Moral Imagination as a Reformational Influence in the Workplace

Jason Stansbury*
Assistant Professor of Business
Calvin College

Many Christians struggle with the challenge of living out their faith-based identities in the pluralistic workplace. The social psychology of religion is useful for understanding the difficulties and inhibitions that Christian businesspeople face. It elaborates on mental models that inform appropriate action at work as well as expressions of contested identity in a potentially unreceptive environment. Moreover, the social psychology of moral imagination details how one central and salient component of a person's identity marshals mental models from other identity components to formulate and justify alternatives to the status quo. Moral imagination can explain how faith integration often occurs in the workplace, and it can be understood as an expression of God's common grace for the business world as a means of reaching understanding and appealing to conscience across moral and theological foundations.

Introduction

> I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.… I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. (Rom. 7:15, 19 NRSV)

With these verses, the apostle Paul highlights the struggle with one's sinful nature that vexes many and perhaps most Christians who take the challenge of holiness seriously. The total depravity of all humankind implies that this problem is not simply one of imperfect management of carnal impulses; it is also a problem of biased perceptions, fallacious reasoning, and an unfaithful will.[1] The failure to

think, feel, speak, and act in ways that are consistent with our new identities in Christ is a thoroughgoing problem.

Christians in business often encounter situations in which their faith seems irrelevant or incongruous. We pray "forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors," but at work, debtors whose payments are behind schedule risk having their accounts turned over to a collection agency, while payables are held to the limits of creditors' tolerances. Compensation levels climb for excellent job candidates, while weak candidates receive no notice of their rejections. Supplier negotiations include bluffing and misinformation on the assumption that other parties use such strategies as a matter of course. Local governments are pressured for tax abatements with the threat of offshoring. Office gossip helps rivals and managers alike keep tabs on risks and opportunities. Forgiveness or forthrightness or forbearance seems hopelessly naïve.

Accordingly, the "religious congruence fallacy" applies to believers in business.[2] Believers often do not actually subscribe to the complete set of beliefs that their commitments imply;[3] moreover, individuals often do not act in ways that are consistent with their beliefs.[4] Some deny that contradictions between belief and action even arise at work,[5] while others despair of ever aligning their beliefs with their actions at work, instead insisting that their beliefs and actions must exist in paradox, or that Christians must abandon the business world due to its hopeless corruption.[6] For many Christian businesspeople, the evil they do not want is what they do on a daily basis.[7]

Fortunately, the doctrine of common grace provides some hope that these problems of irrelevance or incongruousness can be resolved with something other than resignation. Rather, Christians are able to discerningly adopt insights from their environments, even as they appeal to the law whose requirements are written on the hearts of the Gentiles (cf. Rom. 2:14).[8] We can reframe problems that we encounter in ways that are familiar yet novel to the people around us and that appeal to those people in terms that resonate with them (cf. Acts 17:22–34). We can thereby engage in what some philosophers have called "moral imagination"[9] and manage the tension between being alienated Christian pilgrims self-conscious of our differences and at the same time be engaged witnesses who participate in God's renewing work in his world.[10]

I will explain how individual Christians may participate in God's provision of common grace in the workplace by using moral imagination to bring their faith to bear at work. First, I will explore the problem of religious incongruence, specifically with respect to faith integration in the workplace. Then, I will describe the phenomenon of moral imagination in social psychological terms and explain its intersection with the social psychology of faith integration. Next,

I will summarize the Reformed doctrine of common grace, relating it to moral imagination. Finally, I will detail some implications of moral imagination as a common grace ministry of faith integration for both theory and practice, including advice to Christian businesspeople.

Religious Incongruence and Faith Integration

Faith integration refers to the attempts of Christians in the workplace to think, feel, and act in ways that reflect their identities in Christ. This reflects Kenneth Pargament's characterization of the integration of faith into a person's life in three dimensions: (1) integration of a person's faith into a social community; (2) integration of the means a person selects in various situations with ends appropriate to that person's faith commitments; and (3) integration of "religious beliefs, practices, relationships, and motivations … with each other."[11] Some Christian business leaders have demonstrated a high degree of faith integration at work through their high-profile entrepreneurial inventiveness: The late Truett Cathy reintroduced Sabbath rest into the superlatively competitive fast-food industry,[12] whereas Tom Chappell created a line of ecologically responsible personal-care products while drawing inspiration from Puritan leader Jonathan Edwards.[13] However, nothing about the definition of faith integration restricts it to the work of entrepreneurs and executives.

There is a multiplicity of ways that a person's faith can be expressed, and scholars have found evidence that faith has some systematic effects in the workplace. Weaver and Stansbury, in a review of literature on religious behavior in the workplace, found evidence that religion both positively affected job attitudes, ethics, and prosocial behavior; reduced occupational stress and risk tolerance; but promoted some counterproductive behaviors.[14] Miller theorized that faith integration would influence one or more of four domains that he called the "integration box": (1) ethics (i.e., the pursuit of virtue and justice in the workplace); (2) expression (i.e., includes evangelism and statements of belief or identity that are made for the benefit of the speaker rather than the audience); (3) experience (i.e., the pursuit of meaning in one's work, often by understanding it as a vocation or calling); and (4) enrichment (i.e., the use of spiritual resources to realize personal renewal and empowerment at work).[15] Lynn, Naughton, and VanderVeen found in a survey of alumni of religious colleges whose graduation dates spanned fifty years that the answers to fifteen questions about faith integration all tracked together across respondents (using a statistical technique called exploratory factor analysis)[16] and indicated that these are all expressions of a single phenomenon of faith integration rather than a set of separate-but-

