

# Tobias Brügger

# The Christian Body at Work

Spirituality, Embodiment,  
and Christian Living

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# The Christian Body at Work

P V E R  
V A L A  
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L A G O



# Religion – Wirtschaft – Politik

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Band 21

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**Nomos**

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*For God, who said "Let light shine out of darkness,"  
is the one who shined in our hearts to give us  
the light of the glorious knowledge of God in the face of Christ.*

*But we have this treasure in clay jars,  
so that the extraordinary power belongs to  
God and does not come from us.*

*We are experiencing trouble on every side,  
but are not crushed; we are perplexed,  
but not driven to despair;*

*we are persecuted, but not abandoned;  
we are knocked down, but not destroyed,*

*always carrying around in our body the death of Jesus,  
so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our body.*

*For we who are alive are constantly being handed over to death for Jesus' sake,  
so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our mortal body.*

*As a result, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.*

*Second Corinthians 4:6–12*



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# 1 Researching Christianity at work

The scandal invoked by reference to the label ‘Christian’ is still effective today, even if someone’s positioning as a Christian in contemporary Western societies rarely faces direct opposition in the form early Christians experienced it, by being forced to either abandon their Christian commitment or be executed.<sup>1</sup> As far as contemporary workplaces are concerned, deep-seated unease with the Christian label can currently be observed, for example, in the emergence of a whole field of research that addresses faith, spirituality, and religion in present-day workplaces, and for which Christian existence seems to be nearly a non-topic. It only refers to the term ‘Christian’ reluctantly, and if it does, then mainly as a historical remnant, which it does seem not to know what to do with exactly, and thus prefers to speak, in more neutral terms, of concepts like faith, spirituality, and religion, thus trying to keep the Christian scandal at a distance. Unease with the Christian scandal can also be observed in the public relations work of some contemporary theologians who engage with questions of current workplaces by making an effort to convince their readers that Christianity is not obtrusive but useful, implying that it does not confront humans with any existential claims, but is roughly in line with nice and decent conduct. Now, ironically, this attempt at taming Christianity has hardly been attractive or useful to either Christians or non-Christians because the very effectiveness and attractiveness of Christianity is hidden, as I will argue, right in the midst of the bloody scandal in which a Christian mode of existence participates. The study of Christians at work which I propose here is an attempt to recover an existential understanding of the term Christian as it relates to modes of daily living in contemporary workplaces in Western societies.

In the remainder of this introductory chapter, I will describe this study’s research questions and objectives (1.1), and subsequently briefly sketch the three types of data (or *voices*) which I am going to consider: first, two main bodies of research literature relevant to the study of Christians at work (1.2); second, empirical data from a study of Christian managers in Switzerland (1.3); and, third, a combination of various sources, or ‘hermeneutical lenses’, which are themselves not particularly concerned with work contexts, but which help to explore and accentuate the embodied character of a Christian mode of existence (1.4.). In addition to the discussion of the types

1 On the role of executions in Christian identity formation, see Horrell (2007) and chapter 5 of the present study.

of data I am going to use, I will sketch the outline of the present dissertation (1.5).

### 1.1 The study of Christians at work: Research question and objectives

The present dissertation addresses the question of Christian modes of existence in contemporary workplaces in Western contexts. A main starting point for this research is the seemingly unspectacular observation that there are people who are Christians *and* work *at the same time*. Given their existence, I ask how Christians are Christians at work, how they engage with the relationship between their Christian identity and their work activities, and how they *experience* and *embody* their Christianity at work and make sense of it. In other words, what does it mean to work and be a Christian at the same time? In this section, I am going to address different options to narrow down the research question (1), specify the particular terminology employed in the phrasing of the question (2), and identify the research objectives (3).

1) The empirical data<sup>2</sup> discussed in the present study focuses on Christian managers in business contexts in Switzerland. Even though particular definitions of terms like ‘business’ and ‘manager’ can help to confine the fieldwork sampling of research subjects<sup>3</sup>, I argue that these terms are not well-suited to limiting the research question. First, these terms (in particular the terms ‘management’ and ‘manager’) entail a certain vagueness and abstraction (see 3.5), and second, the distinction of managers from non-managers is of little help when studying Christian existence at work (see, again, 3.5). Taking account of Henry Mintzberg’s (2009:12) definition of a manager as “someone responsible for a whole organization or some identifiable part of it” and Michael Black’s (2008, see 5.4.3) contention that in corporate contexts it makes sense to refer to *every* member of the corporation as a corporate manager, I hold that the term Christian, existentially understood, indicates a form of existence in which it becomes secondary whether individuals are labeled as managers or not.<sup>4</sup> In this respect, while

2 See sections 1.3, 6.1, and 6.2 in the present dissertation, and Brügger (2018); Brügger and Huppenbauer (2019).

3 For example, the term ‘business sector’ is helpful as an empirical sampling criterion (I use it to refer to the context of *for-profit* organizations (even if the term ‘business’ can be used in a broader sense).

my own empirical work has (so far) been concerned with business management contexts in particular,<sup>5</sup> in the present study I adopt a focus on (Christian existence in) work contexts in general and include studies across a variety of work contexts, types of work, and professions in the literature review (see chapters 2–5).<sup>6</sup>

Geographically, while I review studies across a variety of contexts,<sup>7</sup> many of the existing studies concentrate on contemporary Western societies. In the light of this literature, it seems suitable to focus the research question on ‘contemporary Western’ contexts. While my perspective is, of course, influenced by the particular geographical context in which I have been

- 4 A similar point applies to the notion of ‘the secular’ with reference to work contexts. In terms of empirical sampling processes, it seems to make sense to speak of *secular* workplaces in contrast to religious workplaces and thus to focus, for example, on people working in business contexts instead of, say, church or para-church contexts. However, in the context of the study of Christians at work, the relationship of Christians to ‘the world’ (see chapter 4.2) becomes important in a way which cannot be adequately considered through the simple allocation of secularity and religiosity along the lines of different work contexts (on secular workplaces, see e.g. Whipp 2008:52–72, on secularity, see also Brügger 2010:60–78).
- 5 See Brügger (2018, 2010); Brügger & Huppenbauer (2019); Brügger & Kretzschmar (2015).
- 6 Current research on faith, spirituality or religion at work covers different work *contexts*, such as, for example, the business world (e.g. Brophy 2014, Delbecq 2009, Lambert 2009, Nash 2007), the finance and retail service industries (e.g. Chen and Yang 2012, Chen et al. 2012), manufacturing (e.g. Chen et al. 2012), factory farming (e.g. Zuzworsky 2001), aviation (e.g. Milliman et al. 1999), hospitality (Gatling 2015), policing and law enforcement (e.g. Moran 2017), the public sector (e.g. Inauen et al. 2010), higher education (Bell-Ellis et al. 2015, Epstein 2002, Konz & Ryan 1999, Sikkema & Van der Werff 2015), healthcare (e.g. Delbecq 2010, Kinjerski & Skrypnek 2008), religious contexts (e.g. Inauen et al. 2010, Lewis-Anthony 2014, Payer-Langthaler & Hiebl 2013, Pfang 2015, Yahanpath et al. 2017), and secular organizations (Whipp 2008). Another group of publications addresses faith, spirituality or religion at work with respect to different *types* of work or different *professions* (for an overview, see e.g. Zolnai & Flanagan 2019), such as physicians (Miller and Dorjee 2013), lawyers, judges, law professors and legal staff (Sullivan 2013), accounting and reporting work (Rodgers & Gago 2006), or engineering (Sikkema & Van der Werff 2015).
- 7 For example, Arab Middle East (Tlaisy 2015), Australia (Crossman 2015a, 2015b), Brazil (Vasconcelos 2010), China (Cao 2007, Zhang 2020), France (Bell 2008), Germany (Moll 2020), Ireland (Cullen 2011), India (Hicks 2003), Indonesia (Neubert et al. 2015), Kenya (Neubert et al. 2015), New Zealand (Singh, Corner, and Pavlovich 2016), The Netherlands (Mazereeuw, Graafland, Kaptein 2014), Nigeria (Nakpodia, Shrivs & Sorour 2018), North America/US (Hicks 2003, Mitroff & Denton 1999a, Lambert 2009, Neubert and Dougherty 2013, Sikkema & Van der Werff 2015), Puerto Rico (Escobar 2011), Singapore (Hicks 2003), South Korea (Jeon et al. 2013), Sri Lanka (Fernando & Jackson

engaged empirically, I try to sketch a broader account of Christian living<sup>8</sup> at work contextualized<sup>9</sup> for present-day Western contexts. I leave it to others to assess the validity of my analysis for contexts other than ‘contemporary Western’ ones. Thus, the present study focuses on Christians engaged in contemporary workplaces and asks the questions *how Christian existence is embodied in present-day work settings* and *what it means to live as Christians in work contexts in contemporary Western societies*.

2) In an earlier formulation of the research question, I conceptualized the problem of Christian living by employing the notion of faith and by asking: how do Christians integrate (or relate) their faith and their work?

2006), Turkey (Kalafatoğlu & Turgut 2019, Karakas & Sarigollu 2019, Kirkbesoglu & Sargut 2016), UK (Bell 2008).

- 8 I will use the terms ‘Christian existence’ and ‘Christian living’ interchangeably, partly because I do not want to give too much weight to any particular term referring to Christian modes of existence (see chapters 6 and 7) and to remind myself that the label Christian(s), existentially understood, qualifies first and foremost people, not concepts. Terminologically, I have followed Arthur Rich (see also 5.3.5) in referring to a Christian way of life as Christian existence (see, for example, Rich 1984:132). However, to explore the meaning of the term (see chapters 4–6), I have only selectively drawn on Rich’s writings and his metaphoric (see Rich:1984:121) understanding of resurrection, and have focused more on the notion of Christian existence as characterized by the actual and bodily participation of individuals in Christ’s death and resurrection (see e.g. Miller 2014, Kelly 2010). For a discussion of Rich’s ‘existential’ position, see Behrendt (2014:58). I do not particularly identify with a theological existentialist movement (see McGrath 2011:147f), but I do, as many others have done before me, emphasize the importance of “the immediate, real-life experience of individuals” (McGrath 2011:147). A (merely) metaphoric interpretation of Christ’s death and resurrection in their relationship to the formation of a Christian mode of existence might appear to be an intellectual way-out for those who do not want to ignore the New Testament accounts completely in this regard, but still try to avoid some of the conceptual and existential force of the New Testament accounts. However, if the Christian location of individuals at the intersection of the timeless and the timebound (see 4.2) is taken into account, there is no longer a conceptual need for such a way-out and one can, instead, explore the existential contours and implications of the participation of contemporary Christians in Christ’s death and resurrection (see Kelly 2010, Miller 2014:134f). In Rich’s (1984:121) metaphoric understanding of ‘resurrection’, the term “will nicht eigentlich etwas erklären, was am dritten Tage nach der Kreuzigung geschehen ist”. I am not sure what Rich means by “eigentlich” and by “erklären”, but, the term has surely been used, for example in Paul’s epistle to the Romans, to describe *how* “was am dritten Tage nach der Kreuzigung geschehen ist” shapes the formation of the way of life of those who (bodily) belong to Jesus Christ (see also the discussion in 5.3.6).
- 9 It is contextualized in that it draws on empirical data from Switzerland and considers literature covering a variety of different geographical contexts, of which many can be subsumed under the label ‘contemporary Western’ contexts.

However, this turned out to be potentially problematic phrasing in the light of contemporary research on faith, spirituality, and religion in work contexts, as it emerged primarily in management and organization studies (see 1.2). By putting the question this way, I assumed that ‘faith’ is the element which characterizes a Christian as *Christian*. While the assumption of faith as determining Christian identity can be justified in a Christian theological context,<sup>10</sup> it turned out to be somehow *misleading* in the light of current research relevant for the study of Christians in contemporary work contexts. In this research, instead of a single focus on faith, there are *three* main terms used which relate to Christian living at work: faith, spirituality, and religion<sup>11</sup> at work. In the light of this research, which employs a diversity of understandings of the key terms of faith, spirituality, and religion at work (see 2.2), the assumption of faith as a key characteristic displayed by Christian managers becomes particularly problematic. In the relevant research discourses, the notion of faith is used in a variety of different ways, and while its implied meanings are not necessarily unrelated to Christian living, faith is definitely *not* (and quite plausibly so) understood as a particular characteristic of *Christian* identity. If the usage of the notion of faith is related to Christian identity or living in these discourses, then primarily in such a way that the term Christian serves to categorize a certain *type* of faith (among other types), differentiating it, for example, from “Islamic faith” (Al Arkoubi 2013, Neal 2013). It turned out that there is no agreement in current research concerning the definition of the key terms of faith, spirituality, and religion in their relationship to work contexts (see 2.2). Given this terminological situation, I reframed the earlier question of ‘how do Christians integrate faith and work?’ in a way that targets more explicitly the meaning of the term ‘Christian’ and the formation of Christian existence by asking how Christian existence is embodied at work and what it means to live as Christians at work.

It turned out that, conceptually, clarification of the term Christian with regard to the formation of Christian modes of existence can serve as a basis from which to clarify and conceptualize the notions of faith, spirituality, and religion at work, not in general, but *in their relationship* to a mode of exist-

10 By drawing, for example, on the Pauline writings (see e.g. Eastman 2018, Ueberschaer 2017, and Schliesser 2016) or from the work of various ‘classical’ Christian theologians (such as Anselm of Canterbury, Martin Luther, or Karl Barth, see McGrath 2011). On the Augustinian *fides qua creditur*/*fides quae creditur* distinction, see McGrath (2011:409) and section 7.3.1 in this dissertation.

11 Additionally, the term religion occurs in different variations, such as ‘religiousness’ and ‘religiosity’.

tence pertinent to *Christians*. Thus, clarification of the term Christian(s) provides the basis for consideration of the notions of faith, spirituality, and religion in the study of Christians at work.

This conceptual work is omitted by those who explore Christians at work by simply employing one of the terms faith, religion, or spirituality to refer to the Christianity of their research subjects. This becomes a problematic move in the light of the present diversity of meanings of the notions of faith, spirituality, or religion, as they are used in relevant contemporary research discourses. The consequence of this terminological diversity for a conception of Christian living which leans heavily on one of the notions of faith, spirituality, or religion at work, without clarifying their location in the overall project of Christian living, is that the talk of faith, spirituality, or religion at work in connection with the theme of Christian existence becomes potentially misleading. Faith, as a characteristic of Christian identity, so this dissertation's argument goes, refers primarily to and implies a particular mode of existence (as marked by allegiance or belonging to Christ, see chapter 4). Such an existential Christian understanding is, however, usually not implied in the notion of faith as it is used in current discourses on faith, religion, and spirituality in management and organization studies (see chapters 2 to 4). This is why the phrasing of the research questions explicitly targets the existence of Christians. This allows me to explore the available usages of the term Christian(s) and relate them to Christian existence at work and to key terms used in extant research.

3) Given the present terminological–conceptual situation in current research, my aim is to appreciate present contributions of the research relevant to the study of Christians at work and advance extant research by exploring and accentuating the concrete and bodily character of how Christians live at work. A main step in support of this focus on Christian embodiment will be recovering a historically informed existential understanding of the term ‘Christian/s’.

The two main objectives of the present study are thus:

- 1) To identify and assess the contributions of and gaps in existing research with regard to the study of Christians in present-day Western workplaces.
- 2) To advance the understanding of Christian living at work by exploring its concrete and embodied character.

In the following section, I will identify the two main bodies of literature which I suggest represent the bulk of ‘existing research’ relevant to the study of Christians at work.

## 1.2 Target discourses: management studies and theology

To sketch the contours and contents of a social scientifically and theologically informed study of Christians at work, I will take into account two main bodies of literature: first, the literature corpus on faith, spirituality, and religion at work (fsw<sup>12</sup>), as it has emerged mainly in the context of management and organization studies and, second, theological approaches to contemporary workplaces.<sup>13</sup> This distinction refers broadly to the academic disciplines that are used as starting points, contexts, and target discourses to address various aspects of Christian existence at work.<sup>14</sup> I consider these

- 12 Given the trinity of ‘faith, spirituality, and religion’, in which each of the three terms can (but does not have to) refer or relate to Christian existence, I will, in the following, refer to this field of research on faith, religion, and spirituality in work contexts, as it has emerged mainly in the context of management and organization studies, as fsw research. Fsw is meant to be a descriptive label of extant research which employs the terms of faith, religion, and spirituality with reference to work contexts (for alternative labels for the field, see 2.1).
- 13 The anthropology of Christianity is a further stream of research from within the social sciences, in addition to management and organization studies, which is relevant to the present study in important respects (for an overview, see Robbins 2014, and Bialecki, Haynes & Robbins 2008), even though it has, to my knowledge, not focused on work contexts in contemporary Western societies. While I focus mainly on literature from management and organization studies, as well as on theology in this study, I think a more systematic attempt to bring together the anthropology of Christianity and the study of Christians at work would be a worthwhile future endeavor. In this dissertation, I will confine myself to hinting at some connections in 1.4, and I will also try to roughly place my approach to Christians with regard to conversations about definitions of Christianity in the anthropology of Christianity in 7.2.
- 14 The distinction works well to roughly identify two distinct bodies of relevant literature, even if it is an oversimplification (on the different theoretical and academic contexts of fsw research, see 2.1). I will differentiate between fsw and theological approaches, even though theological approaches also sometimes employ the terms faith, spirituality, or religion with regard to workplaces, and this is, therefore, not a watertight distinction. I discuss theological approaches to the workplace which emphasize that theirs is a *theological* approach in chapter 5, but have included some of the theologians that address questions of faith or spirituality at work, without particularly claiming a theological frame or stance, in my discussion of fsw research in chapters 3 and 4. Writers with a theological background that are thus included in my discussion of fsw research include Margaret Benefiel (chapter 3, she also served as Chair of the Academy of Management's MSR



two types of research literature to constitute the bulk of what can be termed ‘existing research’ with regard to the study of Christians at work. For the present dissertation, these two bodies of literature represent the reference points in terms of extant research, as well as the target discourses to which I seek to contribute.

Having broadly identified this study’s target discourses, I will now turn to some of the key concepts used in the respective research and discuss their function in selecting the literature on this subject area. When selecting a sample of the literature relevant for the study of Christians at work, one is confronted with terminological problems, both with regard to the part of the subject relating to ‘Christians’ and to that relating to ‘at work’. In both respects, various terms are used with considerable semantic ambiguity.<sup>15</sup>

As I have already briefly outlined above with regard to the research question (1.1), the theme of Christians in work contexts is addressed, in extant research, mainly via the notions of faith, spirituality, or religion at work. In other words, what characterizes Christians as Christians is mostly referred to in academic texts as either their *faith*, their *spirituality*, or their *religion*. In the respective journal articles, one of the most popular terms used in this regard is ‘workplace spirituality’. My impression from working with this research literature is that the recent rise in research output on the themes of faith, spirituality, and religion in work contexts has emerged mainly in the context of management and organization studies and leans heavily on the notion of ‘workplace spirituality’<sup>16</sup>. It is in this context of a rising interest in spirituality in management and organization studies that the related topics of faith at work and workplace religion have received fresh attention. The three main terms of faith, spirituality, and religion are used in a variety of ways, with sometimes distinct and sometimes overlapping or even identical fields of meaning. This terminological situation is further complicated by the fact that, with regard to the ‘at work’ aspect of the study of Christians at work, a number of different relevant terms are used, such as ‘work’, ‘workplace’, ‘business’, ‘corporation’, ‘management’, ‘leadership’, and ‘entrepreneurship’. However, for example with regard to management, it is not possible to clearly differentiate between two subsets of the

Interest Group), Michael Black (4.1.1, but see also 5.4), Vivian Ligo (4.3), David Miller (chapters 3 & 4), Inese Radzins (4.3), and Travis Tucker (4.1, Tucker has a background in philosophy & religious studies, but served at the Center for Faith and Culture at Yale Divinity School).

15 On definitions, see section 2.2.

16 And/or the related notions of ‘spirituality at work’ or ‘organizational spirituality’.

aforementioned literature, one concerned with managers and managerial work, and the other not addressing management.<sup>17</sup> This is partly due to the variety of different conceptions of ‘management’ and ‘work’ available and the broadness of these terms. A similar point also applies to the focus on *business* contexts.<sup>18</sup> Although there are studies which explicitly focus on business contexts in terms of for-profit contexts, many different workplace-related concepts, such as work, corporation, business, management, leadership, and entrepreneurship, can be related to *both* for-profit *and* not-for-profit organizations and work contexts. It will become clear in the course of the literature discussion (see chapters 2 & 3) that, because of the semantic ambiguity of these terms (both with regard to the part of the study of Christians at work relating to ‘Christians’ and that relating to ‘at work’), they do not qualify as appropriate criteria for the selection of the literature I focus on, even though, for reasons of manageability of the literature sample, it would be convenient to focus strictly on, say, the literature on ‘faith’ in ‘business’, or ‘spirituality’ in ‘management’. However, a publication which uses the terminology of ‘faith at work’ can be just as relevant for the study of Christians at work as a publication which employs the terminology of ‘religion’ and ‘management’. Thus, focusing on only one combination of these terms (of, say, faith, religion, or spirituality, on the one hand, and of, say, work, business, or management, on the other hand) would produce an arbitrary sample. The only way to adequately consider the relevant literature on this subject area is by analyzing each of the different strands of texts that adopt terms like ‘work’, ‘workplace’, ‘business’, ‘corporation’, ‘management’, ‘leadership’, and ‘entrepreneurship’ with regard to the notions of ‘faith’, ‘spirituality’, and ‘religion’, and by exploring their contribution to the study of Christians at work. Therefore, this review of the literature relevant to the study of Christians at work will include the literature on the three main notions of ‘faith’, ‘spirituality’, and ‘religion’ in work contexts and will apply a similar inclusiveness in terms of the work-related concepts considered.

In the present dissertation, I will first focus on fsw research, as it is mainly shaped by contributions from management and organization studies (chapters 2–4), and subsequently address theological approaches to contem-

17 Even though it is possible to identify some texts which clearly focus on managers, such as Andre Delbecq’s (2004) “The Christian manager’s spiritual journey”, others are more ambiguous in this regard (see section 3.5).

18 Which we employ in our empirical research, in terms of for-profit organizational contexts, see Brügger (2018) and Brügger and Huppenbauer (2019).

porary work contexts (chapter 5).<sup>19</sup> The literature selection and review have been broadly orientated toward the following questions:

- How are fsw constructs defined in the literature? (chapter 2)
- How is fsw related to and situated in theoretical contexts in terms of academic disciplines and discourses, important thinkers and methodological traditions and approaches? (chapter 2)
- How can fsw as a research area be presented from an overview perspective and how can the research area be structured? (chapter 3)
- What theory building efforts have been undertaken and what aspects of a theoretical analysis of fsw are addressed? (chapter 3)
- In what way does fsw research contribute to the study of Christians in contemporary workplaces? (chapter 4)
- What can theological approaches to work or work contexts contribute to the study of Christians at work? (chapter 5)

Formally, I have included articles and essays published in academic journals<sup>20</sup> and anthologies, as well as book publications and monographies in the literature sample.<sup>21</sup> In considering the most important publication chan-

19 Which employ similar workplace-related concepts, such as, for example, work, business, and corporation (see chapter 5).

20 While some journals focus strongly on fsw topics (such as *Faith in Business Quarterly*, *Journal of Management, Spirituality & Religion*, *Journal of Religion and Business Ethics*, *Journal of Biblical Integration in Business*, *Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership*), a number of other academic journals have (more or less) recently published special issues on fsw topics (in chronological order): *Journal of Business Ethics* (1986; religious studies & business ethics), *Journal of Managerial Psychology* (1994), *Journal of Organization and Change Management* (1994), *Business Ethics Quarterly* (1997; Western religious approaches to business ethics), *Chinmaya Management Review* (1999), *Journal of Organizational Change Management* (1999), *Journal of Organization and Change Management* (1999), *American Behavioral Scientist* (2000), *Journal of Management Education* (2000), *Leadership Quarterly* (2001; book reviews on leadership & spirituality), *Journal of Adult Development* (2001, 2002), *Journal of Organizational Change Management* (2003), *Organization* (2003), *Theology Today* (2003), *Business and Professional Ethics Journal* (2004; Christian perspectives on business ethics: faith, profit, and decision-making), *Leadership Quarterly* (2005), *Journal of Management Inquiry* (2005), *International Journal of Organizational Analysis* (2005), *Journal of Management Development* (2010; practical wisdom in management from the Christian tradition), *Journal of Business Ethics* (2011; the encyclical-letter ‘*caritas in veritate*’), *Organization* (2012; theology, work and organization), *Koers — Bulletin for Christian Scholarship* (2014), *Journal of Business Ethics* (2017; Christian ethics and spirituality in leading business organizations), *Journal of Religious Ethics* (2017), *Management Research Review* (2017; innovative research methods in management, spirituality, and religion),

nels of the respective target discourses of management and organization studies and theology, the fsw review places an emphasis on articles, and the review of theological approaches includes more book publications (in particular in the discussion of theological ethics). When selecting the literature, I searched for publications by using a variety of terms and combinations (such as workplace spirituality, faith and management, spirituality and management, faith and business, religion and management, faith and work, spirituality and work, spirituality and business, God and management, Christians at work, et cetera) on the Rechercheportal of the Zentralbibliothek Zürich (<http://www.recherche-portal.ch>) and on Google Scholar (<https://scholar.google.ch>).

With respect to fsw research, I started by identifying and reading overview articles, and asked how the research area is approached and presented in these articles. Subsequently, I followed the literature references in the overview articles and complemented this literature with texts found through additional searches on the Rechercheportal and on Google Scholar and by considering the various special issues on fsw which have been published by a number of academic journals (see above). In addition, I also searched for fsw articles in journals directly (in particular, the *Journal of Management, Spirituality and Religion* and the *Journal of Business Ethics*). The sample of fsw literature discussed includes more than 400 texts, most of them journal articles. New studies are being published continually.<sup>22</sup>

Academy of Management Perspectives (2019; papers from the symposium ‘faith in management scholarship and practice’), *Business & Society* (2020; the macro-social level impact of religion on business), *Organization Studies* (2020; spirituality, symbolism and storytelling), *Journal of Business Ethics* (2020; values, spirituality and religion: family business and the roots of sustainable ethical behavior).

- 21 By focusing on academic discourses, I do not address the large body of (mainly exhortational) practitioner literature on faith at work (for a recent example, see Curtas 2015). A hybrid form (between practitioner and academic literature) is represented by publications authored by academics with a target audience that includes practitioners (see for example Buszka & Ewest 2020, Daniels & Vandewarker 2019, Keller & Alsdorf 2014).
- 22 I have been using e-mail alerts from the following journals to continually add relevant publications to the sample: *The Academy of Management Review*, *Action Research*, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *American Sociological Review*, *Biblical Theology Bulletin*, *Body & Society*, *Business Ethics Quarterly*, *Business & Society*, *Critical Research on Religion*, *Currents in Biblical Research*, *Dialog*, *Faith and Philosophy*, *Field Methods*, *Human Relations*, *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, *International Review of Mission*, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, *Journal of Business Ethics*, *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, *Journal of Management Inquiry*, *Journal of Management, Spirituality & Religion*, *Journal of Management Studies*, *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, *Journal of Religious*

While doing this search for fsw literature, I also encountered a few theological approaches to the workplace. Addressing the contribution of theology to the study of Christians at work poses the problem that there is a huge amount of theological literature which seems to be somehow peripherally related to the study of Christians at work, yet a dearth of literature that actually addresses it directly. Therefore, I will discuss texts that address the question of a theological neglect of the workplace (see 5.1). To offer an idea of the broadness of the conceptual space addressed, I will sketch the use of different ‘entry concepts’ in theological engagement with the workplace (see 5.2). To illustrate and discuss some of the problems and possible contributions of theological engagement with the workplace, I will explore five theological ethical approaches to the workplace (5.3), as well as different ‘theologies’ related to workplaces, such as the theology of work, of business and management, and of the corporation (see 5.4).

Except for a focus on German-speaking contributions to theological ethical engagement with the workplace,<sup>23</sup> I have not limited the literature sample to studies from particular geographical contexts (although many of the studies available focus on Western contexts), assuming that the concrete incorporation of faith, spirituality, and religion at work may display both context-specific characteristics and properties which are similar across geographical contexts. Therefore, I have treated studies from various geographical contexts as potentially contributing to fsw and to the study of Christians at work in contemporary Western contexts.<sup>24</sup> In addition to considering existing research, the study also incorporates insights based on pri-

Ethics, Journal of Sociology, Labor Studies Journal, Leadership, Management and Labour Studies, Missiology, Organizational Research Methods, Organization, Organization Studies, Qualitative Inquiry, Qualitative Research, Religious Studies Review, Reviews in Religion & Theology, Sociological Methods & Research, Sociology, Strategic Management Journal, Studies in Christian Ethics, Theological Studies, Theology, Theology Today, Work and Occupations, and Zygon.

23 For more detailed information on the literature sample concerning theology, see the respective sections in chapter 5.

24 With regard to Switzerland, I have not found any publications in academic journals addressing Christian living in contemporary workplaces in a Swiss context, apart from the publications by Brügger and Huppenbauer (2019), and Brügger and Kretzschmar (2015). As far as the German context is concerned, there is a study of Christian managers in Germany by Andrea Werner (2008), published in the Journal of Business Ethics. On German managers, see also Eugen Buss’ (2012) work in his *Managementsoziologie*, and the study by Kaufmann, Kerber, and Zulehner (1986). On the historical role of religious socialism in Switzerland, see for example Fluder (1996), Fluder and colleagues (1991), Ruffieux (1969), and Schmid (2015:105–109). I thank Daniel Waeger for

mary data collected among Christian managers in Switzerland, to which I will turn presently.

### 1.3 Empirical data and method

In addition to reviewing relevant existing research, I conducted a study of Christian managers in the German-speaking part of Switzerland which served to provide an empirical grounding or foundation for the account of Christians at work presented in this dissertation (see chapters 6 and 7).<sup>25</sup> In the present section, I will briefly describe the data (1) and methods (2) employed in the collection and analysis of the data. The status of the theoretical sketch developed on the basis of this empirical study in relation to other theoretical elements considered in this dissertation will be addressed in chapter 6. For more on the role of practitioner perspectives in this research approach, see 1.4.

1) The main intention behind collecting the empirical data was to produce a diverse set of accounts of scenes of Christian existence embodied<sup>26</sup> at work that provides a basis on which to develop an empirically grounded theoretical sketch. These accounts have been generated through a combination of manager observations and manager interviews. I have used Henry Mintzberg's (2009:12) definition of a manager as "someone responsible for a whole organization or some identifiable part of it". The sampling focused on managers from the business sector in the German-speaking part of Switzerland<sup>27</sup> who identify themselves as Christians and with an interest in faith, spirituality, or religion at work. The original goal was to conduct

pointing out to me the importance of Pier Luigi Giovannini and other Christians in the events that preceded the formation of Ethos (a Swiss foundation which promotes socially responsible investing), and to the fact that Dominique Biedermann, co-founder of Ethos, has been a practicing Catholic (in personal correspondence with the author. On Biedermann, see also Waeger & Mena's 2019 study on shareholder activists as moral entrepreneurs).

25 The results of this empirical study (conducted as part of SNSF Project No. 169838 on faith–work integration) will be published via this dissertation and a planned additional article (for a draft, see Brügger & Huppenbauer 2019).

26 The research focus on embodiment will be described in 1.4.

27 Most of the managers were located in Switzerland, except research participant 1 (P1), who was located in southern Germany (which is geographically adjacent, as well as culturally, linguistically, and economically close, to the German-speaking Swiss context). I included some data from her because I hold it to be instructive and because it was her report of a working situation which first inspired the idea to focus the data collection on concrete scenes of Christian existence embodied at work.

observations and interviews with 8 to 12 managers.<sup>28</sup> For the sampling, I put together a list of potential research participants.<sup>29</sup> We<sup>30</sup> contacted the managers from the list via e-mail, telephone, or in person, to arrange a date for an interview plus (if possible) observation. During the data collection process, we found that half of the managers interested in participating in the study were prepared to give an interview but said that it would not be possible for us to accompany them during their work, mostly for reasons of confidentiality. Finally, while 9 out of 27 managers contacted either did not answer or rejected the invitation to participate in the study, we conducted interviews with 18 managers and made additional observations of 9 out of the 18 managers interviewed.

We have included variation in the sample with regard to sector and size of organization, as well as with regard to the hierarchical position, gender, and denominational orientation of the managers. Variety was a crucial criterion for the selection process, since the aim was not to find some kind of universal ‘ingredient’ of Christian existence at work, but to produce accounts that offer a glimpse of the variety of Christian existence embodied in work contexts. According to Mintzberg (2009:238), variety is a characteristic feature that should be considered in the study of managing:

There are so many managers in such a wide variety of places that I made no pretense of developing a scientific sample, even if I could have figured out what that means. In any event, my intention was not to test any hypothesis or prove anything specific, so much as to gain insight into managing in its many varieties.

In this light, my aim was to gain insight into Christian existence as embodied by business managers ‘in its many varieties’. To ensure variation in terms of *sectors*, the sample includes managers from the consumer goods

- 28 See Truschkat, Kaiser, and Reinartz (2005) on the problem of sample size in grounded theory studies.
- 29 Some of the managers were publicly known as Christians, others were personally known or recommended by research participants or others. We also contacted a few networks to ask for recommendations of potential research participants: the Bankenbibelgruppen, the Unternehmernetz, the VBG, and alliance f.
- 30 The SNSF support, which covered part of my employment as a doctoral researcher, allowed us to engage Daniel Schättli as a research assistant to help with the data collection, in particular in recruiting managers for the study, and conducting interviews, field observations, and transcription (as part of SNSF project no. 169838 on faith–work integration). While I developed the research design, Daniel Schättli conducted 13 interviews and 6 observations, while I conducted 5 interviews and 3 observations. I assume full responsibility for how the empirical data is used in this dissertation to support the theory development concerning the study of Christians at work.



industry (P2<sup>31</sup>), delicatessen trade (P15), finance (P9, P10), health care (P17), industry (P3, P6, P8, P11, P13), information technology (P1), management consulting (P7), marketing communications (P14), online-marketing (P16), real estate (P12), retail business (P5), and telecommunications (P4). In terms of organization *size*, the sample includes managers from all four categories of enterprises<sup>32</sup>: microenterprises (1–9 employees; P14, P15, P16, P18), small enterprises (10–49 employees: P6, P7, P8, P12), medium-sized enterprises (50–249 employees: P11, P13), large enterprises (250 and more employees: P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P9, P10, P17).

In terms of *hierarchical positions*, we have included managers from the three main hierarchy levels ('top', 'middle', and 'bottom', see Mintzberg 2009:6). In particular, the sample includes 3 chairpersons of the board (P3, P12, P14), 8 CEOs (P5, P6, P7, P8, P13, P15, P16, P18)<sup>33</sup>, a CFO (P11), 4 department managers (P2, P4, P9, P10), an education manager (P17), and a project manager (P1). In terms of *gender*, the sample includes 5 female (P1, P4, P15, P16, P17) and 13 male (P2, P3, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, P18) managers.

As regards *denominational orientation*, we often found dynamic orientations which were modified throughout the managers' biographies, and which could also include parallel affiliations<sup>34</sup> with more than one denomination<sup>35</sup> at the same time. The denominational orientation of the managers can be specified according to the denominational background in which the managers grew up and with regard to current participation<sup>36</sup>. The sample includes 1 manager with a Lutheran background (P8), 11 managers with a Reformed Church background (P3, P6, P7, P9, P10, P12, P13, P14, P16, P17, P18), 5 managers with a Roman Catholic background (P1, P4, P5, P11, P15), and 1 with a Salvation Army background (P14). The sample includes

31 P2 stands for 'research participant 2'.

32 As proposed by the Swiss Federal Statistical Office. See <https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/fr/home/statistiques/industrie-services/entreprises-emplois/structure-economique-entreprises/taille-forme-juridique-secteurs-repartition-regionale.html> (accessed 4 June 2018).

