Based on this research, and the findings from my own study, I agree with Cunningham (2015) and Clydesdale (2015) who argue that

colleges and universities should consider making 'vocation' an 'organizing principle' within their curriculum and student success models. As an organizing principle, vocation would certainly be expressed differently within different types of institutions. For this reason, I offer a series of implications for both Christian faith-based and non-religious colleges and universities.

Christian faith-based colleges and universities. Christian higher education institutions should pay particularly close attention to the findings within this study, as they could help to curb the alarming trend of Christian college students experiencing a spiritual decline every semester they attended their Christian college (Hall, et al., 2016). Below, I offer three strategies which Christian colleges and universities could pursue to more effectively and faithfully foster the vocational formation of their Christian students.

First, based on the positive impact that Fellows had on participants, I recommend that faith-based institutions should consider making vocational formation (i.e., the development of a seamless Christian life) the foundation of their student success/development models. Based on the positive transformations that participants experienced during and after their Fellows year, promoting students' vocational formation both inside and outside the classroom could help them to experience a more coherent life. In this way, vocational formation could promote some of the positive outcomes identified in this study (e.g., professional clarity, spiritual confidence, and vocational creativity), which mirror similar outcomes from other students who have participated faith-based vocational formation programs in college: including significantly higher levels of holistic development, career planning, and life satisfaction (Clydesdale, 2015)

Second, since learning about the 4-Chapter Gospel was such a transformative experience for participants, and promoted a deeper level of engagement with and excitement about their faith, Christian higher education institutions should consider normalizing the language and

concepts of the 4-Chapter Gospel within their curriculum. This could be accomplished by teaching about narrative worldviews and the Biblical metanarrative within their freshman seminars or equivalent introductory courses (See Appendix G for a basic framework to use). Doing so could help students to engage in a similar form of faith development by articulating what they believe and why they believe it, before examining how these beliefs align with the Bible metanarrative, and the potential implications of these beliefs on their lives, faith, and work.

Third, Christian colleges and universities should also consider joining a network of like-minded institutions who emphasize and/or specialize in promoting the vocational formation of college students. While TFI programs focus exclusively on recent college graduates, and the Lilly Foundation is no longer offering funding for PTEV programs, Christian institutions could consider joining NetVUE: the Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education (Council of Independent Colleges, 2017). Currently, NetVUE has over 200 member institutions, and joining a network like this could provide Christian colleges and universities with an opportunity to share relevant resources, best practices, and data to more effectively weave vocational formation into their curricula and programs.

Non-religious colleges and universities. While non-religious colleges and universities might be reluctant to feature vocation as an 'organizing principle' for their institutions, they could instead focus on related concepts, such as 'purpose', to facilitate a non-religious form of vocational formation for their students. Focusing on purpose as an organizing principle could help college students to develop a greater sense of coherency between their beliefs, values, academic interests, and future goals. Based on the positive impacts that developing purpose had on the lives and work of participants, I offer the following two recommendations to non-religious

college and universities who want to help their students develop more meaning and purpose in their lives and for their future goals.

First and foremost, I recommend that colleges and universities be more intentional about promoting students' development of purpose inside and outside the classroom. The 'gold standard' definition of purpose comes from William Damon (2008) who describes purpose as "a stable and generalized intention to accomplish something that is at the same time meaningful to self and consequential for the world beyond the self" (p. 33). Damon's definition is built upon four core components of purpose identified within the literature: enduring commitments, goal-directedness, personal meaningfulness, and prosocial motivations (Bronk, 2016; Damon, 2008). The component most aligned with participants' experiences of vocational transformation is 'enduring commitments', which describes the core values, beliefs, and convictions that shape a person's worldview (Bronk, 2016). Before discussing how colleges and universities can more effectively foster students' exploration and articulation of their enduring commitments, I will discuss why focusing on purpose is a wise strategy for higher education in general.

Inherent within participants' vocational transformation was a desire for more integration between the seemingly disconnected parts of their lives (Parks, 2000). On a number of different levels, purpose and purpose development can promote a similar kind of integration between college students' academic, personal and professional experiences, interests, and goals (Bronk, 2016). The potential benefits of this kind of integration can be observed in some of the positive outcomes associated with young adults who have strong sense of purpose. For example, college students who have high levels of purpose also typically exhibit higher rates of persistence and retention (Clydesdale, 2015; Yaeger, et al., 2014), engaged and meaningful learning (Yaeger & Bundick, 2009; Bronk, 2012), grades and test scores (Duckworth, et al., 2007; Yaeger, et al.,

2014), and have more clarity in and confidence about their selection of major and career choice (Clydesdale, 2015; Dik, et al., 2009). Beyond the classroom, the impact of purpose on students' health and wellness are equally impressive. Purpose has been identified to be core component of identity development (Erikson, 1980; Burrow, et al., 2010), positive mental health (Steger & Frazier, 2005), life satisfaction and hope (Bronk, 2012, Clydesdale, 2015; Mariano & Vaqillant, 2012), psychological well-being (Seligman, 2011; Sunmer, Burrow, & Hill, 2015), and personal growth (Hill, et al., 2008). This wealth of research showing the positive impacts associated with students' purpose development illustrates why purpose should function as an organizing principle for non-religious college and universities. Promoting purpose and purpose development at an institutional level would undoubtedly have a beneficial impact on students' lives, potentially helping them to experience more coherency between their academic, personal, and professional goals. As an organizing principle, purpose could also provide institutional benefits to colleges and universities by promoting deeper cooperation and boundary-spanning collaboration between different departments which focus on students' academic, career, and identity development.

While religious institutions and liberal arts colleges have typically emphasized purpose development within their curriculum and student success models (Clydesdale, 2015), some larger public universities are also pursuing purpose as a strategy for student success. For example, Michigan State University has recently placed a high priority on students' purpose development by a) placing purpose at the center of their "Spartan Pathways" student success model, b) appointing a cross-divisional "Purpose pillar" committee to focus on weaving purpose development into a wide range of curricula (e.g., Freshman seminars, first year writing courses, senior capstone classes, etc.) and campus programs and resources (e.g., Life Design Labs,

Purpose Exploration toolkits, etc.); and c) creating a full time position (ie., "Purpose and Career Design Consultant") charged with leveraging purpose as integrative strategy for more deeply interweaving career services with undergraduate education.

Despite the positive impacts of purpose on young adults, research shows that many college students lack a strong sense of purpose. As defined in the literature, purpose is fairly rare among college students, with a number of studies showing that only 30% of students exhibit a sense of purpose while in college (Bronk, 2016). This lack of purpose was reflected in the narratives of most participants before attending their Fellows programs as well. To help offset this lack of purpose development, I recommend that colleges and universities be more intentional about normalizing conversations about life's "big questions" of existence, meaning, purpose, and values (Parks, 2000). My participants' experiences of vocational transformation confirm Baumeister's (1991) research, which shows that a person's 'enduring commitments' (e.g., core value, beliefs, convictions) provide them with justification that their goals are worthy and meaningful. Therefore, this study corroborates the research which claims, in order to develop purpose, college students need to be able to articulate their "enduring commitments" and understand how they are coherent with their life and career goals (Parks, 2000).

However, even if colleges and universities decide to normalize conversations about life's 'big questions', the issue of *how* to do so remains. Some students will undoubtedly be intimidated by engaging with these topics. Based on participants' transformative experiences learning about the 4-Chapter Gospel, I recommend that colleges consider asking students to articulate their worldview within a non-religious narrative framework. Framing worldviews as a 'story', could help students begin to identify and examine some of their beliefs and assumptions about the world in a less intimidating way. While it would be unorthodox on some campuses,

there is a considerable amount scholarly rationale for this kind of worldview-as-narrative approach (Appendix G). For example, consider the revered philosopher Alisdair MacIntyre (1984), who claims, "I can only answer the question 'What am I to do?' If I can answer the prior question, 'Of what story or stories do I myself a part?'" (p. 74). By normalizing conversations about life's big questions, colleges and universities could help students begin to articulate the enduring commitments that are necessary for their purpose development. Doing so would signal a shift from current approaches in higher education (Astin, et al., 2011; Chickering, Dalton, and Auberbach, 2006; Strange, 2001), but also a return to the original mission of college, which was to have students engage with questions of truth, purpose, and meaning (Marsden, 1992).