Table 1
Domains of Faith Integration

Weaver & Stansbury (2014)	Miller (2007)	Faith-at-Work Scale (Lynn et al., 2009)*
Favorable job attitudes	Experience	I view my work as a mission from God.
		I sense that God empowers me to do good things at work.
		I pursue excellence in my work because of my faith.
		I believe God wants me to develop my abilities and talents at work.
		I view my work as a partnership with God
		I think of my work as having eternal significance.
		I view my work as part of God's plan to care for the needs of people.
		I view myself as a caretaker not an owner of my money, time and resources.
Reduced stress	Enrichment	I see connections between my worship and my work.
		My faith helps me deal with difficult work relationships.
		I sense God's presence while I work.
Ethics & prosocial behavior	Ethics	I view my coworkers as being made in the image of God.
		I sacrificially love the people I work with.
		When I am with others and alone, I practice purity in my work habits.
	Expression	My coworkers know I am a person of faith.
Risk tolerance		
Counterproductive behaviors (rejudice, loss of cohesion, overconformity)		

* With kind permission from Springer Science+Business Media: Monty L. Lynn, Michael J. Naughton, and Steve VanderVeen, "Faith at Work Scale (FWS): Justification, Development, and Validation of a Measure of Judaeo-Christian Religion in the Workplace," *Journal of Business Ethics* 85 (2009): 236, Table V.

correlated phenomena. Some of these expressions of faith in the workplace are listed in table 1 on the following page.

Notably, these expressions vary according to several individual and situational influences. Weaver and Agle theorized that the likelihood of a person's carrying out their workplace roles in ways that reflect the role expectations of their religion is influenced by the salience of that person's religious identity, that is, by the degree to which the other people who are meaningful to that person display expectations that her or his religion should be expressed in a given role.[17] However, the salience of religion is itself impacted by the workplace context, which may or may not prompt or discourage its integration, leaving other competing role expectations at some greater or lesser degree of salience. Weaver and Stansbury also emphasized the influence of the centrality of religious identity, that is, the importance of religion to a person's self-concept.[18] A person may cherish their faith and readily acknowledge its importance but may receive no social cues that prompt its enactment in the workplace, thus rendering their faith central to their identity but not salient to their work role, and therefore quite possibly unreflected in action. Conversely, a person may have a faith that is peripheral to their self-concept but in their workplace receive strong cues that it should be enacted,[19] perhaps through onsite prayer meetings or the frequent use of religious language among managers and coworkers. That person's faith has low centrality to their identity but high salience to their work role, and it may well be reflected in action. Of course, a person with a highly central and salient religious identity will be relatively likely to enact it, and a person with a religious identity of low centrality and low salience will be relatively unlikely to enact it.

Day,[20] and later Weaver and Stansbury[21] have also theorized that the development of religiously informed cognitive schemas and scripts[22] may predict greater integration of faith in the workplace. These schemas and scripts, or mental models, provide pattern templates that allow a person to recognize an entity or situation and its meaning (e.g., a coworker who is expressing vulnerability) and to respond in an appropriate way (e.g., with listening, prayer, and perhaps aid), respectively. Individuals with more- and better-developed schemas and scripts may have a greater likelihood of recognizing opportunities to integrate their faith into their work and to seize those opportunities.

Individuals for whom religion is important may still act in ways that are incongruent with their beliefs. For example, Darley and Batson[23] found that seminarians hurrying to deliver a sermon on the parable of the good Samaritan often ignored a man slumped on a campus walkway, while seminarians who were not late for their next appointment were more likely to offer help, and more doctrinally orthodox seminarians were more likely to offer help more

insistently. Apparently, the highly salient "presenter" script with its imperative to be on time for one's own presentation overrode the good Samaritan script for many participants, while the good Samaritan script was more accessible (i.e., more salient) for relatively more orthodox participants, at least when they were not in a hurry. Carpenter and Marshall[24] found that students who both reported a highly intrinsic orientation to religion (i.e., whose faith commitments were based on their belief in the tenets of the faith itself, rather than on incidental benefits such as social connections or aesthetic enjoyment) and whose religious identities were primed by exposure to Scripture passages before the beginning of the experiment, were less likely to behave hypocritically when assigning rewards to themselves and others. When not primed with Scripture, even intrinsically religious students were relatively more inclined to cheat or assign benefits to themselves in a self-serving way despite their own stated beliefs about how a participant in their experiment ought to behave. Clearly, while religious identity is an important influence on religious thoughts, feelings, and behavior, situational triggers are crucial as well.

Studies on work-role behavior also have supported the idea that faith integration is influenced by a person's configuration of identities and cognitive schemas. Lynn, Naughton, and VanderVeen[25] reported that the intent to integrate one's faith into one's work is the strongest predictor of (self-reported) success at doing so based on their finding that membership in stricter denominations; church attendance; and scores on Benson, Donahue, and Erickson's faith-maturity scale[26] all correlated with higher scores on their faith-at-work scale. Increasing age also correlated with higher scores, although scores decreased for participants who worked in larger organizations. Similarly, Longenecker, McKinney, and Moore[27] found that religious affiliation alone did not predict the stringency of study participants' evaluations of sixteen unethical scenarios, but participants who rated religion as being moderately or highly important to them rated those scenarios more stringently. Moreover, those who agreed with two characteristically evangelical statements about the lordship of Jesus Christ over business and about the authority of Scripture also rated the scenarios more stringently. These results would seem to confirm that more central religious identities and better-defined religious schemas result in greater faith integration behavior.