33 Of these, P6, P7, P15, P16 identified themselves as founder-CEOs and P8, P18 as owner-CEOs.

34 For example, P15 partakes in both Catholic and Reformed Church events and activities.

35 For an overview of the religious landscape in Switzerland, see Stolz and colleagues (2014), and Baumann and Stolz (2007).

36 I counted all managers as active participants with regard to church institutions, where they currently engage in some form of regular activities (for example, P16 is engaged in volunteer work in religious education in the Reformed Church, and at the same time participates in particular worship services at ICF on a regular basis. I thus categorized her both as an active participant in the Reformed Church and ICF).



3 active participants in the Roman Catholic Church (P1, P11, P15), 1 active participant in a Chrischona congregation (P8), 2 active participants in an FEG congregation (P5, P13), 2 active participants at ICF (P6, P16), 7 active participants in the Reformed Church (P3, P7, P9, P12, P14, P15, P16), 2 active members of an SPM congregation (P2, P10), 1 active member of a Vineyard congregation (P18), and one practicing Christian manager currently not affiliated with any institutional church organization (P17). The fieldwork and data analysis consisted of a range of activities, which I will describe now.

2) The main instrument employed in the data collection was a combination of observation (see Lüders 2000:384–401, Knoblauch 2003:77–81, Mintzberg 1970, 2009, Martinko & Gardner 1985) of the managers during sequences of work and semi-structured interviews (Hopf 2000:349f, Flick 2014:207–227). The combination of observation and interviews seems to be well-suited to producing accounts of Christian existence embodied at work, which, first, display the actual practice of the managers and, second, also take into account the Christian experience and practice which informs and shapes their lifestyles. In the interview, one or more scenes from the working sequence observed were discussed in more detail. This allowed us to triangulate the manager's perspective and the observer's perspective on particular situations. This provided the basis for producing accounts of scenes of Christian existence embodied in real-life working situations, which I then used to develop an empirically grounded understanding of Christian existence at work.

If the managers allowed us to accompany them during a sequence of their working day, we usually conducted the observation prior to the interview. The first interview phase consisted of questions about the scenes observed and about the managers' experiences at work.<sup>37</sup> The second interview phase included questions about the managers' spiritual or faith biographies and about their current form of Christian living and practice(s). In the third interview phase, we asked questions about the relationship between the managers' current Christian lifestyles and their work, first, with regard

37 If the managers did not allow us to accompany them during a work sequence, we asked them to recall relevant scenes from their recent work experience to link our questions to concrete situations.

to the scenes observed and, second, in general. This resulted in a quadripartite structure<sup>38</sup> for the data collection process:

- 1) observation during a sequence of work
- 2) interview phase 1 (questions on the scenes observed)
- 3) interview phase 2 (questions on spiritual or faith biography and on current form of Christian living)
- 4) interview phase 3 (questions on the relationship between Christian existence and work)

For the study's observation activities, Mintzberg's (2009) observation of managers served as a point of orientation. He accompanied the executives for one day, wrote down what he saw chronologically and analyzed this conceptually. However, while Mintzberg adopted a general perspective on managing, our own focus was more specifically on the relationship between Christian existence and work. We accompanied the managers during a meeting or another sequence of a working day. For the interview part which followed the observation, the manager and the interviewer selected one or more scenes from the working sequence observed for further discussion. The managers were asked to name a scene or situation which was particularly relevant or interesting to them. The interviewer could then suggest (an) additional scene(s) according to the salience of noticeable aspects. These selected scenes provided the key content for the first interview phase, where we sought to reconstruct the scenes by asking what happened, how the managers experienced the respective scene(s), and in what way it/they was/were relevant to them. In the second interview phase, we sought to reconstruct the crucial aspects of the managers' faith or spiritual biographies and Christian lifestyles by using the notions of 'religious'<sup>39</sup> habitus' and 'body pedagogics' as the conceptual background with which to study the embodiment of particular orientations, as acquired through particular means (activities), and in having particular experiences, which result in embodied outcomes.<sup>40</sup> In particular, we asked the managers to describe the activities and practices that characterize how they live out their faith, spiri-

38 In some cases, the data was collected in two meetings, whereby the questions from interview phase 2 were discussed in a first meeting because they had no direct link to the scenes observed, and observation and additional interview parts were conducted in a second meeting.

39 On the relationship between the label 'religious' and Christian existence, see 6.1 and 7.3.2.

40 See Mellor & Shilling 2014, 2010a, 2010b; for a discussion of their approach, see 1.4, 4.2, and 6.2.

tuality, religion, or Christian identity<sup>41</sup>, and how these practices and orientations had developed in the course of their biographies. In addition, we asked them to describe the experiences related to these activities or practices, as well as the concrete effects these (activities or related experiences) provoked (in terms of ‘embodied outcomes’ and orientations).

The interviews were designed as semi-structured one-on-one interviews. As in the ‘problem-centered interview’ developed by Andreas Witzel (see Flick 2014:223–227), we used narrative stimuli to collect biographical data focusing on a specific problem, namely the formation of a Christian mode of existence at work. Similarly to Witzel, we combined different interview styles, ranging from conversational to confrontational. In contrast to Witzel’s approach, the interviews do not stand alone in our research, but draw directly on the observation data and seek to reconstruct the interconnections between concrete work situations and the managers’ Christian orientation. Different types of question have been integrated to do justice to the problem-centered interests: from open and narrative stimuli, prompting and ad hoc questions, to more directive questions. If possible, we also collected general data (professional and personal background, specific jobs and functions of the managers, sector-specific challenges, etc.). We tried to formulate short, simple, specific and concrete questions (see Foddy 1994:51; Berg 2007:105) which we could use as starting points and adapt them to the needs of particular interview situations.

The interviews and observations were conducted between 21 May 2014 and 23 April 2018. Wherever possible, the interviews were recorded digitally and transcribed<sup>42</sup>. For reasons of confidentiality, all sensitive information, such as names of people and organizations, has been anonymized. I analyzed the data with the aid of the software MAXQDA (see Kuckartz 2007), employing a grounded theory approach of open, selective, and theoretical coding (see Glaser & Strauss 1967; Flick 2014:397–417; Breuer 2010; Kuckartz 2007:72–82) as a frame of reference for structuring the coding and theory development process. The results of the data analysis were discussed at a meeting in March 2018 with the doctoral supervisor (and SNSF project no. 169838 main applicant), Prof. Dr. Markus Huppenbauer, and

41 We tried to formulate our questions in a conceptually open way and work with the terminology the interviewees used, usually by, first, offering them different options and, subsequently, sticking to their preferred terminology. However, our efforts were sometimes crossed by the efforts of the managers to adapt to our terminology (e.g. P8).

42 The data collected from the interviews with P1, P3 and parts of the data from P2 were generated out of ad-hoc situations and were not recorded but written down after the interview.

with Daniel Schächli, the research assistant employed within the respective SNSF project. In addition, the empirical data analysis and theory development were also presented and discussed at a meeting of the praktisch-theologische Sozietät at the University of Zurich under the guidance of the co-supervisor of this dissertation (and SNSF co-applicant), Prof. Dr. Ralph Kunz in April 2018, at a conference on 'Glaube und Management' at the Vienna University of Economics and Business in June 2018, at the Faith@Work Summit in Chicago in October 2018, and at a session on Christian perspectives on management, spirituality and religion at the Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management in Boston in June 2019.

#### 1.4 Research approach: Christian embodiment

This dissertation's focus on the embodied character of Christian living corresponds to a stress on embodiment which can currently be found in a number of disciplines, and which refers not so much to a well-defined concept, but to an attitude or perspective in which phenomena, such as mental processes or social interaction, are viewed and explored in their relation to the body (Tschacher & Storch 2012:259f, for an introduction, see Fingerhut, Hufendiek & Wild 2013). The basic assumption of an embodiment perspective is that these phenomena and processes are always embedded in a bodily context. In the following, I will briefly address two particularly interesting notions<sup>43</sup> related to embodiment which I hold to be relevant for

43 Two other important notions related to embodiment, which I can only mention here briefly, are those of embodied cognition and the somatic marker. 1) Recent approaches in the field of cognitive sciences propose the notion of embodied cognition, which questions a neat mind/body separation, that is, the idea that there is a given separation between one's mind and one's bodily actions and behavior. Instead, they propose that cognition itself is an embodied phenomenon. Such an embodiment perspective implies an understanding of cognitive entities (such as thoughts and beliefs) as always embedded in a bodily context (e.g. Gallagher 2012, Tschacher & Storch 2012, Hoffmann & Pfeifer 2011, Norris 2005). 2) Another interesting concept which highlights the crucial role of the body in the formation of human behavior is the idea of a 'somatic marker'. Originally presented as a hypothesis of how body signals influence behavior (the 'somatic marker hypothesis', see Damasio 1996), it has since been developed into a broader theory of decision-making (the 'somatic marker framework', see, e.g., Reimann & Bechara 2010). Some authors try to combine it with economic theory (Bechara & Damasio 2005) and ethics (Sobhani & Bechara 2011). As a neurological account of how somatic signals shape human behavior, it is an interesting conversation partner for an embodied account of work behavior. I thank Barbara Studer for bringing the idea of a 'somatic marker' to my attention.

the study of Christians at work<sup>44</sup>, that of the religious habitus (and the related body pedagogics) and the Christian notion of incarnation (1). Subsequently, I will describe a conglomerate of resources that I will draw on in this study to explore and accentuate the bodily character of Christian living at work (2). In addition, I will address two questions concerning the relationship between insider and outsider perspectives with regard to studying Christians at work (3).

1) With the notions of the religious habitus and body pedagogics, Philip Mellor and Chris Shilling (2014, 2010a, 2010b) introduce a conceptualization of patterns of the embodiment of religious attitudes and orientations in a person's biography. Mellor and Shilling emphasize the role of the body for the perpetuation of religious orientations. In their 'body pedagogics' approach, they describe three analytically distinct factors for research: First, the *means* and activities through which people encounter their key values, techniques, and dispositions. Second, the *experiences* and perceptions they have while they acquire or fail to acquire these values, techniques, and dispositions. And third, the acquisition of these attributes results in the embodied *outcomes* (techniques, dispositions, orientations) of religious transmission. Mellor and Shilling refer to the set of embodied outcomes as a religious habitus. The guiding research questions in the study of religious body pedagogics are thus: Which embodied (religious) orientations, dispositions, values, and techniques can be identified in a concrete situation or person? And how and through which activities and experiences were they acquired? Transferred to the study of managers, the notion of the religious habitus permits the study of the biographical emergence of spiritual or religious orientations in their relation to current bodily practices.

For the study of Christians at work, the recent emphasis on the body, as developed in various academic accounts of embodiment, can also be made intelligible with reference to the Christian notion of incarnation. As I will argue, an empirically orientated description of how Christian modes of existence are embodied at work displays interesting similarities in structure and substance to a Christian incarnational account of existence (see 6.2).

44 For research on the body in organization studies, see, for example, Heaphy and Dutton (2008), Pullen and Rhodes (2015, 2014), and Styhre (2004).

The Christian notion of incarnation is a traditional concept which resonates in the writings of a variety of contemporary scholars.<sup>45</sup> The notion of incarnation, as shared by mainstream Christianity, indicates that God is embodied in the human being Jesus Christ. Traditionally, incarnation is understood as *both historical and ongoing*. In its historical dimension, it holds that the historical person Jesus of Nazareth is the self-embodiment of God in human form. In this light, Jesus' birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension can all be understood as aspects of the embodiment of God in Jesus Christ (see e.g. Kelly 2010). In its ongoing aspect, the notion of incarnation refers to the idea that Jesus Christ is *continually* embodied in concrete contexts through those who belong to Him. The importance of the concept for an understanding of Christian living in contemporary work contexts lies in the notion of incarnation as ongoing, which is expressed in the Pauline writings<sup>46</sup> and has been received by mainstream Christian theology: the risen Christ is embodied in those who belong to him. Their *bodies* are members of Christ (e.g. 1 Cor 6). They are members of the *body* of Christ (e.g. 1 Cor 12). In this light, an individual's belonging to Christ, which is indicated in the term Christian (see 4.2), is marked by a bodily mutuality between Christ and His members (see chapters 5 and 6). A number of writers bring up the notion of incarnation in its ongoing sense and ascribe a formative power to the dynamics it refers to, speaking, for example, of a "continuing" (Nelson 1995:47) or "expanding" (Kelly 2010:792) incarnation. Dietrich Bonhoeffer (2005:94–99)<sup>47</sup> and Colin Miller (2014) have particularly taken up the Pauline notion that it is the historical incarnation, in particular Christ's life, death, and resurrection, which defines the shape of the ongoing incarnation in the life of human beings. In such incarnational

45 See, for example, Brock 2011, Cahill 2013 & 1995, Cole-Turner 2013, Dumitrascu 2014, Flaman 2011, Fotiade, Jasper & Salazar-Ferrer 2014, Glancy 2010, Green 2011, Hamori 2010, Hauerwas 2004 & 1995b, Hays 1996, Henry 2000, Holmes 2012, Kelly 2010, Kim 2008, Kohli Reichenbach 2011, Martin 1995, McFarland 2014 & 2005, McGrath 2011, Meiring & Müller 2010, Mount Shoop 2010, Nelson 1995, Nessian 2012, O'Donnell Gandolfo 2014, Prusak 2014, Radzins 2017, Richardson 2003, Roose 2005, Schwartz 2010, Shi 2008, Sigurdson 2008, Simmons 2019, Thomas 2007, Tjørhom 2009, Verhey 1995, and Wright 2011.

46 On Johannine incarnation and Pauline embodiment, see in particular Kelly (2010). On Pauline Studies, see also the recent special issue of the Journal for the Study of the New Testament on Susan Eastman's work (in particular, Eastman 2018, Linebaugh 2018 and Rabens 2018).

47 On Bonhoeffer, see also Kohli Reichenbach (2011:303–310).

terms, Christian living concerns one's bodily existence in quite specific ways, as I will explore in chapters 5 and 6.

Thus, the theoretical background of the embodiment perspective employed in this study is characterized by these two notions, a sociological understanding of embodiment and a theological notion of incarnation as ongoing. I will combine both lenses to form the interdisciplinary theoretical background and as sensitizing conceptions for studying Christians at work. Conceptually, I will bring the lenses of embodiment and ongoing incarnation to bear upon the study of Christians at work by employing the concept of 'Christians'. As I will outline in chapters 4 to 7, the concept of 'Christians' opens up a space in which to bring together crucial theological, Christological, pneumatological, ecclesiological, sociological–anthropological, ethical, and organizational–managerial facets with regard to how people live their lives.

2) To explore the bodily character of Christian living at work, I will, in addition to a review of the two main bodies of relevant literature (see 1.2 and chapters 2–5) and to empirical data from Christian managers at work (see 1.3 and chapter 6), draw on a number of concepts and resources. These have no particular focus on contemporary workplaces. However, I will bring them to bear upon the study of Christians at work as 'hermeneutical lenses' and in a comparative way (or as 'conceptual conversation partners'), in which I contrast some aspects with and integrate others into the present account of Christian living at work. The main conceptual resources in this regard are:

- the notion of a religious habitus as proposed by Philipp Mellor and Chris Shilling (4.2.1, 6.2.1)
- Shannon Smythe's work on παραδίδομι and παράδοσις and the correspondence between divine and human handing-over (4.2.2)
- the synoptic and Pauline accounts of the notion of παράδοσις (4.2.2)
- Clive Staples Lewis' account of Christian living in its relation to morality (4.2.2, 5.3.6)
- David Horrell's work on the label Χριστιανός (4.2.2, 5.3.6, 6.1.2)
- A Pauline perspective on the life of followers of Christ and, in particular, Colin Miller's interpretation of Romans on participating in the body of Christ through practice (4.3, 5.3, 5.5, 6.1, & 6.2)<sup>48</sup>

48 I am particularly grateful for the work of Colin Miller on Paul. Yet I also believe that his work in particular, and Pauline theology in general, has much more to offer to studies on Christians in work settings than what I have been able to consider in the present



- the notion of a habitus as proposed by Pierre Bourdieu (5.5 and 6.1)
- Anthony Kelly's work on the life of faith as an actual form of participation in the body of Christ (5.5; 6.2),
- Viktor Frankl's notion of finding meaning in life (6.2)
- Ephesians 2:10 with regard to the question of the embodiment of Christian existence at work (6.2)

While these concepts and accounts are quite diverse, the main aim which organizes my reference to these approaches is to explore and accentuate the contours and contents of the bodily character of a Christian mode of existence at work. Let me add here a word on the role of the biblical scriptures in the present study. In the study of Christians at work, it is, first, to be taken into account that the practitioners studied use biblical texts as a point of orientation for how they live their lives (see 6.1 and Brügger 2018; Brügger & Huppenbauer 2019). Second, my approach to the biblical texts differs in its hermeneutical aims from standard exegetical literature, in that the *object* of my exegesis is, properly speaking, not the biblical texts but the mode of existence pertinent to Christ-followers, whereas the biblical texts function as an instrument<sup>49</sup> with which to *interpret* Christian existence.<sup>50</sup> With respect to this hermeneutical process, which is informed by historical sources but targets contemporary formations of Christian living, the above resources are diverse: some of these resources are biblical texts (the syn-

study. I am particularly aware that I could not give enough attention to the topics of justification (which I believe could shed more light on the nitty-gritty of the just life that Christians live, at work and elsewhere) and the practicalities of the communal aspects of Christian living independent of or outside of their work contexts (this study has focused more on the basic situation of many Christians in contemporary Western work contexts who are there as individual Christians in not particularly 'Christian settings'). I hope that my study will shed some light on the potential of the notion of Christians in order to open up a conceptual space for further theological work on work and work contexts, and as a conceptual basis or reference point for linking basic theological topics like justification or sanctification to current work contexts.

49 Or as the basis for particular *lenses*, as Gümüşay (2018) has recently suggested.

50 This said, my reading of New Testament texts (except for a short glance at Isaiah 36f in a footnote in 4.2.2, the texts engaged in this study are from the New Testament) is in some respects close to what has been termed an 'apocalyptic' exegesis, which is associated with the writings of Ernst Käsemann and, more recently, for example, with Christiaan Beker, J. Louis Martyn, Douglas Campbell, and Susan Eastman (see Miller 2014:1). In this interpretative school, 'apocalyptic' refers to the "concern for the centrality of the revelation of Jesus Christ as the all-determining and world-making reality" (Miller 2014:1). On Christian apocalyptic theology, see for example Duff (2018) and Siggelkow (2018).



optic and Pauline accounts of the notion of *παράδοσις*, Ephesians 2:10 and other New Testament passages), others represent primarily exegetical work on biblical texts (Miller, Horrell), while others relate exegetical texts to contemporary questions (Kelly, Smythe), and still others directly address more contemporary forms of life (Lewis, Bourdieu, Mellor & Shilling, Frankl). These various sources will be discussed with regard to current relevant research from management and organization studies (chapter 4), theological approaches to the workplace (chapter 5), empirical data from the study of Christian managers at work (chapter 6), and the study of Christians at work more broadly (chapters 6 and 7).

3) Let me address here two related possible reservations about the approach to the study of Christians at work sketched in this introduction. First, one could argue that it is problematic (or even inappropriate) to bring together social scientific and theological research on the subject because of a demand upon academic research to clearly differentiate between outsider and insider perspectives. Second, one could also argue that it is problematic (or even inappropriate) to include practitioner perspectives in theory building, due to the same demand to clearly differentiate between outsider and insider perspectives. These are important reservations to be addressed, since this study draws upon social scientific approaches (chapters 2 to 4), theological approaches (chapter 4 and 5), and empirical data from Christian managers (chapter 6). Questions of perspectivity will thus play a role at various points in this study, but here I wish to address them with the purpose of the present study in mind. I will proceed by, first, specifying the intention of this research in the light of these reservations and, second and third, addressing the two reservations individually.

First, both reservations relate to what I hold to be a crucial quality for researching Christian embodiment with regard to work contexts. Even if this study offers some indications of how various perspectives with regard to Christians may or may not differ, the goal of my research has been neither to presuppose nor to establish a simple insider–outsider perspective distinction concerning Christians. Rather, the intention of this study has been to put forward an academic perspective on Christians at work which can be made *intelligible* to academic researchers from various fields (that is, observers, ‘outsiders’, who may or may not be Christians at the same time, and thus also ‘insiders’), as well as to practicing Christians (‘insiders’). The demand for transdisciplinary and practical intelligibility is a demand pertaining to the *academic* quality of the study. The two reservations sketched above focus on different aspects of that claim, to which I will now turn.

Second, one might argue that, when one is studying Christians academically, it is crucial to differentiate clearly between Christian insider perspectives and (an) academic outsider or observer perspective(s).<sup>51</sup> But what would that mean? A study of Christians at work has to take account of, engage critically with, and incorporate the perspectives of the practitioners studied. The actors studied

have perspectives on and interpretations of their own and other actors' actions. As researchers, we are required to learn what we can of their interpretations and perspectives. Beyond that, grounded theory requires, because it mandates the development of theory, that those interpretations and perspectives become incorporated into our own interpretations (conceptualizations). ... its procedures force researchers to question and skeptically review their own interpretations at every step of the inquiry itself. A major argument of this methodology is that multiple perspectives must be systematically sought during the research inquiry. This tenet contributes to building theory inclusive of lay conceptions and helps to prevent getting captured by those (Strauss & Corbin 1994:280).

Thus, researchers conducting research on Christians have to be careful to use terms and concepts appropriate for studying Christians, and to *incorporate* the Christians' perspectives into their own interpretations. Additionally, in my view, it should be possible to make such research intelligible to practitioners. Research perspectives which are intelligible only to researchers, but cannot—at least to a certain degree—account for and resonate with practitioner perspectives and practices, show a lack of 'fitness', in terms of their being "faithful to the everyday realities of a substantive area" and with regard to their being "closely related to the daily realities (what is actually going on) of substantive areas" (Glaser and Strauss, quoted in Strauss & Corbin 1994: 276).<sup>52</sup> So, the quality needed here seems not to be so much that of a strict separation of perspectives, but that of critical consideration and integration of multiple perspectives.

51 On the us/them dichotomy, see also Scott (2005).

52 I will argue below that, with regard to Christians, some approaches to fsW are actually largely unfit. They cannot, however, be blamed for that if they do not explicitly adopt a focus on Christians or claim that their approach to faith, spirituality, or religion at work is inclusive of Christians. A good example of the 'fitness' of a theory with regard to the study of Christians can be found in the sociological understanding of a 'Christian cultural repertoire' by Mellor and Shilling (see 4.2.1), which takes into account and systematizes the practices, perspectives, and interpretations of Christian actors. For other examples, see McDougall (2009), and Robbins' (2014:161) description of Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity. Studies in the anthropology of Christianity (Robbins 2014) seem to show particular sensitivity toward the subtleties of questions of 'fitness' in this regard.

Third, I have stated that this study of Christians at work is to be both social scientifically and theologically informed. However, one might say that it is problematic to combine approaches from these two different research backgrounds because of a need, again, to differentiate clearly between insider and outsider perspectives. Theology, one might argue, represents a Christian ‘insider perspective’, and the social sciences an ostensibly more neutral ‘observer perspective’. However, such an allocation of disciplines according to an insider–outsider schema would ignore, first, that an academic study of Christians, irrespective of its disciplinary starting point, necessarily takes on an observer role and, second, that both social scientific and theological research are never completely neutral or objective, but operate within complex dynamics of discursive and traditional influences.<sup>53</sup> I will address some of these traditional influences on fsw research in 4.1.2. The demand for a social scientifically as well as theologically informed study of Christians arises already from the fact that both of these strands of academic work have produced relevant and critical approaches with regard to studying Christians at work. I have therefore sought to consider a variety of essential research helpful to the study of Christians, without applying a preconceived schema of insider and outsider perspectives along disciplinary or other lines to judge which kind of approach is fitting. And I will show how different perspectives resonate with each other (see e.g. 4.2). My intention and hope are that the present study will be accessible for researchers interested in the subject from the social sciences (in general, and from management and organization studies in particular) as well as those from theology and other disciplines.

### 1.5 Structure: Approaching the Christian body at work

Having introduced the aim and scope of this dissertation in the present chapter, I will now offer a brief overview of the following chapters. In chapter 2, I will sketch how fsw is situated with regard to theoretical contexts and discuss important definitions of fsw terms. Furthermore, chapter

53 On the question of the differentiation between insider and outsider perspectives with regard to the relationship between the (social scientific) study of religion and theology, focusing particularly on the work of Fritz Stolz, see Brügger (2012). Questions of perspectivity with regard to the study of Christians have been recently raised and addressed in anthropology of Christianity, see for example Robbins on definitions of Christianity held by anthropologists (2014:162) and by those whom they study (2014:166). On the relationship between the social sciences and theology with regard to the study of Christians, see also Jenkins (2012) and Cannell (2005).

2 identifies open questions in terms of two terminological problem areas: first, the vagueness, abstraction, and confusion of the three main terms of faith, spirituality and religion at work and, second, the problem of the meaning of the term Christian(s).

In chapter 3, I will sketch the main theoretical contours of current fsw research focusing on the theory of spiritual practice, different levels of analysis of fsw, the notions of leadership, management, and entrepreneurship in the light of fsw, and ways of assessing fsw. In addition to the two terminological problem areas identified in chapter 2, I describe the use of workplace-related concepts (such as management, work, business, leadership, etc.) as a third terminological challenge to fsw research in chapter 3. In the light of chapter 3, the problems encountered in chapter 2 can be addressed as this research adds clarity with regard to the relationship of spirituality to the notions of work, management, and leadership. However, I argue that a residual vagueness remains and that the fsw research available is not able to adequately address the terminological problems related to the trinity of faith, spirituality, and religion at work and that no *general* solution is in sight, but that a clarification of the term Christian(s) permits a *contextual* understanding of these terms in relation to the study of Christians at work.

In chapter 4, I will point out how, in fsw research, Christians are mainly conceptualized as members of a tradition or of a group of related traditions (where membership is marked by the adoption of particular beliefs and practices). I will look at the roles tradition plays with regard to fsw research. Additionally, I will consider the particular relationship of Christians to traditional influences from a sociological perspective, as well as from a Christian perspective which draws on traditional sources. Consideration of the particular relationship between Christian modes of life and tradition makes it clear that a simplistic and linear construal of Christians as members of (a) tradition is deficient. Such a traditionally oriented understanding of Christians tends toward a reductionistically nominal understanding of the term Christian (where it is used as a mere label without a clearly specified substance) and is prone to ignore the existential connotations of the term. These more existential connotations of the term Christian(s) are addressed in accounts of a Christian spirituality at work, which indicate the role of the existential (and existentially disruptive) experience of participating in Jesus Christ in the formation of a Christian mode of existence.

In chapter 5, I will discuss theological approaches to the workplace by addressing the question of a theological neglect of contemporary workplaces, theological entry concepts to the workplace, theological ethics and the workplace, and theologies of work, business, and the corporation. I will

outline how some accounts explicitly consider the existence of Christians in work contexts, while others display what I term the ‘blindness’ and ‘lameness’ problems of theological engagement with the workplace. In terms of ‘blindness’, some theological approaches address or propose Christian perspectives on work and workplace-related issues, but tend to ignore the Christian mode of existence as the actual existential location in which a Christian perspective on work contexts is necessarily embedded. The ‘lameness’ problem refers to a theological approach which does account for a Christian mode of existence, but does not consider in particular how such a Christian mode of existence may ‘walk’ or be embodied in contemporary work contexts. The direction for the cure is indicated by theological approaches that do explicitly consider the existence of Christians in present-day work settings.

In chapter 6, I will outline how the terminological–conceptual challenges of fsw research with regard to the study of Christians at work, as well as the ‘blindness and lameness’ challenges of theological approaches, can be remedied by recovering the existential aspects of the term ‘Christian’. This can be achieved in part, I propose, by studying actual Christians at work and by building on empirical accounts of Christian living at work. In particular, I will draw from the framing practices of Christians to offer a possible frame in which to locate the notions of faith, spirituality, and religion with regard to Christians’ existence. In addition, I will also draw upon an empirically oriented analysis of Christian existence at work to sketch the contours and contents of Christian living as embodied in present-day work contexts. To set the empirically informed account of Christian living in a broader conceptual context, I will discuss it against the background of extant research and some additional relevant theoretical accounts, such as Bourdieu’s habitus and Frankl’s meaning in life, in order to describe and argue for the priority of the existential aspects of the term. I will propose ‘being a Christian’ or Christian existence as a key category for the study of Christians at work.

In the conclusion (chapter 7), I will recap the main line of thought this dissertation follows and offer some concluding comments concerning the terms and concepts which have featured prominently in the discussion of fsw research and theological approaches, that is, faith, spirituality, religion, ethics, and tradition. I will argue for the notion of ‘Christians’ as a key concept which opens up a space for taking into account crucial theological, Christological, pneumatological, ecclesiological, sociological–anthropological, ethical, and organizational–managerial aspects of living at work. The

chapter sketches the relationship between the terms faith, spirituality, religion, ethics, and tradition and the study of Christians at work.



## 2 Introducing contemporary research on faith, spirituality, and religion in work contexts

The theme of faith, spirituality, and religion in the workplace (fsw) has developed as an academic field of study, roughly speaking, in the last two decades. It has emerged mainly in the context of management and organization studies, but is heterogeneous in terms of the variety of authors from different academic backgrounds that contribute to the field. There has been, to date, much debate about basic definitions and what the main aspects and dimensions of fsw and the key areas of study should be. Between 1995 and 2015, more than 300 peer-reviewed journal articles related to the subject of fsw<sup>1</sup>, and over twenty special issues related to fsw<sup>2</sup> were published.

Many reasons have been suggested for the rising interest in fsw. As negotiation of the role of faith, spirituality, and religion in work contexts in present-day Western societies is still under way, Ramarajan and Reid (2013:621) argue in their “Shattering the myth of separate worlds” that recent developments are “blurring the distinctions between work and non-work life domains.” Lynn, Naughton, and VanderVeen (2009) indicate the “religious affiliation of a sizable portion of the global workforce” and Miller (2003) points to a growing movement of practitioners who seek to integrate faith and work. Walker (2013:453.459) outlines the individual costs of separating one’s faith and work, such as tension and stress, and the positive life and work outcomes of perceived faith–work integration.<sup>3</sup>

The chapter will proceed as follows. In section 1, I will address how fsw research can be situated with regard to relevant theoretical contexts. In section 2, I will discuss available definitions of key terms.

- 1 For statistical data on articles on spirituality in the social sciences in general, and in the area of business and management in particular, see for example Oswick (2009). See also the citation analyses by Fornaciari and Lund Dean (2009) and Gundolf and Filser (2013), Cullen’s (2016) bibliometric review of research on religion and spirituality with reference to management, and Tackney, Chappell, and Sato’s (2017) analysis of MSR papers.
- 2 See the list of journals with special issues in 1.2.
- 3 On different ways of justifying fsw, see section 3.4.2.



## 2.1 Fsw in theoretical contexts

As a starting point, I will address the question of how the field of fsw is referred to in relevant review articles, and I will present the key issues that the authors of these articles identify (2.1.1). Subsequently, I will situate the study of fsw in its relationship to relevant academic disciplines and discourses (2.1.2.), influential thinkers (2.1.3), and relevant methodologies (2.1.4).

### 2.1.1 *Naming of the field and key issues raised*

A number of overviews of the field and discussions of the current state of research are available (e.g. Benefiel, Fry & Geigle 2014, Benefiel 2007, Delbecq 2009, Fornaciari & Lund Dean 2009, Gundolf & Filser 2013, Houghton, Neck & Krishnakumar 2016, Long & Driscoll 2015, Lynn & Burns 2014, Miller & Ewest 2013a, Oswick 2009, Tackney, Chappell & Sato 2017, Tracey 2012, Vasconcelos 2018).<sup>4</sup> A look at these texts reveals a number of things: First, a variety of different terms and expressions are used to name the field, with no consensus in sight. Second, a variety of different themes are identified as key issues, which then shape the different maps of the field, with no consensus on how the “territory” (e.g. Benefiel 2007, Smith 2008) is to be mapped, or what the main “trails” (Benefiel 2007) leading through fsw terrain are.

1) As regards the naming of the field, which I refer to as fsw (faith, spirituality, and religion in work contexts), a number of different terminologies are used: workplace spirituality, spirituality in the workplace (e.g. Houghton, Neck & Krishnakumar 2016, Long & Driscoll 2015, Lynn & Burns 2014, Miller & Ewest 2013a, Oswick 2009), MSR (management, spirituality, and religion; e.g. Fornaciari and Lund Dean 2009), SRW (spirituality and religion in the workplace; Benefiel, Fry & Geigle 2014), spirituality and business, spirituality within management studies, spirituality and leadership (Delbecq 2009), research in management with regard to religion (Gundolf & Filser 2013), and spirituality in organizations (Benefiel 2007). This list, which indicates the diversity of the terminologies used by the authors of overview articles, can easily be expanded to include other phrases used in the broader body of fsw literature to refer to the field, such as faith and spirituality at work (Phipps & Benefiel 2013), organizational spirituality (Smith 2008),

4 See also three overview articles published in German: Alewell & Moll (2019, 2018) and Schneider (2012).

faith at work (Lynn, Naughton & VanderVeen 2009, Miller & Ewest 2013c, Miller 2007, 2003, Whipp 2008), integration of faith and work, faith–work integration (Lynn, Naughton & VanderVeen 2009, Walker 2013), faith and business (Wood & Heslam 2014), religion and work, work–faith integration (Lynn, Naughton & VanderVeen 2010), spirituality at work (Tourish & Tourish 2010), spirit at work (Kinjerski & Skrypnek 2006), and spirituality of work (Ligo 2011, Ottaway 2003).

What conclusions (if any) can be drawn from the use of these diverse terminologies? And does it make sense at all to speak of one field in the face of such a diversity of terms? In chapter 1, I introduced my suggestion that, from the viewpoint of the study of Christians at work, it makes sense to speak of *one* field or research area of fsw, despite the fact that common terminology of how this field should be referred to is lacking (and notwithstanding the different nuances the various terms may be carrying). Broadly speaking, the diversity in terminology can indicate three different things: First, a term (e.g. spirituality) can be used to distance one’s approach from other approaches which use another term (e.g. religion). Second, it can be a matter of nuances, while the terms have considerable overlap of meaning (e.g. religiosity and spirituality as used in Brotheridge and Lee 2007). Third, the terms are used interchangeably<sup>5</sup> (e.g. faith and religion in Lynn, Naughton, and VanderVenn 2009).<sup>6</sup> I will further discuss the relationships between the terms faith, spirituality, and religion in the discussion of their definitions below (2.2.4).

2) A look at the available overview articles also reveals the variety of aspects and dimensions deemed to be relevant for the field of fsw. There is no single valid map of the field. The availability of different maps and proposed structures of the field indicates that any map of the field is dependent on the position of the one who is drawing the map and on the particular drivers of one’s interests. A diversity of positions is also mirrored in the variety of approaches that are employed to create an overview of the field, such as, content analysis of scholarly papers (Tackney, Chappell & Sato 2017), citation analysis (Gundolf & Filser 2013, Fornaciari & Lund Dean 2009), discourse analysis (Long & Driscoll 2015, Oswick 2009), network analysis (Lynn & Burns 2014), and a personal review of the field (Delbecq 2009). In spite of this variety, both with regard to perspectives on the field

5 Note also how the terms business, leadership, and management seem to be used interchangeably, for example in Delbecq (2004).

6 For more options on how to conceptualize the relationship between religion and spirituality, see Phipps and Benefiel (2013, see also 2.2.4 in the present study).

of fsw, and in terms of aspects that are identified and used to provide a map of the field, a few key topics which are deemed to be relevant by most of the authors can be identified: definitions of fsw, the relationship between spirituality (or religion, or faith) and work (or management, business, or leadership), and the problem of integrating spirituality (or religion, or faith) and work.<sup>7</sup> Framed as questions, these topics point to three (interrelated) key questions that occur in the literature: 1) What is fsw?<sup>8</sup> 2) How are spirituality (or religion, or faith) and work related? 3) How can spirituality (or religion, or faith) be integrated at work? Most other questions raised, such as legal issues of fsw, the instrumentalization of fsw, outcomes of fsw, or the role of ethics in fsw, can be read as variations of these three basic questions.