Recommendations for Future Work

Both the findings and limitations of this study form the basis of my recommendations for future research on the vocational formation of Christian young adults. I recommend that future studies should focus research on additional vocational formation catalysts and programs, especially those that would offer a wider diversity among participants' racial and religious identities, educational backgrounds, and professional contexts.

Additional catalysts. While this study primarily discussed how participants' theological studies (i.e., Biblical metanarrative) impacted their vocational transformation, participants also identified a number of other catalysts which also helped them learn to find more meaning in their work. These additional catalysts included spiritual/professional mentors, a community/peer cohort, and liturgical practices/spiritual disciplines. Future research should explore more about the impact that these additional catalysts had on participants' vocational formation experiences.

Additional programs. While this study drew participants exclusively from TFI Fellows programs, there are a wide range of other vocational formation programs that have yet to be

researched. Future research should also consider drawing participants from other programs to evaluate how additional pedagogical features (e.g., theological curriculum, experiential learning opportunities) have impacted participants' vocational formation process.

Racial diversity. While my study reflected the demographic make-up of a typical Fellows program (20% minority and 60% female), future research projects could focus on a participant sample and research context that has more demographic diversity. For this reason, I recommend that future research focus on groups that are under-represented within this study.

Religious diversity. The primary focus of this study was on Confessional Evangelical Christians, who largely align their faith with some of the core theological formulas of Protestant Christianity. However, future studies could also focus on the vocational formation of Catholic or Orthodox Christian young adults. Additionally, while the majority of participants claimed to be conservatively-oriented in their theological and political perspectives, future studies might choose to learn about how more liberally-oriented (i.e., mainline) Christians view the relationship between their faith and work and engage in vocational formation.

Educational and professional diversity. While all participants in this study attended a four-year college or university, future studies could also draw participants from different education backgrounds (e.g., community college, no college) to learn more about the role that educational background plays in Christian young adults' vocational formation. While my study focused primarily on Christian young adults in so-called "white collar" professions (e.g., teaching, law, business), other studies could also examine the vocational formation process of those who hold so-called 'blue collar' careers and jobs. It would be illuminating to see if/how particular fields of work might influence the vocational opportunities, perspectives, and imaginations of Christian young adults.

Conclusion

This study set out to learn about the vocational formation experiences of Christian young adults who have learned to integrate their faith and work in meaningful ways. Over the course of this project, it became clear to this researcher that most participants had engaged in a deeper, more transformative kind of learning than previously anticipated. For this reason, participants' narratives are depicted as describing a type of *vocational transformation* wherein participants revealed, reframed, and reimagined some of their core perspectives about faith, work, the world, and the relationships between them. These transformed perspectives were shown to have a major positive impact on participants' experiences with integrating their faith and work, ultimately helping them to find more meaning, purpose, and value in their lay work.

In particular, learning about and internalizing the revelatory image of "God's story" (i.e., the "4-Chapter Gospel"), functioned as the primary catalyst which transformed participants' perspectives on faith and work. The narratives presented above demonstrate how participants' former dualistic assumptions were transformed into convictions that were more consistent with Biblical theology during their Fellows year. As a result, participants developed an expanded '*vocational imagination'*, which helped them to reimagine their place in God's unfolding story, their role in God's emerging Kingdom, and their lay work in God's mission of cosmic redemption. In this way, participants' experiences in Fellows helped to shift their focus from a perceived "Sunday-Monday Gap" between faith and work, to an expanded imagination for ways their lay work was/could be overlapping with God's Kingdom. In this way, participants' previous negative faith and work integration experiences were fundamentally transformed, causing them to develop a more expansive faith, a more satisfying relationship with their work, and more coherent (i.e. less compartmentalized) life overall.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Email to Vocational Gatekeepers

Dear XXX,

My name is Marc Hunsaker and I am doctoral candidate in the Higher, Adult, & Lifelong Education program at Michigan State University. This summer, I will begin collecting data for my dissertation research which is focused on exploring the vocational formation experiences of Christian young adults who have participated in a Fellows Program. My goal is to interview a handful of Christian young adults to better understand *how* they have meaningfully engaged in vocational formation.

I am writing because your work focuses on issues related to the vocational formation of Christian young adults, and I need your help to identify 3-5 potential 'vocational exemplars' to interview for my study. Broadly speaking, I am defining a 'vocational exemplar' as a person who has successfully engaged in a process of vocational formation, learning how to integrate their faith and work in meaningful ways.

To be more specific, I am looking for vocational exemplars who have all five of the following characteristics. For my study, each vocational exemplar must:

1) identify as a Confessional or Evangelical Protestant Christian,
2) be a young adult between 23-35 years old,
3) possess a college degree,
4) have successfully completed a Fellows Program
5) have worked in a full-time (non-ministry) job for at least 1 year,

While every vocational exemplar must possess each of these five characteristics, I am particularly interested to interview people who have an interesting story to share about how they have thoughtfully, practically, and successfully wrestled with ways to integrate their faith and work.

What I am requesting from you are the names and contact information (email and/or phone number) of 3-5 vocational exemplars who possess all of the characteristics described above. Although it is not required, if you have time and want to include a few brief sentences about why you have recommended your vocational exemplars, it would be appreciated.

To summarize: if you are interested in my project and able to recommend 3-5 vocational exemplars to me, please reply to this e-mail (marchunsaker@gmail.com) with the exemplars' names and contact information. If you are so inclined, please feel free to share this email with any of your colleagues who might also be interested in my project and/or available to recommend other potential participants.

Thank you for your time and assistance,

Marc Hunsaker

APPENDIX B: Email to Potential Participants

Dear XXX

You are receiving this email because you have been recommended to me by _____ as a Christian young adult who has learned to connect their faith and work in meaningful ways.

My name is Marc Hunsaker and I am doctoral candidate in the Higher, Adult, & Lifelong Education program at Michigan State University. This summer, I will begin collecting data for my dissertation research which is focused on exploring the vocational formation experiences of Christian young adults.

My goal is to interview a handful of Christian young adults to better understand how they have engaged in vocational formation and/or explored ways that their Christian faith and their work are (and/or could be) integrated. I plan to conduct a series of interviews (both in-person and online) to collect stories about Christian young adults' vocational formation experiences.

While all participants' confidentiality will be carefully guarded, I plan to share my findings in a wide range of contexts beyond my dissertation research. This includes conference presentations and possibly even a book. All publications will be made available for free to all participants. If you are passionate about helping others learn to integrate their Christian faith and work, this is your chance to contribute to research and programs focused on fostering vocational formation!

For my study, I am looking to interview people who have all five of the following characteristics. Each participant must:

1) identify as a Confessional or Evangelical Protestant Christian,
2) be a young adult between 23-35 years old,
3) possess a college degree,
4) have successfully completed a Fellows Program
5) have worked in a full-time (non-ministry) job for at least 1 year,

How to Sign-up: If you fit all of these criteria, and are interested in learning more about my project, please let me know by filling out this short (confidential) **Google form**. I will contact you shortly to set up a time for a short conversation to discuss my project and your experiences.

Yours sincerely,

Marc Hunsaker

APPENDIX C: Research Participant Information and Consent Form

Explanation of the Research and What You Will Do

- The purpose of this research project is to develop an understanding of the vocational formation experiences of Christian young adults. The study will hopefully shed light on factors that affect the vocational formation process and how Christian young adults are intentionally attempting to integrate their faith and work.
- Your participation will be limited to three interviews (one 60-minute interview and two 90-minute interviews), featuring a mix of face-to-face and video conferencing formats. These interviews will be scheduled at time that are convenient for you.
- If you agree to participate, your responses will be recorded and transcribed. If desired, you will also be assigned a pseudonym of your choice and all of your personal details will be masked.
- It is possible that following the completion of your participation, Marc Hunsaker may need to contact you to clarify or ask for elaboration on a certain point.

Your Rights to Participate, Say No, or Withdraw

- Your participation in this study is completely free and voluntary: you may refuse to answer any questions; and you may end your participation at any time without penalty.