Moreover, Lips-Wiersma and Mills[28] studied faith integration behavior among adherents of a number of diverse faiths in New Zealand workplaces and found that the expression of religious identity in the workplace is often the result of an iterative "sense making" process.[29] A religious individual who would like to integrate faith into work roles will often observe the reactions that other people of faith receive and attempt some tentative expressions of their own to gauge

others' reactions. If coworkers or supervisors react negatively then nascent faith integration may be curtailed, and the resulting identity disjuncture may result in dissatisfaction with and eventually exit from that workplace. After all, if a religious identity is highly central to a person, and its expression is rejected by others in their workplace, that experience is disconfirming and/or distancing at a deeply personal level. Alternatively, a negative reaction may elicit a redirection or reinterpretation of the faith expression and eventually a different attempt at integration. If coworkers or supervisors react positively (or at least indifferently), then subsequent expressions may be richer and more definitive, and the person's relationships with supportive coworkers or supervisors are likely to be strengthened.[30] These findings illustrate the integration (or not) of a central religious identity into a person's work roles over time, through probing of its salience in relation to the work context.

Altogether, it is clear that while religiosity can and does impact a number of workplace behaviors, its influence is often less than might be expected based on the earnestness of an individual's faith commitments. In fact, the integration of those faith commitments into one's work roles is a social-psychological process of identity formation, expression, and confirmation, which can be disrupted. Fortunately, many people of faith overcome the disruptions that they experience to the point where their faith commitments have powerful positive influences in their workplaces. Moral imagination, and the common grace of God that enables it, facilitates overcoming such faith integration disruptions.

Moral Imagination and Faith Integration

Sometimes a person of unusual insight finds a way to transcend the constraints and customs that seem to define "just the way things are" and devise a new way of doing those things that brings them closer to the way that we think they should be. For example, John Woolman, a Quaker merchant in eighteenth-century Pennsylvania, appealed to his fellow Quaker farmers and merchants in favor of, initially, voluntarily and unilaterally freeing their slaves (i.e., manumission) and eventually the abolition of slavery in Pennsylvania. He addressed himself to the presumption that African slaves were inherently lazy and unfit for freedom and convinced his fellow Quakers, a few at a time, to free their slaves to become sharecroppers instead.[31] The freed slaves proved to be prudent and diligent, and the practice of manumission became widespread, just as the Quakers prohibited slaveholding among their members.[32] By overturning a key belief about the feasibility of manumission, he enabled an economic alternative to slavery. That alternative made the gathering force of moral arguments against slavery more

appealing rather than more threatening and bolstered the nascent abolitionist movement.

Similarly, Blake Lingle is an owner and cofounder of Boise Fry Company (BFC), a fast-food chain in Idaho, Oregon, and soon in Texas, whose goals for the company are

> [m]aking amazing fries and burgers and creating an ethical business, influenced by and representative of my relationship with Christ. The latter goal, to me, meant helping the poor, protecting the Earth, and treating people like Christ would.[33]

Helping the poor at BFC entails hiring refugees, despite the challenges that this labor pool entails. Lingle says, "[A]s a business owner, I have the authority to provide jobs, and thereby income, to the poor. It's one way I can live out my faith."[34] Rather than frame his business as one constrained by labor costs in a competitive industry, Lingle framed himself as a person with the authority to provide jobs, and sought out an opportunity to serve vulnerable people.

For business leaders such as these, moral imagination[35] occurs when an individual faces a dilemma or some other ethical problem in which they realize that the framing of the problem does not allow for an adequate solution. That prompts an awareness of the cognitive scripts or conceptual schemes (i.e., mental models) that frame the situation, that is, the usually taken-for-granted assumptions about what is happening and what it means.[36] Once a morally imaginative person is aware of those mental models, they will also become aware of the moral conflicts that they create. Subsequently, that person will imagine other mental models that frame the problem differently, including frameworks that are drawn from other contexts besides the situation at hand—from prior jobs, educational experiences, or other life roles. The existing and alternative mental models will be evaluated against moral and practical criteria pertaining to the problem at hand, and if an alternative mental model is superior, then it will be adopted.[37] This process enables a morally imaginative decision maker to identify the shortcomings of their prevailing mental model and envision alternatives that are not only practical but also morally preferable.