In addition to these key questions, some of the overview texts also point to critical issues in the formation of fsw research activities and outcomes, such as the importance of the person of the researcher (Delbecq 2009), her or his affiliations in terms of academic networks and religious traditions (Lynn & Burns 2014), and the discursive contexts which influence one's research (Long & Driscoll 2015, Oswick 2009). These additional critical issues will be addressed in the following subsections on the academic discursive contexts of fsw (2.1.2) and methodologies of fsw (2.1.4), and then again in section 4.1 on the relationship between fsw and tradition.

### 2.1.2 *Fsw in academic disciplines and discourses*

The study of faith, religion, and spirituality at work has no single academic home discipline. The subject is addressed within a variety of disciplines and is touched upon by publications that draw on various fields, among them economics, management and organization studies, neuroscience, philosophy, psychology, sociology, and theology.

How is the study of fsw related to these different academic contexts? With reference to *management and organization studies*, Quatro (2004) argues that the contemporary emphasis on workplace spirituality in the business and academic world is firmly rooted in classical management theory and traditional organized religion, and Hudson (2014:36) holds that the ques-

7 Some might want to add to this list the methodological requirements and intricacies of studying fsw, which is a favorite topic of a number of authors (on methodology, see 2.1.4). For an overview of the topics addressed in overview articles, see also the chart in the appendix.

8 More precisely, what is spirituality (or religion, or faith) at work?

tions addressed by the contemporary spirituality at work movement are old and have long been asked in management theory. Pinha e Cunha, Rego, and D'Oliveira (2006) propose an understanding of the evolution of management thinking where there is a pendulum which swings back and forth between viewing spirituality as an integral part of organizational life and excluding spirituality from the organization (2006:219). Tracey (2012) argues that in management and organization studies, religion has often been neglected (see also King 2008, and Tracey, Phillips & Lounsbury 2014). Various authors with a background in *psychology* have contributed to the study of workplace spirituality (e.g. Hill & Dik 2012). With reference to *sociology*, Grant, O'Neil and Stephens (2004:267) suggest that sociologists rarely study spirituality in the workplace because of a tendency to take organized religion as their reference point when studying the "sacred". *Theology* can be viewed, broadly speaking, as related to the study of fsw in two different ways. On the one hand, theologians have been working in the areas of theology of work, theological business and economic ethics, and other related areas (e.g. Charry 2003, Grand & Huppenbauer 2007, Heslam 2015, Huppenbauer 2008, Ligo 2011, Posadas 2017, Stackhouse, McCann & Roels 1995, Tucker 2010). On the other hand, a number of management and organization scholars have begun to explore and develop theological approaches to business, management and organization (e.g. Daniels et al. 2012, Dyck & Schroeder 2005, Dyck & Wiebe 2012, Miller 2015, Mutch 2012, Sørensen et al. 2012).<sup>9</sup>

Additionally, fsw is also addressed in relation to a variety of themes and theoretical conceptions, such as attachment theory (Mitroff, Denton & Alpaslan 2009), corporate social responsibility (Van Aken & Buchner 2020), diversity research (Gebert et al. 2014, Hicks 2002), human resource development (Fenwick & Lange 1998), identity research (Gebert et al. 2014, Ramarajan & Reid 2013), institutional theory (Almond 2014, Gümüşay, Smets & Morris 2020), managerial law (Benefiel, Fry, and Geigle 2014, Cash & Gray 2000, Miller & Ewest 2015, Morgan 2005), normative stakeholder theory (Carrascoso 2014, Ray et al. 2014), organizational development and transformation (Benefiel 2005, Dehler & Welsh 1994), religious education (Van Buren 1998), and sensemaking (Long & Helms Mills 2010, McKee, Helms Mills & Driscoll 2008, Scheitle & Adamcyk 2016). In sum, fsw appears as a multidisciplinary field of study which has so far attracted con-

9 I will discuss the relationship between theology and the study of Christians at work in more detail in chapter 5.

tributions from various academic disciplines and prompted lively and diverse theoretical engagement.

### 2.1.3 *Fsw and influential thinkers*

How is the study of fsw related to the thinking of ‘influential thinkers’? Hudson (2014:38) notes that

In the spirituality at work literature, there are virtually no articles which take the ideas of a major thinker—whether a philosopher, theologian, or psychologist—and apply them to the question of spirituality at work.

While Hudson identifies a broader tendency within fsw literature, I nevertheless found some studies which apply the thinking of a ‘major thinker’<sup>10</sup> to fsw.<sup>11</sup> King and Nicol (1999) draw on the frameworks of Carl Gustav Jung<sup>12</sup> and Elliot Jacques to argue for the importance of recognizing *individual* spirituality for *organizational* enhancement. Driver (2005) proposes a framework with which to evaluate organizational spirituality discourses based on the psychoanalysis of Jacques Lacan, in particular his distinction between empty speech and full speech (2005:1093). While empty speech expresses an “alienated reflection” (2005:1097) of the self, full speech “allows the fragmented, dislocated, and fleeting discourse of true subjectivity in the symbolic order to emerge”, says Driver (2005:1097). Wozniak (2012) draws upon the thinking of German philosopher Georg Simmel to explore the dynamics of spirituality, religion, and organizations. She outlines how navigating through possible tensions between one’s spirituality and particular work contexts is not directly accessible by science and its objective methods (2012:45), but is an internal matter of individual conscience. Driscoll and Wiebe (2007) draw on Jacques Ellul’s notion of *technique* to offer a critical evaluation of the predominant instrumentality in current approaches to workplace spirituality (see also 3.4). Bell, Taylor, and Driscoll (2012) draw on William James’s notions of ‘healthy-mindedness’ and a ‘sick

10 The answer to the question of who counts as a major thinker may be influenced by what discourses (see 2.1.2 and 3.4.2) one prioritizes.

11 The purpose of this section is to make visible (usually explicit) interconnections between fsw and thinkers known to a broader audience. Even though this will become obvious in my further treatment of fsw literature, I hasten to add here that when evaluating a contribution to fsw, I am *not* particularly interested in whether an author seems to count as a ‘major thinker’ or not, but more in *what* an author is saying.

12 For other fsw studies with reference to Jung, see for example Abramson (2007), Bell and Taylor (2004), and Rozuel (2019).

soul' to contribute to critical organization theory with respect to the expression of religious beliefs in organizations. Additionally, and with particular regard to Christian living at work, some authors have taken up the work of Søren Kierkegaard (Tucker 2010, see also 4.1), Simone Weil (Radzins 2017, see 4.3) and Abraham Kuyper (Daniels et al. 2012, Diddams & Daniels 2008, Heslam 2015, see sections 5.4, 5.5, and 6.1).

Busse and colleagues (2018), De Klerk (2005), Driver (2007), and Lips-Wiersma and Morris (2009) draw on Viktor Frankl's conception of meaning in life. They explore the difference between the management of meaning and meaningful work (Lips-Wiersma and Morris), possible meanings of suffering in organizations (Driver), and the relationships between work well-being and meaning in life (De Klerk).<sup>13</sup>

Numerous authors on fsw explicitly refer to Max Weber and, in particular, to Weber's thesis (1988[1905]) on the relationship between Protestantism and capitalism (e.g. Assouad & Parboteeah 2017, Bell & Taylor 2016, Cao 2007, Dyck 2014, Gundolf & Filser 2013, Kalemci & Kalemci Tuzun 2019, Stackhouse 2014, Steiner, Leinert & Frey 2010, and Zulfikar 2012). Steiner and colleagues (2010) argue that, from a macroeconomic perspective, Weber's thesis that Protestantism is a causal reason for economic growth has not been supported by recent research. In addition, "empirical research has not been able to establish any consistent effect of denominations on economic growth and per capita income" (2010:12). According to Calvacanti, Parente & Zhao (2007:106), the controversial status of Weber's thesis is attributed to the fact that the social sciences have failed to "adequately quantify the effects of religion on the aggregate performance of economies". Ryman and Turner (2007:184) review empirical and conceptual literature related to Weber's thesis and conclude that Weber's thinking remains highly relevant for studying the "interactions between religion, ethnicity, culture, politics, and economies in a dynamic world". From a historical viewpoint, Schneider (2007) indicates that Rodney Stark has corrected Max Weber (as others have done before him, says Schneider) by observing that "capitalism took root in Catholic Italy centuries before Protestantism existed" (2007:290). He also observes that Catholic theologians adapted to developments in commerce by lifting the ban on interest, forging concepts of investment, strengthening the affirmation of property rights, and sanctifying frugality and commercial work as virtues (2007:290). In spite of such reservations concerning Weber, Stackhouse (2014) argues that Weber's thinking remains highly relevant in that it indicates that economics should

13 On Frankl's notion of meaning in life as it relates to Christian living, see 6.2.

take religion and theology seriously. As regards Christian living in secular contexts, Andersen (2005:124–127) has pointed out how Weber indicates the re-evaluation and new estimation of secular work mirrored in Luther’s understanding of the term *Beruf*. Luther uses *Beruf* to translate the Latin *vocatio*, which in Catholic theology referred at the time to spiritual occupations in contrast to secular ones. Luther applies *Beruf* to secular work, a move which has resulted in a new appreciation of secular work, says Anderesen. In addition to these explicit references to Weber, Dodd and Seaman (1998) have pointed to Weber’s implicit influence, arguing that theoretical approaches to enterprise and religion are still haunted by Weber’s “spectre” (1998:71) and interpreted through a “Weberian prism” (1998:73).

Interestingly, Long and Driscoll (2015:953) outline that some workplace spirituality authors are clearly influenced by the thinking of Abraham Maslow, but without making any explicit reference to him. The implicit influence of major thinkers on current debates on fsw is explored by some studies, for example the influence of Maslow on the workplace spirituality discourse (Bell & Taylor 2003, Long & Driscoll 2015) and the influence of Abraham Maslow, Erich Fromm, Carl Gustav Jung, and Roberto Assagioli on spiritual management development (Bell & Taylor 2004). In sum, even though this might not be a dominant approach to fsw, there is a strand of fsw research that relates fsw questions to the work of ‘influential thinkers’.

#### 2.1.4 Methodological contexts of fsw

Studies on fsw discuss and draw on a wide range of methodological perspectives and discourses, such as positivist versus post-positivist approaches (Fornaciari & Lund Dean 2001), positive, critical, and existential approaches (Lips-Wiersma & Mills 2014), methodological agnosticism as an alternative to secular and theological perspectives (Bell & Taylor 2016, 2014), the integration of a social scientific perspective and a philosophical/theological perspective (Benefiel, Fry & Geigle 2014:183), a “gender-based” perspective (Zaidman 2019), a post-structuralist perspective (Tourish & Tourish 2010), a practical theological perspective (Miller 2015), discourse analysis (Bell & Taylor 2003, Elmes & Smith 2001, Long & Driscoll 2015, Nadesan 1999), and a sensemaking methodology (McKee, Helms Mills & Driscoll 2008). Many have called for more empirical research (see, e.g. Bell-Ellis et al. 2015:2, and the literature there) and there have been a number of attempts to quantify or measure fsw or some aspects of it (e.g. Ashmos & Duchon 2000, Giacalone & Jurkiewicz 2003, Jurkiewicz & Giacalone 2004, Kinjerski



& Skrypnek 2006, Lynn, Naughton & VanderVeen 2009, Miller, Ewest & Neubert 2018, Miller & Ewest 2013b, Pandey, Gupta & Arora 2009, Westerman, Whitaker & Hardesty 2013). Noting the dominance of quantitative approaches, some (e.g. Benefiel 2010:34) have called particularly for qualitative research to capture unconsciously and habitually lived religiosity at work (see Brotheridge & Lee 2007:304) and to access the “lived experience” of fsw (Benefiel, Fry & Geigle 2014:183).<sup>14</sup> Qualitatively oriented research includes, for example, grounded theory studies (Almond 2014, Crossman 2015a, Lips-Wiersma & Mills 2014), ethnography (Cao 2007, Whipp 2008), and autoethnography (Cullen 2011).

The methodological discussion has dealt with the arguments for and against “measuring workplace spirituality” (Krahnke, Giacalone, and Jurkiewicz, 2003), and some have emphasized that particular methodological choices are closely interrelated with basic assumptions on fsw (Lips-Wiersma & Mills 2014, Brooke & Parker 2009:7). In particular, Lips-Wiersma (2003) has argued that a researcher’s own spirituality and religion inevitably influence the research process.<sup>15</sup> Acknowledging the implications of certain methodological choices for one’s understanding of fsw, Brooke and Parker (2009:7) rightly ask: “If we consider an idea of a spirituality as one which may be quantified and implemented within an organization, then how does this affect the way we view spirituality in the workplace?” In particular, quantitative approaches share the assumptions that fsw can be observed and measured, that the degree to which it is present varies from context to context (e.g. Ashmos and Duchon 2000:137), and that this degree can be influenced. Others have argued that spirituality refers to immaterial concerns and that an understanding of spirituality as measurable is necessarily limited (Benefiel 2003). Critics have also argued that a quantitatively oriented understanding of fsw is linked to an emphasis on the outcomes and benefits of fsw and reveals an attitude which seeks to instrumentalize fsw.<sup>16</sup> Overall, there is a broad discussion on methodological issues, with varying levels of awareness of the methodological challenges of studying fsw.

In this section, I have addressed the naming of the field of fsw, key issues raised, and how fsw is related to a number of theoretical contexts, such as academic discourses, the thinking of influential writers, and methodologies.

14 For the debate regarding the possibility of accessing ‘lived experience’ in organizational ethnography, see Watson (2011) and Van Maanen (2011).

15 On the influence of traditions on fsw research, see 4.1.

16 On critical approaches to fsw, see 3.4.



In the following section, I will address the first of the key issues identified above, that of definitions of fsw (1.2). The two other key issues raised above, namely the questions of the relationship between spirituality (or religion, or faith) and work, and the problem of integrating spirituality and work will be discussed in more detail in chapter 3.

## 2.2 Definitions of fsw

The purpose of this section is to introduce the problem of definitions of key terms in fsw research<sup>17</sup> and to sketch the unfinished and fragmented state of the definition project. The question of definitions has been approached in a number of different ways. In the following, I will first introduce definitions found in empirically oriented research<sup>18</sup> (2.2.1); second, present some of the main criticisms raised against the available definitions (2.2.2); and third, introduce an approach which takes up these criticisms in an attempt to avoid a neat definition by understanding fsw as centering around a ‘conceptual convergence’ (2.2.3). Fourth, I shall present a number of proposals to clarify the meaning and role of the three terms of faith, religion, and spirituality and how they are related to each other in the context of fsw research (2.2.4). Finally, I will identify the main open questions and problem areas (2.2.5).

- 17 In the following, I will focus on approaches to defining spirituality, faith, and religion in their relation to work contexts. This discourse, which is prominent in the context of management and organization studies, has gained some independence and seems to be only loosely related (if at all) to broader sociological approaches to the concepts of spirituality and religion (for general sociological approaches to spirituality and religion, see e.g. Kippenberg & von Stuckrad 2003, Knoblauch 2006, Pollack & Rosta 2015, Woodhead 2011). For a broad interdisciplinary conception of religiosity, see Huber (2009).
- 18 Most proposed definitions appear in this context. In addition, some definitions are proposed in non-empirical publications, for example by Gotsis and Kortezi (2008) or Sheep (2006). Gotsis and Kortezi (2008:587) equate workplace spirituality with a “system context of interwoven personal and cultural values permeating all levels of organizational life”. In their understanding, workplace spirituality consists of four core dimensions (transcendence, connectedness, completeness, and joy) and of seven spiritual values (honesty, forgiveness, hope, gratitude, humility, compassion, and integrity). In my impression, such non-empirically oriented definitions borrow heavily from those offered in empirically oriented contributions. Some of the non-empirically oriented definitions will be discussed below in the context of the conceptual convergence approach to definitions of fsw.

### 2.2.1 Definitions in empirically oriented fsw research

In empirically oriented fsw research, I identify two main approaches to the question of definitions. The first approach explores conceptualizations of faith or spirituality at work held by practitioners.<sup>19</sup> The second defines fsw in the first place, and then seeks to measure the degree to which fsw, as defined in advance, is present in particular settings.

With regard to the first approach, I have identified two studies which explicitly focus on practitioner conceptualizations of spirituality at work. On the one hand, Mitroff and Denton's (1999a, 1999b) research among American executives suggests that there is *a similar definition* of spirituality held by many practitioners centering around the "feeling of being connected with one's complete self, others, and the entire universe" (1999b:83). The executives tend to distinguish spirituality from religion and to view the former as highly appropriate in the workplace and the latter as an inappropriate topic and form of expression in the workplace. On the other hand, Crossman (2015a:72), who conducted semi-structured interviews with Australian professionals and managers, finds that their conceptualizations of spirituality are "highly individualized" (2015a:72), and that "eclecticism" (2015a:59) might be an under-appreciated construct in the study of spirituality. However, she also identifies a number of values, which are *commonly* associated with spirituality (such as honesty, respectfulness, caring, and connectedness), and which may provide the "necessary glue" (2015a:59) amidst the diverse perceptions of spirituality.

In the second approach to the empirical study of fsw, researchers focus on quantitative measurement. They develop a conception of fsw with the intention to measure it empirically. The most prominent proposals are, in my view, the following five:<sup>20</sup>

- 1) In "Spirituality at work: A conceptualization and measure", Ashmos and Duchon (2000) identify three aspects of spirituality at work (which in their approach includes both the individual and the organizational levels): inner life, meaningful work, and community. "We define spirituality at work as the recognition that employees have an inner life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work that takes place in the context of community" (2000:137).

19 In other words, they explore what Hubert Knoblauch (2006:91) has called an "Ethnokategorie".

20 For more extensive presentations of approaches to measuring fsw, see Miller and colleagues (2018), Miller and Ewest (2013a), and Neal (2013).

- 2) In “Measuring the intangible: Development of the spirit at work scale”, Kinjerski and Skrypnek (2006) focus exclusively on individual experiences of spirit at work, measuring four factors or dimensions<sup>21</sup>: engaging work, sense of community, spiritual connection, and mystical experience. They suggest that spirit at work is a distinct *state* in which one can be.
- 3) In “A values framework for measuring the impact of workplace spirituality on organizational performance”, Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2003:91) define workplace spirituality as a “framework of organizational values evidenced in the culture that promote employees’ experience of transcendence through the work process, facilitating their sense of being connected to others in a way that provides feelings of completeness and joy”. The respective organizational values are benevolence, generativity, humanism, integrity, justice, mutuality, receptivity, respect, responsibility, and trust (Jurkiewicz and Giacalone 2004:131). Individual spirituality in the workplace entails the same ten values (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz 2003:87).
- 4) In the “Faith at work scale (FWS): Justification, development, and validation of a measure of Judaeo-Christian religion in the workplace”<sup>22</sup>, Lynn, Naughton, and VanderVeen (2009) propose a measure for the degree to which an employee perceives her work and religion to be interrelated. They have generated a model of workplace religion “informed by historical, theological, and sociological writings across Judaeo-Christian traditions” (2009:231). Based on this, Lynn and colleagues (2009:232) developed construct dimensions, items, and indicators, measuring five dimensions of faith at work: relationship, meaning, community, holiness, and giving.
- 5) In their “Spiritual climate of business organizations”, Pandey, Gupta, and Arora (2009) propose that the individual spirituality of employees is reflected in the work climate of an organization. Their ‘Spiritual Climate Inventory’ measures three aspects of spirituality in the workplace: harmony with oneself, harmony within the work environment, and transcendence (2009:316f).

21 This four-dimensional construct builds on an earlier six-dimensional definition proposed by Kinjerski and Skrypnek (2004; see also Miller & Ewest 2013a:41).

22 They use the term ‘faith’ because they believe that workplace spirituality research has largely ignored workplace religion so far, and they feel that the term “faith” expresses their aim of emphasizing the substance of one’s religious beliefs and practices at work.

I will discuss the criticism mounted against such definitions in the following subsection. Here it is important to note that the question of definitions and the question of methodology are interrelated (see also section 2.1.4). Both of the above approaches toward definitions of fsw found in empirically oriented research, the analysis of practitioner conceptions, as well as quantitative measurement of predefined constructs, come with particular methodologies that tend to imply certain understandings of fsw. At a very basic level, both approaches favor ‘what individuals say about fsw’ (collected via surveys or interviews) over ‘what they do’ as a source for understanding fsw. When one compares surveys and interviews, it seems that face-to-face interview techniques may be better suited to considering the complexity of practitioner understandings of spirituality, while quantitative “surveys may not capture” (Crossman 2015a:72) it adequately (it can be argued, however, that this is exactly the point of quantitative measuring, to simplify a construct in order to be able to perform research on a larger scale).

As particular implications of empirical research with regard to the substantial understanding of fsw are built into the respective methodology, the question Brooke and Parker ask is, again, particularly instructive: “If we consider an idea of spirituality as one which may be quantified and implemented within an organization, then *how does this affect the way we view spirituality in the workplace?*” (2009:7, emphasis mine). For example, one implication of quantitative measurement approaches is that spirituality is construed as being scalable. In such a view, spirituality is thought of as observable and measurable, and the degree to which it is present may vary from context to context (see e.g. Ashmos and Duchon 2000:137). But is spirituality really scalable or is it best thought of as scalable? However one answers such questions, the assumption of spirituality’s scalability is not a result, but a *presupposition* of quantitatively oriented research. But it might equally transpire that such an assumption becomes an obstacle to understanding fsw. A number of authors<sup>23</sup> have suggested that the assumption that spirituality is measurable is a manifestation of management interests to harness spirituality for organizational purposes. Thus, they argue that the issue of spirituality’s measurability is related to that of its manageability. This leads to the broader question of the instrumentality of fsw and fsw research, which is raised by a number of authors, and which I will discuss below (see 3.4). At this point, it is important to note that questions of definitions and methodology of fsw are interrelated, and that these are inextricably bound to the very basic questions of the assumptions and intentions a researcher brings

23 See the literature discussed in 3.4.

to bear on this subject.<sup>24</sup> In the following section, I will focus more narrowly on a number of criticisms raised concerning existing definitions of fsw.

### 2.2.2 *Criticism of the definition project*

Several authors have raised concerns that present definitions of spirituality in management and organizational research lack substance. In particular, Reva Brown (2003), when attempting to write on the relationship between “emotion and organizational spirituality”, finds that, while the concept of emotion has been clearly defined and clarified through research, it is impossible to arrive at a “workable definition” (2003:393) of organizational spirituality, and she concludes that the notion is confused, imprecise, and opaque (2003:393). She therefore proposes abandoning the notion of organizational spirituality, and she is also radically skeptical of the related notion of workplace spirituality. Arguing along similar lines, Margaret Benefiel (2003) holds that the current discourse of spirituality in business and management is based on vague and broad definitions without substance, lacking in particular a philosophical foundation. In addition to these general criticisms, there are a number of specific issues raised by scholars who address the vagueness, abstractness, and confusion of available definitions, to which I will presently turn. In this subsection, I will present these criticisms to offer an overview. Later<sup>25</sup>, I will engage in more detail with the issues raised here.

First, Dent, Higgins, and Wharff (2005) point to one particular problem associated with the *vagueness* of available definitions of spirituality: The challenge presented by the unclear boundaries and relationships between spirituality and other concepts presumably related to spirituality:

If humility, for example, is part of being spiritual, then the concept of spirituality needs to be sited in a conceptual landscape. We are not calling for a definition which is overly reductionist or hierarchical. However, the principle of parsimony demands that a given concept performs its role while other concepts perform theirs. In a similar vein, spirituality is such a loaded term to bring in to the organizational arena that there must be compelling reasons for theorists to do so.

24 On the influence of traditions on fsw research, see 4.1.

25 In section 2.2.3, I will discuss a potential solution to the criticisms raised, and in section 2.2.5, I will summarize the open questions with regard to the task of defining fsw. In section 3.5, I will then discuss how extant fsw theory is partly able to mitigate the problems raised by critics. In section 7.3, I will present some orientations with regard to the relationship between key fsw terms and the study of Christians at work.

Two interrelated issues are raised here; that of the relationship of spirituality to other concepts, and that of the necessity of a justification to introduce the notion of spirituality into organizational research. In the light of the ‘principle of parsimony’, a number of questions with regard to the proposed definitions introduced above arise. If, for example, one defines fsw as a construct which entails the three main dimensions of meaning at work, community, and innerness (Ashmos & Duchon 2000), in what way does fsw (or in particular, spirituality) serve as an umbrella term for these three concepts? Is the concept of fsw (or a similar concept) necessary to address the concepts of meaning, community, and inner life at work, or can they stand alone? Do we need an overarching concept of spirituality at work, for example to address the theme of meaning at work (see e.g. De Klerk 2005)?

Second, in addition to vagueness, the *abstractness* of present definitions is criticized. For example, Hicks (2002:388) observes that abstract definitions do not permit clear identification of practices that count as spiritual or religious, and practices that do not. This is, I think, at least partly a reflection of the fact that the available definitions tend to rely more on what individuals say about fsw than on what they do, or on how they practice fsw. Such definitions tend to remain abstract in that their connection to concrete practices remains elusive. This relates to an issue on a more general level. The question arises *of which aspect* the notion of spirituality relates or should relate to (e.g. to practices, to people, or to the workplace).

This is, third, according to Wozniak (2012:33), the *confusion* concerning the definition of organizational spirituality, which is characterized by a lack of agreement on which organizational aspect the spiritual quality belongs to. In her view, the term “workplace spirituality” suggests that spirituality is an attribute of the workplace or the organization. However, some authors also attribute spirituality to a variety of other phenomena, such as practices, values, attitudes, perspectives, beliefs, and emotions. Thus, spirituality becomes an amorphous concept “that encompasses everything that can be associated with the human or social condition” (Wozniak 2012:33). She thus points to a present lack of clarity in the use of the term ‘spiritual’, and argues that an approach to spirituality in work contexts needs to make it clear what (aspects, practices, people) the terms ‘spirituality’ and ‘spiritual’ relate to.

Thus, the three issues of the vagueness, abstractness, and confusion of definitions of fsw can be translated into the question of the justification of the concept(s) of fsw in organizational research, the question of the relationship of fsw to spiritual practice, and the general question of the aspect(s) to which fsw refers (people, practices, workplaces, values, etc.).

While I will address these questions in more detail in chapter 3 (see 3.5), I will presently turn to a widespread strategy of dealing with the problems concerning the definition of fsw concepts. Many authors, while acknowledging the aforementioned problems in defining fsw concept(s), continue to argue for the relevance of fsw constructs for management and organizational research, claiming that, in spite of the absence of a widely shared definition, a consensus has emerged regarding the most important themes and concepts of fsw.

### 2.2.3 *The ‘conceptual convergence’ approach*

While many researchers agree that defining fsw is difficult and that a widely accepted definition has yet to emerge, a number of researchers claim to have discovered, in the variety of definitions available, a common semantic field in the sense of “a conceptual convergence” (Sheep 2006:360) around some “prevalent themes” (De Klerk 2005:66), “unifying themes” (Driver 2005:1096), “recurring themes” (Sheep 2006:360, McGhee & Grant 2016), or “themes that dominate the discussion” (Hudson 2014:27f), and a “fair amount of agreement about what counts as spirituality at work” (2014:29). To evaluate this claim, I shall, in the following, examine which themes and concepts are identified as contributing to this ‘conceptual convergence’.

Driver (2005:1094f) finds three “unifying themes” or core dimensions of spirituality in research literature: transcendence, harmony/holism, and personal growth. De Klerk (2005:66) identifies three “prevalent themes”: meaning in life, a sense of unity with the universe, and awareness of a life force. Sheep (2006:360) concludes that a consensus in terms of a definition may be lacking, but that a conceptual convergence has emerged in research literature around the four recurring themes of self–workplace integration, meaning in work, transcendence of the self, and growth/development of one’s inner self at work. Hudson (2014:27f) proposes the connection to one’s authentic self, to one’s community, and to something transcendent as the dominant themes. McGhee and Grant (2016:326) argue that spirituality is a composite of four recurring themes: transcendence, interconnectedness, meaning, and innerness. In a manner similar to that of identifying dominant themes, Krishnakumar and Neck (2002, see also Houghton, Neck & Krishnakumar 2016) offer a classification of definitions of spirituality at work based on the dominant theme to which a definition relates: intrinsic-origin views, religious views, and existentialist views (2002: 154–156). “The

26 They draw upon the writings of Sheep (2006) and Nelson (2009).

intrinsic-origin view of spirituality is that which argues that spirituality is a concept or a principle that originates from the inside of an individual. (...) religious views of spirituality are those that are specific to a particular religion”. Existentialist views are characterized by “the search for meaning in what we are doing at the workplace”.

The following table (figure 1) presents an overview of the themes as proposed by the different authors (with similar themes allocated to the same column). The overview of recurring themes indicates that there seems to be no agreement on which themes exactly count as unifying themes or conceptual convergence, but that some recurring themes among the proposed unifying themes can be discovered, nevertheless. Interestingly, the ‘conceptual convergence’ or ‘unifying themes’ approach arrives at an understanding of fsw which is quite similar to that of the empirically orientated approaches (this is why I have included empirically orientated researchers in italics in the last three lines of the table). In fact, some of the authors even draw directly upon the definitions proposed by empirically orientated researchers (see e.g. Sheep 2006:360 or Driver 2005:1094).



	Integration	Meaning	Transcendence	Innerness	Community	others
McChee & Grant 2016	Interconnectedness (self-workplace integration)	Meaning	Transcendence (toward an ultimate concern, toward meaning)	Innerness		
Hudson 2014			Connection to something transcendent (universe, higher power)	Connection to one's authentic self	Connection to one's community	
Sheep 2006	Self-workplace integration	Meaning in work	Transcendence of the self, becoming part of an interconnected whole	Growth/development of inner self		
Driver 2005	Holism and harmony (Integration)	Personal growth toward a meaningful life	Transcendence			
de Klerk 2005		Meaning in life	Sense of unity with the universe			Awareness of a life force
Krishnakumar and Neck 2002		Existentialist view		Intrinsic-origin view		Religious view
Mitroff and Denton 1999a, 1999b			Feeling of being connected with the entire universe	Feeling of being connected with one's complete self	Feeling of being connected with others	
Ashton and Duchon 2000		Meaningful work		Inner life	Community	
Pandey, Gupta, and Arora 2009			Transcendence	Harmony with the self	Harmony within the work environment	

Figure 1 Recurring themes

The difference between the empirical researchers who propose definitions and the authors who propose dominant themes lies mainly in their evaluation of the robustness of their proposals. While the former authors propose a definition, the latter argue more tentatively for conceptual convergence (around the similar themes that the former use for their definition), but tend to conclude that a widely accepted definition has not emerged. A nuanced position is adopted by Houghton, Neck, and Krishnakumar (2016). They point out that, in terms of the original classification by Krishnakumar and Neck (2002), a “reasonably well-accepted definition of workplace spirituality” (2016:2) with regard to what they call the intrinsic-origin and the existentialist views has emerged in research literature,<sup>27</sup> but that the role of religion in workplace spirituality is still controversial. In their claim that a definition has emerged, they tend to side with the empirically oriented researchers, who propose a definition. In contrast, most of the other authors who propose a ‘conceptual convergence’ or ‘recurring themes’ approach, tend not to call their proposal a definition.

In so doing, they take seriously the criticism of *vagueness* raised against the mainly quantitatively oriented definitions (without necessarily providing a remedy). With this move, they are able to react to a major issue, which is implied in the question of the necessity of the spirituality concept, namely that of its legitimacy as a research subject: Although no agreement on definition has emerged, and in spite of some remaining vagueness, there is a kind of ‘semantic field’ of recurring relevant themes uniquely related to the subject.

However, the conceptual convergence proposed is not able to silence the criticisms of the *abstractness* and *confusion* of the constructs, in that it proposes themes or dimensions of fsw with which the abstractness in terms of an unclear relation to practices cannot be remedied, and with which the confusion in terms of aspects (people, workplaces, values, practices, etc.) is still not addressed.

In addition, as Houghton, Neck, and Krishnakumar (2016) have pointed out, this conceptual convergence does not include the issue of the relationship between *religion* and spirituality, which remains controversial. And, in addition to spirituality and religion, the term faith is also used by a number of authors. Therefore, as regards the terminology of what I have referred to as the field of faith, spirituality, and religion in work contexts (fsw), the pro-

27 To them, the common definition of workplace spirituality has emerged around the three dimensions (originally conceptualized by Ashmos and Duchon 2000) of inner life, meaningful and purposeful work, and a sense of community and connectedness.

posed conceptual convergence does not clarify the relationship between these three terms. While most of the authors discussed so far tend to use the term ‘spirituality’, the terms ‘faith’ and ‘religion’ are also used. In the following subsection, I will thus address the use of the three main terms faith, spirituality, and religion in fsw research.

#### 2.2.4 *Spirituality, religion, or faith at work?*

In the following, I will first introduce perspectives on the relationship between spirituality and religion in the workplace. Subsequently, I will sketch different understandings of the notion of faith at work. Houghton, Neck, and Krishnakumar (2016:6) argue that on the question of the role of religion in research on spirituality at work, two camps have developed: those who want to include religion and those who want to exclude it from the study and promotion of workplace spirituality. Phipps and Benefiel identify six juxtapositions of spirituality and religion present in the “field of faith and spirituality at work” (2013:33): mutually exclusive, overlapping, synonymous, religion as a subset of spirituality, spirituality as a subset of religion, and contextually determined. They evaluate the available juxtapositions in the light of four underlying considerations (practical needs for differentiation, protecting individual rights, fostering cross-cultural dialog, opening avenues for relevant research), and conclude that spirituality and religion should be treated as *distinct but overlapping* constructs and that researchers should make it clear whether their focus is on spirituality (without religion) and management<sup>28</sup>, or on spirituality and religion and management, or on religion (without spirituality) and management (2013:41f).

Wozniak (2012) proposes an understanding of spirituality and religion as distinct, but related. In particular, she suggests that the problem of confusion in the definition of workplace spirituality can be remedied by introducing a concept of spirituality which builds on the notion of ‘religiosity’ or ‘spiritual rhythm’ from the philosophy of Georg Simmel (Wozniak 2012:33; Simmel 1997 [1906]). Simmel associates *religiosity* strictly with a person. Religiosity denotes the form of being “characteristic of an individual” (2012:33). It is distinct from *religion* as a social form, which may be consti-

28 Note the use of the term ‘management’ here, while they earlier refer to the “field of faith and spirituality at *work*” (2013:33, emphasis mine). This interchangeable use of management and work seems to be a characteristic feature of fsw literature (I will comment on this use in section 3.5).

tuted by practices, rituals, systems of beliefs, discourses, et cetera. Wozniak identifies Simmel's 'religiosity' (or 'spiritual rhythm') with spirituality, as a form of being which is related to but distinct from social forms of religion, in which spirituality may materialize in such aspects as practices, systems of beliefs and morals, attitudes, and values. Thus, spirituality has no object, says Wozniak: It is a state or quality of the form of being of people, a quality of an individual that may be accompanied by such aspects as practices, systems of beliefs and morals, attitudes, and values. These aspects are referred to as 'religion' by Simmel, while the basic individual quality from which they emerge is called 'religiosity' or 'spiritual rhythm' (by Simmel) or 'spirituality' (as suggested by Wozniak). Thus, objects of religion "emerge as materializations of the spiritual impulses of human beings" (2012:34).