Costs and Benefits for Being in the Study

- Your time and energy is the only cost associated with your participation.
- Risks associated with the study topic and the methods are minimal.
- Benefits of the study include having your vocational formation story included published materials (e.g., dissertation research, scholarly articles, conference presentations, and possibly, a book on the vocational formation narratives of Christian young adults).

Contact Information for Questions and Concerns

- If you have any concerns or questions about this study, please feel free to contact Marc Hunsaker (517.388.5801 / hunsak10@msu.edu) or Dr. John Dirkx (517. 353.8927 / dirkx@msu.edu).

Documentation of Informed Consent

- You indicate your voluntary agreement to participate by signing this document below.

_____ _____

Name Date

APPENDIX D: Screening Interview Protocols

This short screening interview will occur over video conferencing software (e.g., Zoom, Skype, or FaceTime) and would be approximately 15-20 minutes long.

1. ***Tell me a little about yourself*** (I'll be collecting key demographic information and confirming that the interviewee meets all of my criteria for 'vocational exemplars')

   If they do not mention them, I will ask the following questions:

   - Age**:** ***How old are you?***

   - College**:** ***Where did you go to college?***
     - *What was your major?*
     - *What degree(s) do you have?*

   - Work**:** ***What do you currently do for a living?***
     - *Where do you work?*
     - *What is your job title / responsibilities?*
     - *How long have you been working in your career field?*

   - Faith**:** ***How long have you been a Christian?***
     - *What church / denomination do you belong to?*

   - Location**:** ***Where do you currently live?***

2. ***What piqued your interest in this research project?***

3. ***How would you describe the relationship between your faith and work?***

4. ***What questions or concerns to do have about my project?***

APPENDIX E: Primary Interview Protocols

Faith, Work, and the Life Story

Interview Protocol
Adapted from The Foley Center for the Study of Lives, 2005

Introductory Comments

This interview is about three things: your personal faith, your work experiences, and the story of your life. I am interested in how Christian young adults understand the relationship between these three things. What role, for example, does your religious or spiritual life play in the way you approach your work and/or professional responsibilities? How would you say that you have developed or changed over time with respect to faith and work in your life? Have certain events or things that have happened in your personal life had an impact on your religious and work-related beliefs, values, and commitments?

The interview begins with the *life story*. I am going to ask you to think about your life as if it were a book or a play, containing chapters, scenes, main characters, and so on. We will focus briefly on what you believe to be a few key scenes or episodes in your story – some high points, low points, and turning points, for example. The purpose of the first part of the interview is to compose a very brief autobiography for you by highlighting a few critical scenes in your story.

The rest of our interviews will focus primarily on *your faith and your work*. I asked you to participate in this study because of your strong involvement in and commitment to a Christian faith tradition. So, in the second part of our interview, I want to understand your beliefs and religious or spiritual practices and I will ask you to tell me a bit about the role of faith in your life overall. For the third part of this interview, I will ask about your work-related attitudes, experiences, and responsibilities.

I will conclude our interview with a few specific questions to solicit some of your thoughts and stories about how your Christian faith is involved with your work, if at all.

I think you will find the interviews enjoyable and interesting. I know I will.

Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

The Life Story

As I said, I would like you to begin by thinking of your life in general as if it were a kind of story or play. I would like you to focus in on a few key scenes that stand out in the story. Each of these scenes would be an event or a moment in your life that you now consider to be important in some way. For this first interview, I am going to ask you to describe **8** key scenes in your life. For each one, I will ask you to describe the event in detail, what happened and when, who was involved, what you were thinking and feeling in the event, and what you now think, looking back on it, the event may have meant in the context of your overall story and your understanding of who you are today.

Scene #1: High point.

The first scene is a high point, or what some people might call a "peak experience." This would be an event in your life that was so positive or wonderful that you now look back on it as one of the high points of your entire life. It would be a moment or episode in your story in which you experienced extremely positive feelings of some sort, such as joy, excitement, happiness, or inner peace. Please choose one scene like this in your life story and describe it for me in detail. What happened in the scene? Where / when did it happen? What were you thinking and feeling in the event? Why is it an important event? What impact has this event had on who you are today?

Scene #2: Low point.

The second scene is the opposite of the first – a low point in your life story. Thinking back over your entire life, try to remember a specific experience or event in which you felt extremely negative emotions, such as deep sadness, fear, strong anxiety, terror, despair, guilt, shame, etc. This does not necessarily have to be the worst thing that ever happened in your life, if you are not comfortable talking about that. But it should be something pretty bad. Even though this memory is unpleasant, I would appreciate your attempt to be as honest and detailed as you can be in describing it. What led up to this negative scene? What happened in the event? Who was involved? Where/when did it happen? What were you thinking and feeling in the event? Why is it an important event? What impact has this low-point event had on who you are today?

Scene #3: Turning point.

In looking back on your life, you may be able to identify particular "turning points" – episodes through which you experienced an important change in your life. Please choose one key turning point scene and describe it in detail. If you feel your life story contains no clear turning points, then describe a particular episode in your life that comes closer than any other to qualifying for a turning point – a scene where you changed in some way. Again, please describe what led up to the event, what happened in the event, where and when it happened, who was involved, what you were thinking and feeling, and so on. Also, please tell me how you think you changed as a result of this event and why you consider this event to be an important scene in your life story.

Scene #4: Positive childhood memory.

The fourth scene is an early "good" memory from childhood that was emotionally positive. Please try to recall a scene from your childhood that stands out as vivid or important in some way and which you experienced at the time in an emotionally positive way. Please describe this positive scene from childhood in detail. What led up to this event? When/where did it happen? Who was involved? What were you thinking and feeling? Why is it an important event? What impact did it have on you?

Scene #5: Negative childhood memory.

The fifth scene is an early "bad" memory from childhood that was emotionally negative. Please try to recall a scene from your childhood that today stands out as vivid or important in some way and which you experienced at the time in an emotionally negative way. Please describe this negative scene from childhood in detail. What led up to this event? When and where did it happen? Who was involved? What were you thinking and feeling? Why is it an important event? What impact did it have on you?

Scene #6: Adolescent memory.

The sixth scene is a vivid or important memory from your teen-aged years. It can be emotionally positive or emotionally negative. Describe a particular event from your teen-aged years that stands out in your memory today. What led up to the event? What happened? Where and when? Who was involved? What were you thinking and feeling? Why is it an important event? What impact did the event have on you?

Scene #7: Adult memory.

The seventh scene is a vivid or important memory from any time in your adult years. Again, this can be positive or negative. It can be about anything – family, work, whatever. The scene stands out in your mind today as being especially vivid or important. Please describe what led up to the event. Then describe the scene in detail. What happened? Where and when? Who was involved? What were you thinking and feeling? Why is it an important event? What impact has the event had on you?

Scene #8: Idealized future scene.

For the eighth and final scene, I am going to ask you to do something a little different. Your life story is not only about the past as you remember it, but it also includes the future as you imagine it today. I want you to imagine a very positive scene from the future in your life story that could realistically happen sometime in your life. Imagine such an event and describe what it might be like. What might happen? Who might be involved? What might you be thinking and feeling in this future event? Why would this event be important? What impact might this imagined future event have on you, if indeed this event were to happen in the future?

Faith

The second part interview focuses on your faith and your religious practices. I am going to ask you to imagine your religious or spiritual life as if it were a story developing over time. I will ask you to identify a few key scenes in the story. But I will also ask more basic, factual questions about your faith life, so that I can better understand your beliefs, values, and practices.

Overall orientation: Beliefs and values.

Let us then begin by considering the spiritual and/or religious dimensions of your life in general. Please describe your overall religious or spiritual approach to life. What are your basic beliefs and values?

Practices.

Faith involves things we believe, but it also involves things we *do* (e.g., worship, prayer, liturgy, singing, meditation, witnessing, and so on). You have already told me a little bit about your beliefs and values. Now please describe any spiritual or religious practices in your life. As an engaged Christian young adult, what do you do that affirms your faith or puts your faith into action? Why do you do these things?

Prayer.

Many Christians pray. Do you ever pray? [If participant says "no," ask why. Then proceed to next question.] When and under what circumstances do you pray? If it is okay with you, I would like you to give me an example of a prayer you might offer to God. Tell me what you might "say" to God. Please narrate the prayer to me. Why might you offer that particular prayer to God?

Beginning scene.