More importantly, this process is situated within the decision maker's social psychological configuration; it cannot be abstracted from the decision maker's perspective because no person is able to fully ignore their own perspective regardless of their attempts at impartiality.[38] Instead, a person is able to gain insight into the strengths and weaknesses of their own perspective by examining it in comparison with other perspectives. In particular, each person has multiple perspectives (i.e., bundles of mental models) that form through learning and

performing that person's social roles. Werhane has called these "thick selves"[39] because they are situated in the thick of a person's experiences, relationships, and responsibilities in a given role.[40] Those can be contrasted, in turn, with the "thin self"[41] that exists at the intersection of a person's set of thick selves. The thin self is that which is consistent about a person across all of that person's roles, and it is that aspect of the self that evaluates the thick selves and mediates among them.[42] For example, a person may be enthusiastic and encouraging across all her roles and have a consistent rationale for such a disposition across roles; enthusiasm and encouragement would be aspects of her thin self. However, her enthusiasm and encouragement may be boisterous and outspoken among colleagues in her professional association (i.e., for one thick self) but subtle and understated when dealing with colleagues at work (i.e., for a different thick self). While the thin self may seem impartial, that impartiality only occurs with respect to the thick selves among which the thin self mediates; the thin self definitely has a perspective that is situated amidst a person's experiences. That perspective is important for determining the appropriateness of responses to problems that break the usual frames that fit within a given thick self and, therefore, for knowing what alternative mental models (like those associated with a person's faith) might be useful.

Consequently, moral imagination occurs when one's thick self encounters a problem in its role that it does not have the resources to solve. The thin self examines the situation and the mental models within which it is framed to ascertain the moral and practical dimensions of the problem, and then it considers whether alternative approaches borrowed from one of the other thick selves might be more adequate. If a superior alternative is found, the thin self attempts to introduce it into the role in which the challenge arose.

Despite the complexity of moral imagination[43] and the difficulty of measuring its components, a few researchers have examined it. Caldwell and Moberg[44] found that individuals working in organizations in which ethics is an important theme of the organizational culture were more likely to consider unconventional alternatives and evaluate them in ethical terms, particularly with reference to the interests of others; however, that effect was more powerful for individuals for whom ethics was a less-central aspect of their identities, while individuals for whom ethics was more central were less affected by organizational culture. Therefore, individuals with highly central moral identities are more likely to exercise moral imagination, while those with less-central moral identities can still be prompted to exercise moral imagination if ethics is salient (i.e. made relevant by social cues) in their workplace.[45] Whitaker and Godwin[46] have found that moral attentiveness (an individual disposition to screen and evaluate situations for moral implications based on moral criteria) is positively related to an

individual's combined ability to generate alternative courses of action, describe the moral implications of those courses of action, and evaluate the impacts of those courses of action on other identified people. Moreover, creativity (i.e., the cognitive ability to create novel and useful ideas) is also positively related to these same three outcomes.[47] The limited empirical research on moral imagination suggests that situational differences and individual abilities interact with individual identities to cause variation in the expression of moral imagination.

The parallels between the social psychology of moral imagination and the social psychology of faith integration highlight opportunities for moral imagination to inform faith integration. In particular, it is useful to consider the thin self's mediation among thick selves. A Christian may have several well-developed thick selves that stem from roles that are richly informed by her or his faith: elder or deacon, worshiper, youth committee chair, food pantry volunteer, Bible study member, and so on. A Christian's family, friendship, or citizenship roles may also be richly informed by their faith, as may their savings and investment decisions.[48] All of these may contribute mental models that are potentially applicable in the workplace: coaching or counseling weak performers, arranging or personally providing support for colleagues or stakeholders struck by some misfortune, or making conservative use of credit, for instance. However, making these connections in a way that is effective requires two things: (1) a thin self that is able to bring them to bear and (2) a process of moral imagination that is able to both accurately define the problem at hand and rigorously evaluate alternatives for their adequacy.

The thin self at the center of one's identity that is consistent across all of one's roles will be more likely to borrow mental models from religiously informed thick-self roles if religion is a central and salient aspect of the person. If religion is not a central aspect of one's self-concept, then (if it is not altogether absent) it may be represented among the thick selves that the thin self coordinates, rather than as part of the coordinating thin self. Then, the morally imaginative incorporation of religious schemas and scripts is likely to be incidental to whatever other consideration the thin self is attuned. The thin self will also likely incorporate religion with varying degrees of salience. If religiosity is reinforced by relationships that are meaningful to a person's central self-concept across a range of roles, then it will be salient and accessible even if few prompts to that end exist in the role at hand.

An individual's thick selves will also have varying degrees of religious centrality and salience, depending on whether a person thinks of that role as being religious and the extent that relationships in a given role incorporate religious content. For example, if one thinks of one's family as a religious family and

sees one's role within that family as entailing religious responsibilities (such as praying before meals, attending religious services together, and so forth), then the centrality of religion to that thick self will be high. Similarly, if religion is part of the content of the relationships in one's family (e.g., it is a regular topic of conversation), then it will be salient (i.e., readily accessible) to that thick self. One may also think of oneself as working for a "Christian company," and experience high centrality of religious identity in that thick self; the salience of that identity for that thick self will vary to the extent that one's workplace relationships actually incorporate or at least encourage religious content. As Lips-Wiersma and Mills found,[49] many individuals may even tentatively try to introduce faith integration into their work roles in an attempt to establish the salience of that identity to a given thick self.

Moral imagination requires more than the readiness of the thin self to borrow schemas and scripts from alternative thick selves, which may result in ill-conceived introduction of inappropriate ideas into the workplace. For instance, although one may regularly pray "forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors," making no attempt to collect overdue accounts receivable can lead to financial and organizational ruin.[50] Instead, moral imagination requires an accurate assessment of the problem at hand, including awareness of the mental models that structure the problem, along with a robust analysis of the adequacy of potential alternatives. This requires personal recognition of the mental models that are assumed within a thick self for which alternatives are available; that is, it requires critical thinking. John Woolman used critical thinking to identify the flawed reasoning behind the assertion that slaves were lazy and therefore unfit for freedom: in fact slaves who labored for no rewards other than continued sustenance were unlikely to do more than required to attain that minimal sustenance, while freemen who kept at least a share of the fruits of their labors thereby had an incentive to diligence.[51] Critical thinking therefore requires a willingness to examine received truths, even those cloaked in religious language. Recognition of the problem of human depravity can be invaluable for encouraging such an examination of flawed mental models.