In this outlook, religious forms (practices, beliefs values, etc.) are manifestations of spirituality. It is, however, not clear why the concern of workplace spirituality research with "spiritual workers doing spiritual work" (Long & Driscoll 2015:948) should be reduced in such a way that the spiritual quality should be allocated only to people, but not, for example, to work. In any case, a theory of spirituality in the workplace which adopts such a narrow definition would still have to address the question of how this spirituality is manifested in the workplace, even if it conceptually distinguishes spirituality from its manifestations.<sup>29</sup> In addition, as far as I understand Wozniak, people who would consider themselves spiritual, but not religious (see e.g. Mitroff & Denton 1999a & 1999b, Johnson et al. 2018), would still be categorized as religious because, in such an outlook, one's being spiritual inevitably leads to some form of religious expression.

A different solution to understanding the spirituality–religion relationship is proposed by Brotheridge and Lee (2007, see also 3.4.1). They conceptualize spirituality and religion as distinct, yet overlapping concepts, based on the distinction between intrinsically and extrinsically motivated religiousness<sup>30</sup>. Spirituality overlaps with intrinsic religiousness because both are based on "deep-seated beliefs" (2007:291), either secular or religious, and they share a "common core of values" which "engenders the same moral and ethical behaviors among all workers" (2007:297). Spirituality does not, however, overlap with extrinsic religiousness because the

29 Note the distinction between pure spirituality and applied spirituality, which a number of theorists use to make a similar conceptual move (section 3.2.2).

30 The terms 'religiosity' and 'religiousness' are, as far as I can judge, used interchangeably, and in contrast to religious affiliation.

latter is based on “instrumental purposes” (2007:291). Secular spirituality does not overlap with religion because it is based on secular beliefs. However, as far as the workplace is concerned, both share a “common core of values” (2007:297). These distinctions lead to a typology of five different groups of people: the disconnected, the extrinsic, the intrinsic, the pro-religious, and those whose spirituality is based on secular beliefs. The disconnected are people with low intrinsic and low extrinsic religiousness. They are non-spiritual and non-religious. The extrinsic are low in intrinsic and high in extrinsic religiosity. They are religious, but not spiritual. The pro-religious are high in intrinsic and high in extrinsic religiosity. They are religious and spiritual. The intrinsic are high in intrinsic and low in extrinsic religiosity. They are also both religious and spiritual. The individuals of the fifth group, whose spirituality is based on secular beliefs, are spiritual but not religious (2007:296f). In this approach, secular spirituality is formally treated as a specific type of religiosity (“religiosity based on secular beliefs” 2007:296), which is similar to intrinsic religiosity, and which functions as a quasi-religion, but which is not part of the overall category of religion. However, in this approach, the distinctiveness of spirituality is to be questioned because both religion and spirituality are conceptualized on the basis of religiousness. Although secular spirituality is explicitly distinguished from religion, there is, nevertheless, a tendency to view spirituality as a quasi-subset of religion.<sup>31</sup>

Phipps and Benefiel (2013:39) argue that to view religion and spirituality as separate domains with “some shared content” allows researchers to “study either or both when appropriate” (2013:39). However, as the examples of Wozniak (2012) and Brotheridge and Lee (2007) indicate, it is questionable whether this is a position which can be realistically maintained. Wozniak, acknowledging a relationship between spirituality and religion, conceptualizes this relationship *on the basis of spirituality*. Brotheridge and Lee assume some shared content between spirituality and religion and tend to conceptualize their relationship *on the basis of the concept of religion* (or religiousness). I have not found an approach which treats spirituality and religion as distinct, but as overlapping without conceptually clearly prioritizing

31 On the other hand, if one wishes to establish a unique concept of secular spirituality as independent from religion, it seems that the spirituality–religion relationship is then to be conceptualized on the basis of this basic notion of spirituality, and religion is consequently conceived of as one possible form of spirituality, resulting in the conceptualization of religion as a subset of spirituality.

one of the concepts over the other by conceptualizing one on the basis of the other.<sup>32</sup>

It seems that the only way to maintain the distinctiveness and overlap of the concepts at the same time, without favoring one concept over the other, is by introducing an overarching term, which allows for both religion and spirituality to be distinct constructs of the same category, and thus share some similar content, while still being distinct. Such an approach has been suggested by Miller and Ewest (2013a:37, see also Miller, Ewest & Neubert 2018). They propose ‘faith at work’ as an umbrella term which includes both religion and spirituality in the workplace. Faith is used here as a generic socio-historical term, with subcategories such as Islamic faith or Jewish faith. In this understanding, the term is used similarly to how the term religion is used in the social sciences (as a generic term with subcategories), and in addition, it is argued that the term faith is suited to encompassing secular spirituality as well as religion (Miller & Ewest 2015:2).

However, the question arises of whether faith is well-suited to serve as a generic category subsuming both religion and spirituality, or whether faith is to be understood in quite different terms. In fsw research, in addition to Miller and Ewest’s usage, at least three quite different additional ways in which faith is to be conceptualized are presented.

A second<sup>33</sup> usage is presented by Fry and Cohen (2009). They use the term faith alongside the notion of hope as a component of their theory of spiritual leadership. Faith, in their model, refers to one’s hope and trust in the realization of a “transcendent vision of service” (2009:80) to others. This faith/hope is nurtured by one’s inner life and spiritual practice (varying in form and content; it can be religious, but does not have to be), and by one’s attitude of altruistic love. Thus, spirituality (as an inner life nurtured by spiritual practice) is conceptualized as a source of faith. The object of faith is a “transcendent vision of service to key stakeholders” (2009: 80), and thus a combination of an understanding of the mission and purpose of a particular organization, and an idea of what the world will look like when this mission and purpose are accomplished. As such, it differs from what

32 This problem of the tension between and the conceptual interdependence of the notions of spirituality and religion is by no means restricted to the study of religion and spirituality at work. See, for example, Knoblauch (2006) on the question of whether spirituality is to be treated as a discrete sociological form of religiosity. He identifies its distance to organized forms of religion as one of the key characteristics of spirituality, construing as he does a conceptual tension and interdependence between the concepts at the same time.

33 Miller and Ewest’s being the first.

others have called “existential” or “religious” faith (Krishnakumar et al. 2015:23) by being oriented toward the accomplishment of an organization’s mission.

Third, Lynn, Naughton and VanderVeen (2009) use the term ‘faith at work’ as referring to a substantial understanding of workplace religion and in contrast to an understanding of spirituality in the workplace, which sidesteps religion (what others have called ‘secular spirituality’). Thus, they use faith as a synonym for a particular (substantial) understanding of religion.

Fourth, Nash (2007:173), speaking from a protestant perspective, argues for an understanding of faith which views faith “not as a source of ready-made answers to ethical conundrums, but as a process”. The focus of the person of faith is not mainly on applying specific religious positions in a business setting, but on tapping into “the dynamics of faith” (2007:178) as a process that should constantly and actively intrude on one’s consciousness as a business leader.

The term faith is thus used in at least four different ways: faith as a socio-historical category encompassing religion and spirituality (Miller & Ewest 2013a), as an attitude with regard to organizational goals (Fry & Cohen 2009), as (substantial) religion (Lynn, Naughton, and VanderVeen 2009) and as a process that intrudes on consciousness (Nash 2007). In addition, others have explored the way in which management practices require faith (Olohan & Davitti 2017, see also Black 2008:50–52<sup>34</sup>) and the parallels between trust in organizational contexts and faith within a religious framework (Caldwell, Davis & Devine 2009).

In sum, there is not only much diversity in terms of various different understandings of faith, spirituality, and religion at work, but also in terms of understanding the relationship between faith, spirituality, and religion at work. In the following subsection, I will briefly recap the main points of this section and relate them to the study of Christians at work.

### *2.2.5 Current state of fsw definitions and the study of Christians at work*

Having introduced fsw with reference to relevant theoretical contexts, and having reviewed the main definitions available, there seem to be a number of open questions in contemporary fsw research. When looking at this research with the intention of studying Christians at work in mind, two main areas of open questions seem to be critical. The first area concerns

34 For a discussion of Black’s approach, see 5.4.3.

the main terms and definitions of fsw research in general. The second area concerns questions with regard to how the main fsw terms and definitions relate to the study of Christians at work in particular.

With respect to the first area, fsw constructs are sometimes criticized for being (too) vague, (too) abstract, and (too) confused. The issue of *vagueness* has been linked (see 2.2.2, and also 3.4.2) to the question of the legitimacy or justification of fsw as a field of study. Authors advocating a conceptual convergence approach have indicated a number of recurring themes and have thus sought to make a case for fsw as a field of study in its own right which emerges around these respective recurring themes.<sup>35</sup> However, a certain vagueness and conceptual unclarity remains (why should, for example, the concept of meaning at work be part of the broader concept of spirituality at work?). In addition, the definitions proposed on the basis of conceptual convergence can be criticized for being *abstract* because they largely ignore spiritual practices.<sup>36</sup> In addition to this neglect of practices, there is, as Wozniak (2012) has pointed out, *confusion* or a deep-seated ambiguity in the use of the terms spirituality and spiritual. It is often unclear what (aspects, practices, persons) they actually refer to.

Adding to the problems regarding vagueness, abstractness, and confusion (which have been mainly raised with respect to fsw constructs involving the notion of spirituality), other terms apart from spirituality, like faith and religion/religiosity, are also used in fsw research. There is no consensus on the relationship between these terms, and as a consequence, there is also no consensus on how the field should be properly named.<sup>37</sup>

- 35 Such an identification of themes functions similarly to a definition, marking the appropriate scope of research (see e.g. Van Dam et al. 2018:38). However, it is not clear why the existence or absence of a widely accepted definition of a term (or a consensus on what the basic themes of a construct are) should account for the existence of a field of study or its legitimacy. Woodhead (2011:121) has pointed out that other general concepts (such as ‘the economy’, ‘politics’, ‘society’, or ‘history’) face similar problems when it comes to definitions, and that “scholars in all these areas proceed quite happily without necessarily being able to define their object of study.”
- 36 In other words, the problem here is not so much the abstractness per se (since, arguably, e.g. research on embodiment needs to operate with a certain degree of abstraction, see Cregan 2006), but a specific kind of abstractness where the terms lose their resonance with the object of study in terms of how it is practiced.
- 37 Adding to this vagueness is a terminological problem which I will address in chapter 3: the fact that the workplace-related concepts (such as management, work, business, and leadership) to which faith, spirituality, and religion are related in fsw research, the notions that pertain to work, to aspects of work, to workplaces or to work contexts, also tend to be very broad and general constructs (see section 3.5).



Second, at this point it must be noted that, as far as fsw research is concerned with Christians, religion, faith, and spirituality seem to be the three main terms used in extant research to refer to what is at stake in Christian existence at work (see also chapter 4). All these three terms are used to refer to the key characteristic of Christians at work, that is, their spirituality, religion, or faith. Thus, for those studying Christians at work, an additional question is how these terms relate to the study of Christians at work. While a social scientifically informed study of Christians at work<sup>38</sup> takes account of the terminological situation in fsw research, it must also ask the question of the relationship between fsw terms and the term ‘Christian(s)’.

While, at first, this may seem either to be an unnecessary question or to complicate things even further, I will indicate below (6.1) how different understandings of Christian identity adopted by practitioners can serve as a framework in which the Christians we studied position themselves by using the terms faith, spirituality, and religion in particular ways. Thus, while the terminological problems in fsw research seem to be resistant to a general solution, I intend to contribute to the clarification of fsw terms as they concern the study of Christians at work by taking into account how practitioners use these terms.

In addition to practitioner usages of fsw terms in relation to Christian existence, there are broader theoretical questions concerning the relationships of fsw terms to the semantic field around the term Christian/s. I will now briefly indicate some of the relevant questions: To what does the term ‘Christian/s’ refer and what is its function in relation to fsw terms (such as faith, spirituality, and religion)? How are these terms related to Christian living or existence at work? Is there something (and if so, what is it?) which marks someone’s faith, spirituality, or religion as Christian faith, Christian spirituality, or Christian religion? And does the term Christian mainly function as a possible categorization of faith, spirituality, or religion in a socio-historical sense, referring to one (religious, spiritual, or faith) tradition as a subtype of a particular set of traditions, for example Christian faith, compared to Jewish, Islamic, or Buddhist faiths? And, more generally, is the term Christian best described by reference to these concepts of faith, spiri-

38 In our empirical study of Christians at work in Switzerland, we also found some diversity in meanings of fsw terms (such as faith, spirituality, and religion at work). With respect to faith, for example, the term is sometimes used more in the (particular) sense of an attitude of confidence (see 6.2) and at other times it seems to be more a (general) label for Christian identity/existence (see 6.1).

tuality, or religion? What are the meaning and function of the term ‘Christian’ with reference to Christians in current work contexts?

In the present chapter, I have addressed theoretical contexts of fsw research and definitions of key terms. I have identified, first, the problem areas of the vagueness, abstractness, and confusion surrounding the main terms of fsw, and, second, the question of how fsw terms relate to the notion of ‘Christians’ and to the study of Christians in present-day work contexts.<sup>39</sup> In chapter 3, I will discuss the available theory of fsw and how the present theory base offers possible answers to the vagueness/abstractness/confusion problems. Toward the end of chapter 3 and then again in chapter 4, I will take up the question of the term ‘Christians’ in relation to fsw and address the question of the relationship between fsw and the study of Christians at work.

39 Note that the first problem area is addressed by fsw researchers themselves, while the second problem area is rarely addressed in fsw research, but was identified by me while approaching fsw research with a focus on its potential contribution to the study of Christians at work.



### 3 Theoretical contours of contemporary fsw research

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce important theoretical building blocks available on fsw and to illustrate the fragmented state of current theory development. The sections are concerned with various aspects of fsw, such as 1) spiritual practice(s) and work, 2) different levels of analyzing fsw, 3) fsw and the ‘workplace-related concepts’ of leadership, management, and entrepreneurship, and 4) assessments of fsw (focusing on outcomes, justification, ethics, and critique of fsw).

In the following, I will consider both empirically<sup>1</sup> and conceptually oriented texts in their theory-related functions.<sup>2</sup> In the fifth section of this chapter, I will evaluate the contribution of the available theory to the two problem areas identified in chapter two (see 2.2.2 and 2.2.5) of the vagueness/abstraction/confusion of fsw terms (3.5.1) and the relation of fsw terms to the study of Christians at work (3.5.3). Furthermore, I will identify the use of workplace-related concepts (such as management, work, business, leadership, etc.) as an additional terminological challenge to fsw research (3.5.2).

#### 3.1 Theorizing spiritual practice in work contexts

One promising avenue via which to remedy the abstraction problem of fsw appears to be the exploration of the link between fsw and concrete practices. If one looks at the attempts to define spirituality in work contexts discussed so far, the notion of (spiritual) practice/s seems not to be viewed as part of the concept of spirituality itself; instead, spirituality is construed as being characterized by certain aspects or dimensions, such as Ashmos and Duchon’s (2000) three dimensions of spirituality at work (inner life, meaningful work, and community). According to Hudson (2014:30–33), much research literature seems to treat spirituality at work as a state of

1 In the case of empirically oriented articles, it is mostly that of theory testing, and sometimes, but to a lesser degree, that of theory generation.

2 In this theoretically orientated overview of fsw research, I do not engage in detail with historical accounts of fsw (see e.g. Benefiel, Fry & Geigle 2014, Davenport 2008, Lambert 2009, Miller 2007, 2003, Steensen & Villadsen 2019), or with fsw in relation to particular work contexts, professions, and types of work (see chapter 1.1 for a list of some examples of the literature in these respects), apart from management, leadership, and entrepreneurship (and with respect to these three terms, it is not clear whether they refer to ‘types of work’ or constitute a ‘profession’, see below).

mind, and the relationship between one's "acts" and spirituality is not clear. Others have indicated that spiritual practices seem to be crucial for fsw because they are "portable and adaptable" (Grant, O'Neil & Stephens 2004:268), and thus allow spirituality to retain its salience outside organized religion. With respect to the inclusion of spiritual practice at work, Grant and colleagues (2004) mention a number of aspects which play a role. First, it is crucial whether individuals can *interpret* their work practices and their companies' operations in sacred terms (2004:268). In addition, Grant and colleagues (2004:281) suggest that variations in *opportunity structures* for spiritual practices across different working contexts, and variations of experiences of spirituality (engaging and disengaging) should be considered in further research. Given the potentially important role spiritual practice seems to play, how are the notions of spiritual practice/s and spirituality in the workplace related?

### 3.1.1 *Spiritual practices and workplace spirituality*

The relationship between spiritual practices and workplace spirituality is addressed by two publications which examine the influence of meditation practices on levels of spirituality in organizations. Petchsawang and Duchon (2012) find that individuals who practice meditation have higher scores in workplace spirituality than those who do not. Petchsawang and McLean (2017) compare organizations that offer mindfulness meditation courses to organizations that do not and find that the levels of workplace spirituality and work engagement are higher in those organizations that do offer mindfulness meditation courses.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to this observation of a positive effect of spiritual practice upon levels of spirituality in an organization,<sup>4</sup> spiritual practice is explored as a coping strategy to mitigate adverse influences of work contexts, such as stress and negative emotions. Studying prayer in organizational life in Brazil, Vasconcelos (2010) finds that the subjects studied view prayer as a form of communication with a divine power and regarded prayer as beneficial in "deal[ing] with tasks, colleagues' relationships, negative emotions and spiritual vibrations at work settings" (2010:369). Goltz (2011) reviews the

3 This seems to be consistent with Fry and Cohen's (2009:80) conceptualization of the relationship, where they identify spiritual practice as the source of spiritual well-being in an organization (on Fry and Cohen's approach to spiritual leadership, see 3.3).

4 Which some might argue is tautological, and if one were NOT to find empirical evidence of this relationship, something would have gone remarkably wrong with one's research.

literature on the effects of spiritual practices and finds that prayer and meditation have significant positive effects on an individual's physiological and emotional state and result in beneficial changes in cognition (2011:345), and that spiritual practices may lead to non-judgmental awareness, calmness, empathy, and flexibility. Arnetz and colleagues (2013:271) study the relationship of spiritual values and practices to employee stress and mental well-being. Their results indicate that spiritual values are positively associated with mental well-being and low occupational stress, and that spiritual practices are positively associated with low work-related exhaustion.<sup>5</sup>

But what is spiritual practice? The study of spiritual practices seems to focus mainly on prayer and meditation<sup>6</sup>, with few exceptions, for example the study by Kluver and Wicks (2014:358) on “decorative practices” as a form of spiritual expression. While individual spiritual practices in organizations are addressed by a number of researchers, the study of *corporate* spiritual practices seems less prominent. One exception is presented by Dyck and Wong (2010, see also 3.4.1), who draw on the literature on spiritual disciplines (Dallas Willard and Richard Foster) to propose the practice of the four corporate spiritual disciplines of confession, worship, guidance, and celebration.<sup>7</sup> In our own research (Brügger 2018; Brügger & Huppenbauer 2019), a few managers reported the practice of *corporate* spiritual activities at work.<sup>8</sup> While the texts discussed in this subsection propose the integration of spiritual practices, which are mostly viewed as not being directly associated with work contexts in the first place, others have suggested that work itself is to be understood as being inherently spiritual.

5 While this passage addresses the effects of spiritual practice at work, the broader topic of outcomes of fsw will be addressed in 3.4.

6 In addition to spirituality, the study of meditation at work is related to other concepts like consciousness (e.g. Marques 2010), mindfulness (see e.g. Badham & King 2019, Dane 2011, Kalafatoglu & Turgut 2019, Van Dam et al. 2018, Weick & Putnam 2006) and conscious awareness (Pavlovich 2010).

7 See also Delbecq's (2010) study on organizational-level spirituality, which does not focus particularly on spiritual practices, but which also takes account of the modes of behavior that are related to the manifestation of spirituality (see 3.2.1).

8 Such as collective prayer and corporate events, including such activities as body awareness exercises, dialog, and reflection.

### 3.1.2 *Work as spiritual practice*

The argument is put forward in different ways (from a historical, neurological, conceptual, or practical perspective). Arguing from a historical perspective, Ottaway (2003) points out that an understanding of work as spiritual can be found throughout history, for example in the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament writings, the thinking of the early Church Fathers, the Protestant ethic, and also in the writings of modern theological writers on the spirituality of work (he discusses the work of Holland, Fox, Volf and Occhiogrosso). Peregoy (2016) explores the idea that work itself is spiritual. He proposes a ‘spirituality of work’, instead of a ‘spirituality at work’, and finds that the idea of work as spiritual appears in Catholic and Protestant thinking, in Islam, in Judaism, and in a number of secular writers (i.e. Maslow, Palmer, Wilber, Newberg & Waldman). Peregoy concludes that, for the individual, practicing work as something spiritual requires a certain “oneness” (2016) and the alignment of one’s thoughts, actions, and emotions.

From a neurological perspective, Smith (2008) argues that spiritual experience is facilitated by ritualized activities and repetitive behavior, which can be found in religious practices *as well as* at work (2008:17–21). In this view, spirituality is not something which is *added* to a particular work activity, but work itself can be experienced as something spiritual: “If spiritual experiences and peak work experiences can share a common neurological agency, then work might itself be considered a legitimate site for spiritual experiences” (2008:23) (see also 3.2.2).

Arguing on conceptual grounds, Long and Driscoll (2015) first observe that in the workplace spirituality discourse, authors make connections between spiritual concepts and work. They go on to concede that the story can be told differently in that “it could be argued that the authors of the texts we analyzed are not making any new discursive connections between spiritual concepts and work for they may be implicitly linked from the start” (2015:951). Such a conceptual connection between work and spirituality is also posited by Vivan Ligo (2011:441). She suggests that the concept of work is to be understood in terms of five variables (product, process, end user, the worker, and the workplace). As each of these five variables entails a spiritual dimension, the spirituality of work is part of (the concept of) work itself.<sup>9</sup>

9 For a more detailed discussion of Ligo’s (2011) approach, see 4.3.

Exploring the practical integration of spiritual practice at work, Lychnell (2017) describes a process whereby the work of the managers he studied becomes spiritual. In Lychnell's study, this process is initiated and sustained by the manager's meditation practice. The managers gradually learn to apply a meditative attitude to their work situations. They increasingly expand the meditative attitude acquired during their meditation practice to the work setting. In this way, their "work becomes meditation" (2017). This process results in a "holistic understanding" (2017) of oneself and one's situations because it is based on embodied experience, including thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations. In this way, the spiritual practice (which has a distinct place and time separate from one's work) results in an attitude which gradually expands and develops into a stable disposition, in which a manager's experience (including the work experience) becomes rooted. In such a perspective, while work is not construed as inherently spiritual from the beginning, spirituality as a 'meditative attitude' is conceptualized as being able to encompass and 'spiritualize' one's experience of work.

Additionally, the implicit connections between work and spirituality have been addressed by a number of other authors: for example, Radzins (2011) explores the spiritual nature of work in the thinking of Simone Weil.<sup>10</sup> Others have explored the way in which management practices require faith (Olohan & Davitti 2017), and the parallels between trust (in organizational contexts) and faith (within a religious framework) (Caldwell, Davis and Devine 2009). Black (2011:6) has even argued that management, rightly understood, consists of spiritual exercises (in contrast to pious rituals or managerial techniques), and that "searching for God" is an inherent part of corporate existence.<sup>11</sup> In Fry's (see e.g. Fry & Cohen 2009) theory of spiritual leadership, the source of spiritual leadership is 'inner life' or spiritual practice, which may include individual practices, such as meditation, prayer, yoga, journaling or walking in nature, and organizational spaces, such as rooms for silence and reflection.<sup>12</sup>

In sum, the notion of spiritual practice/s is portrayed by some scholars as distinct from but related to work (or management, or leadership), while others conceptualize spiritual practice in a comprehensive way, in which the notion allows an interpretation of work (or management, or leadership) itself as a spiritual practice. Research on spiritual practice in work contexts is also related to other important theoretical building blocks of fsw, such as

10 For a more detailed discussion of Radzins' (2017) approach, see 4.3.

11 For a discussion of Black's (2011, 2009, 2008) approach, see 5.4.

12 On the spiritual leadership theory, see 3.3.



the outcomes of fsw (see 3.4), and the different levels of analysis of fsw (3.2), to which I will turn now.

## 3.2 Fsw levels of analysis

One way to categorize fsw publications is according to the level they primarily address. The most often used distinction is that between the organizational (meso) and the individual (micro) levels, although some publications also explicitly cover the macro level of the broader cultural and social context (see e.g. Dodd & Gotsis 2007) or issues located between the meso and micro levels, that is, on the unit or team level (e.g. Benefiel, Fry & Geigle 2014:182). In the following, I will first address the organizational and subsequently the individual levels, before turning to the question of the interrelationships between the different levels.

### 3.2.1 Organizational-level fsw

In this section, I will briefly introduce research focusing on the organizational level. First, I will address the manifestation of spirituality on an organizational level, and second, organizational attitudes toward fsw. Some authors conceptualize and explore the *manifestation* of spirituality in work contexts as a cultural expression of certain values. Jurkiewicz and Giacalone (2004) develop a values framework of workplace spirituality<sup>13</sup>. In their approach, ‘workplace spirituality’ is by definition an organizational variable. It refers to an organizational culture which is marked by the values of benevolence, generativity, humanism, integrity, justice, mutuality, receptivity, respect, responsibility, and trust. In a similar vein, Delbecq (2010) presents a case study of how spirituality is manifested in the corporate culture of a particular health care organization. These are the lived values he identified (2010:69): mission centric, vocational/calling emphasis, inclusive decision-making, differential talents valued, respectful interactions, connection to transcendence through prayer/reflection, attention to mission in selection, investment in development, behavioral modeling by leaders. In such a conceptualization of fsw as being characterized by values, fsw is not understood as being constituted by certain practices or behavior, but by certain dispositions or attitudes which orient organizational behavior. Compared to

13 Which they propose as the basis for the empirical testing of the relationship of workplace spirituality and organizational performance. For a discussion of their definition of workplace spirituality, see 2.2.

other approaches, spirituality is understood more narrowly here as pertaining to normative orientations (such as values), while other aspects, such as spiritual practices and organizational contexts, seem to be less important.<sup>14</sup>

This broader context, on which the manifestation of fsw relies, is indicated by studies which address the theme of organizational implementation or facilitation of fsw (e.g. Houghton, Neck and Krishnakumar 2016, Miller & Ngunjiri 2014, Pawar 2009, Bandsuch & Cavanagh 2005). While Houghton and colleagues (2016) and Miller and Ngunjiri (2014) focus on particular aspects of fsw facilitation (leadership and workplace chaplains<sup>15</sup> respectively), Pawar (2009:382) offers a comprehensive model of factors that facilitate fsw. His model explicitly considers a variety of factors (e.g. leadership development, leadership practice, organizational spiritual values, personal spiritual values and practices, and individual and group focused activities to facilitate workplace spirituality) and locates them within a broader framework which culminates in the experience of workplace spirituality.<sup>16</sup>

A particular aspect which also occurs in Pawar's model, and which attracts some research, is the question of the *attitude* taken by organizations and their managers toward the expression of faith or spirituality at work. A number of authors have proposed a typology of organizations according to the attitude they take toward fsw. Mitroff and Denton (1999a, 1999b) identify six organizational designs in terms of workplace spirituality: religion-based organization, evolutionary organization, recovering organization, socially responsible organization, values-based organization, and a hybrid-type organization.<sup>17</sup> Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2003) suggest three types of relationship between spirituality and the workplace: the parallel relationship, the adversarial relationship, and the integrative relationship. Pinha e Cunha, Rego, and D'Oliveira (2006) propose a typology of organization and management theories in terms of organizational spiritualities, distinguishing between the dominant view of people (as independent or dependent) and the model of management (as spiritually informed or spiritually uninformed). This approach results in four types of organization: the soulful

14 As the individual fsw section will make clear, particular forms of *experience* can be considered another crucial aspect of fsw.

15 For a literature review on workplace chaplaincy, see Wolf and Feldbauer-Durstmüller (2018).

16 For an alternative model focusing on rituals, community, and belief, see Bandsuch and Cavanagh (2005:228).

17 For a discussion, see Miller and Ewest (2013a:38f).

organization (view of people as dependent, spiritually informed management practice), the ascetic organization (dependent people, management as a spiritually uninformed practice), the holistic organization (independent people, spiritually informed management), and the professional organization (independent people, spiritually uninformed management practice). Moreover, Ashfort and Pratt (2010) propose three types of organization with regard to workplace spirituality on a matrix around individual and organizational control: enabling organizations (high individual and low organizational control), directing organizations (low individual and high organizational control) and partnering organizations (high individual and high organizational control). Miller and Ewest (2015) propose the “faith and work organizational framework”, which focuses on corporate actions and attitudes toward workplace spirituality and religion. It identifies four distinct organizational approaches, namely faith-avoiding, faith-based, faith-safe, and faith-friendly organizations (2015:1). Ibrahim and Angelidis (2005) suggest differentiating between explicitly Christian and secular companies.

The variety of proposed typologies indicates a diversity of possible approaches which organizations and their managers can take toward fsw. The question which arises here is that of the criteria (and their appropriateness) which guide organizations in developing an attitude toward fsw. This question will be addressed in more detail in section 3.4. Having offered a brief overview of existing research on organizational fsw in this section, I will now turn to individual-level fsw.

### 3.2.2 *Individual fsw*

Different conceptions of individual fsw emerge around different answers to the question of what is essential to or at the core of individual-level fsw. The four main answers I am going to address here are experience (Heaton, Schmidt-Wilk & Travis 2004, Smith 2008), the intention to integrate (Miller 2013b), worldview assumptions (Daniels, Franz & Wong 2000), and spiritual practice (Fry & Cohen 2009), resulting in an emphasis on what I characterize as an experiential, volitional/intentional, cognitive/intellectual or practical account of fsw.

First, with regard to what I refer to as an experiential understanding, Heaton and colleagues (2004) propose a conceptualization of spirituality in organizations consisting of the three related concepts of “pure spirituality”, “applied spirituality”, and “spiritual development.” Pure spirituality refers to the “silent, unbounded, inner experience of pure self-awareness, devoid of

customary content of perception, thoughts, and feelings” (2004:63). Applied spirituality refers to “the domain of practical applications and measurable outcomes that automatically arise from the inner experience of pure spirituality” (2004:64). Spiritual development means the “holistic process of positive transformation through experience of pure spirituality (...) the process through which all aspects of the personality grow from experiences of pure spirituality” (2004:64). Thus, the experience of pure spirituality affects a person on all levels of existence (such as emotions, intellect, mind, sense perception, and behavior) and the outcomes of such experiences are referred to as “applied spirituality”, while the development of these outcomes and their integration into the life of an individual are called “spiritual development”.<sup>18</sup>

This differentiation between an essential spiritual experience and its application is taken up by Smith (2008).<sup>19</sup> He proposes a theoretical framework of organizational spirituality which draws upon practitioner reports, as well as existing academic theory, and incorporates them into a comprehensive map (see Smith 2008:20). At the core of his conceptualization is what Smith terms the “spiritual experience”, drawing on Heaton and colleagues’ (2004) concept of pure spirituality, which refers to “direct personal experience”, as opposed to applied spirituality, which denotes the outcomes and consequences of spiritual experience. The individual spiritual experience differs in terms of two main continua: intensity (mild or intense) and duration (transient or permanent) (2008:9). Smith focuses on transient spiritual experience, which is associated with “the perception of an absence of time, space, and body, as well as feelings of peacefulness, unboundedness and fullness of life” (2008:6). It carries measurable emotional, physiological, and neurological correlates (2008:6).

- 18 Although the conception is presented in general terms, Heaton and colleagues focus primarily on the study of transcendental meditation, and their understanding of pure spirituality is drawn from the writings of the Vedic scholar and teacher Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (see Heaton et. al. 2004:64).
- 19 The distinction between pure and applied spirituality used by Smith also resembles Wozniak’s (2012) distinction between spirituality and religion (see 2.2). While Wozniak does not directly refer to spirituality as an experience, she (drawing on the thinking of Simmel) conceives of spirituality as a state or quality of the form of being of people. This quality may then be accompanied by such aspects as practices, systems of beliefs and morals, attitudes, and values. These aspects can be referred to as ‘religion’ as a social form and they “emerge as materializations of the spiritual impulses of human beings” (2012:34).

Drawing on a classification of definitions of spirituality by Krishnakumar and Neck (2002), Smith (2008) argues that there are three main types of understanding of the origin of spirituality: the intrinsic-origin view, the extrinsic-origin<sup>20</sup> view and the existential-origin view. For Smith, however, the question of spirituality versus religion and that of the individual interpretation of the cause of a spiritual experience are of secondary importance. Instead he argues for the centrality of the experience of spiritual *states* in terms of pure spirituality, and proposes that people can experience spiritual states “*regardless of the way in which they or others define the origin of that experience*” (Smith 2008:7.15, my emphasis).

Smith refers to the level which Heaton and colleagues (2004) call applied spirituality as the area of manifestations of spirituality. He differentiates between an area of *inner* manifestations of spirituality, such as decision-making and thinking patterns, sensory awareness and intellectual frameworks of ethics and morality, and an area of *outer* manifestations of spirituality, such as behavior, health and (emotional) well-being, creative abilities, and interpersonal abilities and connections (2008:7).

In sum, Smith answers the question of *what* (individual<sup>21</sup>) spirituality at work is in a quite comprehensive manner.<sup>22</sup> His answer entails four aspects. 1) The core element of organizational spirituality is the individual spiritual experience, 2) framed by the individual’s view of the origin of this spiritual experience. The spiritual experience is manifested in 3) an inner domain as inner qualities (virtues, values, frameworks, convictions, et cetera) and 4) in the outer domain of observable states, behavior, and actions. While Smith does not specify the inner and outer manifestations of spirituality in more detail as regards their content, he does so in terms of the spiritual experience and its emotional, physiological, and neurological correlates. The spiritual experience is characterized by the perception of an absence of space, time, and body, and accompanied by feelings of peace, joy, and unity.

20 This type is an adaption of Krishnakumar and Neck’s ‘religious view’.

21 Smith actually speaks of ‘organizational spirituality’, but I take him to be referring to the spirituality of individuals in organizational contexts.

22 It is to be noted that he focuses on transient spiritual experience, although *permanent* spiritual experience might be quite an important aspect of spirituality in the workplace as well. Aaron Smith indicated to me via e-mail (21 Sept 2015) that he has not yet pursued the issue further, but that in his opinion daily spiritual experience in the workplace remains an important and underdeveloped area of research. See also Benefiel (2003:384) who criticizes a superficial understanding of spirituality which focuses on peak spiritual experiences with which one is tempted to abandon the spiritual path as soon as one hits “the inevitable bumps on the spiritual journey”.

Smith is also quite precise in sketching the conditions of *how* spirituality and work can be integrated. 1) A spiritual experience can occur *regardless* of the way an individual defines the origin (e.g. God) of this experience. In this approach, spirituality at work can occur with or without an individual's commitment to particular traditional beliefs or interpretations. In this sense, traditional influences are of secondary importance for the emergence of spirituality in the workplace. 2) There is no on/off-button for spiritual experiences and "the right combination of conditions is probably quite rare" (2008:17). There are, however, two main facilitating factors for spiritual experiences: intense attention-focusing and ritualized, repetitive activity (2008: 6.19 – 21).

In this view, in terms of general lifestyle, it will be helpful for the blossoming of one's spirituality to become engaged in long-term repetitive behavior, such as prayer or meditation (Smith 2008: 21, see also Delbecq 2004). From a neurological perspective, this predisposes the brain for spiritual experiences. In terms of the individual's concrete experience of work, spiritual experiences are facilitated by engaging in attention-focusing tasks and by integrating repetitive, ritualized behavior at work. This does not need to be specifically faith-related, but any activity (also directly work-related ones) can be ritualized (Smith 2008:17). Because the neurological correlates of spiritual experience can also emerge during an intensely attention-focusing task, there is "in neurological terms, (...) little that separates work from religion in terms of stimulating the brain preconditions needed for spiritual episodes" (2008:17).<sup>23</sup>

Second, in terms of what I refer to as a volitional or intentional account of individual fsw, David Miller and colleagues (2018, 2013b, 2007, 2003) propose an "integration box" theory of faith<sup>24</sup> at work. This theory is intended to be descriptive in that it offers a typology of four different, but equally legitimate styles of faith–work behavior. In this perspective, people integrate faith and work mainly in accordance with four primary modes (and corresponding motivations), which can be specified in more detail according to two different orientations for each mode: the Ethics type (with community- or self-orientation subtypes), the Expression (earlier called "evangelization", 2003:307) type (with verbal or nonverbal orientation), the Experience type (with outcomes or process/activity orientations), and the Enrichment type (with group or individual orientation). According to Miller and Ewest (2013b), everyone's faith–work integration can be described in

23 On the possibility of experiencing work spiritually, see also 3.1.2.

24 Which in this conception includes spirituality.

terms of these four types and specified according to the two orientations for each type.