I want to understand how you became the Christian young adult you are today. Could you identify an event in your life that stands out as an important *beginning* in your faith journey? This might be a scene that shows how you entered into the Christian faith or a scene in which faith became important to you for the first time. Please describe the scene in detail. When and where did it occur? Who was involved? What were you thinking and feeling at the time? Why is this scene important?

High point scene.

Please describe a scene in your life having to do with your faith or religion that stands out today as a high point. This would be the most positive religious or spiritual event or moment in your life. If no single moment stands out, please choose an event from your religious or spiritual life that you look back on today as having been especially positive or fulfilling. Please describe the scene in detail. When and where did it occur? Who was involved? What were you thinking and feeling at the time? Why is this scene important to you today?

Low point scene.

Now, please try to identify a scene in your life having to do with your religion or spirituality that stands out today as a low point. This would be a negative religious or spiritual experience. It might be a period of profound doubt or questioning, a period of fear or sadness in your spiritual life, a time when your religious or spiritual orientation to life reached a very negative level in some sense. Please describe the scene in detail. When and where did it occur? Who was involved? What were you thinking and feeling at the time? How did the scene resolve itself? Why is this scene important to you today?

Continuity and change.

Faith involves both continuity and change in life. In some ways, you have probably changed a great deal over the course of your life with respect to your faith. In other ways, you have probably remained the same. How have your Christian beliefs and practices changed over time? And how have they remained stable?

Alternative stories.

Please imagine for a moment a very different life story than the one you now live. Imagine that you had no faith – that you lived a life without God, without a relationship with Christ. What would that life be (feel) like without God, without faith?

Other.

What else can you tell me to help me understand the role of faith in your life?

Work

As discussed, the third part of the interview focuses on your work. In this final section, I want to understand how your work-related experiences and perspectives are related, if at all, to your faith and/or to your life story overall.

Overall orientation towards Work.

What do you do for work? What is your current (or most formative) job? How did you come to this occupation? How do you describe your work to others? How would you characterize your overall orientation towards (or relationship with) your work?

Practices.

What kinds of practices and/or responsibilities does your work entail? What does a typical day at work look like for you? What is required to do your job well? Please describe in detail any involvements and activities in your life that you consider to be a core part of your work.

Life-story scene.

Please describe an important scene in your life story that involves work in some way. This could be an event in which you learned something important about work, developed core perspectives about work, participated in meaningful work, or whatever. Please describe what happened in the event, where and when it happened, who was involved, what you were thinking and feeling, and why you consider this event in your life to be important for your work/career story.

Faith and Work.

How, if at all, does your faith – that is your Christian beliefs, values, and practices – influence your work? Please describe in detail how you view the relationship between faith and work in your life. Feel free to give specific examples or stories to illustrate this relationship (including your vocational artifacts – see below).

*If the interviewee brings in "vocational artifacts": Can you tell me why you chose these specific artifacts? How do they illustrate your vocational experiences and/or the relationship between your faith and work in the past, present, and future?

Beginning scene.

I want to understand how you came to have the perspective you have on faith and work today. Could you identify an event in your life that stands out as an important *beginning* in your vocational journey? This might be a scene that shows how you became aware of the relationship between your faith and work or it could be... Please describe the scene in detail. When and where did it occur? Who was involved? What were you thinking and feeling at the time? Why is this scene important?

High point scene.

Please describe a scene in your life that you would identify as a vocational high point. This would be a very positive experience or moment between faith and work in your life. If no single moment stands out, please choose an event from your work life that you look back on today as having been especially positive or fulfilling. Please describe the scene in detail. When and where did it occur? Who was involved? What were you thinking and feeling at the time? Why is this scene important to you today?

Low point scene.

Now, please try to identify a scene in your life that stands out to you as a vocational low point. This would be a negative experience where the relationship between your faith and work was challenged/complicated. Please describe the scene in detail. When/where did it occur? Who was involved? What were you thinking/feeling? How did the scene resolve itself? What impact did this experience have your life?

Turning point (If the interviewee indicates a change has occurred)

In looking back on your vocational journey, you may be able to identify specific "turning points" – episodes through which you experienced an important change in the way you viewed/experienced the relationship between your faith and work. Please choose a key vocational turning point scene and describe it in detail. What were some factors that led to this change? Also, please tell me how you think you changed and what kind of impact did these new vocational perspectives have on your work / life today?

Alternative stories.

Please take a moment to imagine a very different vocational journey than the one now inhabit. Had you not had these positive vocational experiences, how might your life be different? What impact might this have had on your faith and on your work?

Idealized future stories.

For my final question, I am going to ask you to consider your vocational future. I want you to imagine a very positive scene in the future of your vocational journey. This would be an event or happening that could realistically happen in your life sometime in the future. Imagine just such an event and describe what it might be like particularly for your faith and work. What might happen? Who might be involved? What might you be thinking and feeling in this future event? Why would this event be important to you? What impact might this imagined future event have on you, and your faith and work, if indeed this event were to occur as you now imagine it?

Final question.

Is there anything else you would like to add, or that you think is important for me to know about your life, faith, and/or work?

APPENDIX F: Summary of the TFI Curriculum on the Biblical Metanarrative

Since learning about the 4-Chapter Gospel was a primary catalyst within my participants' vocational transformation, I will offer readers some necessary background information to more deeply appreciate and understand my participants' perspectives, experiences, and narratives. For this, I will draw primarily on texts from Cunningham (2014) and Whelchel (2012), which constitute the basis of many Fellows programs' theological curricula. Within this appendix, I will offer a detailed description of what Fellows are taught about the four 'chapters' that make up the Biblical metanarrative and discuss how each builds upon the 'chapters' which proceed it. I will also conclude each section by articulating some of the implications which my participants were taught that chapter has upon their theology of vocation. Doing so will not only give readers a better understanding of the role/contribution that each chapter makes upon the overall narrative, but also prepares readers to understand how the 4-Chapter Gospel transformed my participant's understanding of themselves, the world, and their work. I will limit my chapter descriptions to the major plot points and concepts that were most frequently referenced by my participants.

Theological Framework: 4-Chapter Gospel Narrative. My participants referenced the "4-chapter Gospel narrative" in a variety of synonymous ways: some refer to it as the "4-part Gospel story", or "the narrative of the Gospel", or simply as "God's Story". Similar to TFI's Director's manual and Cunningham (2014), several of my participants explicitly equated this framework with the "Biblical Metanarrative", a summary of the overarching story of the Bible. In the introductory seminar, Cunningham summarizes the plot of 4-chapter Gospel like this:

> "…it moves from the creation of a good and glorious world, through a tragic fall which vitiates and vandalizes that once-beautiful world through and through – human beings *and* the created order they were to rule. But, God in his mercy, through His Son, redeems *all of creation* (including, but not limited to human souls). Eventually, He promises, all will be made right in the consummation of history (His story) at the end of time" (p. 15).

In Cunningham's (2014) summary of the Biblical metanarrative above, he not only provides a general outline for the Biblical story, but he also identifies the four chapters that make up the Gospel narrative. Cunningham's summary could be represented thusly:
Creation → Fall → Redemption → Consummation

Creation: The way things are supposed to be. Cunningham's (2014) seminar on the creation narrative starts with the axiom: "begin with the beginning" (p. 84). To offer a rationale for this statement offers two key concepts: 1) "Creation is a starting point for Christian thinking" (p. 89); in other words, the creation narrative, and the story it tells about the world should be the foundation of a Christian's worldview, and 2) "Genesis is a starting point for thinking about Creation" (p. 89). Here, Cunningham identifies the location of the creation account within the book of Genesis, particularly chapters 1-2. As a "book of beginnings" (p. 64), Cunningham argues that "Genesis helps us understand God's will for the world by looking at how he created it" (p. 84). By understanding God's deign for Creation, we can also understand the way things "ought to be" (p. 84) in the world. Therefore, in this section, I will summarize the some of the key claims and vocational implications of Genesis 1-2, which provides a comprehensive view on the origin, nature, and goal of creation, including the purpose of human beings.