Problem assessment is facilitated when an individual has schemas available in a given thick self that highlight the moral aspects of a problem. These schemas enable an intuitive, and even a reasoned, response to an issue that prompts moral imagination, whereas a lack of moral schemas make it more difficult to even recognize the existence of a problem, let alone evaluate alternatives. An individual who learns faith-based business ethics has some resources for parsing such issues. People whose study of religious ethics resonates with their thin selves and spans multiple application contexts not only have the mental models

for recognizing problems in the thick self of religious observance, but they also have ready access to parallel models that can be brought to bear as needed.

The creation and selection of morally imaginative alternatives is facilitated by a greater range of more nuanced mental models because that enhances the fit of the selected model to the problem at hand.[52] Real experience in a field develops that range as an individual learns about the heretofore inscrutable differences that make a difference; study of a field, be it business, economics,[53] ethics, or religion, also confers a range of mental models that can be used to frame and evaluate problems. Experience and education together are a powerful combination.

Common Grace and Moral Imagination

Attempts at faith integration in the workplace through moral imagination presume that the logics of faith and of business are not incommensurable. If attempts to bring faith and business together are nonsensical, misguided, or futile, as many people believe,[54] then the phenomena described in the foregoing pages are distractions at best from the real business of the workplace. However, the Reformed doctrine of common grace furnishes a theological basis for believing that faith integration is salutary and that moral imagination is an important expression of it.

Common grace is

> the touchstone of a general human grace, coming to you because you are among the children of humanity, yours together with not only all God's children but in common with all the children of humanity….[55]

> [T]he Lord our God is not merely *holy*, but also in his holiness he is at the same time *forbearing*, and it is from that "forbearance," which yields the divine patience of the Almighty for bearing *temporarily* with sin, that "common grace" is born.[56]

Notwithstanding the corruption of human nature and all human works because of human depravity, because of God's great love and concern for his creation,[57] he blesses all the world with the means for life and livelihood,[58] while restraining the effects of sin from having their full and fearsome effects.[59] While only the particular grace bestowed by God can turn a person's heart and mind to God, common grace is sufficient to enable the full range of created human excellences according to God's purposes for creation itself.[60]

Common grace in fact enables action by believers within the world at large. The destructiveness of sin and of God's wrath against sin is held in abeyance so that some of the structure of creation remains intact despite its directional

distortions.[61] Moreover, Christians are empowered to work within existing social institutions, even if the current states of those institutions are thoroughly dysfunctional, to bring them back into alignment with their divinely intended purposes.[62] Christians can cooperate with the Spirit in the "progressive renewal" of the various institutions into which they have been called.[63]

Of course, heeding that call requires discernment. Although common grace has enabled the development of insight, ingenuity, and even genius across the range of human institutions throughout history,[64] even enabling the functioning of conscience to alert humanity to its transgressions,[65] it is the special revelation of Scripture that discloses the meaning and purpose of creation in its various structures.[66] Discernment, too, is common grace because it pertains to the preservation and functioning of the created world rather than to the salvation of Christians.[67] Therefore, common grace brings together the conscience and the insights of the world with the Christian's discernment of the meaning and purpose of both to enable their progressive reformation. This "imaginative function" of common grace provides a special opportunity for Christians to exercise moral imagination; in fact, moral imagination provides a useful template for understanding *how* Christians can engage in common grace ministry in business.

In particular, the "reproductive imagination"[68] must first comprehend the way things are, with respect to the problem at hand. This will typically include the discerning appropriation of mental models that are typically used to frame that problem. There is nothing particularly Christian about applying the schemas "conflict of interest" or "breach of contract" or "discriminatory practice" to define important problems in business ethics. These frameworks not only entail engaging human institutions as they are rather than as we wish they were[69] but also requires critical evaluation[70] of the meanings and limitations of the mental models being appropriated.[71] Having a reforming influence requires both a nuanced understanding of whatever one hopes to reform and circumspection about the limitations of one's understanding.

Yet, thanks to God's continuing work on us and through us in his world, we have insights that can be valuable for others,[72] namely the imagination of alternative possibilities, the "productive imagination"[73] that moral imagination enjoins. We can consider our insights and their application to be "culture care"[74]: envisioning alternative ways of thinking, feeling, and acting in business that make more beautiful and satisfying and human ways of life possible. We can give those ideas to others as gifts that can be used for their thriving.[75] A Christian who imaginatively imports mental models from the thick self of her Wednesday-night Bible study, to envision new and gracious ways of dealing with difficult clients

in the thick self at work in her office on Thursday afternoon, is conceiving ways to reform that office and restore the social structures within it.

Christians also must evaluate the possibilities available to them and justify the new mental models that they choose to enact. That act of "normative free reflection"[76] is facilitated by the possibility of appealing to the consciences of colleagues.[77] Reasoning together enables errors to be corrected and practical considerations to be addressed. In that way, Christians can make positive and incremental contributions to nearly any institution, helping to renew them from within, and bless the people involved.[78]

Altogether, common grace provides both a theological account of the possibility of faith integration in the workplace and a normative impetus for doing so through moral imagination.