All four types represent “behavioral manifestations and corresponding motivation” (2013b:406) of faith–work integration. This typology was developed drawing on Miller’s research on the faith at work movement and its historical development. Miller and Ewest (2013b:405) posit a “unifying principle of faith and work integration that drives the movement and its participants”. This “primary organizing principle” of the people in the movement is “a desire to live an integrated life where their spiritual identity was not divorced from their workplace life” (Miller & Ewest 2013b:405). The core driver of the people in the movement is thus a certain desire or intention. As regards content, Miller and Ewest stay intentionally broad. They use ‘faith’ as an umbrella term which, they argue, is able to encompass a broad range of religions, spiritualities, and worldviews (2013b:406). They thus seek to offer a theory of faith–work integration which is able to capture variety in terms of “multiple faith perspectives”, of the “multivariate nature of workplace spirituality” (2013b:405) and of the individual expression of one’s faith at work. Miller and Ewest argue that what unifies people who integrate their faith, spirituality, or religion with their work, is not specific content (e.g. in terms of participating in a particular tradition or of having a particular spiritual experience), but the desire to integrate one’s faith (whatever that faith may be) with one’s work. In other words, Miller and Ewest assume a more formal or modal core of faith at work/workplace spirituality which allows for diversity in terms of content.

Third, in terms of a cognitive/intellectual account of individual fsw, Daniels, Franz, and Wong (2000)<sup>25</sup> argue that one’s conception of spirituality is dependent on basic assumptions with regard to epistemology and ontology, that is, “worldview assumptions”. In this view, the influence of one’s spirituality on management practice and education differs in relation to the different conceptions of spirituality an individual holds, and these are determined by the underlying worldview. A worldview is a set of presuppositions that shapes how one perceives the world. Daniels, Franz, and Wong (2000) identify four main types of worldview based on different positions in relation to an ontological (the nature of reality) and epistemological (ways of knowing) continuum (2000).

The understanding of the nature of the spiritual is located on the (horizontal) ontological continuum: at the ‘material’ end, reality is understood to be limited to the material world, whereas at the ‘transcendent’ end, an

25 See also my discussion of their Christian approach to management in 5.4.2.



immaterial dimension or aspect of reality is assumed. From both perspectives, it is possible to speak of 'spirit', but the term refers to something totally different in each approach. Implied in the two positions are two different views of business: the purpose of business is to make profit (material perspective), or the purpose of business is to serve others, that is, customers and employees (transcendent perspective) (Daniels, Franz, and Wong 2000).

The understanding of how one experiences and knows the spiritual is located on the (vertical) epistemological continuum. At the objective end, it is assumed that there is an external referent to individual (spiritual as well as other forms of) experience, while at the subjective end, experience is conceived of as purely subjective. The combination of ontological and epistemological assumptions results in four main types of worldview: modern (material and objective orientation), postmodern (material and subjective orientation), mystic (transcendent and subjective orientation), and theistic (transcendent and objective orientation). Each of these worldviews implies a different understanding of the spiritual and spirituality, and entails a corresponding view of business and management. The framework thus serves as an "organizing scheme for articulating managerial implications of spirituality" (Daniels, Franz, and Wong 2000). In this approach, the cognitive content of one's assumptions is assumed to be crucial for the formation of (individual) spirituality in the workplace.

Fourth, in terms of a practical account of individual fsw, Fry (see e.g. Fry & Cohen 2009) conceptualizes spiritual practice as central to a leader's individual spirituality. The content of such a practice is not predefined: it may include individual practices, such as meditation, prayer, yoga, journaling, or walking in nature.

Four different answers to what the essential core of individual fsw is can thus be identified: experience (Heaton et al. 2004, Smith 2008), the intention to integrate (Miller 2013b), worldview assumptions (Daniels, Franz & Wong 2000), or spiritual practice (Fry & Cohen 2009). In summary, individual fsw is conceptualized as being either essentially experiential, volitional/intentional, cognitive/intellectual, or practical. Having introduced the main approaches to organizational and individual fsw, I will now turn to the question of interrelationships between levels.



### 3.2.3 *Interrelationship between the individual, organizational, and extra-organizational levels*

The two main questions that arise in this area of fsw research are the role of the organizational context in fostering or inhibiting the manifestation of (individual and organizational) fsw and the question of the facilitation of spirituality (individual and organizational) from an organizational perspective. I will first turn to the role of the organizational context in the manifestation of fsw. Weaver and Agle (2002) suggest that religious role expectations, internalized as religious self-identity, may influence ethical behavior at work, but that this effect is moderated by religious identity salience and religious motivational orientation. Religious identity salience is in turn influenced by the organizational context, which indicates the interrelatedness of one's religiosity, one's ethical behavior and the organizational context. In particular, they (2002:86–88) propose that the organizational context can influence the manifestation of one's religiosity, that is, "religious salience" at work. They argue that it is a simplistic view, which holds that the "values of economizing and power aggrandizing often found in business organizations completely overpower employees' personal values" (2002:86) and that the process in which factors of the organizational context influence the salience of different elements of one's identity is complex. In a similar vein, Dodd and Gotsis (2007:102) argue that the relationship between religion and enterprise is highly context-specific. They suggest that it is mediated by political structures and ideologies and by religious symbolism in the workplace. Lynn, Naughton & VanderVeen (2010) find that faith–work integration (measured by the faith at work scale) is associated with two variables from inside the organizational context (negatively with organization size and positively with relationships with workplace mentors). It is positively associated with a number of extra-organizational context variables (such as faith maturity, church attendance, age, denominational strictness, and the practice of spiritual disciplines). Pawar (2014) studies the effects of a leader's individual spirituality and organizational spirituality on a leader's spiritual behavior toward subordinates. He finds that individual spirituality can account for variance in leaders' spiritual behavior toward subordinates, while organizational spirituality cannot. McGhee and Grant (2016:1) argue that one's spirituality manifested as an awareness of others that guides and enables authentic ethical action can enable someone to transcend organizational conditions. In summary, the studies available indicate that organizational context and fsw are interrelated in various ways.

A second question is how the manifestation of fsw can be facilitated from an organizational perspective.<sup>26</sup> In this regard, two publications emphasize the importance of a fit between individuals and organizational context. First, Singhal and Chatterjee (2006:173f) propose a person–organization fit approach as the basis for a conceptual framework of spirituality at work. They hypothesize that individual–organizational alignment is the key factor predictive of different outcomes of spirituality at work. Second, Kolodinsky, Giacalone, and Jurkiewicz (2008:467) argue that workplace spirituality can be conceptualized from three different perspectives: as an organizational variable, an individual variable or as a variable in terms of the interaction between an individual’s and an organization’s spirituality. Organizational spirituality is a variable of organizational culture. This organizational level spirituality interacts with a worker’s personal spirituality, that is, the incorporation of a person’s spiritual ideals and beliefs into the work context. The interaction of organizational and personal spirituality is related to “work rewards satisfaction” (2008:465). Kolodinsky, Giacalone, and Jurkiewicz (2008:467) argue for a person–environment fit approach and suggest that, in order to achieve positive work-related outcomes, the fit between one’s individual spirituality and one’s perception of organizational spirituality in terms of values congruence is crucial. In addition, Pawar (2009:382)<sup>27</sup> proposes a comprehensive model, based on a review of extant research, of how different levels are interrelated in facilitating workplace spirituality. Individual experiences of workplace spirituality can be fostered through individual-focused spiritual development of leaders, leadership with a focus on organizational spirituality, particular spirituality-enhancing organizational practices, the personal spiritual values and practices of a leader, individual-focused spiritual development of employees, and group-focused workplace spirituality facilitation (Pawar 2009).

In conclusion, while the particular contexts of fsw seem to be crucial, the level distinction between organizational and individual fsw is primarily used as an analytical move relevant for the observer and seems to be of limited value or of secondary importance in relation to fsw. Furthermore, it tends not to be viewed as part of the construct of fsw.<sup>28</sup> In reality, there is always

26 On the related question of organizational attitudes toward fsw, see section 3.2.1.

27 See also section 3.2.1 in the present chapter.

28 This also holds true for accounts that conceptualize workplace spirituality as an organizational variable, where it seems to be understood, by and large, as an accumulation of individual spiritualities.

both: individuals and a context (intra- and extra-organizational).<sup>29</sup> In such an analytically differentiated view, rather than relating to the phenomenon of fsw, the two levels pertain to two different levels of analysis of the same phenomenon and its effects. Thus, the research discussed here seems somehow to view organizational spirituality as *the sum of the accumulated individual spiritualities*. In the end, one could argue that there is no such thing as organizational spirituality if spirituality is not manifested in the life of the individuals who are part of an organization. What does not seem to come into consideration in such an approach to organizational spirituality, however, is the question of the ‘spiritual nature’ of organizations (see, however, Pfaltzgraff-Carlson 2020). In this regard, I will take up below (see 5.4) the proposal presented by Michael Black (2009), who argues that organizations, understood as corporations with a distinct identity, are spiritual entities that are conceptually closely tied to Christian tradition and can only be understood in theological terms. Having discussed different levels of fsw which can be seen as *formal* specifications of the ‘work contexts’ part of the phrase ‘faith, spirituality, and religion in work contexts’, I will now turn to discussing three concepts which can be seen as more *materially* oriented (content-related) specifications of the ‘work’ part of the phrase ‘faith, spirituality, and religion in work contexts’, and which are often used in research literature in relation to fsw: leadership, management, and entrepreneurship.

### 3.3 Fsw and selected work-related concepts

In this section, I will discuss fsw with regard to the notions of leadership, management/management education, and entrepreneurship because these three notions are prominent in fsw research. Studies that use these concepts do not address the relationship between faith, spirituality or religion, and work (or workplaces, work contexts) in general, but focus on particular constructs assumed to be important for fsw.

29 The interdependence of the different levels can also be observed in texts on legal implications of faith at work (e.g., Adams 2012; Miller & Ewest 2015:7–9; Sullivan 2013; Morgan 2016, 2005), where distinctions with respect to levels become secondary because legal issues are related to both the organizational and individual levels (and because they are concerned with law, they also relate to the macro- or extra-organizational level).

### 3.3.1 Fsw and leadership

Numerous researchers have addressed the relationship between spirituality and leadership<sup>30</sup> (e.g. Barney, Wicks, Scharmer & Pavlovich 2015, Benefiel 2005, Bugenhagen 2009, Fairholm 1996, Fairholm and Fairholm 2009, Fairholm and Gronau 2015, Fry & Cohen 2009, Grandy & Sliwa 2017, Lean & Ganster 2017, Low & Ayoko 2020, Naidoo 2014, Pruzan 2008, Reave 2005, Sanders, Hopkins and Geroy 2003, Tourish & Tourish 2010). While some have argued that spiritual leadership leads to positive individual and organizational outcomes (e.g. Fry & Cohen 2009, Reave 2005), others outline that the positive effects of spiritual leadership are mediated by certain boundary conditions (Krishnakumar et al. 2015) and raise basic questions concerning the very attempt to relate spirituality and leadership (Dent, Higgins & Wharff 2005), arguing that both concepts lack a widely accepted definition and that, therefore, relating the two concepts makes things even more vague and complicated.

The relationship between spirituality and leadership is explored in both directions of influence. Addressing the influence of leadership on spirituality, Houghton, Neck, and Krishnakumar (2016) suggest that a number of leadership styles may help to facilitate spirituality and spiritual diversity in the workplace, such as spiritual leadership, servant leadership, authentic leadership, ethical leadership, empowering leadership, self-leadership, and shared leadership. Addressing the influence of spirituality on leadership, Phipps (2012) explores the role of spiritual beliefs in decision-making and strategic leadership. He argues in particular that spiritual beliefs function as *schemata* to filter or frame the information which leaders consider.

Additionally, a number of models or comprehensive conceptions of spiritual leadership have been put forth.<sup>31</sup> The causal spiritual leadership model was presented and revised by Louis Fry in various journal articles (Fry 2003, 2005, 2009, 2013, Fry & Cohen 2009, Fry & Matherly 2006, Fry & Slocum 2008, Fry, Vitucci & Cedillo 2005, Sweeney and Fry 2012), and tested and explored across various organizational and cultural contexts (e.g. Chaston & Lips-Wiersma 2015, Chen, Yang & Li 2012, Chen & Yang 2012, Chen & Li 2013, Jeon et al. 2013).<sup>32</sup> Spiritual leadership, as conceptualized by Fry and colleagues, entails the two processes of:

30 On religion and leadership, see for example Gümüşay (2018) and the literature there.

31 See also the recent review of spiritual leadership research by Oh and Wang (2020).

32 For an overview of the theory development and testing, see Benefiel, Fry, and Geigle (2014:178–180).

1. Creating a (transcendent) vision (of service to others) wherein one experiences a sense of calling, in that life has meaning and makes a difference.
2. Establishing (or reinforcing) an organizational culture based on the values of altruistic love, whereby one has a sense of membership, feels understood and appreciated, and has genuine care, concern, and appreciation for both oneself and others (see Fry & Cohen 2009; Benefiel, Fry & Geigle 2014).

In terms of the leader's values, attitudes, and behavior, spiritual leadership is based on hope/faith in a transcendent vision of service to others and the values of altruistic love. The purpose of spiritual leadership is to create vision and value congruence across organizational, team, and individual levels. The source of spiritual leadership is 'inner life' or spiritual practice, which may include individual practices, such as meditation, prayer, yoga, journaling, or walking in nature, but also organizational spaces, such as rooms for silence and reflection. Inner life/spiritual practice positively influences the development of hope/faith in a transcendent vision and the values of altruistic love. Spiritual leadership fosters spiritual well-being (consisting of calling and membership) and a number of important individual and organizational outcomes (such as organizational commitment and productivity, financial performance, employee life satisfaction, and corporate social responsibility).<sup>33</sup>

Besides the proposal by Fry, a variety of other authors approach the subject of spiritual leadership. Whittington and colleagues (2005:749) propose a causal model of spiritual leadership, which they term 'legacy leadership,' in which leadership effectiveness is determined by the "changed lives of followers". Krishnakumar and colleagues (2015) present a spiritual contingency model of spiritual leadership. Contingencies are "if-then conditions" (Krishnakumar et al. 2015: 24). They propose that the influence of spiritual leadership (characterized by interconnectedness, faith, and charisma) on workplace outcomes (such as in-role and extra-role performance, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction) is moderated by narcissism, pro-social motivation to lead, perceived organizational support, and perceived leader integrity (2015:229).

In conclusion, research on the relationship between fsw and leadership has so far been strongly focused on the idea of 'spiritual leadership'. Research efforts in this area of fsw display a strong quantitative orientation.

33 For a graphic sketch of the spiritual leadership model, see Fry and Cohen (2009:270).

It should be noted that Fry's spiritual leadership model is one of the few comprehensive approaches to organizational spirituality which explicitly includes the concept of spiritual practice. However, with its focus on outcomes and on creating vision and value congruence in an organization, it provides a formidable target for the instrumentalism criticism (see 3.4). Nevertheless, in its comprehensive approach, it does not focus on outcomes only, but places them in an overall framework, ranging from the sources of spiritual leadership to its outcomes, which also considers individual and organizational levels of the formation of spiritual leadership. Having addressed research on fsw in its relationship to leadership in this subsection, I will now turn to the relationship between fsw and management in the next subsection.

### 3.3.2 *Fsw and management/management education*

How is fsw related to management? While I earlier addressed the question of the attitude of those responsible for an organization toward fsw in the organization they are responsible for (see 3.2.1), I will focus in this section on the question of how fsw influences the practice of managing an organization. First, I will discuss the three contributions on spiritual management and, subsequently, address studies that focus on spirituality in management educational settings.

First, Steingard (2005) posits a complementary relationship between traditional management theory and "spiritually informed management theory" (2005:228) and offers a theory of spiritually informed management. His approach represents "the spiritual cycle of learning and action at the psycho-spiritual level of learning and action of the individual manager" (2005:230). Spiritually informed management *includes but transcends* traditional (conventional) management. On an ontological continuum<sup>34</sup>, a manager develops from being materially oriented to being spiritually oriented, that is, from management rooted in the material dimension of reality, to managerial practice that "transcends materiality and comprises reality's spiritual dimension" (2005:233). On an epistemological continuum, the spiritually informed manager moves from a personal to a transpersonal orientation, that is, (s)he is "moving beyond the self into wider realities" (2005:231). In terms of the two continua (ontological and epistemological), the management process follows a "perpetually iterative ascension–decentration cycle" (2005:231). In addition, managers move through a progressive

34 On the left side of the model, see the figure in Steingard (2005:231).

cycle of the three stages of awareness, change, and manifestation (2005:234). At all stages, a manager may or may not cross the “metaphysical breakthrough threshold” (2005:233) and thus either manage spiritually (above the line) or in a traditional mode (below the line).<sup>35</sup> In the stage of awareness, the relevant distinction between spiritually informed and spiritually uninformed management is that of conscious and unconscious awareness (2005:234). At the stage of change, the difference is found between transformative (in terms of consciousness) and translative (mainly intellectual) practices. At the stage of manifestation, traditional management is temporal in its outcomes, while spiritual management is orientated toward perennial outputs. That is, while the first is merely profit-oriented, the latter targets the triple bottom line of profit, people, and planet (2005:238). Thus, the correlation is drawn between spiritual states of being and managerial outcomes: “managers operating at higher levels of awareness (spirituality) will generate outcomes that benevolently and effectively serve humanity and the planet” (2005:238f). In summary, Steingard construes the notion of spiritual (or spiritually informed) management in relation to a conventional approach to management.

Second, Dyck (2014) offers similar contrasting of management approaches. He terms the two contrasting styles of management ‘mainstream’ and ‘alternative’ approaches to management and argues that spiritual practice consistently leads to alternative approaches to management. In particular, Dyck (2014) reviews the literature on religion and management and proposes a framework for categorizing articles in terms of two distinctions as regards, first, how religion ‘speaks’ to or informs management and, second, the content of what religion is saying to (or how it informs) management. First, the two main means are ‘written scriptures’ (ancient writings and holy texts) and experiential ‘spiritual practices’ (prayer, meditation, etc.). Second, in terms of what religion is saying to management, he distinguishes between ‘enhancing’ approaches that seek to support and enhance mainstream management theory and practices, and ‘liberating’ approaches that are radically critical of mainstream management and propose alternative ways of managing.

To distinguish conventional from alternative management approaches, Dyck draws on Weber’s notion of a materialistic–individualistic iron cage. This iron cage came in to being as a form of the Protestant ethic which has lost its grounding in religious forces and “encaptured society” (Dyck 2014:26). This materialistic–individualistic iron cage works in conventional

35 See the figure in Steingard (2005:231).



or mainstream management theory and practice through an emphasis on self-interest and profits. *Enhancing* approaches to management “argue that religious ideas are basically supportive of conventional management theory and practice” and “often offer ways to improve it or make it more ethical or honest” (Dyck 2014:31). In contrast, *liberating* approaches to management are critical of conventional approaches to management and “transform conventional emphases on self-interests and financial wealth maximization (iron cage)” (Dyck 2014:31).

These two distinctions (scriptures vs. spiritual practices; enhancement vs. liberation), result in a framework of four categories of literature: scriptural enhancement, spiritual enhancement, scriptural liberation, and spiritual liberation.<sup>36</sup> By focusing on the world’s largest religions (Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, and Islam), Dyck (2014) finds that, as regards scriptures, half of the studies he reviewed support mainstream management (which he terms scriptural enhancement), while the other half interpret scriptures as being critical of mainstream management (which he terms scriptural liberation). With respect to spiritual practices, the picture is different: “Taken together, the empirical results presented here are clear and consistent: spiritual practices result in decreased emphasis on financial and individual well-being, and increased emphasis on holistic wellbeing of the collective (especially the marginalized)” (2014:51) and

empirical studies that examine spiritual practices consistently point to liberation from conventional management. Not one study was found which said that managers who practiced spiritual disciplines—like prayer, meditation, mindfulness—became more inclined toward conventional management theory and practice (...) these similar themes and findings are evident across all of the leading world religions (Dyck 2014:52).

Third, a different typology is suggested by Pinha e Cunha, Rego, and D’Oliveira (2006).<sup>37</sup> They propose a typology of organization and management theories in terms of organizational spiritualities, distinguishing between how they view people (as independent or dependent) and their model of management (as spiritually informed or spiritually uninformed). This approach results in four types of organization: the soulful organization

36 See the figure in Dyck (2014:30). Note that Dyck, probably because of his support of a theological turn in management, uses the phrase “God on management” and equals it with “religion on management”. This terminology is a separate issue which I cannot address here. In the present review, I am concerned more narrowly with Dyck’s categorization of the literature.

37 On their approach, see also section 3.2.1 on organizational attitudes toward fsw.



(viewing people as dependent, spiritually informed management practice), the ascetic organization (dependent people, management as spiritually uninformed practice), the holistic organization (independent people, spiritually informed management), and the professional organization (independent people, spiritually uninformed management practice). This results in two organizational options for a spiritually informed management approach: viewing people as dependent (soulful organization) or viewing them as independent (holistic organization).<sup>38</sup>

Fourth, a number of publications address the integration of spirituality into management education (e.g. Ackers & Preston 1997, Boozer 1998, Cavanagh 1999, Crossman 2015b, Cullen 2011, Daniels, Franz & Wong 2000, Epstein 2002, Lenssen 2010, Marcic 2000, Neal 1997) and higher education (e.g. Bugenhagen 2009). Arguments presented for the integration of spirituality into management education include an increase in interest in spirituality in the workplace shown by business people (Crossman 2015b) and the business faculty (Cavanagh 1999). Practitioners indicate that the integration of spirituality into the business curriculum may help them find a balance between tangible outcomes and immaterial concerns (Crossman 2015b). For the sake of a coherent life, Epstein (2002) argues it is important to integrate teachings drawn from religious traditions into management education (see also 4.1). However, spirituality/religion should be integrated in such a way that allows for spiritual diversity (Crossman 2015b:376f) and respect for others, and the inclusion of lessons from faith traditions in management education should aim at intellectual illumination, not indoctrination, says Epstein (2002).<sup>39</sup>

Cullen (2008) explores the form of management and the “genre of manager” suggested by recent interest in organizational spirituality and spiritual learning. In his view, spiritual management learning approaches attempt to clarify a new spiritualized form of managerial self that recognizes both the immanent and transcendent needs of workers and organizations (2008:264).

A number of studies address different sources for the integration of spirituality into management education. Some authors focus on sacred texts as a possible source. Marcic (2000) reports on a course on spiritual values in organizations. She used sacred texts from the world’s major religions and

38 An additional view on fsw and management is presented by Daniels, Franz, and Wong (2000). They argue that particular views of business which carry managerial implications are implicit in one’s conception of spirituality. For an overview of their approach, see 3.2.2.

39 See also Burrell and Rahim (2018) on the concept of ‘religious literacy in the workplace’.

three different models to interpret these texts in light of current organizational issues (such as productivity, turbulence, turnover, employee satisfaction, team development, et cetera). She reports that students felt that the course helped them to understand “the connection between the world of work and the world of spirit” (2000). Lenssen (2010) presents an approach to biblical texts which can be used in executive education in secular settings. His approach aims at enabling executives to draw practical wisdom from biblical texts, which can support them in dealing with the challenges they face during their work.

Focusing not on specific texts but on the transfer of a particular concept, Ackers and Preston (1997) argue that the evangelical Christian notion of conversion and radical personal change has been introduced into management thinking<sup>40</sup> and has been applied to management development. They show how a particular management development program uses personal experience to remold individual personality and, as a result, corporate culture, and in this way mimics the conversion process (1997:677).

Bell and Taylor (2004) argue that the intellectual sources of a spiritual approach to management development (which they refer to as SMD) lie in the human potential movement and in transpersonal psychology, in particular the thinking of Maslow and Fromm, and the psychological frameworks of Jung and Assagioli. In their view, SMD encourages individuals “to search for meaning in their everyday working life through engagement with an inner self” (Bell & Taylor 2004:439). This focus on a search for meaning and self-understanding marks SMD, in their view, as implicitly religious (2004:439.443).

To sum up, management can be conceptualized as, potentially, a spiritual practice (by contrasting spiritual and conventional management). In relation to this, scholars have pointed to an increasing interest in spirituality in management education, and researchers have explored the influence of some religio-spiritual sources and concepts in management education and have noted the potential of using religious texts and concepts in management educational settings.

40 A development which they claim is related to the revival of the charismatic form of authority (1997:677).

### 3.3.3 *Fsw and entrepreneurship*

How is fsw related to entrepreneurship? Given the importance of such notions as vocation and creativity in entrepreneurship, it seems to be an area with various potential connections to fsw. Dodd and Seaman (1998) argue in “Religion and enterprise” that the relationship between religion and enterprise is complex, multilayered and interdependent (1998:71.83). Individual religion influences the entrepreneurial activity of believers, the decision to become an entrepreneur, enterprise management, and the entrepreneur’s networking activities and social capital. In “The interrelationships between entrepreneurship and religion”, Dodd and Gotsis (2007) conclude that the interrelationship between religion and entrepreneurship is highly context-specific (2007:102). In particular, the entrepreneur’s belief matrix influences the entrepreneurial process by setting criteria to be observed, depending on the degree of religious salience.<sup>41</sup> Dodd and Gotsis (2007) also conclude that religion affects the psychological state of an entrepreneur. Reversely, an entrepreneur’s religious beliefs, values, and identity are affected by demographic and cultural conditions.

These interrelationships and interdependencies between religiosity, entrepreneurship, and contextual conditions are addressed by researchers in a number of ways. First, a focus on the influence of religiosity/spirituality on entrepreneurship is adopted. Second, the influence of entrepreneurship on religiosity/spirituality is addressed. Third, some studies compare the religiosity/spirituality of entrepreneurs to that of non-entrepreneurs. Fourth, a number of studies explore the particularities of the religiosity/spirituality of entrepreneurs with respect to different contexts.

First, in “Religiosity and spirituality in entrepreneurship: A review and research agenda”, Balog, Baker, and Walker (2014) review the literature on the influences of spirituality and religiosity on entrepreneurship and focus on the empirical contributions to the field. They conceptualize spirituality and religion in terms of the spiritual or religious *values* of the entrepreneur and use a framework to group the literature with respect to two levels, the individual (micro) level and the level of the organization (which they refer to as the “macro” level) (2014:165). At an individual level, they review studies which investigate the influence of religious and spiritual values on entrepreneurial motivations and attitudes, on responsible business behavior,

41 It is, however, not clear why this should be an implication of religion, which is particularly related to entrepreneurship, or if, in the statement above, ‘entrepreneur’ could be replaced by a more general term like ‘business manager’ or even ‘person’.

on physical health, and on psychological well-being. At the organization level, the studies they review address the influence of spiritual and religious values on firm creation, firm performance, sociocultural environment and others (see the figure in Balog et al. 2014:165)<sup>42</sup>. Griebel, Park, and Neubert (2014) study how faith functions as a frame for entrepreneurial activity and how entrepreneurial activity can result from the need to end tensions between faith and work. Neubert and colleagues (2015) propose that, in addition to financial, human, psychological, and social forms of capital, spiritual capital is a decisive additional influence on the innovation and performance of start-up firms in development contexts (Kenya and Indonesia). They found a significant relationship between an entrepreneur's spiritual capital and business innovation and performance.

Second, addressing the opposite direction of influence, that is, the impact of entrepreneurship on spirituality, Singh, Corner, and Pavlovich (2016) study how one particular aspect of entrepreneurial work, entrepreneurial failure, influences the spirituality of entrepreneurs in New Zealand. In contrast to approaches which apply psychological theories to venture failure, their research reveals that entrepreneurs engage deeply with failure (instead of indulging in self-deception and denial) and found that the spirituality of the entrepreneurs deepened through the experience of failure.

Third, there are studies that explore how the manifestation of religiosity of entrepreneurs differs from that of non-entrepreneurs. Dodd and Seaman (1998) quantitatively explore the level of religiosity among a large sample of British entrepreneurs and find it to be similar to that of non-entrepreneurial samples. Dougherty and colleagues (2013:401, see also Neubert 2013) study "patterns of religious belonging, belief, and behavior" of American entrepreneurs (established and nascent). The entrepreneurs do not differ from non-entrepreneurs with regard to religious affiliation, belief in God, or religious service attendance. They do, however, tend to see God as more personal and responsive (Dougherty et al. 2013:407) and pray more often (more than 50 percent pray daily, and one third pray several times a day) and are more likely to attend a place of worship where business activities are encouraged, that is, they worship in "pro-business congregations" (2013:407). Evangelicals in top positions, however, were not active in congregations, instead preferring small groups and invitation-only gatherings (2013:402). Nine out of ten entrepreneurs are affiliated with a religious tradition (about one third are evangelical Protestants, one quarter mainline

42 On the broader social impact of religion on business, see also Van Buren, Syed, and Mir (2019).

Protestants, with Catholics slightly under one quarter<sup>43</sup>). Religious service is attended about once a month on average; one in three entrepreneurs attends church or mass at least weekly (2013:406).

Fourth, there are studies on the context-specific manifestation of the faith/religiosity of entrepreneurs (e.g. Cao 2007, Dana 2007, Gotsis & Kortezi 2009, and Wood & Heslam 2014). Cao (2007) presents an ethnographic account of Chinese Christian entrepreneurs in Wenzhou, China, with a focus on church–state interaction. Wenzhou is pioneering in developing China’s current market economy. He finds that the “regional capitalist development enabled by post-Mao reforms has largely depoliticized and promoted local practices of faith” (Cao 2007:45). This finding challenges the predominant view of state dominance and church resistance in Chinese Christian studies. The Christian entrepreneurs and the state share common interests, namely the pursuit of stability and development (2007:65). The Christian entrepreneurs actively seek the state’s recognition and adopt “their modern capitalist cultural logic in the production, management, and consumption of religious activities” (2007:45). Thus, the emerging market economy has molded the “post-socialist popular consciousness” and has “played a mediating role in church–state interaction” (2007:64). Dana (2007) explores entrepreneurship among the Amish people in Lancaster County (US). Gotsis and Kortezi (2009) explore the impact of Greek Orthodoxy on entrepreneurship. Wood and Heslam (2014) explore the influence of faith on business practice among Christian entrepreneurs in developing and emerging markets in Africa, Asia, and South America. These contexts are characterized by high levels of poverty and corruption. The Christian entrepreneurs show a “high sense of calling” (similar to entrepreneurs in developed contexts) and the pursuit of a “higher purpose” in terms of contributing to the alleviation of poverty through their business activities. Wood and Heslam (2014) found that because of their Christian faith, the entrepreneurs under study value reputation more highly than short-term profit. They adopt a zero-tolerance attitude toward corruption (“are willing to forgo business which cannot be won without corrupt dealing”, 2014:7) and have become known for this. In addition, the entrepreneurs under study exhibit a greater sense of dependence on God than entrepreneurs in developed contexts.

43 According to Neubert (2013), in the US the numbers of entrepreneurs from religions other than Christianity, as well as those who are atheists and agnostics, are small.

In summary, the relationship between fsw and entrepreneurship has attracted numerous studies, and various research efforts have illuminated the interrelationship between fsw, entrepreneurship, and contextual conditions. While the very notion of the entrepreneur remains somewhat vague (what distinguishes an entrepreneur from, say, a manager or a business leader?<sup>44</sup>), it is, interestingly, in this segment of fsw where one finds research which is highly sensitive to the contextuality of manifestations of fsw. While this is understandable, given the importance of networking and social capital for entrepreneurial activity, it can be doubted that manifestations of fsw are less context-specific in other areas of study (such as leadership or management).

Moreover, with regard to the study of fsw, it seems that the terms 'leadership', 'management', and 'entrepreneurship' are better understood not as referring to different 'things', such as tasks, functions, or roles of people in work settings, but rather as constructs carrying different connotations and thus different emphases in terms of the people and their roles in work contexts, which are viewed under the labels of 'leadership', 'management', and 'entrepreneurship' (see also 3.5).

### 3.4 Assessing fsw

Many have argued that fsw needs to be assessed in terms of its outcomes and benefits and have thus focused their research on the outcomes of fsw. Others have sharply criticized such an emphasis on outcomes and have proposed various other considerations which need to be taken into account in the assessment of fsw. In the following two sections, I will first present outcome-oriented research and then address questions of justification, ethics, and critique of fsw.

#### 3.4.1 *Outcomes of fsw*

Theory development in the field of fsw, as presented by Benefiel, Fry, and Geigle (2014)<sup>45</sup>, culminates in the hypothesis that spirituality/religion in organizations positively influences important employee, organizational, and societal outcomes. They observe that a number of empirical studies using multiple measures found that SRW is positively related to different mea-

44 On concepts of entrepreneurship, see Rocha, Audretsch, and Birkinshaw (2013).

45 They use the acronym SRW to refer to the field of spirituality and religion in the workplace.

asures of performance (Benefiel et al. 2014:180). From a microeconomic perspective, Steiner, Leinert, and Frey (2010:10) suggest that there is a mixed picture with regard to the question of the individual influence of religion, in particular with regard to the question of whether religion improves people's income and labor market prospects. In addition, there are contradictory results regarding the question of the relationship between one's religion and economic attitudes. Steiner and colleagues (2010:11) also point out that research on correlations cannot establish the direction of causality: "It is unclear whether religion really affects behavior or whether people with certain character traits tend to be more religious."<sup>46</sup>

The question of the outcomes and effects of fsw features prominently in the academic discussion of fsw. While some have fiercely criticized a focus on outcomes (see the following section), Steingard (2005) outlines that a *difference* in one's outcome orientation is a crucial distinction between a conventional approach to management and a spiritual approach to management. While the first is merely profit-oriented, the latter focuses on the triple bottom line of profit, people, and planet (2005:238). He proposes a correlation between a manager operating from a spiritual state and managerial outcomes: "managers operating at higher levels of awareness (spirituality) will generate outcomes that benevolently and effectively serve humanity and the planet" (2005:238f). In this section, I will discuss fsw literature that explores the outcomes of the incorporation of spirituality, religion, or faith at work. I found three main groups of publications in terms of the different types of outcome they address. One group focuses on outcomes in terms of ethical views and moral behavior, a second group addresses outcomes related to organizational commitment and performance, and a third group addresses faith-related implications.

1) Ethics-related outcomes: A crucial question is that of the influence of fsw on ethical judgment, ethical attitudes, and moral agency.<sup>47</sup> Agle and Van Buren (1999) empirically tested the relationships between religious upbringing, religious practice, Christian beliefs, and attitudes toward corporate social responsibility. They conclude that religious practice and Christian beliefs have a *weak* relationship to attitudes toward corporate social responsibility. Weaver and Agle (2002) suggest that religious role expectations, internalized as religious self-identity, may influence ethical behavior in organizations, but that this relationship is context-specific and particularly moderated by the organizational context (see also 3.2.3). Graafland, Mazereeuw,

46 On Max Weber's influence in fsw research, see also section 2.1.3.

47 The following overview is in chronological order.



and Yahia (2006) explore the relationship between Islamic religion and socially responsible business conduct among Dutch entrepreneurs. They find that common ideas of socially responsible business behavior correspond with the view of business in Islam, but that Muslims are less involved in applying socially responsible business practices than non-Muslim managers.<sup>48</sup> Brammer, Williams, and Zinkin (2007) explore the relationship between religious denomination and individual attitudes to corporate social responsibility in a large cross-country sample. They find that religious individuals tend to adopt broader conceptions of the social responsibilities of businesses than non-religious individuals. Dyck and Wong (2010) argue that the practice of four corporate spiritual disciplines (see also 3.2.1) facilitates the development of organizational virtues and moral agency in organizations. Westerman, Whitaker, and Hardesty (2013) argue that “belief in God” leads to the adoption of a stronger moral and other-centered value orientation in the workplace. Mazereeuw, Graafland, and Kaptein (2014) examine the relationships between religiosity, CSR attitudes, and CSR behavior. They find that the influence of religiosity on CSR behavior is mediated by CSR attitudes.