Origin of Creation: All things were created by God, from nothing, over time, and in love. The first line of the Bible states: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis, 1:1). This line and the rest of the chapter tells much about where the world came from and how the world was made. Genesis 1-2 is clear that the world was created by God *ex-nihilo* (from nothing), gradually and over the span of time (e.g., six figurative "days"). Summarizing the rest of the Biblical metanarrative, Cunningham (2014) demonstrates how orthodox Christianity has taught that God is a mysterious Trinity, consisting of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. His purpose for highlighting the Trinity is to show that the world and everything in it, was created by a *loving* and relational God, not out of some lack within himself, but rather out of the overflow of the eternal loving relationship he has within himself. Plantinga (2002) describes this creative impulse of the Triune God: "It was so much *like* God to create, to imagine possible worlds and then to actualize one of them. Creation is an act of imaginative love" (p. 23). Thus, in Genesis 1-2, Fellows are taught that the beginning of biblical story describes the world as being intentionally and gradually made, from nothing, by a personal and loving triune God.

Nature of Creation: A physical, complex, diverse, and very good world. Cunningham's (2014) seminar on the creation narrative shows at least three important themes about the nature of the world as it was created by God in Genesis 1-2: 1) God created a *physical* world. The creation narrative repeatedly depicts God as creating a material universe filled with stars, soil, salmon, and everything in between. The primary image within Genesis 2 is the Garden of Eden, which shows God with his hands in the dirt creating everything, including humans, who are depicted as physical creatures made late on the sixth day; 2). God created a *complex* and *diverse* world, reflecting the diversity within the Trinity itself. The complex world that God makes is filled with many different kinds of spaces, creatures, and relationships. While there is unity amidst the diversity of creation, it is clear that God loves variety and builds it into the complex world that he creates; and 3) God created a *very good* world. Seven times in Genesis 1, God declares that his creation is "good", and the seventh time, immediately after created humans "in his image" (Genesis 1:26), he pronounces that creation as "very good" (Genesis 1:28). God's pronouncement of "very good" signals both the culmination of the creation account and a divine appraisal of the inherent goodness of the physical, complex and diverse world He has made.

Goal of Creation: God's glory and the kingdom of shalom. Genesis 1-2 also provides an answer to the teleological question of creation: the purpose of the world that God intended. At its most basic level, the purpose of God's creation is to give Him glory. Reflecting on the creation account, the Psalmist writes "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky proclaims his handiwork" (Psalm 19:1). While the Psalmist focuses on how the non-human aspects of creation bring glory to God, the Bible also demonstrates that humans also give glory to God. Summarizing the creational narrative, Saint Irenaeus claims that "The glory of God is man fully alive". Here, Irenaeus argues that God's glory is intertwined with optimal human functioning; therefore, as humans live as they were designed to live, it also brings God glory. The state of being that the Psalmist and Irenaeus describe is commonly referred in the Bible as in the complex Biblical term *shalom.* Plantinga (2002) describes all that shalom entails:

> "In the Bible, shalom means universal flourishing, wholeness, and delight – a rich state of affairs in which natural needs are satisfied and natural gifts are fruitfully employed, all under the arch of God's love. Shalom, in other words, is the way things are supposed to be" (p. 15).

Since the creation narrative describes the world as it was "supposed to be", Genesis 1-2 could be viewed as a story of shalom (Plantinga, 2002). As within the Trinity, there is a fundamental unity to God's creation, a harmony of diverse relationships across the entire created order. This universally harmonious relational existence between God, humans, and the earth is a core component of the shalom that is portrayed in the creational narrative (Plantinga, 2002).

Within the shalom of Genesis 1-2, four kinds of harmonious relationships are described. These relationships constitute how a person's relationship with God, themselves, others, and the world is supposed / designed to be. Cunningham (2014) offers a short summary of these four relationships: 1) A person's relationship with God shows that human beings are worshippers and this relationship is to be expressed through praise and enjoyment of God; 2) a relationship with themselves is as an individual and is to be expressed by peace and wholeness; 3) relationships with others show that people are social beings and this relationship is to be expressed through loving actions and deep concern; 4) a relationship with the world shows that people are cultural beings and this relationship should be expressed by making a positive impact in/on the world.

Purpose of humanity: Stewardship and the Cultural Mandate. When describing the relationship between their faith and work, many of my participants referenced not only the creation narrative, but also a theological concept they called the "cultural mandate". Unsurprisingly, the cultural mandate is listed as one of the core concepts that Fellows should learn in their theological studies. For this reason, Cunningham (2014) and Whelchel (2012) spend significant time describing this concept, which they locate within Genesis 1:26-28:

> Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth" (26). God created man in his own image, in the image of God He created them, male and female he created them. (27) "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it: and rule over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing". (28).

In the passage above, we see what some theologians have called the first job description for human beings (Williams, 2005) because it describes some of central purposes for which human beings were created. While there is some debate among theologians about what it means to be made in the "image of God", there is widespread consensus that being made "after the likeness" (27) of God means that humans are God's special creatures, and that their purpose is aligned with God's own purpose for His creation. In this sense, the cultural mandate is a call by God for human beings to work for and with Him to promote shalom, the universal flourishing of his creation. This call to promote shalom can be seen when humans are charged by God to "be "fruitful and multiply" (28), as this is a call to be like God who created other living things. God also charges them to "subdue", "fill", "rule", and "have dominion" over His creation. Plantinga (2002) points out that the mandate to "subdue" the earth is a call to care for what is already there (e.g., animals, plants, rivers, etc.), while the charge to "fill" the earth is a call to develop the cultural possibilities within the raw stuff of creation (e.g., languages, tools, contracts, dance, and governance) for the flourishing of everyone. While some may hesitate at the language, the cultural mandate also includes a charge for humans to "rule" and "have dominion" over creation. However, the language of Genesis 1-2 does not suggest an exploitation or conquest of God's creation, but rather a *stewardship* of it. In the Kingdom of God, the charge to "rule" is to lovingly care for the world God has made and to work for the well-being of others, as God

himself does (Plantinga, 2002). In this sense, the work in Genesis 1-2 is intended to be seen as a metaphor for all work (Whelchel, 2012) and an example of every human being's purpose.

Implications for vocation. Within the TFI recommended readings (and my participants' own comments), are an explanation of how the creation narrative and cultural mandate should impact the ways Christians think about their work. At least five important ideas flow from this concept of the cultural mandate, and from the creation account more generally: 1) Work is a core component of God's creational design for the world. This is seen in the cultural mandate, which was given to humans by God in the creation narrative, which describes the world as it is "supposed to be". Whelchel (2012) explains, "Work is not a curse, but a gift from God. By our work, we employ useful skills to glorify God and love our neighbors" (p. 13). Therefore, as a part of God's creational design, human work should also be viewed as being essentially good, having intrinsic value and meaning from God; 2) As described above, the cultural mandate gives humans and human work a purpose: to glorify God and love their neighbors by faithfully stewarding the time, resources, and opportunities that God has given to them. The goal of this work is to promote shalom, the universal flourishing of all things; 3) The cultural mandate is a call for humans to work for and with God, to be God's representatives and co-workers (Whelchel, 2012). By working alongside God to promote shalom, human work is a way that God himself provides for the material needs of His creation. Therefore, through our work, God cares for others, which further enhances the dignity, meaning, purpose, and value of human work. 4) Humans are called to engage with and create culture. The cultural mandate is a call for people to use the raw material of God's creation to form culture (e.g., artifacts, institutions, ideologies, etc) that glorifies God and supports the flourishing of all things. This means that Christians are also called to participate in the creation and cultivation of a godly culture. 5) All types of work are valuable to God and to the world. In the creation narrative and cultural mandate, God does not distinguish between lesser and greater kinds of work. There are no 'white-collar' or 'blue-collar' hierarchies and no dualistic distinctions between so-called 'sacred' and 'secular' forms of work. This means that all kinds of work, if faithfully stewarded, are equally valuable to God and necessary to the flourishing of humanity. Whelchel (2012) elaborates:

> "When you answer God's call to use your gifts in work, whether by making clothes, practicing law, tiling the field, mending broken bodies, or nurturing children, you are participating in God's work. God does not only send ministers to give the world sermons; He sends doctors to give medicine, teacher to impart wisdom and so on" (p. 19).