Implications

Implications for Theory

Framing moral imagination as a form of faith integration highlights a social psychological means by which disparate identities are brought to bear on ill-structured problems[79] in an equivocal context,[80] that is, one in which the forms and meanings of the alternatives at hand are unclear. Modeling the social psychology of faith integration as a multistep process may help to better explain when, why, and how it does and does not occur. The predictors and outcomes of moral imagination may well apply to faith integration in general, and vice versa.

Understanding moral imagination also contributes to the literature on common grace and reformational influence[81] by explaining *how* a Christian may have such an influence. The nuances of moral imagination highlight some necessary prerequisites for effective "culture care"[82] and suggest a set of practical steps that can be taken by Christians who hope to have such an influence.

Implications for Practice

Christians who would like to exercise moral imagination in their workplaces can increase their capacity to do so in three ways.

First, they should beware of work idolatry.[83] While it is important to be knowledgeable enough about one's work role to engage in the first problem-definition step of moral imagination, allowing that role to crowd out other roles within one's particular calling diminishes the other thick selves that provide alternative mental models. Without maintaining depth of commitment and insight in the other aspects of one's identity, it becomes difficult or impossible to critically

evaluate the mental models that are taken for granted in one's work role, let alone imagine alternatives. In fact, if one's work role does not include a significant number of other Christians, then neglecting connections into a faith community[84] outside of work may reduce the salience of religion to one's central thin self, leaving it generally inaccessible and potentially less important over time. Rather, Christians should place special emphasis on regular participation in a worshiping community.[85] This can forge relationships with other believers who increase the salience of faith-shaped identity and develop the set of faith-informed mental models needed for envisioning alternative possibilities.

Second, "complicate yourself"![86] A bigger library of mental models, both inside one's work role and outside it, facilitates[87] a more accurate characterization of the problem at hand in the first stage of moral imagination, it enables the elaboration of more adequate alternatives in the second stage, and it informs a more nuanced evaluation of those alternatives and justification of the chosen model in the third stage. Develop a range of experiences for oneself by pursuing a broad education with diverse and active learning opportunities. Read widely, reflecting on one's experiences and perhaps even journaling about them. In the process, discuss all of the above with trusted confidantes who are willing to challenge one's views as well as to affirm them. Varied experience and reflection build one's library of mental models.

Finally, Christians can increase the salience of their religious identities. Besides cultivating relationships with other believers, inside and outside of the workplace, Christians can also bring artifacts of their identity into their workplaces. Religious jewelry, Scripture quotes tacked to one's cubicle wall, or a Bible on one's desk[88] can all help to prime one's faith identity at work.[89] In fact, artifacts need not be merely physical: practices such as praying before meals (privately or publicly) or Lenten or Friday fasting can also help to remind someone of their identity.[90] Increasing the salience of one's faith identity at work makes it more likely that one's thin self will be able to access the mental models associated with that Christian identity as needed in the second stage of moral imagination.

Conclusion

Christians sometimes fail to act in ways that are consistent with their identities as new creations in Christ (cf. 2 Cor. 5:17). Yet moral imagination can help them to enhance human flourishing even in incongruous circumstances. This is one way to have a reforming influence in the workplace and participate in God's common grace for his creation.

Notes

1.   John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, vol. 1, trans. H. Beveridge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953).

2.   Mark Chaves, "SSSR Presidential Address: Rain Dances in the Dry Season; Overcoming the Religious Congruence Fallacy," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 49, no. 1 (2010): 1–14.

3.   Monty L. Lynn, Michael J. Naughton, and Steve VanderVeen, "Faith at Work Scale (FWS): Justification, Development, and Validation of a Measure of Judaeo-Christian Religion in the Workplace," *Journal of Business Ethics* 85 (2009): 227–43.

4.   Thomas P. Carpenter and Margaret A. Marshall, "An Examination of Religious Priming and Intrinsic Religious Motivation in the Moral Hypocrisy Paradigm," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 48, no. 2 (2009): 386–93.

5.   Laura L. Nash, *Believers in Business: Resolving the Tensions between Christian Faith, Business Ethics, Competition and our Definitions of Success* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1994).

6.   Denise Daniels, Margaret Diddams, and Jeff Van Duzer, "A Magnetic Pull on the Internal Compass: The Moderating Effect of Response to Culture on the Relationship Between Moral Identity and Ethical Sensitivity," *Journal of Religion and Business Ethics* 2 (2011): 1–29, available at http://via.library.depaul.edu/jrbe/vol2/iss2/3; Jeff Van Duzer, *Why Business Matters to God (And What Still Needs to Be Fixed)* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2010).

7.   Alan T. Y. Chan and Shu-Kam Lee, "Christ and Business Culture: Another Classification of Christians in Workplaces According to an Empirical Study in Hong Kong," *Journal of Markets & Morality* 12, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 91–111.

8.   Albert M. Wolters, *Creation Regained: Biblical Basics for a Reformational Worldview*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005).

9.   Mark Johnson, *Moral Imagination: Implications of Cognitive Science for Ethics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); Patricia H. Werhane, *Moral Imagination and Moral Decision Making* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

10. Shirley J. Roels, "The Business Ethics of Evangelicals," *Business Ethics Quarterly* 7, no. 2 (1997): 109–22.

11. Kenneth I. Pargament, "The Bitter and the Sweet: An Evaluation of the Costs and Benefits of Religiousness," *Psychological Inquiry* 13, no. 3 (2002): 177.