A related question is what type of religiosity influences ethical judgment and behavior. Clark and Dawson (1996) empirically explore the influence of personal religiousness on ethical judgments. They analyze religious motivations for ethical action and find significant differences in ethical judgments with respect to different categories in terms of the intrinsic and extrinsic religious motivation of respondents. They identify four types of individual with regard to religiousness: the pro-religious individuals (high intrinsic, high extrinsic), non-religious individuals (low intrinsic, low extrinsic), the intrinsic (high intrinsic, low extrinsic) and the extrinsic (low intrinsic, high extrinsic). Clark and Dawson’s research suggests that religiousness influences an individual’s behavior at work by providing a framework for ethical evaluations and a motivation for moral behavior. Longenecker, McKinney, and Moore (2004) study the impact of religious commitment and ethical judgment in business. They find little relation between religious commitment in broad faith categories (Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, other religion, no religion) and ethical judgment. However, individuals who indicated that religious interests were important to them showed higher levels of ethical judgment (were less accepting of unethical decisions) than those who do not. Brotheridge and Lee (2007, see also 2.2) draw on Clark and Dawson’s (1996) typology built on intrinsic and extrinsic religiousness and argue that

48 On religious traditions in fsw, see 4.1.



religion influences employee perceptions of work, organizational citizenship behavior, and workplace deviance. They argue that the “individual difference variable in organizational research” is the “nature of one’s religiosity rather than one’s religious affiliation” (2007:303). Adding to this, Walker, Smither, and DeBode (2012) study the effects of religiosity on ethical judgments. They focus on three religious attitudes, namely religious motivation (intrinsic vs. extrinsic), perceived sacred qualities of work, and views of God (loving vs. punishing). In contrast to an extrinsic religious motivation, an intrinsic religious orientation and having a loving view of God were both negatively associated with endorsing questionable ethical vignettes.

Another set of studies focuses on the relationship between spirituality and ethics. Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2003) suggest that individual spirituality influences ethical perception. Ayoun, Rowe, and Yassine (2014) found that spirituality was not significantly correlated with ethical perception, ethical judgment, and ethical intention in the hospitality industry. Dyck (2014:55) argues that empirical research shows that spiritual practices consistently lead to the transformation of mainstream approaches to management (which emphasize individual and financial well-being) into alternative and radical approaches to management (which emphasize the holistic well-being of the collective). While (religious) scriptures are sometimes interpreted as enhancing ethics within a conventional management paradigm, studies on the influence of spiritual practices raise general questions concerning conventional management orientation (e.g. whether it is ethical to seek competitive advantage or maximize profits). McGhee and Grant (2016) explore the influence of spirituality on ethical action in organizations and conclude that spirituality is manifested through an awareness of others, which serves to empower authentic ethical action.

2) Organizational commitment and performance: Various studies address fsw in relation to organizational commitment. Kinjerski and Skrypnek (2008) find that a spirit at work program in a health care organization increased spirit at work, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational culture, leading to a reduction in turnover and absenteeism and thus ultimately improving the quality of the care provided by the institution. Walker (2013) explores the relationship between faith–work integration (using the faith at work scale) and organizational commitment. He finds that faith–work integration is positively associated with three forms of organizational commitment (affective, normative, and continuance) (Walker 2013:459). Bell-Ellis and colleagues (2015, 2013) explore faith-related determinants of organizational commitment. They analyze the relationship

between spirituality at work<sup>49</sup> and organizational commitment at two universities, one faith-based, one secular. They find that employees with a higher level of spirit at work also scored higher in terms of organizational commitment, and that the employees from the faith-based institution scored higher in spirit at work than the employees from the secular institution. Roof (2015) finds that individual spirituality positively relates to employee engagement.

A number of studies address the relationship between organizational spirituality and organizational performance (see, e.g. Garcia-Zamor 2003, Jurkiewicz & Giacalone 2004, Karakas 2010, Krishnakumar & Neck 2002, and Poole 2009). Krishnakumar and Neck (2002:162) argue that managers should encourage spiritual diversity at work (encourage spirituality without favoring a particular form or view of spirituality), and this, they suggest, may increase organizational performance. Duchon and Ashmos Plowman (2005) argue that work unit spirituality is associated with work unit performance. Ibrahim and Angelidis (2005) analyze the long-term performance of small businesses, comparing “Christian-based” to secular companies and found significant differences in a number of performance variables. The former had higher sales growth rates and ROIs, and higher levels of productivity. Karakas (2010) reviews 140 papers on workplace spirituality, focusing on the question of how spirituality influences organizational performance. He identifies three ways in which spirituality supports organizational performance: first, by enhancing employee well-being and quality of life; second, by providing a sense of purpose and meaning at work; and third, by providing a sense of interconnectedness and community (Karakas 2010:2). Vallabh and Vallabh (2016) explore workplace spirituality as a cultural phenomenon and its relationship to organizational effectiveness. They conclude that organizations should allow for spiritual expression since it will positively affect organizational effectiveness in a variety of ways (2016:7). In spiritual leadership literature (see 3.3), the relationship between spiritual leadership and individual and organizational outcomes is also addressed.

In addition, a number of studies address other performance-related outcomes. In Tucker’s (2010:32–34) conceptual approach to faith–work integration, the integration of one’s faith and work fosters three attributes which he argues have a positive effect on work performance: unity of thought and the self (a ‘collected’ mind, single-mindedness), inner quietness (which includes being resistant to psychological stress), and self-knowledge.

49 Using Kinjerski and Skrypnik’s (2006) spirit at work scale.

Brügger (2010:156–169) proposes a three-layered framework of worldview–ethics–practice to study international management. He argues that, in international management contexts, a manager’s orientation toward God may lead, at the level of worldview, to the recognition of Christ as the overarching purpose, at the ethical level to freedom and orientation, and at the level of practice to focus and discernment in terms of business strategy. Goltz (2011) explores spirituality as a source of power. The four components of spiritual power (calmness, flexibility, empathy, and non-judgmental awareness) can be acquired through spiritual practice, and they increase the power-holder’s ability to influence others in a non-instrumental way (2011:351). Byrne, Morton, and Dahling (2011) study ways in which spirituality and religion influence emotional labor at work, which is, in particular, critical for the success of service-based organizations. Walker (2013:459, see above) also investigates the relationship between faith–work integration (using the faith at work scale) and satisfaction with life, the intent to leave one’s job, self-rated job performance, and job satisfaction. He finds that faith–work integration is positively associated with life satisfaction and the intent to leave one’s job(!), negatively associated with self-rated job performance, and not associated with job satisfaction (Walker 2013:459). Arnetz and colleagues (2013) find that employee spiritual values and practices foster mental well-being and attenuate stress. Stead and Stead (2014) argue that business organizations need to build spiritual capabilities (such as spiritual intelligence and spiritual capital) to sustain sustainability-based competitive advantages.

3) Faith-related effects: Some studies address the faith-related effects of the incorporation of spirituality, faith, or religion at work. Scheitle and Ecklund (2017) find that an increase in religion in the workplace leads to an increase in religion-related employment discrimination. McGhee and Grant (2016:3) propose that enacting one’s spirituality at work in turn leads to a “maturing process”, a growing of the spiritual self. Singh, Corner, and Pavlovich (2016) found that the spirituality of the entrepreneurs deepened through the experience of failure (see also 3.3.3).

In conclusion, the research that concentrates on the outcomes of fsw reveals a tendency regarding how the three terms of spirituality, religion, and faith are used. If the concept of religion is employed, the focus is often on the question of ethical/moral outcomes of religion at work, while the notion of spirituality seems to be more often, but not exclusively, used in relation to questions of organizational commitment and performance. In fsw research, one can thus find tendencies toward ethics-oriented research

on religion at work and performance-oriented research on spirituality at work.

Studies on the positive outcomes of fsw often seem to follow the logic that these positive fsw outcomes render fsw relevant for researchers and practitioners alike. However, many authors have criticized a narrow focus on outcomes in the evaluation and justification of fsw constructs. This is the theme of the literature introduced in the following section.

#### 3.4.2 *Justification, ethics, and critique of fsw*

In this section, I will first offer a brief overview of proposals concerning the justification and evaluation of fsw. Second, I will present some of the main variations of the criticism of the instrumentality of fsw. Third, I will briefly describe the criticism fsw has received for being too individualistic.

First, many have argued that fsw can be *justified* by establishing its positive relationship to individual and organizational performance and other beneficial outcomes. For example, Houghton, Neck, and Krishnakumar (2016), in their article on “the what, why and how of spirituality in the workplace”, structure the section on ‘the why’ of spirituality in the workplace according to the various benefits it promises to offer (such as intuition and creativity, honesty and trust, personal fulfillment, commitment, organizational performance, job satisfaction, reduced intention to quit, organizational citizenship behavior, ethics, job involvement, buffering the negative effects of emotional labor, employee well-being, and reduced career and social costs for women). Such approaches which focus on the benefits of fsw have been sharply criticized by others as being instrumentalist (see below in this section).

A number of authors have proposed different criteria for the evaluation of fsw. Cavanagh and Bandsuch (2002) propose that the criteria for business leaders to assess the spiritualities manifested at work is a spirituality’s ability to promote good moral behavior and good character. Hicks (2002, 2003) proposes “respectful pluralism” (2002:392) as an evaluative frame and argues that those responsible for an organization should foster an organizational culture which allows for religious and spiritual diversity. Sheep (2006) proposes a “person–organization fit” approach to workplace spirituality. Gotsis and Kortezi (2008:587) explore the three ethical traditions of deontology, utilitarianism, and virtue ethics as a possible basis (in the sense of a theoretical or philosophical justification) of workplace spirituality and conclude that workplace spirituality can be based on virtue ethics or a

deontological framework, while utilitarianism is not a suitable foundation for workplace spirituality (2008:593–595). Brophy (2014) argues for incorporating spiritual values into a business company to the extent that these values are shared by the principals of the organization. In such an approach, the spirituality of a company’s leaders becomes decisive for the whole organization.

Second, some authors have criticized *instrumentalist* tendencies in contemporary (academic and popular) approaches to fsw. Because the substance of this criticism varies considerably and confronts fsw research with crucial questions, I will, in the following, describe the variations of this criticism at more length than other studies discussed so far. In particular, I will focus on texts by Bell and Taylor (2003), Benefiel (2003), Driscoll and Wiebe (2007), Case and Gosling (2010), Long and Helms Mills (2010), and Long and Driscoll (2015).<sup>50</sup>

Emma Bell and Scott Taylor argue that the workplace spirituality discourse is not new and that “the relationship between organizations and spirituality has a long and complex history” (2003:343). They suggest that management has “acquired some of the language and characteristics of religion, albeit in a secularized version” (2003:330). In their view, popular management and business literature (which includes academic and practitioner texts, see 2003:329) has focused on workplace spirituality since the 1990s. This discourse explores the meaning of work in relation to a “higher purpose” (2003:330), and encourages a view of organizations as “communal centers” (2003:330) and as neutral contexts which provide opportunities for spiritual expression and spiritual growth (2003:343). In their view, the popular discourse of workplace spirituality can be located within the broader rubric of the New Age movement, which employs a pick and mix approach to religion. It exists in dynamic tension with both science and religion, “attempting to combine the values of post-materialist society with an ideology of self-fulfillment and self-discovery by repackaging religion, psychology and therapy” (2003:331). The workplace spirituality discourse is instrumentalist in that it “ensures that the search for meaning is harnessed to specific organizational purposes” (2003:332). Bell and Taylor argue that its focus on the measurement and management of spirituality shows that this discourse is “an attempt to mobilize the individual to serve the interests

50 For additional variations of the criticism of instrumentality in fsw, see also Boje 2008, Brooke & Parker 2009, Fenwick & Lange 1998, Forray & Stork 2002, Lips-Wiersma, Lund Dean & Fornaciari 2009, LoRusso 2017, Tourish & Tourish 2010, and Vaidyanathan 2020.

of the organization” (2003:337), and that the discourse seeks to “reconcile individual and organizational interests” (2003:336). The discourse of workplace spirituality and its effects can be understood by drawing from a Foucauldian notion of “pastoral power” and from Max Weber’s notion of the Protestant work ethic (2003:340f). “Pastoral power” is a specific form of power over groups and individuals which has its origins in the Christian metaphor of the shepherd and the idea of Christian pastorship as a technology of power, which, according to Foucault, has emerged as a central characteristic of the modern Western state (2003:341). Drawing on Max Weber’s thesis, Bell and Taylor suggest that the notion of the Protestant work ethic represents a translation of the concept of religious vocation or calling into a secular context (2003:338).<sup>51</sup> The Protestant ethic shaped the development of capitalism, and the current workplace spirituality discourse is a “revival of the Protestant ethic” (2003:344) in that it seeks to resolve the dilemmas created by the structural conditions of capitalism by developing an inner sense of meaning and virtue. However, whereas the Protestant work ethic represents a “transcendent philosophy” (2003:344) which understands “economic work as in the service of God”, the current workplace spirituality discourse represents an “immanent philosophy” in which work is perceived as a path to personal growth. Thus, the workplace spirituality discourse reconceptualizes the Protestant work ethic according to “New Age values” (2003:345) and proposes that spiritual and economic aims can be made commensurate.

Margaret Benefiel (2003) argues that management scholars approach the subject of fsw with the research methods and methodology they were trained in. They thus focus strongly on the measurement of spirituality and its impact on organizational performance, and the deeper question of the instrumentality of spirituality remains unaddressed. She asks: “If spirituality is ultimately about nonmaterialistic concerns, is it appropriate to focus on the material gains to be reaped by integrating spirituality into organizational life?” (2003:384). Benefiel expresses concerns that talk about spirituality is merely superficial, and that, due to a superficial understanding of spirituality, organizations are prone to abandon the spiritual path as soon as they hit “the inevitable bumps on the spiritual journey” (2003:384). To remedy this superficiality, she argues that the study of spirituality in the workplace needs to be “critical, analytical, theoretical, and not reductionist” (2003:385).

51 See also 2.1.3 on the role of Max Weber’s thought in fsw research.

Cathy Driscoll and Elden Wiebe (2007) address the predominant instrumental approach to workplace spirituality by drawing on Jacques Ellul's notion of *technique*. They refer to such an instrumental understanding as "technical spirituality at work" (Driscoll & Wiebe 2007). They argue that, according to Ellul, technical processes were originally "created to serve a limited economic rationality" but have come to "predominate Western thinking" in such a way that *technique* has become an end in itself. Driscoll and Wiebe (2007) demonstrate how the current workplace spirituality movement is dominated by *technique* in a number of respects (its quest for results, its use of experts, and its broadening and dissolution of the notion of spirituality). Technical spirituality has, however, not led to the fundamental transformation of the business world which it seems to promise: "By bringing a myth of meaningful work to a dehumanized workplace, the technician calls it progress" (Driscoll & Wiebe 2007). However, "there has been no significant transformation in business since the recent flourishing of workplace spirituality" (2007). They argue that technical spirituality is "a formidable opponent to authentic spirituality" (2007). While they suggest that there are no general answers to what constitutes authentic spirituality, they propose that "each person must find ways to resist and transcend the pull of *technique* and to put it back in its proper place as secondary" (2007).

Peter Case and Jonathan Gosling (2010) provide a critical review of the literature on workplace spirituality. Their main criticism targets the "performative" (2010:257) treatment of workplace spirituality "as a resource or means to be manipulated instrumentally and appropriated for economic ends" (2010:257). They discuss the notion of the "spiritual organization" and, linked to it, two alternative positions with respect to workplace spirituality: first, the spiritual organization may refer to a type of organization which seeks to "control the bodies, minds, emotions and souls of employees" (2010:257) through social technologies. Second, it may be understood as the site used by employees to pursue their own spiritualities. This is a form of "reverse instrumentalism" (2010:257). In addition, they suggest a third possible position toward workplace spirituality, which rejects it as a "discrete subject of study" (2010:276). In this view, the workplace is just one of many contexts in which the spiritual journey may or may not be pursued. There is, in this third perspective, no particular relationship between 'workplace' and 'spirituality'.

Brad Long and Jean Helms Mills (2010) address workplace spirituality understood in terms of organizational culture. Such an approach promotes the idea that the adherence of organizational members to a particular set of values which give meaning to the workplace leads to the rise of a spiritual



culture in an organization.<sup>52</sup> Such an understanding is, however, prone to potential managerial instrumentalization, in that it may serve as an implicit form of managerial control. Managerial control is achieved via the meaning-providing function of the values promoted. In particular, managerial control via the establishing of a spiritual culture is achieved by “restricting the space in which alternative meanings can be expressed” (2010:329), in other words, by managing the sensemaking of the people managers lead. Critical approaches to sensemaking point out that “power and context” (2010:329) determine what types of sensemaking are dominant. This works via the use of specific vocabulary and metaphors to control social action. The use of metaphors offers a certain clarity, while at the same time constrains thinking and hides alternatives (2010:329). In the literature on workplace spirituality, Long and Helms Mills (2010) find that texts which define spirituality as a set of values and prescribe a spiritual culture tend to be “limited to positivist scholarship, managerial prerogative and Western traditions of thought” (2010:330). These texts emphasize the practical utility of spirituality, connect it to organizational performance, and promote an instrumental understanding of spirituality. Spirituality then serves as a means to organizational and economic ends (2010:331). Long and Helms Mills (2010:332) analyze Mitroff and Denton’s (1999a) “Spiritual audit of corporate America” to demonstrate how the metaphors used shape and constrain the thinking of its audience. For example, the idea of work as a calling and a form of surrendering to a higher authority may serve to reinforce “rules of submission and duty” (2010:334). Such texts thus seek to limit sensemaking and, ultimately, agency, to construct a desired social reality. Promoting a spiritual culture may thus lead to monocultures which replace cultural diversity, and in which employees either have to adapt their beliefs and values or leave the organization (2010:335). In conclusion, Long and Helms Mills (2010:336) concede that “a spiritual culture may indeed be more benign than some alternatives”, for example a criminal culture, but that nevertheless “culture is a controlling discourse” which links personal meaning to organizational meaning. They propose a form of critical spirituality which seeks to overcome social domination and oppression, and which unites people around the values of humanity, equality, and liberation. In their (2010:338) view, this critical spirituality challenges the “domination of managerial instrumentality” and “promotes the rediscovery of a sense of enchantment that modernity has stripped from everyday life”.

52 Which Long and Helms Mills (2010:326) refer to as a “values-based approach” to workplace spirituality (for an example, see Delbecq 2010).



Brad Long and Cathy Driscoll (2015) offer a discourse analysis on workplace spirituality. They conclude by arguing that this discourse seems to be a “sheep in wolf’s clothing” (2015:964) with problematic inherent tensions. On the one hand, the discursive activity of its authors seems to be driven by “very sincere and altruistic motives” (2015:964) to improve workplaces. However, workplace spirituality authors draw upon discourses which “created the kind of workplaces they now seek to change” (2015:964). The workplace spirituality discourse is thus marked by the “failure to challenge dominant ideologies” and by an emphasis on “management power, wealth maximization, competitive forces and individualism” (2015:964).

These critical texts on instrumentality in workplace spirituality present a variety of critical reflections on spirituality in organizational contexts. It is to be noted here that the issues these authors bring to bear on the topic of workplace spirituality, such as discourse and power in organizational settings, reflect topics important for a larger strand in management research often referred to as critical management studies (see e.g. Alvesson & Willmott 1992). How is this criticism of the instrumentalist tendencies of fsw to be addressed? Some of the authors discussed above have indicated strategies based on their analyses of the problem: Benefiel (2003:385) calls for a non-superficial academic study of spirituality in the workplace, Driscoll and Wiebe (2007) argue in favor of transcending technical spirituality with authentic spirituality, and Long and Helms Mills (2010) call for critical spirituality. In addition, as a possible resolution of the instrumentality question, Benefiel, Fry, and Geigle (2014) have suggested that the question of whether spirituality should serve as a *technique* for instrumental ends or as an organizing principle should not be viewed as an either/or proposition. Furthermore, Sheep (2006:357) has proposed a multiparadigm approach for fsw research which avoids privileging “one research interest over another” (e.g. instrumentality, individual fulfillment, or the good of society).

Third, in addition to the criticism of the instrumentalist tendencies of fsw, a variety of criticisms have been raised against a seemingly predominant individualist emphasis in workplace spirituality.<sup>53</sup> One issue is that the current ‘spirituality at work movement’ can be criticized for being dominated by an individualist view of spirituality, where individual-level concepts of spirituality, such as spiritual well-being, spiritual distress, spiritual development, and the individual expression of an authentic self, are predominant (see Hudson 2014:34 and the literature there). This individualist focus is prone to ignore the importance of organizational, social, and political struc-

53 For an overview, see Hudson (2014:34–35).

tures *in their relation* to individuals. Hudson argues that treating individual employees as isolated entities as, in his opinion, most of the spirituality at work literature does, is misleading. Hudson refers to Charles Taylor's notions of a 'secular age' and 'culture of authenticity' and proposes viewing this individualism as a particularly modern and Western phenomenon, in which individuals choose their way to live and religion is a matter of choice. A related criticism of individualist innerness is leveled by Emma Bell (2008, 2007). She advocates a critical spirituality of organization by drawing upon two historical cases, the French worker-priests and the British industrial mission. Both cases represent a synthesis of Marxism and Christianity in the form of "a practice-based morality" (2008:293). Such an approach is complementary to approaches to workplace spirituality which are characterized by a preoccupation with the "interior search for meaningful existence" (2008:293) because it involves a "concern for the exterior, political and social aspects of religion" (2008:293). While in this section the intention was mainly to provide an overview of different approaches, in section 4.3.4 I will look at a possible answer to some of the criticisms raised here. In the following section, I will sketch the preliminary conclusions with regard to the theoretical contours of fsw as discussed so far.

### 3.5 Conclusions and outlook

In chapter one, I proposed the following questions to guide the review of the literature for this dissertation:

- 1) How are fsw constructs defined in the literature? (chapter 2)
- 2) How is fsw related to and situated in theoretical contexts in terms of academic disciplines and discourses, important thinkers and methodological traditions and approaches? (chapter 2)
- 3) How can fsw as a research area be presented from an overview perspective and how can the research area be structured? (chapter 3)
- 4) What theory building efforts have been undertaken and what aspects of a theoretical analysis of fsw are addressed? (chapter 3)
- 5) *In what way does fsw research contribute to the study of Christians in contemporary workplaces?* (chapter 4)
- 6) *What can theological approaches to work/work contexts contribute to the study of Christians at work?* (chapter 5)

So far, chapters 2 and 3 together provide an attempt to explore available answers to the first four of the above questions concerning the definition, overview, structure, and contents of extant theory of what I have termed

fsw research. In chapter 2, I addressed the issue of definitions of fsw and identified some of the key problems with defining fsw concepts (question 1). Additionally, I sketched how fsw is related to a number of theoretical contexts, such as academic discourses and methodological contexts (question 2). In the present chapter, I outlined what seem to me to be some of the main theory building efforts in fsw undertaken so far. In particular, the chapter offers a possible rough structuring of fsw research (question 3) and presents key contents of fsw theory as developed in extant research (question 4). What remains as yet largely unaddressed (in italics above) are the questions of the contributions of fsw research (question 5) and of theological approaches (question 6) to the study of Christians in contemporary work settings. In addition, while question 1 (definitions) has been addressed, some major problems concerning it still remain unresolved. However, the research discussed in the present chapter allows this question to be pursued further.

In sections 3.5.1 and 3.5.2, I will evaluate how the theoretical fragments and building blocks of fsw, as outlined in this chapter, contribute to addressing the question of fsw definitions. At the end of chapter 2, I identified two problem areas with reference to current definitions of key concepts in fsw. First, the vagueness, abstractness, and confusion with regard to the main terms and, second, the problem of the relationship between fsw's main concepts and the study of Christians, and the related question of the meaning and function of the label 'Christian' with regard to fsw concepts. In the light of the theory discussed in the present chapter, an additional problem area relevant for the definition of fsw constructs needs to be identified: the ambiguities that come with the use of workplace-related constructs in fsw research, such as management, work, leadership, business, et cetera. I will now, first, elaborate on the problem of the faith, spirituality, and religion terminology in fsw in the light of the present chapter (3.5.1). Second, I will sketch the terminological problem area concerning the use of workplace-related concepts in fsw (3.5.2). In section 3.5.3, I will prepare the way for addressing the relationship between fsw and the study of Christians at work (question 5 of the above questions), which will be explored in more detail in chapter 4. Subsequently, I will address the question of theology and the study of Christians at work (question 6 of the above questions) in chapter 5.

### 3.5.1 *The terms faith, spirituality, and religion in fsw theory*

With regard to the problem of the *vagueness* (see 2.2.5) of key fsw terms, the conceptual linkage of spirituality with relevant workplace activities such as working (3.1.2), leading (3.3.1), or managing (3.3.2) allows the vagueness problem to be partially remedied by tying spirituality closely to such practices. In addition, the texts discussed in section 3.4.2 on the justification, ethics, and critique of fsw have made the case that the question of the clarity or vagueness of the construct is not the single relevant criterion with regard to the justification of fsw as a distinct area of study. Rather, such questions need to be set within a broader context in which questions of the legitimacy, justification, and critique not only of fsw constructs, but of the phenomena they refer to, need to be considered as well.

The use of different fsw terms adds to the vagueness problem. As far as the relationship between fsw terms is concerned, proposals for clarifying the terms faith, spirituality, and religion *in their relationships to each other* (see 2.2.4), while they might succeed in clarifying the terminology used in particular research endeavors, appear somewhat artificial. This question seems to be resistant to a satisfying general conceptual resolution. Below<sup>54</sup>, I will suggest that clarification of the label ‘Christian’ can lead to clarification of the meaning of these terms and their relationship with reference to the study of Christians.<sup>55</sup>

With reference to the *abstractness* problem of fsw’s key terms (see 2.2.5), the criticism of the abstractness of the term ‘spirituality’ can be addressed now. A main asset in existing fsw research in this regard is that there are a number of studies which explore concrete spiritual practices in the workplace (see 3.1). In addition, there are a fair number of studies which propose specifications of the characteristics of the activities of working (3.1.2), leading (3.3.1), and managing (3.3.2) as *spiritual practices*. There are thus serious proposals on the table as to how one can conceive of spiritual work, spiritual leadership, and spiritual management. If we consider practices in this way, an allegedly abstract notion of ‘spirituality’ becomes more closely tied to what people actually do when they work, manage, or lead.

54 See in particular chapter 7.

55 I am thus proposing what Phipps and Benefiel (2013:36) categorize under a contextually determined juxtaposition of spirituality and religion, a juxtaposition *in the context of* the study of Christians at work.

Related to the above is the problem of *confusion* (see 2.2.5) with regard to what aspects the term spiritual does relate to. Extant research has, in my view convincingly, shown that the term spiritual can be reasonably (although not exclusively) tied to relevant workplace-related activities, such as working (3.1.2), managing (3.3.2), or leading (3.3.1). What reduces the confusion is, in my view, not so much the delineation of a single aspect (of people, workplaces, practices, values, etc.) to which the term spiritual should exclusively refer, but clarification of *how* the terms spiritual and spirituality relate to *different* aspects pertinent to work settings.<sup>56</sup>

### 3.5.2 *Work-related concepts in fsw theory*

Adding to the semantic ambiguities regarding the concepts of faith, spirituality, and religion as employed in fsw research, there is a certain vagueness with reference to workplace-related concepts used, such as management, work, leadership, business, et cetera. It is, in other words, not only the ‘faith-part’ in the phrase ‘faith at work’ which is not clear, or not only the ‘religion-part’ in the phrase ‘management and religion’, or not only the ‘spiritual-part’ in the phrase ‘spiritual leadership’. In its reference to the workplace or work contexts, fsw research needs to work with some kind of broad (and sometimes implicit) conceptualization of work contexts or particular aspects of these contexts or relevant practices. Favorite concepts used in fsw publications are, for example, management, leadership, and entrepreneurship (see e.g. the literature discussed in 3.3), but other concepts are employed as well, such as business, work/workplace, corporation, or organization (e.g. Benefiel et al. 2014, Benefiel 2007, Black 2009, Delbecq 2004, Miller & Ewest 2013a, Van Duzer et al. 2007). In fsw research, these concepts carry different meanings and perform different functions. Moreover, these terms do not stand alone but, as the phenomena they refer to are interrelated, these terms are usually part of broader conceptual landscapes (e.g. the use of the term ‘business’ may imply a particular understanding of ‘management’), made explicit in varying degrees. In the light of their role in the context of these workplace-related conceptual landscapes, two different basic functions of these terms can roughly be identified. They either seem to serve as a place holder or label for the whole map, that is, the whole conceptual landscape in question, or they refer to a particular con-

56 While interesting general proposals exist on how spirituality relates to work, leadership, or management, what is lacking, in my view, are studies of the spiritual aspects of concrete tasks, such as, cooking, writing, train driving, or chairing a meeting.

ceptual aspect of the whole map. It is not always clear in a publication which function is intended. In addition, it has to be noted that some of these (and related) terms are used interchangeably.<sup>57</sup>

In the following, I will illustrate this terminological problem by focusing on the use of the terms *management* and *manager* in fsw research. Gundolf and Filser's (2013) article may serve to illustrate the vagueness which results from this particular use of workplace-related concepts in fsw publications. In their title, they use the phrase "management research and religion" (2013:177). However, the literature they review seems not to focus specifically or exclusively on *management*, but on work in general. This can be seen, for example, in how they refer to their second cluster (in their clustering of the literature): According to the abstract of their article, the second cluster is concerned with "religion at work" (2013:177). However, in the text of the article they refer to the second cluster as being concerned with "the influence of religion on *management*" (2013:182, my emphasis). Are the terms work and management used as synonyms here? This is confusing because one might, for example, expect the study of religion and management to be a subfield of the broader field of religion and work, that is, a subfield that focuses on *managerial* work instead of work in general, or on *managers* as one specific section of the workforce. It is thus not clear why the terms management and work should be used interchangeably. A similar ambiguity is encountered in the journal entitled 'Journal of *Management, Spirituality & Religion*' (my emphasis), but which includes many articles that do not focus specifically on managers or managerial work, but on particular work contexts in more general terms (e.g. Aggarwal & Singh 2017 or Moran 2017).

Furthermore, the fsw literature discussed so far has often treated *work* in a generic way. It has addressed singular work-related issues, such as performance or job satisfaction. Or it has addressed other more general characteristics of work, such as work as something that demands attention and that sometimes includes repetitive behavior (Smith 2008). Some studies have addressed fsw with regard to particular work contexts, types of work, and professions (see 1.1). In the light of such studies, one may categorize studies on management and spirituality as a subgroup of these work-specific studies which focuses on a particular type of work, namely managerial work. Management, however, does not seem to be understood mainly as a particular type of work, nor can managers and non-managers easily be separated in an organization, as is indicated, for example, by Black's (2008:47)

57 Delbecq (2004), for example, seems to use the terms 'manager', 'leader', and 'executive' interchangeably.

use of the term ‘corporate manager’ as referring to *all* participants of a corporation, or by Mintzberg’s (2009:12) definition of a manager as somebody who is responsible for an organization or an identifiable part of it (this definition may also include a large share of the people who work in an organization). Additionally, it is not always clearly identifiable how the terms managers and management are used at all.

Moreover, there are a number of additional terms which refer to similar or related phenomena, such as *leadership* or *entrepreneurship*. Since there are neither three identifiable groups of people out there who can be clearly labeled as managers, leaders, or entrepreneurs, nor three particular types of work which can be unambiguously marked as management, leadership, or entrepreneurship (see 3.3), the usage of these different terms in fsw research does not seem to add much clarity. Moreover, it is not always clear whether the decision to use one of these three terms is actually content-related (i.e. has something to do with the object under investigation), or has a stronger research-strategic dimension in that, for example, researchers want to position a study in a certain field (e.g. management studies or leadership research) or relate to a certain body of literature (e.g. the literature on entrepreneurship). Therefore, all the fsw studies that apply one of these terminologies can possibly contribute to the study of Christians at work.<sup>58</sup>

Another source of confusion is the fact that phrases like ‘spirituality and leadership’ or ‘management and spirituality’ can refer to at least two very different, yet related topics and questions. They can refer to either the question of how an individual who is responsible for a certain organization deals or should deal with the issue that *in the organization for which she is responsible* people integrate or try to integrate their faith or spirituality into their work. Or they can refer to the question of how an individual who is responsible for a certain organization integrates or tries to integrate her faith into her (managerial) work.<sup>59</sup> If it addresses the former question, such research is identical in its focus to what I have below referred to as organizational

58 In this regard, the label ‘Christians at work’ has no advantage over the labels faith, spirituality, or religion at work, but is subject to the same vagueness (or broadness) that comes with employing the phrase ‘at work’.

59 The distinction between the spiritual manager/leader and the spiritual person seems to offer itself here, as it mimics the distinction between the moral manager/leader and the moral person in ethical leadership theory (see Mabey et al. 2017:760, and the literature there). Interestingly, Mabey and colleagues (2017:761) argue that followers of Jesus are called to be spiritual individuals, but not spiritual leaders. This is one of the building blocks of their answer to the criticism of instrumentalist tendencies in fsw (which they refer to as manipulation, see 4.3.4).



level fsw (see 3.2.1). The latter question is related to individual-level fsw (see 3.2.2) and to the question of the relationship between management and spirituality (see 3.3).

In summary, with reference to these workplace-related concepts employed in fsw research, three things seem to be noteworthy. First, fsw research, in its focus on work contexts, works with a (sometimes implicit) conceptual map pertinent to the work contexts that are addressed. Second, different workplace-related terms, such as business or management, can be used either to refer to one concept within this conceptual map (such as management as a function within a business enterprise, see Delbecq 2004, or within a corporation, see Black 2009). Or they can serve as a placeholder, referring not so much to an individual concept, but to the whole map of workplace-related concepts, that is, to work contexts in more general terms (see e.g. Gundolf & Filser 2013<sup>60</sup>). Third, the two different functions cannot always be clearly differentiated between. Given this terminological situation in fsw research, I suggest that terms like ‘leadership’, ‘management’, and ‘entrepreneurship’ are better understood as not referring to different ‘things’, such as tasks, functions, or roles of peoples in work settings. Rather, they can be understood as constructs that carry different connotations and thus different emphases in terms of the phenomena, people, and their roles in work contexts that are viewed under such labels as ‘leadership’, ‘management’, and ‘entrepreneurship’. In this respect, I intentionally use the term ‘work’ in the phrase ‘the study of Christians at work’ in a broad sense to refer to contemporary Western work contexts and what takes place therein, including different aspects of work (such as management, leadership, or entrepreneurship), different work settings (such as business contexts), and types of work.

### 3.5.3 *Fsw theory and the study of Christians at work*

Interestingly, from the overview of fsw research presented so far, it has remained almost completely unclear what its particular contribution to the study of Christians in present-day workplaces might be. This conclusion may surprise the reader, but so far, in the theoretical conceptions of fsw introduced, the particular theme of Christians *existing as Christians* in contemporary workplaces has hardly been addressed and, therefore, any conclusion that fsw and the study of Christians are related must rest on the

60 In their approach, management and work seem to refer to a large semantic area lacking clearly defined contents and boundaries.



general assumption that spirituality, religion, faith, and the existence of Christians in work contexts are, in any case, somehow linked. However, if one assumes this relationship as given for a moment, it seems remarkable that large parts of the theory of fsw can be introduced without particular reference to Christians or Christian existence in the workplace. Given this, a very basic question emerges: How, then, are the notions of faith, spirituality, and religion related to the label 'Christian' and to the study of Christians in present-day work contexts? I propose that via this question, the vagueness–abstractness–confusion problems (see above) can be addressed and clarified, not in general, but in their relation to the study of Christians at work.