Whelchel argues that, if stewarded faithfully, all work can be seen as participation in God's work to care for this world. In this sense, he summarizes what the creation narrative shows about human work: that work is good, a blessing and a call that God gives to his special creatures as his representatives. In the creation narrative, human work is shown to be designed by God as a critical component for maintaining shalom, the way the world is supposed to be.

Fall: The way things are…but not the way they are supposed to be. Directly following the creation account (Genesis 1-2), comes Genesis 3, which describes what Christians commonly refer to as "The Fall". The Fall represents the conflict within the Biblical metanarrative, building on the prologue set out in the creation narrative and pushing towards the resolution found in the following chapters. To introduce The Fall, Cunningham's (2014) seminar is entitled "Everything is broken: The Fall a World of Sorrow" (p. 153). Within this seminar, the

Fall is described as being simultaneously "the way things are" and "not the way things are supposed to be" (Plantinga, 1997). Cunningham (2014) and Welchel (2012) unpack this dramatic tension introduced by the Fall narrative by describing what Genesis 3 teaches the cause, effects, and scope of the Fall. After discussing each of these in some details, I will also describe God's response to the Fall and discuss some of its implications for vocation.

Cause of the Fall: Humanity's desire to be their own god. In the first verse of Genesis 3, a new mysterious character is introduced into the narrative: the serpent, who is described as "crafty" (3:1). While the exact identity of the serpent is never discussed, his evil intent is made clear as he tempts Adam and Eve to rebel against God by disobeying his commandments. Tragically, Adam and Eve listen to the serpent and disobey God. Their choice to eat God's forbidden fruit is about much more than a desire to taste an apple, it is representative of their desire to be their own god (Cunningham, 2014). While Adam and Eve attempt to blame each other, the serpent, and even God himself for their rebellion, the cause of the Fall is clear: God's image-bearers have committed mutiny against God, their creator and king (Cunningham, 2014).

Effects of the Fall: Death and the cosmic breakdown of shalom. Within Genesis 3, the effects of the fall are tragic and immediate. Immediately after disobeying God, Adam and Eve's "eyes were opened", giving them a new tragic view of a world that has become cursed and turned upside down. In describing the effects of the Fall, Cunningham (2014) claims that it is "best understood as a reversal of Creation" (p. 157). While in the creation narrative, the garden was a depicted as a perfect paradise, human disobedience brought catastrophe into Eden and resulted in the "vandalism of shalom" (Plantinga, 1997). Whereas shalom is characterized by the abundance of life, the central example of the loss of shalom is *death*. While *death* is not present within creational narrative, it is tragically introduced into the world in Genesis 3. Cunningham (2014) describes death as "a totalizing principle" (p. 157) in the Fall narrative, not only because it introduces physical death and its correlates (e.g., aging, disease, decay) into the creation narrative, but also because it describes the breakdown of shalom across the creational cosmos.

Scope of the Fall: Paradise lost. The scope of the Fall's effect is widespread and pervasive. As a totalizing principle, death functions as a lens for understanding the reversal of shalom in the creational narrative. Through this lens, the effects of the Fall can be observed in/as the corruption and distortion of previously harmonious relationships between humans and God, themselves, others, and the earth (Bartholomew & Goheen, 2014). For example, after their rebellion in the Fall narrative, humans' perfect relationship with God has been broken and they hide from Him in fear and shame. As a result of their fractured relationship with God, every other harmonious human relationship becomes negatively impacted as well. Their relationship with themselves is now characterized by shame and guilt, their relationship with others is now biased towards selfishness and strife, and their relationship with the earth and their work it in will now be characterized by "toil", a struggle often characterized by feelings of frustration and futility. Towards the end of the Fall narrative, God casts Adam and Eve out of the garden of Eden and they are barred from re-entry. The shalom of Eden is gone and the relationships which define their lives are now characterized by brokenness and ruin. In the Fall, to paraphrase Milton, paradise is lost.

God's Response to the Fall: Common grace. While the Fall paints a dark picture of the world, it is important to note that it doesn't erase God's original design for his creation or his commitment to care for it. As one theologian writes, "God does not make junk, and he does not junk what he has made" (Wolters, 2005, p. 57). Therefore, after the Fall, all of God's creation (including people) are portrayed as "glorious ruins" (Schaffer, 1981) being beautifully designed,

deeply flawed, and also carefully preserved. This is what the doctrine of common grace points to: God's ongoing and gracious commitment to lovingly care for His deeply wounded world. Plantinga (2002) makes an important distinction between "particular grace" which leads to a person's faith and salvation, and "common grace", which describes an "array of God's gifts that preserves and enhances human life even when not regenerating it" (p. 58). Whelchel (2012) elaborates further on the term common grace: "Common grace is *common* because it is universal; it is *grace* because it is undeserved and given by a gracious God." (p. 33).

God's universal and undeserved commitment to care for his creation is manifested in two primary ways. First, through common grace, God restrains the effects and consequences of sin on people and in the world. Common grace recognizes that, because of God's providential mercy, people are not as wicked as they could be, and by graciously restraining the effects of sin, God keeps the world from falling into a state of complete anarchy (Whelchel, 2012). The consequences of sin also entail God's righteous judgment on sinful humans and every relationship they touch. However, in his common grace, God has also not allowed the world to be as bad as it could be. God has graciously placed limitations on the consequences of sin in the world. For example, while human's work is now characterized by a struggle with the earth, by God's gracious providence, the soil still produces enough food to sustain humanity (Whelchel, 2012). Second, through common grace, God demonstrates his continued commitment to bestow His creational blessings all people (Whelchel, 2012). While believers enjoy special spiritual blessings from God, all people benefit from God's creational blessings. Describing the doctrine of common grace, Jesus tells his followers that "God causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain to fall on the righteous and unrighteous" (Matthew 5:32). God gives gifts to all people, and by God's empowerment, these gifts can and often are used to promote the wellbeing of others. For example, in common grace, God empowers surgeons with steady hands, artists with creative minds, and firefighters with courageous hearts (Whelchel, 2012). These gifts provide for physical needs of God's creatures and, as such, are used by God to preserve the remnants of shalom.

Implications for vocation. Within the TFI curriculum, the Fall and the doctrine of common grace are described as having three primary implications for a Christians understanding of their vocation. 1) The Fall narrative describes "the way things are" (Cunningham, 2014), and in doing so, it offers an explanation for how / why the world is off-kilter, filled with struggle and suffering. It explains how everything has been affected by the curse of sin, including humans' relationship with work. While the Fall did not eradicate the inherent goodness or purpose of human work, it does complicate its potential to glorify God, care for others, and be productive and personally satisfying. Therefore, people should not be surprised when work is difficult or when we experience struggle and dissatisfaction in our work. 2) However, the doctrine of common grace also explains that God has not abandoned the world, but promises to continue care for it and to work preserving the remnants of shalom in it. This reminds us that, within a fallen world, there is still merit/value in providing for the flourishing of God's creation. The cultural mandate has not been revoked and humans are still called by God to work for shalom through our work. Colson and Pearcey (1999) elaborate:

> "God cares not only about redeeming souls but also about restoring his creation. He calls [Christians] to be agents not only of his saving grace, but also of his common grace. Our job is not only to build up the church but also to build a society to the glory of God. As agents of God's common grace, we are called to help sustain and renew his creation, to

uphold the created institutions of family and society, to purse science and scholarship to create works of art and beauty, and to heal and help those suffering from the results of the Fall" (p. 19)

Colson and Pearcey argue that, as "agents of God's common grace", Christians still have a responsibility to continue to pursue the cultural mandate by sustaining and renewing God's creation, even though it is much more difficult now. 3) When read in light of the creational narrative, the Fall narrative shows that "the way things are" and also "not the way things should be" (Plantinga, 1997). Genesis 3 introduces conflict within the Biblical narrative, but God's response of common grace also shows that the story is not complete. Although the Fall narrative is tragic, the Biblical metanarrative as a whole is not a tragedy. Instead, the Fall frames a story in search of a resolution. The story the Bible tells of this world, and our work in it, is far from over.