12. Truett Cathy, *It's Easier to Succeed than to Fail* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1989).

13. Tom Chappell, *The Soul of a Business* (New York: Bantam, 1993).

14. Gary R. Weaver and Jason M. Stansbury, "Religion in Organizations: Cognition and Behavior," in *Research in the Sociology of Organizations*, vol. 41, ed. Paul Tracey, Nelson Phillips, and Michael Lounsbury (Bingley, UK: Emerald Group, 2014), 65–110.

15. David W. Miller, *God at Work: The History and Promise of the Faith-at-Work Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 126.

16. Lynn, Naughton, and VanderVeen, "Faith at Work Scale (FWS)"; Monty L. Lynn, Michael J. Naughton, and Steve VanderVeen, "Connecting Religion and Work: Patterns and Influences of Work-Faith Integration," *Human Relations* 64, no. 5 (2011): 675–701.

17. Gary R. Weaver and Bradley R. Agle, "Religiosity and Ethical Behavior in Organizations: A Symbolic Interactionist Perspective," *Academy of Management Review* 27, no. 1 (2002): 77–97.

18. Weaver and Stansbury, "Religion in Organizations."

19. Blake E. Ashforth and Michael G. Pratt, "Institutionalized Spirituality: An Oxymoron?" in *Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance*, 2nd ed., ed. Robert A. Giacalone and Carole L. Jurkiewicz (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2010), 4–58.

20. Nancy E. Day, "Religion in the Workplace: Correlates and Consequences of Individual Behavior," *Journal of Management, Spirituality, and Religion* 2, no. 1 (2005): 104–35.

21. Weaver and Stansbury, "Religion in Organizations."

22. Dennis A. Gioia and Peter P. Poole, "Scripts in Organizational Behavior," *Academy of Management Review* 9, no. 3 (1984): 449–59.

23. John M. Darley and C. Daniel Batson, "'From Jerusalem to Jericho': A Study of Situational and Dispositional Variables in Helping Behavior," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 27, no. 1 (1973): 100–108.

24. Carpenter and Marshall, "An Examination of Religious Priming."

25. Lynn, Naughton, and VanderVeen, "Connecting Religion and Work."

26. Peter L. Benson, Michael J. Donahue, and Joseph A. Erickson, "The Faith Maturity Scale: Conceptualization, Measurement, and Empirical Validation," in *Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion*, vol. 5, ed. Monty L. Lynn and David O. Moberg (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1993), 1–26.

27. Justin G. Longenecker, Joseph A. McKinney, and Carlos W. Moore, "Religious Intensity, Evangelical Christianity, and Business Ethics: An Empirical Study," *Journal of Business Ethics* 55 (2004): 373–86.

28. Marjolein Lips-Wiersma and Colleen Mills, "Coming Out of the Closet: Negotiating Spiritual Expression in the Workplace," *Journal of Managerial Psychology* 17, no. 3 (2002): 183–202.

29. Sally Maitlis and Marlys Christianson, "Sensemaking in Organizations: Taking Stock and Moving Forward," *Academy of Management Annals* 8, no. 1 (2014): 57–125.

30. Lips-Wiersma and Mills, "Coming Out of the Closet."

31. Richard P. Nielsen, *The Politics of Ethics: Methods for Acting, Learning, and Sometimes Fighting, with Others in Addressing Ethics Problems in Organizational Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

32. Nielsen, *The Politics of Ethics*.

33. Blake Lingle, "A Faith-Reflective Business Model," in *Our Souls at Work*, ed. Mark L. Russell (Boise: Russell Media, 2010), 127.

34. Lingle, "A Faith-Reflective Business Model," 127.

35. Werhane, *Moral Imagination and Moral Decision Making*; Patricia H. Werhane, "Moral Imagination and Systems Thinking," *Journal of Business Ethics* 38 (2002): 33–42.

36. Gioia and Poole, "Scripts in Organizational Behavior."

37. Werhane, *Moral Imagination and Moral Decision Making*; Werhane, "Moral Imagination and Systems Thinking."

38. Werhane, *Moral Imagination and Moral Decision Making*.

39. Werhane, *Moral Imagination and Moral Decision Making*, 39.

40. The thick self roughly corresponds to what Craig Dykstra has called the "pastoral imagination" or the "ecclesial imagination." These are "ways of seeing and interpreting" that are shaped by long embodied experience in the role of pastor or congregant, respectively, and guide thinking, feeling, and acting in those roles. See Craig Dykstra, "Pastoral and Ecclesial Imagination," in *For Life Abundant: Practical Theology, Theological Education, and Christian Ministry*, ed. Dorothy C. Bass and Craig Dykstra (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 41–61.

41. Werhane, *Moral Imagination and Moral Decision Making*, 39.

42. Werhane, *Moral Imagination and Moral Decision Making*.

43. Dennis J. Moberg and Mark A. Seabright, "The Development of Moral Imagination," *Business Ethics Quarterly* 10, no. 4 (2000): 845–84.

44. David F. Caldwell and Dennis Moberg. "An Exploratory Investigation of the Effect of Ethical Culture in Activating Moral Imagination." *Journal of Business Ethics* 73 (2007): 193–204.