In this chapter, I have shown how current research helps to remedy some of the terminological problems concerning fsw concepts, but that new ambiguities occur as well. There is arguably no *general* solution to the problem of defining the trinity of faith, spirituality, and religion at work, and, generally speaking, these three terms necessarily mean different things to different people (including academics) and in different contexts. However, while I think that the existing terminological ambiguities cannot be resolved on a general level, I propose that additional clarity can be achieved, as far as the study of Christians is concerned, if one moves, first, away from the problem of 'the faith, spirituality, and religion at work terminology' and addresses the meaning of the term *Christians*. By clarifying the term Christian/s, one can then, I suggest, return to the three terms of faith, spirituality, and religion, and sketch, if not a general understanding of these terms, an understanding of these terms *in the context of* the study of Christians at work (see chapter 7). In the following chapter, I will take a first step in this direction and explore the relationship of fsw research to the study of Christians at work.

## 4 Fsw research and the study of Christians at work

Given the diversity of meanings that comes with different usages of the terms faith, spirituality, and religion at work, and taking into consideration the fact that the subjects under study in this dissertation are Christians, it is to the terms ‘Christians’ and ‘Christian’ and the respective modes of existence that my attention now turns. The focus of the present chapter is on discussing fsw research by exploring its contribution to the study of Christians in contemporary work contexts. In the previous two chapters, I presented an overview of fsw research as it emerged mainly in the context of management and organization studies. Implicit in the move toward fsw literature was the assumption that it is *in this research* that the existence of Christians in present-day workplaces is addressed. And, indeed, much material referring to Christianity is available. One finds different accounts of faith, spirituality, and religion at work which either explicitly address the faith, spirituality, or religion of Christians (for examples, see 4.1) or which use these terms in a way that is meant to be inclusive of Christianity.<sup>1</sup> The terms ‘Christians’ and ‘Christian’ seem to be mostly used in fsw texts in a traditional perspective, that is, as a category referring to Christianity as a spiritual, religious, or faith *tradition*,<sup>2</sup> or as a category used to group related traditions.<sup>3</sup> In section 4.1, I will discuss the role of tradition in fsw research and how it influences the portrayal of Christians at work in particular ways. In section 4.2, I will argue that this perspective needs to be broadened by considering the particular Christian location of individuals which shapes the interaction of Christians with tradition. In section 4.3, I shall discuss four accounts of Christian spirituality at work which offer a more comprehen-

- 1 A notable exception seems to be an understanding of the relationship between spirituality and religion at work as mutually exclusive, “suggesting that questions of spirituality have a unique expression at work, wholly separate from any religious connotation” (Phipps & Benefiel 2013:34; see also Mitroff & Denton 1999:88). For the authors, this seems to imply *Christian* connotations (for the broader ‘spiritual but not religious’ (SBNR) category, see e.g. Johnson et al. 2018). However, it is to be noted that a similar distancing from religion is performed by Christian practitioners who understand themselves as ‘Christian, but not religious’ (see McDowell 2018 and sections 6.1 and 7.3 of the present dissertation). For the broader phenomenon of the ‘rise of the non-religious’ with regard to management and organization studies, see Chand and Perry (2019).
- 2 See, for example, Pio and McGhee’s (2019:88) chapter on “Spirituality and religion at work. Christian traditions in action”.
- 3 For example, the Orthodox, Protestant, and Catholic traditions as ‘subtraditions’ of Christian tradition.

sive approach to Christians at work than those discussed in section 4.1. Finally, in section 4.4, I will draw a conclusion concerning the term ‘Christian/s’ in fsw research and its existential and nominal connotations.

#### 4.1 Fsw and tradition

The understanding of Christianity as a tradition seems to rest on the idea that there are certain cognitive (beliefs) and behavioral (practices) contents and patterns of the Christian faith, spirituality, and/or religion that are transmitted over time and that can be (more or less) clearly marked as Christian. Christians, in this perspective, are people who partake in a particular tradition by sharing in its respective beliefs and practices. In fsw literature, the term ‘tradition’ is used in combination with terms from the trinity of faith, spirituality, and religion, and comes in phrases such as ‘faith traditions’ (e.g. Herman & Schaefer 2001), ‘spiritual traditions’ (e.g. Delbecq 2009), and ‘religious traditions’ (e.g. Dyck 2014, Agle & Van Buren 1999). The notion of tradition is usually not explicitly defined, although it is complex. Its complexity is linked to the fact that it can be construed as integrating other concepts central to fsw, such as the notions of behavior, practices, attitudes, values, belonging, and beliefs (see e.g. Brotheridge & Lee 2007:292). The notion of belonging or membership has a certain priority in the concept of tradition, because behavior, practices, and beliefs seem to be conceptualized *on the basis* of one’s belonging to a certain tradition. In this way, the notion of tradition is used to portray Christian existence at work as a mode of existence determined or characterized by one’s membership or participation in a particular tradition. Although I have not found it explicitly defined in fsw literature, the term ‘tradition’ seems to be used broadly as a socio-historical term referring to a group of people with common sets of beliefs and practices which are transmitted over time. In this section, I will introduce the tradition-oriented strand of fsw research and address the question of how this strand of literature contributes to the study of Christians in current workplaces. First, I will briefly discuss the main reasons that are offered for and against the relevance of tradition to the study of fsw, and some of the implications of this problem for the study of Christians in the workplace (4.1.1). Second, I will discuss how traditions are considered to possibly influence the fsw researcher, and his or her research activities and outcomes. (4.1.2). Third, I will describe how the study of traditions is approached in fsw research (4.1.3), and fourth, how

current studies explore Christian tradition(s) in their relationship to contemporary workplaces (4.1.4).

#### 4.1.1 *The contested role of tradition in fsw research*

In this section, I am first going to introduce approaches that relativize the role of tradition in fsw. Second, I will sketch two arguments which are made to emphasize the importance of tradition in fsw. Third, I will focus on one crucial aspect of this discussion, the relationship between traditional beliefs and experience in present-day work settings.

First, it needs to be noted that many authors theorize fsw in a way which seems to *relativize* the role of tradition. For example, according to Miller and Ewest (2013b), everyone's faith–work integration can be described in terms of four types and specified according to the two orientations for each type (see 3.2). In other words, the specific tradition with which one is associated can be neglected when determining one's main mode of faith–work integration. Moreover, the main driving force for faith–work integration is, in this view, not a particular traditional influence, but an individual's desire to integrate faith and work.<sup>4</sup> For Smith (2008), because individual spiritual experiences are at the core of the emergence of spirituality in organizations, spirituality can occur at work with or without an individual's commitment to particular traditional beliefs (see 3.2), that is, regardless of one's conception of it.<sup>5</sup> In terms of practices, because spiritual experiences are facilitated by intense attention-focusing and ritualized, repetitive activity (2008:6.19 – 21), traditional spiritual practices, such as prayer and meditation, may potentially foster spiritual experiences at work, as far as they include intense attention-focusing and ritualized, repetitive activity. However, for the spiritual experience to occur, it is *irrelevant* whether this activity is located outside or inside the framework of traditional spiritual practices. Traditional influences are, in this perspective, therefore irrelevant or of secondary importance for the emergence of spirituality in the workplace. Radzins (2017:305f) argues that, for Simone Weil, spirituality does not imply a particular traditional affiliation. According to Radzins, Weil does not locate spirituality in a religious tradition, doctrine, or in personal piety, but in one's capacity to work. "Spirit

4 This is not to say that Miller and Ewest ignore tradition in their research, as for example their study on Protestant accents of faith at work indicates (see Miller & Ewest 2013c).

5 This position can, of course, always be countered by hinting at the fact that the idea that one's conception of spiritual experience is irrelevant for its occurrence is also a conception of spiritual experience.

arises in the activity of living, and more specifically in laboring—in one’s engagement with materiality” (Radzins 2017:291). Gotsis and Kortezi (2008) distinguish between two main approaches to workplace spirituality: contextual and acontextual ones. Contextual approaches address workplace spirituality from the perspective of a particular theoretical or philosophical model, a cultural or religious tradition, or a scientific paradigm. Acontextual approaches are not founded on a particular theoretical tradition. In their view, both types have their strengths and weaknesses. However, the use of particular traditions and theories leads to a limited and restricted understanding of spirituality because spirituality is to be viewed, as Gotsis and Kortezi argue, as a universal phenomenon.<sup>6</sup> In addition, Fry & Cohen (2009:276), point to possible negative consequences of employing particular religious traditions at work, but at the same time they emphasize the importance of spiritual practices at work. This is reflective of an intention shared by many authors to emancipate the notion of spirituality from traditional religion.<sup>7</sup>

Second, others have emphasized the *importance* of tradition as it relates to fsw. McCann and Brownsberger (2007) draw on the work of Alasdair MacIntyre and Peter Drucker to argue that management is a morally relevant social practice and that MacIntyre has demolished “the claim of modern moral philosophy to deliver an approach to morality upon which all rational agents can agree” (2007:195). This is why, in this perspective, moral claims have to be embedded in communal traditions.<sup>8</sup> In McCann and Brownsberger’s (2007:194) view, this opens up space for an “explicitly theocentric construal of reality” and “a theological model of business ethics”, which they would organize around the notion of stewardship. They argue that this would have to be executed in the mode of public theology and that it would

6 Gotsis and Kortezi (2008:585) argue that Douglas Hicks’s respectful pluralism is an acontextual approach because it is theoretically founded “on the moral ideas that are predominant in the modern democratic societies and not on a very specific, ultimately particularistic system of thought.” One could, however, argue that this classification of Hicks’s approach as acontextual ignores the fact that the emergence of modern democratic societies is undeniably linked to *particular* traditions of thought and practice.

7 On the contrary, discursive analysis of this type of spirituality research (see e.g. Bell & Taylor 2003, Long & Driscoll 2015, Oswick 2009) has indicated how such approaches to spirituality are clearly linked, implicitly or explicitly, to particular traditions of thought.

8 In theology, Alasdair MacIntyre’s stress on traditions has been taken up by Stanley Hauerwas. According to Hauerwas (1983:46f, see also 1983:120,133f), “the Christian tradition holds us accountable, not to an abstract story, but to a body of people who have been formed by the life of Jesus”.

enhance rather than inhibit critical conversations in organizations (2007:195). Black (2009) goes one step further, arguing that while the corporation is a concept with traditional roots, the demands of management implied in the concept are not restricted to those who understand themselves as members of the tradition from which the concept emerged, but are placed upon *all* participants in contemporary corporate life. The form of life which emerged from this traditional concept of the corporation is still marked by it, says Black. In other words, the corporation maintains its theological character “even in an apparently secular setting” (2011:5). In this view, the demands of the traditional concept of the corporation on managerial practice are not placed only on adherents to a certain tradition (because they happen to be both managers and adherents to a certain religious tradition), but are tied to the very functioning of a corporation and its management.

To sum up, there are thus three reasons provided in the literature regarding why tradition is of secondary importance to the study of fsw: it is irrelevant for theorizing different types of faith–work integration (Miller & Ewest 2013b), it is limiting and restricting in understanding spirituality as a universal phenomenon (Gotsis & Kortezi), or it is irrelevant or of secondary importance for the occurrence of spirituality (Smith 2008, Radzins 2017). On the other hand, and, interestingly with particular regard to managerial practice, tradition is viewed to be important because the morality related to managerial practice is understood as being dependent on communal traditions (McCann and Brownsberger 2007) in general, or, in particular, because the very functioning of corporate life is the product of (Christian) tradition (Black 2009:256).

How are these pros and cons related to each other and to the study of Christians in the workplace? If the embeddedness of moral claims in communal traditions proposed by McCann and Brownsberger (2007) is also at work with regard to claims about spirituality, the argument put forward by Gotsis and Kortezi (2008) that tradition restricts the understanding of spirituality and that an acontextual (non-traditional) understanding of spirituality is to be favored seems to ignore its own traditional embeddedness. Furthermore, one could argue that a seemingly acontextual approach to spirituality is simply an approach which ignores the fact that all utterances stem *from somewhere* and, therefore, from a particular context. If we relate this to the study of Christians at work and to broader fsw research, it seems safe to say that one’s *understanding* of fsw is inextricably bound, in one way or another, to traditions of thought (and practice).

However, the question which emerges in the light of the accounts that argue for the occurrence of spirituality *irrespective* of traditional beliefs and practices (Smith, Radzins) is the following: Is the existence of Christians in the workplace adequately conceptualized as traditional by reference to particular practices and beliefs which are transmitted over time and which mark Christians as members of the Christian tradition? Or is the existence of Christians to be thought of as somehow transcending traditional beliefs and practices and, if yes, in what way? In other words, what is the role of traditionally mediated convictions and practices in the formation of Christian existence in the workplace? The problem of the role of beliefs, as the cognitive contents of one's faith, in Christian living at work can be elucidated by comparing the thinking of Smith (2008) and Tucker (2010).

Smith (2008) presents a position in which the possible cognitive content of one's spirituality is irrelevant or of secondary importance. An approach to fsw which argues for the importance of *particular cognitive conceptions* or beliefs for faith–work integration or separation is presented by Tucker (2010). I have already introduced Smith's (2008) account of organizational spirituality (see this section, and 3.2), and I will now briefly introduce Tucker's approach to faith at work. Subsequently, I will reflect on the perspectives of the two authors to argue that alongside traditional beliefs and practices, concrete *experience* is a third aspect which needs to be considered in the study of Christians at work.

Tucker (2010) draws upon the writings of Søren Kierkegaard to argue for the importance of adopting a *particular perspective* to overcome the separation of one's faith from one's work. Tucker's starting point is to address the disconnection of one's faith from one's work. He points out how, in terms of one's faith, such a disconnection (which he calls the “Sunday–Monday gap”) is problematic. In order to be a person of faith, an individual must obtain and maintain a relationship with God, says Tucker. The spiritual connection with God through faith entails two aspects, a conceptual aspect (faith in the form of proper understandings) and a relational aspect (faith as trust). The second is dependent on the former, in that trust in God develops as an individual possesses the proper conceptions of God and of him-/herself. In particular, trust develops when an individual adopts the self-conception that s/he is “capable of nothing” (2010:26) without God, and that God is “absolute”. Such an absolute conception of God in relation to oneself slowly transforms one's entire existence until one is convinced of this absolute conception at every moment of one's life, and until it enters



every aspect of one's life.<sup>9</sup> The recognition of one's complete dependence on God is accompanied by the development of trust in God, and this makes one's relationship with God something which is permanently maintained.

There are, however, difficulties for an individual to maintain this relationship at all times during the workweek, and Tucker, again drawing upon the writings of Kierkegaard, offers five reasons why a disconnection can occur. These are either cognitive or volitional (related to one's will) or a combination of the two, that is, the faith–work disconnection appears because individuals have 'a problem' in terms of their understanding and/or their desires. The first reason is a problem of will, where individuals do not want to maintain a relationship with God 'always', understood in a comprehensive way, meaning literally 'all the time'. The second is a cognitive problem and a matter of pride: individuals hold a misconception of themselves and of God. This can happen very easily when a person looks at her abilities and achievements. She is then tempted not to uphold the self-conception of herself as 'being capable of nothing without God' because our daily experience seems to tell us that we are at least capable of some things. The third reason can occur as a volitional or a cognitive problem. It is the belief that, by going to church on Sunday, people are relieved of the demands of faith during the workweek. The fourth reason is peer pressure, a desire for peer approval, and fear of peer rejection. In this case, individuals are reluctant to live according to their faith during the workweek because of a fear of being criticized, rejected, or ridiculed. The fifth reason is a belief that one's work or occupation is insignificant or irrelevant to God, and thus individuals are unable to see a connection between their work and their relationship with God.

Tucker argues that, instead of giving way to a disconnection between faith and work, a person of faith needs to develop an appropriate awareness and frame of mind during everyday life. This living with awareness, which is at stake here, is a kind of living while being aware of being a single individual and aware of one's eternal responsibility before God (Tucker 2010:30). There is a particular method for doing so: to adopt a confessional attitude during every moment of life, that is, to think of oneself as being at a confession before God at all times. Tucker presents three characteristics of such a confessional mindset. First, God's presence is felt more vividly at the time of confession. With a person doing everything as 'before God', her

9 For an approach which establishes, in some respects, a contrarian direction of influence, see Cottingham (2005), who points out that one's praxis shapes what one believes.



or his awareness of God's presence changes everything. How? Before God, everyone *pays attention* to themselves and to what they are doing: "the speaker during his speech has the task of paying attention to what he is saying, and the listener during the speech has the task of paying attention to how he is hearing" (Kierkegaard quoted in Tucker 2010: 31). The second characteristic is that being in God's presence demands awareness of one's ethical responsibilities toward God. Third, this confessional attitude should be held at all times. Repentance, the reason for confession, should be a daily activity, because one sins on a daily basis. The relationship with God has to be permanent.

Tucker addresses the Christian characteristics of existence by describing how to become a Christian. In particular, one can move from a general religiousness to a Christian religiousness, which involves adopting the appropriate understanding of her/himself and of God and, in particular, accepting the self-conception that one is "capable of nothing" (2010:26) without God. This acceptance results in the development of trust in God, which is the essence of the relationship with God. In this way, living as a Christian includes being in a permanent relationship with God.

If one compares Tucker's (2010) approach to Smith's (2008), it seems that they identify different aspects as the decisive terrain where faith-work integration or the emergence of spirituality at work is decided upon. While for Smith the central element is the occurrence of a spiritual experience, which can be facilitated through particular patterns of behavior (attention-focusing and repetitive behavior), the nerve center of faith-work integration for Tucker is mainly located on the level of an individual's conception and attitude.<sup>10</sup> For Tucker, the individual has to adopt the right conceptions (of God and her-/himself) and this will then result in faith-work integration. The adoption of inappropriate conceptions will lead to the disconnection of one's faith and work. In contrast, for Smith, the level of individual conceptions and frameworks carries no decisive force. Spiritual conceptions and frameworks are but manifestations of something more central, namely the spiritual experience.

However, one could also see Smith's approach as contributing to balancing the Tucker/Kierkegaard conception, or as pointing to an inherent tension: If one takes seriously what Tucker says, that is, that the individual is 'capable of nothing without God', the path to living a faithful life cannot be "you simply have to get your conceptions of God and yourself right and

10 Note, however, the similar emphasis on *paying attention* to what one does within Tucker's and Smith's thought.

then maintain these conceptions in every moment of your life”. If individuals are ‘capable of nothing without God’, this implies that individuals are not capable of getting their conceptions of God and themselves right and of maintaining them without God. Thus the ‘cognitive’ change which an individual is to undergo, according to Tucker, implies an experience of God or, in Smith’s terms, a ‘spiritual experience’. It is thus not purely conceptual, but has, at its heart, an experiential–relational quality.

Tucker’s conception could also serve to balance that of Smith, in that it proposes quite specific answers to how the spiritual experience could manifest itself on Smith’s level of inner manifestations as spiritual conceptions, frames, and beliefs in the form of particular conceptions of oneself and of God in relation to one’s work.<sup>11</sup> Smith does not deny the existence of different spiritual traditions and perspectives. He argues, however, that a common spiritual experience can emerge *regardless* of the perspective from which one views this experience (Smith 2008:7). Challenging Smith’s approach, one could, however, ask why beliefs should not be related to experience similarly to how practices are. In other words, why should certain practices facilitate spiritual experience, yet beliefs be irrelevant for its occurrence? Could there not also be certain beliefs that facilitate spiritual experience? On the other hand, Tucker’s adoption of the appropriate conceptions (beliefs) also seems to imply a certain experience. A comparison of Tucker’s and Smith’s thinking makes it clear that, in an analysis of Christians in contemporary workplaces, experience seems to be an important aspect to be considered alongside traditional beliefs and practices.<sup>12</sup> In the formation of Christian existence at work, traditional elements, such as particular beliefs and practices, are interrelated with concrete individual experience at work. This seems to indicate that the formation of Christian lifestyles at

11 I leave it to the neurologists, however, to test whether they can identify a significant difference by comparing the neurological activity of people who hold the conceptions which Tucker associates with faith–work separation and that of people who adopt those which Tucker associates with faith–work integration.

12 For an fsw study which uses the distinction between beliefs, practices, and experiences, see Grant, O’Neil and Stephens (2004:280f). On different aspects or dimensions of religiosity, such as experience, rituals, and others, see for example Pollack and Rosta (2015:66–69), Schneuwly Purdie & Stolz (2014:93), or Woodhead (2011:139). Schneuwly Purdie & Stolz (2014:93) observe that the “Dimensionen sagen wahrscheinlich weniger über “Religion” bzw. “Religiosität” aus, als dass sie ganz grundlegende Dimensionen des Menschseins überhaupt unterscheiden (Handeln, Erfahren/Fühlen, Glauben, Wissen)”. On the notions of practice and action in (practical) theology, see Smith (2012) and Mager (2012).

work cannot be totally subsumed under the category of tradition.<sup>13</sup> Having discussed the contested role of tradition in fsw, I will now turn to the question of the influence of traditions on fsw activities and outcomes.

#### 4.1.2 *How traditions influence fsw research*

In chapter 2 (2.1.1), I outlined how overview articles on fsw point to critical issues in the formation of fsw research activities and outcomes, such as the importance of the person of the researcher (Delbecq 2009), her or his affiliations in terms of academic networks and religious traditions (Lynn & Burns 2014), and the discursive contexts which influence one's research (Bell & Taylor 2003, Long & Driscoll 2015, Oswick 2009). As regards the role of tradition, I will address three aspects in the following. A first crucial question is the influence of religious traditions on fsw research. A second important aspect is the influence of academic or research traditions on fsw research activities and output. A third crucial aspect concerns the *relationship* between religious traditions and academic traditions in fsw research.

First, a network analysis of academic associations in workplace spirituality conducted by Lynn and Burns (2014) indicates the influence of religious traditions on fsw research established in particular via academic networks. Lynn and Burns analyze the Christian Business Faculty Association (CBFA), the Colleges in Jesuit Business Education (CJBE), the International Symposium for Catholic Social Thought and Management Education (CSTME), and the Management, Spirituality and Religion Interest Group (MSR). There is a clear tendency with regard to the secular or religious identification of the members of each association, that is, the CBFA with 94 % Protestant members, the CJBE and CSTME with 95 % and 80 % Catholic members, respectively, and the MSR with 91 % secular members (2014:10). Scholars from the same network tend to cite similar academic literature, discuss similar topics, and produce similar genres of scholarship. The networks differ in their epistemological authorities, their focus on workplace emphases, and their view of business (2014:18). However, Lynn

13 I do not say that experience is a strictly extra-traditional category (traditions can e.g. be understood as stimulating certain experiences). However, I would say that experience has a certain quality that transcends tradition (in particular, if traditions are understood as characterized by certain beliefs and practices) and can mediate between the group level of tradition and the individual level (on the important role of experience in the transmission or non-transmission of religious orientations, see Mellor & Shilling 2010a:215; on the relationship of practices, beliefs, and experience, see also section 4.2).

and Burns indicate that cross-network communication may enrich research perspectives, and enhance research quality and innovation across networks.

If religious traditions influence research and higher education, the question of academic freedom arises. Epstein (2002, see also 3.3.2) addresses the issue of the extent of academic freedom with particular reference to the many religiously affiliated colleges and universities in the United States. He argues that, interestingly, academics do not perceive the religious affiliation of their institution as a constraint for academic freedom. One may even argue that there is more academic freedom in private institutions than in public institutions (2002:94). In Epstein's view, it is crucial to integrate lessons from faith traditions into management education. However, the main purpose is not indoctrination but intellectual illumination. In such an outlook, the influence of religious tradition is not a problem, and yet it demands critical reflection.<sup>14</sup>

Second, with reference to the influence of academic traditions on fsw research, Margaret Benefiel (2003, see also section 3.4.2) has pointed out that management scholars (automatically) approach the subject with the research methods and methodology they were trained in, and thus focus strongly on the measurement of spirituality and its impact on organizational performance. This is problematic in that the deeper question of the instrumentality of spirituality remains unaddressed: "If spirituality is ultimately about nonmaterialistic concerns, is it appropriate to focus on the material gains to be reaped by integrating spirituality into organizational life?" (2003:384). Spirituality discourses can thus become superficial, and due to a superficial understanding of spirituality, organizations abandon the spiritual path as soon as they hit "the inevitable bumps on the spiritual journey" (2003:384). Benefiel thus argues that the study of spirituality in the workplace needs to be "critical, analytical, theoretical, and not reductionist" (2003:385). Addressing the same problem of unthinkingly operating within one's own research tradition, Kent Miller (2015:284) argues that "natural and social scientists may often pursue their investigations without explicitly acknowledging or reflecting on the traditions in which they operate". Thus, the problem with regard to the inclusion of religious or academic tradition

14 For recent examples of critical integration of traditional religious perspectives into management scholarship, see Neubert (2019), Dyck and Purser (2019), and the other papers from the symposium 'faith in management scholarship and practice', published in *Academy of Management Perspectives* 33:3. See also Burrell and Rahim (2018) on the concept of 'religious literacy in the workplace'.

in fsw research is, in both cases, a lack of reflexivity, but not the inclusion of traditional elements per se.<sup>15</sup>

Third, how can religious and academic traditional sources be related in fsw research? Two instructive examples in this regard are provided by Travis Tucker's (see 4.1.1) and David Miller's (see 3.2.2) accounts of faith–work integration. Tucker operates with concepts that can be categorized as being rooted in religious tradition, while Miller employs concepts from the social scientific tradition of researching movements. A main difference between the conceptions of Miller and Tucker seems to be that, for Tucker, the overarching umbrella of faith–work integration is one's relationship with God, and that faith–work integration is understood in the context of this relationship, while Miller conceptualizes it more in terms of different modes or styles, and of individual preferences of faith–work integration, where the substance of one's faith is secondary (what matters is the intention to integrate one's faith and one's work).

While I do not think it is accurate to say that Tucker operates from a participant or insider perspective and Miller from an observer or outsider perspective, it is true that the conceptual lenses of the two authors stem from different traditions. And because of their different starting points, both approaches make particular contributions and have particular limitations. However, the fact that Tucker draws from ideas that many would allocate to a 'religious tradition', while Miller works with concepts from a social scientific research tradition, does not automatically make Miller's approach more critical and more academically sound. One can uncritically adopt social scientific paradigms and reflect very critically using concepts from a spiritual or religious tradition. I think that the academic study of fsw will gain more through the critical inclusion of such concepts from the traditions studied than through the rigid adoption of concepts from the social sciences and humanities *at the expense* of other concepts which are more closely related to the phenomena studied. Furthermore, the task of fleshing out and thinking through the implications of concepts from religious or spiritual traditions seems to be a legitimate academic task in itself. The academic task, then, is one of mapping and understanding concepts, a task which is explicitly embraced in hermeneutic approaches to ethics (e.g. Fischer 2002) or in some phenomenological approaches to organization studies<sup>16</sup>. As Cantrell

15 See also the study by Spoelstra, Butler, and Delaney (2020) on the role of beliefs from the 'positivist tradition' in leadership studies.

16 For an overview of phenomenological approaches to organization studies, see Gill (2014).

(2015:24) concludes in his analysis of the limitations of both methodological atheism and methodological agnosticism for the study of religion:

This does not mean that “anything goes”. But, as historian of religion George Marsden has suggested, it does mean that scholars are free, for example, to investigate issues in the form of the question, “*If so and so religious belief were true, how would it change the way we look at the subject at hand?* (1997:52)” (my emphasis)

This would separate the study of the implications of a spiritual or faith concept from the task of accounting for its legitimacy. However, it could be argued that in terms of academic research, a concept’s legitimacy can be partly demonstrated by its usefulness for understanding the subject at hand. In this regard, Tucker’s notion of an individual’s relationship with God seems to be useful in understanding the faith–work integration of Christians.

Moreover, in the study of fsw, one is confronted with concepts, such as faith, spirituality, and religion, which are used by practitioners and academics alike. In such a case, practitioner perspectives should not be ignored, I think, but are to be considered alongside academic perspectives in clarifying the terminology used in academic research, and if practitioner usages of terms differ from academic usages of the same terms, this instance should not lead to the blind prioritization of customary (traditional) academic terminology which ignores practitioner usages of terms, but should attract academic reflexion.<sup>17</sup>

Many scholars have turned to the study of traditional sources and of lived traditions and their implications for working life. In the following, I will first outline how the influence of spiritual and religious traditions on work contexts is conceptualized (4.1.3) and subsequently introduce the respective research on Christian tradition(s) at work (4.1.4).

#### 4.1.3 *How traditions are studied in fsw*

The strand of fsw literature which applies a traditional focus uses different categories to study traditions. Herman and Schaefer (2001) group their collection of essays on “Spiritual goods: Faith traditions and the practice of business” according to different ‘faith traditions’<sup>18</sup>, such as Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. “Christianity”, however, does not refer to a

17 On the role of practitioner perspectives, see also 1.4 and 7.2. See also our empirical study of Christians at work (Brügger 2018; Brügger & Huppenbauer 2019; and chapter 6 in the present dissertation).

18 The phrases ‘faith traditions’ and ‘religious traditions’ seem to be used synonymously.

particular tradition in their approach, but is an overarching term referring to a group of different traditions, such as Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, the Mormon tradition, the African-American church, the Baptist tradition, evangelical Calvinism, the Lutheran tradition, and the Mennonite tradition. In light of such a categorical understanding of Christianity, an important question (to which I will return below) is: What marks these traditions and their respective beliefs and practices as *Christian* traditions? Similar to Herman and Schaefer (2001), Dyck (2014) also uses tradition as a socio-historical category to identify religions as religious traditions (such as Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, and Islam). In terms of the manifestation of the influence of a tradition, he adds two cross-traditional categories, namely scriptures and spiritual practices, mirroring two main aspects of tradition, namely beliefs and practices, and permitting an analysis across traditions.<sup>19</sup>

In addition to Herman and Schaefer's (2001) anthology and Dyck's study (2014), a number of other comparative works have been published which apply different foci. For example, Malloch (2014) offers case studies of companies shaped by particular traditions (Catholicism, Protestantism, Judaism, Confucianism, Islam, Buddhism, Shintoism, Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, and humanism). Ray and colleagues (2014) compare insights from Judaism, Christianity, and Islam to advance normative stakeholder theory. They attempt to identify a 'normative core' of the three Abrahamic faith traditions. Fernando and Jackson (2006) conduct an inter-faith study with business leaders in Sri Lanka with Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, and Muslim backgrounds. Ali, Camp, and Gibbs (2005) compare the theological perspectives of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam on the concept of free agency and its implications for management and business organizations. Longenecker, McKinney, and Moore (2004) explore the relationship between religious commitment and business ethical judgment, comparing broad faith categories (Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, other religions, no religion) and religious intensity.<sup>20</sup> Ali, Camp, and Gibbs (2000) discuss and compare a Ten Commandments perspective drawn from Christianity, Judaism, and Islam on power and authority in corporations.

In addition to these comparative approaches, one finds studies which focus particularly on a single religious tradition. I will, in the remainder of this section, point to some examples of studies on Buddhist, Islamic, and Jewish traditions, and turn to Christian traditions in more detail in the fol-

19 On Dyck's approach, see also section 3.3 on fsw and management.

20 See also section 3.5 on outcomes of fsw.



lowing section. Vu and Gill (2018) discuss spiritual leadership from a Buddhist perspective. Marques (2010) explores the role of Buddhist practices in contemporary workplaces. Lurie (2013) proposes a Jewish perspective on faith and spirituality in the workplace, and Pava (1998) explores the ‘substance’ of Jewish business ethics. Murphy and Smolarski (2018) outline an Islamic perspective on corporate governance. Abdelzaher, Kotb, and Helfaya (2017) explore different aspects of Eco-Islam. Helfaya, Kotb, and Hanafi (2016) outline a Quranic ethical perspective on environmental responsibilities and its implications for business practice. Kirkbesoglu and Sargut (2016) consider the relationship between religious beliefs and social networks of managers in Turkey. Robinson (2015) explores the relationship between Islam and business. Tlaiss (2015) analyzes how Islamic business ethics influences women entrepreneurs in four Arab countries. Possumah, Ismail, and Shahimi (2013) discuss the role of work in Islamic ethics and the implications of an Islamic worldview on the concept of work. Al Arkoubi (2013) explores implications of Islam for business management. Graafland, Mazereeuw, and Yahia (2006) explore the relationship between Islam and responsible business conduct among Dutch entrepreneurs. Beekun and Badawi (2005) sketch an Islamic perspective on balancing ethical responsibility toward organizational stakeholders. Traditions are thus further categorized and analyzed with respect to historical, cultural, and geographical contexts.<sup>21</sup> In the following, I will turn to studies on Christian tradition(s) and their role in contemporary workplaces.

#### 4.1.4 *Christian tradition(s) at work*

Within fsw research that addresses (Judeo-)Christian tradition, I find two main foci: textual sources and contemporary manifestations. On the one hand, there are studies which focus on *textual sources*, that is, a certain text or collection of texts, and explore its/their implications for key concepts and practices of organizational life (such as management, corporate governance, performance, or work). On the other hand, various studies focus more on a tradition’s contemporary members, that is, the *people* (and their beliefs and behavior) who participate in a particular lived tradition. These categories are not mutually exclusive, but the distinction can be found in the starting

21 I can only offer a few examples here of what has been written in this area. For additional contributions to Judaism, Islam, and Christianity in business, see for example, Williams 2003, for other religious traditions, see the volumes by Herman and Schaefer (2001), Malloch (2014), and Neal (2013).



point or emphasis a study adopts. In the following, I will provide a brief overview of, first, studies on ‘Judeo-Christian’ textual sources and their implications for the workplace and, second, studies on particular contemporary ‘lived traditions’ and the traditions’ implications concerning work contexts. Third, I will address the question of what it is that marks or characterizes a tradition as Christian.

First, the Abraham story is explored as a source with which to identify a leadership archetype (Abramson 2007) or a ‘leadership by example’ template (Fischer & Friedman 2017). Ali, Camp, and Gibbs (2000) analyze the Ten Commandments as a source of a perspective on power and authority in corporations. Rowe (2014) analyzes chapters 10–36 from Second Chronicles to identify antecedents and consequences of ethical leadership. Wessels (2014) relates insights into leadership drawn from the shepherd metaphor in the book of Jeremiah to the modern-day workplace. Escobar (2011) draws on the book of Amos to argue for the interdependency of spirituality and ethics.

Rodgers and Gago (2006) propose drawing on various biblical scriptures to establish a stronger link between decision-making in organizations and ethical decision-making frameworks and moral practices (2006:134). In particular, they use the scriptures of the New Testament as a source of ethical orientation for accounting practices. Dyck (2013) explores the implications of the gospel of Luke for management in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. Almond (2014) uses the biblical texts on the life and work of Paul of Tarsus to contribute to the scholarship on institutional work by developing a grounded theory of how new institutions are created. Whittington and colleagues (2005) draw on Paul’s first letter to the Thessalonians to propose a causal model of spiritual leadership which they term ‘legacy leadership’. In this model, leadership effectiveness is determined by the “changed lives of followers” (2005:749). Taylor (2017) explores the theology of work in First and Second Thessalonians. Gotsis and Dodd outline the economic ideas that they find to be contained in the Pauline Epistles (2002) and in the Epistle of James (2004).