Redemption: The way things could be. Directly after the main events of the Fall narrative in Genesis 3, God responds to the tragedy of the Fall, and the suffering of his creation, by making hopeful promise. In Genesis 3:15, God makes a mysterious vow to Adam and Eve that he will send a descendant from their family who will destroy the power of evil and undue sin's curse upon the earth. This promise is often called "protoevangelium (the first good news)", because it "…marks a transition in God's response to His fallen creation, from wrath to grace" (Williams, 2005, p. 70). God's promise to send a savior is not only the beginning the redemption narrative, but it is also the story that frames the rest of the Biblical narrative. While the creation and fall narratives were told succinctly and framed within a few (packed) verses/chapters, the rest of biblical narrative is one big story about God's redemption of His creation. Below, I will describe what Fellows are taught about the cause, effect, and goal of redemption, and identify some implications that flow from this big story of redemption.

Cause of redemption: The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Cunningham's (2014) chapter on redemption is entitled "The Inbreaking: Incarnation & Atonement" (p. 112). This summarizes how, in the Bible, the redemption narrative culminates in the person and work of Jesus Christ, whom the New Testament writers identify as the long-awaited Savior that God promised. Cunningham discusses the incarnation as a reference to Jesus' birth and *life*: the incarnation shows God himself taking on a physical body and living in the physical world. Throughout His *life*, Jesus perfectly obeys God's commandments in everything He thinks, says, and does. He does this first in His vocation as a carpenter, then as a religious teacher, and ultimately as God's atoning sacrifice (Plantinga, 2002). By atonement, Cunningham (2014) refers also to Jesus' perfect life and His *death* on the cross, where He suffered and died for His people, absorbing all evil and suffering its consequences. Shortly after His death, the *resurrection* of Jesus occurs. In this, Jesus rises from the dead and is re-joined with His physical body, which has been healed and perfected. Before Jesus leaves to join God the Father in heaven He promises that he will return to complete the work of redemption that he began.

Effects of redemption: Reconciliation and the recovery of shalom. While Christ's atonement is multi-faceted, it's primary effect was to create a true reconciliation of the broken relationship between a Holy God and fallen humans (Cunningham, 2014). The redemption narrative culminates with the atonement because it "puts us right with God" (p. 194) and, in doing so, it resolves the dramatic tension within the Biblical narrative by healing broken relationship between God and his special creatures that has existed since the Fall. The person and work of Jesus also demonstrate another effect of redemption: the recovery of shalom.

Throughout His life and ministry, Jesus performed many miracles, and these were both a vindication of his message and a preview of the redemption He would bring: blind people were made to see, lame people could walk, the earth obeyed his commands, the socially marginalized were esteemed, people's sins were forgiven, and death was overcome. All of these point to the effects of redemption: a reversal of the consequences of the Fall, and a recovery of God's creational shalom. The reconciliation between humans and God points to more cosmic renewal.

Goal of redemption: The re-establishment of the Kingdom of God. Whelchel (2012) describes the coming of the Kingdom of God in Jesus to be "the central event of redemptive history" (p. 22) and, as such, it is also the climax of the Biblical metanarrative. The Kingdom of God is a core theme within the Biblical story and is mentioned 162 times in the New Testament alone. For this reason, the Kingdom of God also occupied a central place in Jesus' ministry and He taught more about it than anything else (Whelchel, 2012). Therefore, when Jesus regularly proclaimed that "the Kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark 1:15), He was referring to himself as God's promised redeemer and to the goal of redemption: the re-establishment of God's Kingdom on earth (Whelchel, 2012) as it originally was in the creation narrative.

Throughout the Bible, the Kingdom of God refers to God's dynamic reign over His entire creation and is the primary way the New Testament writers talk about shalom (Plantinga, 2002). In fact, the theme of God's Kingdom is present throughout the entire the Biblical narrative: In the Creation narrative, God's Kingdom is perfectly portrayed as the world functions in the way should be. In the Fall narrative, God's creation is turned upside down as humans attempt to be their own God and establish their own Kingdom. While 'Kingdom of the World' becomes the new status quo, it is also riddled with the tragic consequences of the Fall, making it the way things are, but not the way they should be. In the redemption narrative, the Kingdom of God begins to break in and push back the effects of the Fall and the Kingdom of this World. Through His life, death, and resurrection, Jesus re-establishes the Kingdom of God on earth by providing the opportunity for human reconciliation with God, which points to how the world *could be*.

Implications for vocation. Whelchel (2012) claims that a Christian's vocation is intertwined with God's Kingdom, "Until we understand our place in God's kingdom, we will never fully understand the importance of the work He has called to do in our present lives" (p. 28-29). Welchel and Cunningham (2014) describe the redemption narrative and the doctrine of Kingdom of God, offering at least three implications for Christians about their work: 1) While the Fall prevented humans from fulfilling the cultural mandate to its fullest potential, the redemption narrative and Christ's atonement in particular, make it possible to be reconciled with God. In this sense, the gospel gives Christians the motivation, confidence, ability, and direction to fulfill the cultural mandate in a way that promotes shalom (Plantinga, 2002) and gives maximum glory to God (Whelchel, 2012); 2) As characters within the Biblical metanarrative, Christians are still called to fulfill the cultural mandate, and within the redemption narrative this means they are to work alongside Christ to be "transformers of culture" (Niebuhr, 1951) and "ambassadors of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:20) by actively participating in the re-establishment of God's Kingdom on earth through their lives and though their work. Whelchel (2012) explains:

> "As Kingdom people, we must be actively spreading God's reign into every segment of society. We should be influencing the world by bringing God's love and grace to all, whether through the arts, through business, through politics, or through our other vocations".

Fellows are taught that Christians are called is to actively spread God's Kingdom by bringing His love and grace into every sphere of life, sector of society, and vocational field they are involved in. 3) When Christians faithfully bring God's love and grace into the world through their work, they are both inhabiting and embodying the Biblical story of redemption. In doing so, a Christian's life points both to the better-ness of God's Kingdom on earth and demonstrates what the Bible teaches about the way the world could be and how it will be (Whelchel, 2012).

> "As we believe, repent, and enter into the Kingdom in this age, our lives become a witness to the way things *could* be and a signpost to the way things *will* be in the new heavens and new earth" (p 26)

Above, Whelchel highlights the impact that the redemption narrative the way the world *could be*) and consummation narrative (the way the world *will be*) should have upon the lives and work of Christians. How the world *will be* points to the final chapter of the Biblical story.

Consummation: The way things will be. Cunningham (2014) dedicates two seminars to consummation which are entitled: "Last Things First: The Life of the World to Come" (p. 201) and "The Revolution of Beauty: The Redemption of All Things" (p. 215). Both of these seminars expound on the climax of the consummation narrative: king Jesus' claim: "Behold I am making all things new" (Revelation 21:5). Jesus' words summarize the consummation narrative as it is presented through John's prophetic vision in the book of Revelation. Revelation 21-22 are not only the final two chapters of the Bible, but they also offer the clearest and most comprehensive description of the consummation narrative. These chapters describe the source, goal, and timing of consummation. Below, I will describe each and outline the vocational implications offered to Fellows in their theological studies.

Source of consummation: The gracious, loving, and faithful God. When Jesus states: "Behold, I am making all things new" it is the culmination of the promise of redemption that God made to humans back in Genesis 3:15 (Williams, 2005). From start to finish, the triune God is the primary hero/protagonist of the Biblical metanarrative. Whether it is through God the Father, God the Son (i.e., Jesus Christ) or God the Spirit, the triune God is the one who creates, sustains, redeems, and ultimately perfects the world that He loves (Cunningham, 2014).

Nature of consummation: New Heavens and New Earth. While the first two chapters of the Bible describe the creation of the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1-2), the last two chapters describe the re-creation of a "New Heavens and New Earth" (Revelation 21-22). In Revelation, the term "new" is not a term of replacement, but rather of renewal. The New Heavens and New Earth are not in place of the current heavens and earth, but rather are renewed versions of the heavens and earth that God has already made. Therefore, in the consummation narrative, the New Earth is like the old earth: a diverse, material, and very good place. This said, one of the few major changes between the creation and consummation narratives is that the garden of Genesis (i.e., Eden) becomes into a city (i.e., the New Jerusalem) in Revelation. This change is deliberate and it shows the culmination of the cultural mandate and that the New Heavens and New Earth will be even more glorious than God's original creation (Cunningham, 2014).