45. Karl Aquino and Americus Reed II, "The Self-Importance of Moral Identity," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 83, no. 6 (2002): 1423–40.

46. Brian G. Whitaker and Lindsey N. Godwin, "The Antecedents of Moral Imagination in the Workplace: A Social Cognitive Theory Perspective," *Journal of Business Ethics* 114 (2013): 61–73.

47. Whitaker and Godwin, "The Antecedents of Moral Imagination."

48. For example, Ron Blue, *Master Your Money*, new ed. (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2004).

49. Lips-Wiersma and Mills, "Coming Out of the Closet."

50. Matt Helms, "Witnesses: Detroit Water Shutoff Moratorium Too Risky," *Detroit Free Press*, September 23, 2014, http://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/detroit/2014/09/23/rhodes-water-hearing/16110927/.

51. Nielsen, *The Politics of Ethics*.

52. Karl E. Weick, *The Social Psychology of Organizing*, 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill. 1979); Scott Sonenshein, "The Role of Construction, Intuition, and Justification in Responding to Ethical Issues at Work: The Sensemaking-Intuition Model," *Academy of Management Review* 32, no. 4 (2007): 1022–40.

53. An anonymous reviewer helpfully pointed out the value of characteristically economic schemas such as counterfactuals, opportunity costs, and other abstractions that highlight considerations that would otherwise go unseen. The following essay contains a helpful discussion of several of these differences-that-make-a-difference: See Frédéric Bastiat, "What Is Seen and What Is Not Seen," in *Selected Essays on Political Economy*, trans. Seymour Cain (Irvington-on-Hudson, NY: Library of Economics and Liberty, 1995), 1–50, http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/956.

54. Marc S. Mentzer, "The Ethics of Displaying Workplace Piety—Or Should I Be at the Boss's Prayer Breakfast?" *Academy of Management Review* 27, no. 4 (2002): 501–4; and Van Duzer, *Why Business Matters to God*.

55. Abraham Kuyper, *Common Grace*, vol. 1, pt. 1, trans. Nelson D. Kloosterman and Ed M. van der Maas, ed. Jordan J. Ballor and Stephen J. Grabill (Grand Rapids: CLP Academic, 2013), 11.

56. Kuyper, *Common Grace*, 13, emphasis original.

57. Richard J. Mouw, *He Shines in All That's Fair: Culture and Common Grace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001).

58. Mouw, *He Shines in All That's Fair*.

59. Kuyper, *Common Grace*.

60. Kuyper, *Common Grace*.

61. Wolters, *Creation Regained*, 88.

62. Wolters, *Creation Regained*, 93.

63. Wolters, *Creation Regained*, 90–91.

64. Abraham Kuyper, *Wisdom & Wonder: Common Grace in Science & Art*, trans. Nelson D. Kloosterman, ed. Jordan J. Ballor and Stephen J. Grabill (Grand Rapids: Christian's Library Press, 2011).

65. Kuyper, *Common Grace*, 203.

66. Kuyper, *Wisdom & Wonder*, 82–83.

67. Kuyper, *Wisdom & Wonder*, 83.

68. Werhane, *Moral Imagination and Moral Decision Making*, 103.

69. Wolters, *Creation Regained*.

70. Werhane, *Moral Imagination and Moral Decision Making*.

71. Kuyper, *Wisdom & Wonder*.

72. Kuyper, *Wisdom & Wonder*.

73. Werhane, *Moral Imagination and Moral Decision Making*, 121.

74. Makoto Fujimura, *On Becoming Generative: An Introduction to Culture Care* (New York: International Arts Movement, 2013), 20.

75. Of course, others may reject these gifts. Giving a meaningful and expressive gift that symbolizes a relationship, or hopes for a relationship, requires courage. It also requires a thoughtful understanding of the recipient because inappropriate gifts are sometimes rightly rejected. Gift-giving is pleasant to discuss but difficult to do well.

76. Werhane, *Moral Imagination and Moral Decision Making*, 121.

77. Kuyper, *Common Grace*.

78. Wolters, *Creation Regained*.

79. Herbert A. Simon, "On the Structure of Ill Structured Problems," *Artificial Intelligence* 4, no. 3–4 (1973): 181–201.

80. Weick, *The Social Psychology of Organizing*.

81. Wolters, *Creation Regained: Biblical Basics for a Reformational Worldview*.

82. Fujimura, *On Becoming Generative*.

83. Lee Hardy, *The Fabric of This World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990).

84. Pargament, "The Bitter and the Sweet."

85. James K. A. Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013).

86. Weick, *The Social Psychology of Organizing*, 243.

87. Weaver and Stansbury, "Religion in Organizations: Cognition and Behavior."

88. Weaver and Agle, "Religiosity and Ethical Behavior in Organizations"; Weaver and Stansbury, "Religion in Organizations." I would like to thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing out that some of these practices may be infeasible in some workplaces. Under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, employers are obligated to reasonably accommodate the religious practices of employees, unless those practices impose an undue hardship on the employer's business. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) provides guidance with respect to the reasonable accommodations to which employees may be entitled, and the undue hardships that may excuse an employer from providing them. United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, "Religious Discrimination," 2013, http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/types/religion.cfm.

89. Lips-Wiersma and Mills, "Coming Out of the Closet."

90. Weaver and Stansbury, "Religion in Organizations."