Goal of consummation: All things new: the complete and cosmic restoration of shalom. In the consummation narrative, the New Heavens is not separated from the New Earth, but instead descends upon the earth with the heavenly declaration "Behold the dwelling place of God is with man". The re-establishment of God's kingdom (i.e., Heaven) on the earth depicts a) the

reversal of the estrangement between God and humans in the fall; b) a completion of the reconciliation of the broken relationship between people and God that began in the person and work of Jesus; and c) the complete and cosmic restoration of shalom (Cunningham, 2014). The consummation narrative describes a world where "all things" are made new and the effects/consequences of sin have been removed "as far as the curse is found" (Williams, 2005). In description of the New Heavens and New Earth, Jesus promises to "wipe away every tear from their eyes" (Revelation 21:4) and also wipe away the reason for their tears, as the world will be free from sin, sickness, and death (Revelation 21:4). In Consummation, the dead will also be resurrected and, like Jesus, they will be given renewed physical bodies. Finally, in the New Heavens and New Earth, all broken relationships will be restored, not just between people and God, but also between themselves, others, and the earth itself.

Timing of Consummation: Already, but not yet. The consummation narrative describes the completion of God's redemptive plan and actions, but when does this occur in history? The Bible tells us two things about the timing of consummation: that consummation occurs with the return of Jesus to earth and that Jesus' return will happen at an unspecified time in the future. While on earth, Jesus himself did not know the exact timing of his return would be (Mark 13:32). Therefore, while consummation is the state and the story of the world as it will be when Jesus returns, this has not yet occurred. However, when Jesus says, "Behold I am making all things new" this a promise that He is currently redeeming the world and gradually restoring shalom through the lives/work of his Holy Spirit-filled followers. This points to what many of my participants referred to as the "already, not yet" of the 4-chapter Gospel story. While God's kingdom has *already* begun to be re-established on earth in the person and work on Jesus, it has *not yet* been established in its fullness. Until He returns, the restoration of shalom on earth will not come to consummation. The *already-not yet* portrays the 4-Chapter Gospel as an unfinished story which, although its end is known, is still unfolding all around us (Cunningham, 2014).

Implications for vocation. Cunningham (2014) and Whelchel (2012) offer at least four implications that the consummation narrative should have on Christian's understanding of their vocation: 1) Humans are created and destined to live on the earth. When the consummation narrative depicts the New Heavens descending upon the New Earth, it challenges the popular cultural notion that humanity's destination is to go to some ethereal afterlife in the clouds; 2) Human work continues in the New Heavens and New Earth. As all of God's creational intentions are fulfilled in the consummation narrative, humans are also depicted as continuing to fulfill the cultural mandate by exploring God's expansive creation and creating culture that promotes shalom. Therefore, human work continues to be a blessing and a calling even in the renewed world; 3) Christians should understand that the Bible depicts them as living in the part of the story between redemption and consummation. The concept of 'Already, Not Yet' should help Christians to situate themselves in the still unfolding Biblical metanarrative and remind them that their story and the story of this world is not yet complete. Christians should see themselves as living between Creation and Consummation, still feeling the pinch of the Fall and still pursuing the promise of Redemption. This should remind us that the world is still broken and in need of fixing, but also that through the Holy Spirit and His followers, that Christ is currently redeeming the world; 4) Christians should also see themselves as characters who are participating in the re-establishment of God's Kingdom on earth through their lives and see their work as critical for bringing about the Consummation of Redemption. They should see and embrace their role and their work as an opportunity to, through Christ, help make the world into the kind of place that God has promised it *will be* (Cunningham, 2014).

APPENDIX G: Scholarly Rationale for Narrative Worldviews

Worldview as metanarrative

A major assumption of this study is that all people live "story-shaped lives" (Wolsterstoff, 2001). Scholars have long argued that narratives, specifically metanarratives, are integral to the shaping of a person's worldview (Wright, 1992; Pearcey, 2004). While some scholars have focused on how people are inhabited and shaped by small life-stories (McAdams, 2008), other scholars have argued that we also inhabit a big story (a metanarrative) that frames the way we see our lives and the world (Naugle, 2002; Pearcy, 2004; Sire, 2015; Wright, 1992).

Worldviews consist of (and provide) answer to life's basic questions

When we perceive reality we do so within a prior framework, a worldview (Naugle, 2002; Sire, 2015; Wright, 1992). Mezirow (1991) describes the cognitive dimensions of such a framework as a "meaning perspective," a constellation of assumptions about the world and reality. Pearcy (2004) argues that a worldview provides and consists of answers to the basic questions of life including those focused on *origins* (e.g., Where did we come from?), *problems* (e.g., What is wrong with the world?), *solutions* (e.g., How will the world be set right again?), and the *future* (e.g., Where is the world heading?) (p. 192). Pearcy claims that every person, religion, and culture has (examined or unexamined / explicit or implicit) answers to these questions. These answers, or "assumptions", provide a basic framework for a person's worldview because they shape the stories we tell (and vice versa), and as stated above, the stories we tell shape the way we see ourselves, the world, and our work.

Worldview	**Origins** *Where did we come from?*	**Problems** *What is wrong with the world?*	**Solutions** *How will the world be set right again?*	**Future** *Where is the world heading?*

Figure 17.
Worldviews address the basic questions of life

Worldviews are "normative" stories and follow a story-line

Building on this logic, every worldview can be conceived of/characterized by certain types of stories and each of these stories provides answers to the key questions articulated above (Wright, 1992). For example, when viewed through a narrative lens, the questions/answers mentioned above could also be conceived of as a story-line, containing an *introduction (origins), conflict (problems), resolution (solution), and a conclusion (future)* (Pearcy, 2004; Wright, 1992). By framing it within narrative terms, a worldview could be conceived of as metanarrative, offering people a mega-story and a narratively-bound world in which readers/listeners are asked to inhabit. In this way, a metanarrative functions as a set of lenses which brings the world and our experiences into focus. Therefore, a worldview functions in a *normative* manner, presenting itself as *the* story which makes sense of the whole of reality (Wright, 1992). This kind of a metanarrative often leads to a system of basic beliefs, which are often held at a more conscious level than the worldview itself (Wright, 1992). Therefore, all worldviews, as metanarratives, "commit their hearers to a way of being-in-the-world or being-for-the world" (p. 135).

Worldview	Origins *Where did we come from?*	Problems *What is wrong with the world?*	Solutions *How will the world be set right again?*	Future *Where is the world heading?*
Storyline	**Introduction**	**Conflict**	**Resolution**	**Conclusion**

Figure 18.
Worldviews follow a basic story-line

The Bible offers a Worldview Metanarrative: As the Story Christians Inhabit

Although many Christians may not be explicitly aware of it, the whole Bible also follows the narrative theme described above: *Creation (Introduction), Fall (Conflict), Redemption (Solution),* and *Restoration (Conclusion)* (Pearcy, 2004; Wright, 1992). Many people forget that the Bible is more than a mere religious text, it is also a preeminent piece of literature, and presents itself as a mega-story which claims to describe the way the world is (e.g., a metanarrative worldview). As such, the Biblical metanarrative functions as all other worldviews do, offering its readers answers to the fundamental questions of life (see figure 17) in the format of narrative, which in turn, offers its readers/listeners the opportunity to practically and imaginatively inhabit the "meaningful world" (Ricœur & Wallace, 1994) as it is described therein. In this way, every religion serves two purposes: 1) it provides a message of salvation, explaining how we can get right with God; and 2), it *functions as a lens to see the world* (Pearcy, 2004). Following the rationale outlined above, when the Bible is taught and conceived of as a metanarrative, it functions as a lens through which Christians see the world. Therefore, the Biblical narrative necessarily impacts the way Christians think about and make meaning for their work. Put simply: the big story that Christians see themselves as inhabiting will necessarily and profoundly impact the way they understand the purpose for, value of, and possibilities within their work.

Worldview	Origins *Where did we come from?*	Problems *What is wrong with the world?*	Solutions *How will the world be set right again?*	Future *Where is the world heading?*
Storyline	**Introduction**	**Conflict**	**Resolution**	**Conclusion**
Biblical Metanarrative	**Creation** (Genesis 1-2)	**Fall** (Genesis 3:1)	**Redemption** (Genesis 3:15)	**Restoration** (Revelation 21-22)

Figure 19.
The Biblical worldview as a metanarrative

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