Natoli (2008) outlines how Augustinian thinking may inspire business people to discover the presence of God in their own consciousness.<sup>22</sup> Tredget (2010) outlines the implications of key concepts from the Rule of Benedict (wisdom, practical wisdom, prudence, discretion, and discernment) for management education and leadership development. Mercier and Deslandes (2017) study the crucial role of practical wisdom in interpreting

22 For another recent study that draws on St. Augustine’s thought, see Wray-Bliss (2019a).

the Rule of Benedict. Payer-Langthaler and Hiebl (2013) analyze the definition of performance in a religious organization by studying the case of a Benedictine abbey and by drawing predominantly on the *Regula Benedicti*. Weber-Berg (2010) draws on Martin Luther's thinking for a Protestant reformulation of faith and love as virtues of practical wisdom for modern management. In particular, he describes faith as a receptive attitude (2010:732). Cavanagh (2003) proposes an approach to spirituality based on the thinking of Ignatius of Loyola as a promising form of spirituality for business managers. Rothausen (2017) outlines an approach to leadership development which draws upon the writings on Ignatian spirituality. Tucker (2010) examines the writings of Søren Kierkegaard to address the problem of a "Sunday–Monday gap" (2010:24). Frey (1998) draws upon the thinking of puritan moralists (William Perkins, John Cotton, William Ames) to argue that the puritan ethic has been wrongly interpreted to encourage self-interest "inimical to the good of organizations and society" (Frey 1998:1573). In contrast, says Frey, they argue that the authentic puritan ethic believes the moral end of economic individualism to be the common good. Orwig (2002) outlines the influence of the writings of Norman Vincent Peale on the religious values of American business leaders. Melé (2016) proposes that current Anglo-Saxon capitalism can learn much from the macro-level business ethics of scholasticism, as developed between the thirteenth and the mid-seventeenth centuries. Armstrong (1993) offers a Protestant interpretation of the papal encyclical *Centesimus annus*. Naughton (1995) outlines how, in the papal social tradition, the notion of participation is crucial for structuring an organization and for the moral formation of the workers within an organization. Silva (2007) identifies three resources from Christian spirituality for business leadership: servant leadership, Catholic social teaching, and the spirituality of business leadership as a Christian vocation. Sandelands (2009) draws on the Catholic social tradition in order to correct current thinking on business. He argues that the business of business is not business, but the human person. Naughton and Alford (2012)<sup>23</sup> outline the implications of Catholic social teaching for business practice. Carrascoso (2014) relates Catholic social teaching to stakeholder theory. De Peyrelongue, Masclef, and Guillard (2017) draw upon Catholic social teaching to introduce the concept of gratuitousness for understanding consumer behavior. Heslam (2015) takes up the thinking of the Dutch Reformed philosopher and statesman Abraham Kuyper for an understanding of the workings of God's grace in business, the social function of

23 A church document written by Roman Catholic academics.

money, and the calling of business. Meynhardt (2010) tries to dissect the roots of the thinking of Peter Drucker, a leading management thinker of the twentieth century in the Christian tradition. Fourie and Höhne (2017) explore the implications of Protestant theology (in particular the writings of Jürgen Moltmann) for transformational leadership theory. Whipp (2008) draws upon contemporary approaches to Trinitarian theology to address the discursive interface between the church and secular work contexts.<sup>24</sup>

Second, while the studies introduced above focus on textual sources and their implications for present-day workplaces and workplace-related views and practices, I will now turn to studies that explore the contemporary formation of Christian traditions at work. Many researchers address a particular geographical context and compare the influence of different strands of tradition within each respective context.

In the United States, Neubert and Dougherty (2013) explore and compare Christian attitudes on faith at work across religious traditions (black Protestants, evangelical Protestants, and mainline Protestants and Catholics). In particular, they study the influence of Christian congregations “in making faith relevant to the workplace” (2013:47) in the US. They use two scales: the Congregational Entrepreneurial Orientation Scale (CEOS) and the Congregational Faith at Work Scale (CFWS). The CEOS measures “the extent to which the congregation behaves entrepreneurially” (2013:58) and the CFWS measures the extent to which specific beliefs about faith at work are emphasized within a congregation. Black Protestant congregations have the highest scores in both CEOS and CFWS, followed by evangelical Protestant congregations. “Hence, it is the most theological conservative strands of American Protestantism where worshippers are encountering entrepreneurial leaders and an emphasis on faith’s relevance to work” (2013:58). Mainline Protestant congregations are slightly more entrepreneurial than Catholic congregations, but in terms of the CFWS, their score is nearly identical (2013:61). Among other results, Neubert and Dougherty (2013) found that a Protestant work ethic is most salient within evangelical congregations, followed by mainline Protestants and Catholics, who display a similarly salient Protestant work ethic, and by black Protestant congregations. Black Protestant Christians are thus the least likely, among the four Christian traditions, to embrace a Protestant work ethic. Brown (1984) compares Protestant, humanist and evangelical approaches to management in the US, and argues that while Protestant and humanist

24 The present dissertation also takes up different Christian traditional sources. For an overview, see 1.4.

approaches lead to authoritarian and manipulative management styles, respectively, the evangelical approach results in a participative management style. According to Miller and Ewest (2013c:77), American Protestants differ from Catholics in the sources they use for orientation. While Protestants still turn to “reformation hallmarks” (such as *sola scriptura*, *sola gratia*, *sola fide*, *solus Christus*), Catholics use church teachings and the papal encyclicals, such as *Laborem Exercens* (1981), *Centesimus Annus* (1991), and *Caritas in Veritate* (2009), for orientation.

With regard to Germany, Eugen Buss (2012) explores the social profile of German top managers. He finds that a crucial factor in their social profile is the confession of a manager’s parents. In relation to the overall German population, Lutheran, Reformed, and independent Protestant (Free Church) parental influences are disproportionately high, and Catholic parental influences are disproportionately low among German top managers. As regards the managers themselves, 55 % of German top managers are Protestant (compared to 31 % in the overall population) and 22 % are Catholic (compared to 32 % in the overall population). Less than 10 % of German top managers express no relationship to religion at all and consider themselves atheistic. Nearly 65 % of German top managers grew up in a family with a Protestant atmosphere, and around 23 % in a Catholic milieu (Buss 2012:35). Religious influences during childhood are the *main* characteristic in the social profile of the majority of German top managers. For nearly 70 %, the religious atmosphere at home during their childhood is a decisive factor in their identity development. The majority of managers view the Christian education they received as a positive experience. Involvement in church played an important role in their education, in particular service attendance and involvement in youth groups. Every fourth German top manager was active in a church youth group (Buss 2012:36).

With reference to the Irish context, Cullen (2011) presents an auto/ethnographic study of workplace spirituality, reflecting on the difference between American Protestantism and Irish Roman Catholicism. He received spiritual training in an Irish company, which to him appeared to be suspiciously American and Protestant. For him, the American spirituality discourse has what he calls a particular “Pelagian” (2011:156) tone, with a more optimistic view of human nature compared to an Augustinian understanding of original sin, which is predominant in Irish Roman Catholicism. If the self is characterized by original sin, spirituality is not about expressing one’s authentic self, but about getting in touch with God and seeking forgiveness. These studies with a geographical focus indicate that the presence of certain traditional influences in work settings varies not only across dif-

ferent strands of tradition, but also across different geographical–cultural contexts.

Various studies explore one particular strand of lived tradition as it relates to contemporary work contexts. For example, Trimiew and Greene (1997) discuss business ethics in the African-American church. Dana (2007) explores entrepreneurship among the Amish. Cao (2007) offers an ethnographic account of Chinese Christian entrepreneurs in Wenzhou, China. Lewis-Anthony (2014) analyzes the understanding of management in the Church of England. Other studies focus on Benedictine monasteries:<sup>25</sup> Inauen and colleagues (2010) draw on the monastic practice of governance as an inspiration for dealing with challenges in public management. Rost and colleagues (2010) explore the question of what business corporations can learn from Benedictine monasteries in terms of corporate governance. Roels (1997) discusses the business ethics of (Calvinist) evangelicals. Vaidyanathan (2018) explores Catholicism in Bangalore and Dubai. Gotsis and Kortezi (2009) develop a theoretical framework to describe the implications of Greek Orthodoxy on entrepreneurship. Miller and Ewest (2013c) outline current Protestant accents of faith at work in the United States. Nash (2007) reflects on the role of faith in a global marketplace from a Protestant perspective. Escobar (2011) offers critical reflexion on current practices in the Latino-Hispanic American Pentecostal church. Burton, Koning and Muers (2018) explore Quaker decision-making practices.

Others compare the use of concepts, such as governance, in religious and non-religious contexts with reference to a particular religious tradition. Pfang (2015) explores management as corporate governance practiced in the Catholic Church as it differs from corporate governance in a business company. Rost and Grätzer (2014) draw on the concept of governance practiced in monasteries of Catholic orders as an inspiration for the governance of multinational organizations.

I have only sketched these studies on Christian traditional influences in contemporary workplaces briefly, in order to offer a glimpse of the variety of research on Christian traditions and their relationship to workplaces. To offer a more concrete illustration of this research, I will now focus on the description of the American Protestant tradition and its formation in contemporary work settings provided by Miller and Ewest (2013c) as one particular example. They propose five “modern Protestant theological accents of faith at work” (2013c:69). Their proposal is based on a historical analysis of the development of Protestantism, of the emergence of a Protestant the-

25 See also above on the rule of Benedict as a textual source.

ology of work in North America, and of its contemporary revisions and contextualizations. In their proposal, they do not explore “official theologies of say, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Methodists, Congregationalists, and Baptists, or the so-called black church, and the variety of growing freestanding or Pentecostal-based Protestant churches”, but

how various theological accents commonly found in Protestantism writ large (and found across a range of Protestant denominations) impact contemporary attitudes toward and behavior at work, listening to foundational voices from the past as modified by context and experiences of the present (2013c:78).

The first accent is personal purpose or calling in daily life. The doctrine of vocation denotes that everyone has a calling to fulfill God’s purposes which encompasses all spheres of life (Miller & Ewest 2013c:79). There is a second Protestant accent on stewardship: “This doctrine teaches that the people of God are cocreators with God and have a responsibility to use wisely and responsibly the gifts and opportunities they are given” (2013c:79). Third, there is an accent on economic justice, business ethics, and ethical character. Fourth, there is an accent on “lifestyle modesty within success coupled with a spirit of radical generosity (...) on modesty in material pleasures, prudence in consumption, and generosity for those who have less” (2013c:80). Fifth, there is an accent on the expression of one’s faith at work (often referred to as evangelism), verbally and/or by example.

Hermeneutically, there is a “primacy of scripture when deciding orthodoxy and orthopraxy” (2013c:81). With the use of the term ‘accent’, Miller and Ewest take into account the fact that there is theological and practical diversity among North American Protestants, but that there are nevertheless common themes which can be found in contemporary North American Protestantism.

It is important to note that, in Miller and Ewest’s account, the formation of tradition is conceptualized as a dynamic process. Contemporary revisions and contextualizations of Protestant theology influence attitudes toward and behavior at work. Traditional texts from the past interact with contemporary contexts and experiences. In particular, “foundational voices from the past” are “modified by *context* and *experiences* of the present” (2013c:78, my emphasis). Miller and Ewest’s notion of ‘accents’ seems to include both beliefs and practices, and it is conceptualized as being related to particular contexts and experiences. With reference to the study of Christians at work, and if we take into account that traditions are continually modified, the question of *what it is that marks a tradition as Christian over time*

arises again. This brings me to the third and last question addressed in this section.

It is interesting that, while Christians seem to be ever present in fsw research, the question of what it is that makes a Christian a Christian is hardly ever addressed. A possible answer to the question of Christian characteristics is provided by Cavanagh and colleagues (2003:128), who propose four “core elements” of the Christian tradition of spirituality. According to them, it involves an account of God, of human beings, of discipleship to Jesus Christ, and of the church. In particular, in a Christian perspective, God is made known through events in history and is “most fully revealed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus whom Christians regard as Messiah or Christ” (2003:128). Through “God’s Spirit, a community of believers in Jesus Christ arises and expands” (2003:128) heading to an “eventual culmination” (2004:128). While humans are made to live in a relationship with God, there is a human tendency “to place fundamental confidence and hope in a spiritual substitute for God” (2003:130), such as wealth and success. Jesus calls on human beings to repent, change their direction, and reorient their priorities toward God. Following Jesus involves a “fundamental change” (2003:130) which “is paradoxically both given by God and enacted by humans” (2003:130). God works in the world in particular through the formation of “a special social group, Israel and the church” (2003:131). In the church, the “Christian story takes on bodily existence” (2003:131). In section 4.3, I shall discuss additional approaches to Christian characteristics, but prior to that, I will address an aspect related to the account proposed by Cavanagh and colleagues (2003).

The proposal of core elements of Christian spirituality by Cavanagh and colleagues (2003) reflects the location of Christians in an overall framework of the ‘Christian story’. This localization of Christians (and of human beings in general) is, as I will argue, insufficiently characterized as a mere traditional Christian belief, but characterizes the *relation* of Christians to particular beliefs, practices, and experiences in such a way that it appears reductionist to conceptualize Christian living in contemporary workplaces by (mere) adherence to particular traditional beliefs and practices. There is thus more to the study of Christians at work than the study of particular Christian traditions and groups, such as the Amish, the Greek Orthodox, Protestants, or Catholics (see the studies mentioned above in this section). Even though Christian living at work can be described, by applying a traditional lens, as being marked by the adoption of particular Christian traditional beliefs and behavior at work, its central features remain obscured if the broader reality to which Christians correspond (by being located in it



and by localizing themselves with regard to it) is ignored. To substantiate this claim, I will, in the following section, draw on a sociological perspective on the Christian location of individuals and, additionally, sketch a Christian perspective on tradition to elucidate the characteristics of the *interaction* of Christians with tradition.

## 4.2 The relationship between Christians and tradition

In this section, I will propose that the formation of Christian living is not traditional in a simple sense (e.g. a simple perpetuation of traditional beliefs and practices). Instead, it is the Christian location of individuals that functions as a mediating factor for the inclusion or exclusion of traditional elements in the formation of Christian lifestyles. I will take up the work of two few authors, as well as a current sociological approach (4.2.1). These, I argue, offer a perspective on the relationship between Christians and tradition which is congruent with a Christian perspective on the role of tradition in Christian living, which draws on traditional sources to encourage a dialectic, dynamic, and critical relationship between individuals and tradition (4.2.2).

### 4.2.1 *The Christian location of individuals*

With regard to the the question of the Christian localization<sup>26</sup> of individuals, some authors connect an emphasis on the bodily concreteness of Christian existence with a stress on the Christian location of individuals at the embodied intersection of this world and an other-worldly realm. Jean Bartunek (2006) reflects on the dualities and tensions between her academic and religious life (as a Catholic nun) and the tensions and dualities between theory and practice which have been influential in her intellectual development and her scholarly contributions.<sup>27</sup> She argues that these dualities and tensions were once reconciled in a Christmas gift, “whose ramifications have unfolded throughout my scholarly career” (2006:1875). She describes how she first experienced this Christmas gift as follows:

26 Similar notions discussed in German theology are that of “Lozieren” (Dalferth 1997:215) and the “lokalisierende Charakter des christlichen Glaubens” (Fischer 2002:15–32).

27 In the area of organizational change and transformation and in the insider/outsider joint research methodology.



On Christmas morning of 1976 I was praying about the scripture readings from one of the masses of Christmas. Specifically, I was praying about the prologue of John's gospel in the Christian scriptures (John 1:1–18). The prologue starts with, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

“In the beginning” the Word (God) is very abstract and distant, always described in the third person. But later the prologue goes on to say, “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” By this point the reading is using the first person and much more immediate language, and I suddenly had a eureka moment. The *Word* became *flesh*. There was a theory–practice link. The ‘word’ was no longer just abstract, distant words. They became flesh; they were enacted, became part of ‘us’. There didn't have to be a separation between theory and practice even ‘divinely’; they could be part of each other in some way, and my academic life could be integrated with my religious life (2006:1882).

In the remainder of her article, she describes how this Christmas moment has influenced her scholarly work. She notes that

although I have never consciously made decisions about what work to undertake based on that Christmas morning insight, I have often discovered that what draws me has been some embodiment of it. (...) much of my intellectual life since then has felt as if it touches parts of ‘the Word made flesh’ in ways that help to keep that experience alive for me (2006:1883).

Bartunek mentions, in a footnote, a theological commentary on the prologue, which confirms her observation of the language used in the prologue, which made it clear to her that “the evangelist *positions himself and the readers of his gospel at this intersection of the timeless and the timebound*. Third person narrative slides<sup>28</sup> into first person plural narration” (2006:1892, my emphasis).<sup>29</sup>

Using different terminology, the notion of an intersection (she uses the term ‘connection’) is also prominent in Radzins' (2017) account of Simone Weil's understanding of work as spiritual.<sup>30</sup> For Weil, living labor comes from “the world beyond” (Radzins 2017:298), from what is unseen (thought, contemplation, or attention). “Spirit appears in the *connection* between the world beyond (what is unseen) and this world (the seen),” says

28 I am reminded here of similar shifts in the use of persons in the Psalms, in particular, the shift between speaking of God in the third person and speaking to God in the second person (see e.g. Psalm 23), which to me also seems to reflect a dynamic in terms of distance and closeness (on the shift of address in Psalms, see e.g. Suderman 2008).

29 One could, of course, argue that the very notions of ‘embodiment’ or ‘incarnation’ must imply the idea of a movement of something (or someone) from a non-incarnated or disembodied sphere into the dimensions of space and time.

30 For a more detailed discussion of Radzins' text, see 4.3.

Radzins (2017:298, my emphasis). For Weil, “the divine is materially present (...) the world is ‘God’s language to us,’” says Radzins (2017:303). In this way, one’s experience of and concrete engagement with the world is interpreted as one’s experience of the Word of God.<sup>31</sup> Thus for Weil, Christianity is particularly related to work contexts because spirituality is. The embodiment of Christianity at work is characterized by offering living examples of the spiritual character of work. The accent of Radzins/Weil is not on the timeless/timebound, but on the seen/unseen (or ‘this world’ and ‘the world beyond’), where (the) Spirit appears in the *connection* of the two through one’s engagement with materiality.

A similar notion of an intersection can be found in Mellor and Shilling’s (2014:283) concept of a religious habitus<sup>32</sup>. Although Mellor and Shilling have no particular focus on workplaces, their approach brings together different aspects of the embodied character of the formation of Christian lifestyles in a way which I hold to be relevant for the study of Christians at work. In particular, they refer to an “embodied intersection of worldly and other worldly realities” and “the Christian location of the individual at the intersection of worldly and other worldly realities” (2014:283). They point out that the relationship between tradition, traditional sources, and the formation of individual lifestyles is complex and that the integration of traditional elements into one’s own lifestyle is increasingly related to reflexive processes.

The dynamics of the manifestation of tradition and its Christian characteristics are particularly taken into account in Mellor & Shilling’s (2014) notion of the *instauration* of a religious habitus. Mellor and Shilling (2010a) introduce the notion of the religious habitus by drawing on a number of sociological theories. They conceive of the habitus as “the embodied predispositions which promote particular forms of orientation to the world” (2010a:217). In particular, the notion of a religious habitus takes account of a number of aspects of embodiment specific to religious life, such as “the existential reassurances and anxieties reflective of human frailty, the stimulation and regulation of emotions relative to the sacred, and the development of rituals, techniques and pedagogics with the aim of stimulating particular

31 A similar thought can be found in Ligo (2011:459), who argues that the concreteness of one’s workplace is an embodiment of grace (see also 4.3).

32 The attractiveness of the habitus concept for fsw research lies, generally speaking, in its capacity to bring together a number of cognitive, experiential, dispositional, and behavioral aspects as they concern the formation of different lifestyles. In this section, I concentrate on Mellor and Shilling’s (2014, 2010a) notion of the religious habitus. For Bourdieu’s notion of the habitus, see 5.5 and 6.1.

forms of consciousness and experience, including those related to transcendence and immanence” (2010a:217). Mellor and Shilling (2014) further develop the concept of the religious habitus by considering more explicitly the notions of instauration, reflexivity, and multi-realism<sup>33</sup>, which are increasingly important given the “cultural discontinuities of the current era” (2014:290). Taking account of this, they re-conceptualize the religious habitus as “the reflexive crafting of a mode of being that locates human action, feeling and thought *at the embodied intersection of worldly and other-worldly realities*” (2014:277, my emphasis), “where traffic flows both ways” (2014:284). Thus, individuals do not unreflexively reproduce a traditional habitus, but increasingly encounter situations in which they have to choose “from where to receive religious guidance” (2014:279). Actors are routinely forced to take “an *external, third-party view of their own practices*, assess them in relation to others, and plan according to changing contexts” (2014:281, my emphasis). Thus, individual actors do not simply reproduce stable traditional modes of being, but reflexively “negotiate their way through the heterogeneity of the present” (2014:281) by drawing on traditional repertoires to craft a mode of being. This is indicative of broader “hybridization of multiple-traditions and multiple modernities, wherein religious and other cultural resources are drawn upon and reinterpreted creatively” (2014:281).

In terms of the formation of a “Christian habitus” (2014:284), Mellor and Shilling identify three “central features of the Christian cultural ‘repertoire’”, upon which groups and individuals draw in the formation of, say, a Catholic, Protestant, or Pentecostal habitus: 1) “a focus of people being drawn out of their societies (by opening their bodies and minds to a transcendent other-worldly sphere)” (2014:283), 2) “the development of a relationally-defined but unique sense of personhood (arising from the experience of communion with God)” (2014:283), and 3) the acquisition of “the capacity to reflect upon, interrogate and deploy the individual conscience (in engaging morally with and identifying religious potential within, secular society)” (2014:283). In short, this characterizes “the Christian location of the individual at the intersection of worldly and other-worldly realities” (2014:283), which “has long required the faithful to consciously cultivate techniques and habits designed to ‘open’ their bodies to spiritual forces” (2014:283). Using Pentecostalism as an illustration, Mellor and Shilling out-

33 See also Fischer (1994:172), who speaks of “overlapping realities” in the Pauline writings, and the importance of the question of the “localization [Zugehörigkeit]” of humans in terms of these realities and his later (Fischer 2002:15) reference to the “localizing character [der lokalisierende Charakter] of Christian faith”.

line how the practice of baptism in early Christianity “assumed new visibility with the modern Pentecostal focus on conversion” (2014:284) as an “active instauration of a Christian habitus” (2014:284). In the Pentecostal instauration of a Christian habitus, the “Pentecostal opening of the body as a conversional creation of a ‘born-again subject’” (2014:284) centers “on the bodily dynamics of becoming and remaining a convert” (2014:284), which involves “techniques of prayer, pure living and a reflexive interrogation of the self across every aspect of life as believers prepare their bodies to be receptive to the Holy Spirit” (2014:284). Mellor and Shilling are thus able to account for a broader Christian cultural repertoire, upon which it is creatively drawn to instaur a Christian habitus, such as a Pentecostal habitus. This “reflexive reconstruction of tradition” (2014:287) is “certainly not ‘traditional’ in any simple sense” (2014:287), but “results in the emergence of something genuinely new” (2014:287). In a similar way, one could examine the crafting, for example, of an Amish (Dana 2007), Benedictine (Mercier and Deslandes 2017), or Greek Orthodox (Gotsis & Kortezi 2009) habitus as different ways of instauring a habitus in the crafting of Christian modes of being.

In terms of fsW and the study of Christians at work, this seems to imply that one’s conduct at work is not totally determined by traditional influences, but that traditional influences on work conduct are *mediated by individual reflexive and experiential processes*. This may result in more fluid manifestations of traditions in contemporary workplaces. Thus, the influence of particular traditions is not linear, but dynamically shaped by individual biographies of workers and managers.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, while the study of Christians at work can build on studies of the influence of particular traditional sources on Christian practice at work or the study of particular strands of lived Christian (such as the Amish) traditions, as sketched in section 4.1, it should also take into account the dynamics of the manifestation of tradition(s) and the reality in which Christians localize themselves in their drawing upon traditional sources and by positioning themselves in relation to particular strands and aspects of lived tradition. In other words, the study of Christians at work must move beyond traditional particularities (of, say, Reformed spirituality at work) to address the cross-traditional factors that influence the inclusion or exclusion of particular traditional elements in the formation of Christian lifestyles.

34 This can be observed in our own data, for example with regard to the dynamic development of denominational orientations and affiliations in the biographies of the managers we studied (see 1.3).

Note that the term ‘Christian’ is used in Mellor and Shilling’s approach as an umbrella term, of which ‘Pentecostal’ is one possible variation. It is the drawing upon what Mellor and Shilling term the Christian cultural repertoire that qualifies, say, a Pentecostal, Catholic, or Protestant habitus *as Christian*. With their identification of a Christian cultural repertoire, they offer a sociological answer to the question of the cross-traditional characteristics of Christian living. In the following section, I will address the question of a Christian evaluation of tradition and argue that it is roughly congruent with Mellor and Shilling’s sketch.

#### 4.2.2 *Tradition in Christian perspective*

In this section, I will draw on contemporary and biblical accounts of tradition to sketch a map of understanding for the role of tradition in a mode of existence pertinent to Christians. Let me start by highlighting and synthesizing some of the key aspects of the above discussion of fsw research with regard to the notion of tradition. Broadly speaking, in the respective fsw literature Christian existence seems to be mainly conceptualized through a traditional lens, that is, Christianity is studied as a (faith, spiritual, or religious) tradition, resulting in an understanding of Christian existence as consisting primarily of a particular set of (traditional) *beliefs* and *practices*. For the formation of particular modes of existence in work contexts, concrete *experience* is a third element which is considered in addition to beliefs and practices. The relation of experience to tradition is interpreted in different ways. According to one interpretation (see e.g. Miller and Ewest 2013c), experience interacts with traditional (transmitted, that is, ‘handed-over’) beliefs and practices in a way which leads to particular modifications of traditional modes of existence in the formation of concrete ways of living. According to another interpretation (see e.g. Smith 2008, who is concerned with spirituality in general, and not with a specifically Christian mode of existence), the role of experience as *spiritual* experience is juxtaposed with and prioritized over traditional beliefs and practices in the formation of spirituality at work. This results in an emphasis on spiritual experience at work *at the cost* of traditional beliefs and practices, and in the claim that traditional beliefs and practices are of secondary relevance or even irrelevant in the formation of spirituality at work.<sup>35</sup> In the study of Christian existence

35 In a similar vein, some (see e.g. Fry & Cohen 2009:276) have argued for the priority of spirituality over (traditional) religion in contemporary workplaces. On the definitions of these terms, see below (2.2).

at work, both lines of thinking can be taken up by highlighting the importance of experience and by accentuating the specific relatedness of beliefs and practices to the particular kind of experience pertinent to a Christian mode of existence.

Shannon Nicole Smythe (2018) draws upon the thinking of Karl Barth<sup>36</sup> to propose that the divine handing-over (παράδομι) of Jesus in the incarnation and crucifixion has its human correlate in the apostolic handing-over (παράδοσις) of tradition by the disciples. She argues that through Jesus's handing-over of the Spirit to his followers, they are given the power to correspond existentially to “the divine prototype of handing-over” through “the Spirit's non-identical repetition of Christ's death in us”, and “in the apostolic way of handing-over Jesus” (2018:77), or, in other words, “in witnessing to Jesus” (2018:77). In this outlook, the human handing-over of tradition is located in the context of a wider framework. But even though the handing-over of tradition is important in this approach, the value of the handing-over of tradition lies in its correspondence to a reality, on which its significance is based. To explore this in more detail, I will, in this subsection, connect the general question of the formation of modes of existence via the possible interaction of *beliefs*, *practices*, and *experience* to a reading of biblical accounts and assessments of tradition.<sup>37</sup> The aim is to sketch a basic scheme or map of understanding of the particular relationship between beliefs, practices, and experience in a Christian mode of existence informed by the New Testament texts on tradition.

In the New Testament writings, different texts offer differing accounts and evaluations of the notion of tradition. Without ignoring the different nuances, meanings, and contexts that the different passages imply, it seems to me that the New Testament writings *do* speak with a rather clear voice with regard to the question of the role of tradition in the lives of followers of Christ. The Greek term παράδοσις appears 13 times in the New Testament (Mt 15.2.3.6, Mk 7:3.5.8.9.13, Gal 1:14, Col 2:8, 1 Cor 11:2, 2 Thess 2:15, 2 Thess 3:6).<sup>38</sup> There is no similar term used in the Hebrew Bible or

36 In particular, Barth's exegetical work on some of the New Testament occurrences of παράδομι (see Smythe 2018:78).

37 I will address the problem of the anachronism of such a move in my discussion of Acts 11 below in the present section. On the hermeneutical approach taken toward the biblical texts, see also 1.4.

38 In addition, the verb παράδομι is used five times to refer to the impartation or passing on of instructions for believers (Lk 1:2, 1 Cor 11:2.23, 1 Pet 1:18, 2 Pet 2:21, see Williams 2017; on additional occurrences of παράδομι, see Smythe 2018).

the Septuagint.<sup>39</sup> Broadly speaking, in the New Testament tradition refers to teachings on matters of belief and conduct (see e.g. Williams 2017).<sup>40</sup> In most of the 13 occurrences, the notion of tradition is used with a *negative* connotation.

In the synoptic references to tradition (Mt 15:2ff, Mk 7:3ff), a (dis)qualification of the tradition in question is introduced which targets its origins and the lifestyle to which it leads: “Mt 15:1 Then Pharisees and experts in the law came from Jerusalem to Jesus and said, 15:2 ‘Why do your disciples *disobey the tradition of the elders*? For they don’t wash their hands when they eat’”<sup>41</sup> (my emphasis). Tradition here refers to something passed on from generation to generation and coming from the “elders”.<sup>42</sup> Jesus modifies the qualification of tradition presented by the “Pharisees and experts in the law” as the tradition *of the elders*. His reaction focuses on the “Pharisees and experts in the law” themselves (instead of the elders) as those who claim the tradition in question as their own: “15:3 He answered them, ‘And why do you disobey the commandment of God because of *your* tradition’” (my emphasis)? In addition, Jesus contrasts the commandment of God to their own tradition. In this sense, tradition stands against what God says. Jesus illustrates this by giving an example in verses 4 to 6, concluding that

You have nullified the word of God *on account of your tradition*. 15:7 Hypocrites! Isaiah prophesied correctly about you when he said, 15:8 “This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me, 15:9 and they worship me in vain, teaching as doctrines the commandments *of men*” (my emphasis).

Using the notion of “teaching as doctrines the commandments of men” (from Isaiah 29:13), Jesus contrasts what comes from humans to what comes from God. As Mark has it: “Mk 7:8 Having no regard for the command of God, you hold fast to *human* tradition (τὴν παράδοσιν τῶν ἀνθρώπων)” (my emphasis). The emphasis is not so much on the particular form of the concrete tradition which is of concern here, but on qualifying it

39 Except for some passages where the term is used with a different meaning, see Williams (2017). In spite of this terminological report concerning παράδοσις in the Septuagint, the idea of handing over instructions can, of course, be found in the Hebrew Bible (see e.g. Deuteronomy 6:6), and it is against the background of a culture in which tradition in this sense *is* important that the disputations of Jesus with the ‘Pharisees and experts in the law’ acquire their particular profile.

40 There is no entry on παράδοσις in THWNT, but there is one in TDNT (referenced on [www.net.bible.org](http://www.net.bible.org), accessed on 29 November 2017, and on <https://www.biblestudytool.com/lexicons/greek/nas/paradosis.html#Legend>, accessed on 22 May 2018).

41 Scripture quotes are taken from the NET Bible (2017) if not otherwise indicated.

42 A description of what the respective tradition entails can be found in Mk 7,3f.



as human. Interestingly, for those observing it, the human origin and character of the tradition leads to a discrepancy between what one says and one's existential attitude, which is referred to as paying lip-service to God while "their heart is far from me" (Mt 15:8). In continuing, Jesus refers back to the washing of hands (the topic which the Pharisees and experts in the law used to initiate the conversation), and it becomes clearer why he assesses the human character of tradition as problematic. It is because of an inner source of impurity which characterizes human beings:

Mk 7 20 He said, 'What comes out of a person defiles him. 7:21 For from within, out of the human heart, come evil ideas, sexual immorality, theft, murder, 7:22 adultery, greed, evil, deceit, debauchery, envy, slander, pride, and folly. 7:23 All these evils come *from within* and defile a person.' (my emphasis, see also Mt 15:11)

The thoroughly negative account of tradition in the synoptic gospels is thus connected to a radically critical view of the source and quality of what humans produce.

Similar to the synoptic accounts, the epistle to the Galatians also advocates a juxtaposition of human tradition and Godly intervention:

1:13 For you have heard of my former way of life in Judaism, how I was savagely persecuting the church of God and trying to destroy it. 1:14 I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my nation, and was extremely zealous for the *traditions of my ancestors*. 1:15 But when the one who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace was pleased 1:16 to reveal his Son in me so that I could preach him among the Gentiles, *I did not go to ask advice from any human being*, 1:17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before me, but right away I departed to Arabia, and then returned to Damascus (my emphasis).

Paul describes himself as working against "the church of God" and at the same time advancing in the "traditions of my ancestors". This "former way of life" was interrupted when God "was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I could preach him among the Gentiles". Paul seems to be emphasizing here, and in the rest of the chapter, that the interruption of his "former way of life" and the subsequent changes in his behavior are attributed to the influence of God's intervention and not to that of other human beings. While one could get the impression that Paul somehow turns from one tradition to another, and thus becomes a proponent of another tradition,<sup>43</sup> it is interesting to note that God's intervention had the purpose of leading Paul to "preach the Son" among the Gentiles. After having focused above on beliefs and practices as crucial elements of tradi-

43 For a recent study of Paul's positioning work, see Eyl (2017).



tion and the question of their relationship to experience, I must stress that the event which is accentuated here, although it can be described as involving beliefs and practices, is closer to what the authors discussed above termed experience. Paul refers to the particular experience that God “was pleased to reveal his Son in me”. Thus, what Paul now starts to pass on to others is probably not best depicted as a set of beliefs or practices (and it is, in this sense, not primarily a tradition), but as his report of an experience of the Son. Therefore, the movement of passing on or transmission becomes important in the very formation of followers of Christ, but it is inextricably linked to a specific kind of experience. Paul does not primarily communicate certain viewpoints as beliefs, and gives recommendations in terms of practices, but he preaches “the Son” as a result of his experience of Him.

In the epistle to the Colossians, one finds the description of a related contrast between living according to human traditions on the one hand, and according to the reality of Jesus Christ on the other:

2:6 Therefore, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, 2:7 rooted and built up in him and firm in your faith just as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. 2:8 Be careful not to allow anyone to captivate you through an empty, deceitful philosophy that is *according to human traditions* (κατὰ τὴν παράδοσιν τῶν ἀνθρώπων) and the elemental spirits of the world, and not *according to Christ* (κατὰ Χριστόν) (my emphasis).

The broader theme here is how to live one’s life as a follower of Christ. Those who have “received Christ Jesus as Lord” are to live in him and be “rooted and built up in him”. This ‘living in Christ’ stands in stark contrast to a mode of existence marked by being limited by a philosophy which is ‘according to human traditions’ and ‘not according to Christ’. The contrast is clear: One can live one’s life *either* according to human traditions *or* according to Christ.

Positively connoted references to tradition are entailed in the first epistle to the Corinthians and in the second epistle to the Thessalonians (1 Cor 11:2; 2 Thess 2:15; 3:6). In these passages, tradition seems to refer to the composite of Paul’s (who is traditionally believed to be the author of 1 Cor and 2 Thess<sup>44</sup>) personal example and the oral and written teachings that he gave and passed on to the recipients of his message.

44 For a recent discussion of the authorship of the Pauline writings, see Schnelle (2017).

2 Thess 2:15 Therefore, brothers and sisters, stand firm and *hold on to the traditions that we taught you*, whether by speech or by letter. 2:16 Now may *our Lord Jesus Christ himself* and God our Father, who loved us and by grace gave us eternal comfort and good hope, 2:17 encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good thing you do or say (my emphasis).

Here one finds a juxtaposition between Paul's tradition and the Lord Jesus Christ. The context and situation sketched in 2 Thess 2:13–17 indicate that Paul's activities of transmission are *embedded* in Jesus Christ's and God the Father's acting to save and sanctify the Thessalonians by the Spirit.

Given the negatively connoted accounts of tradition in the synoptic gospels and the parallel existence of critical and positively connoted accounts of tradition in Pauline literature, it can be noted that it seems to be clear that the message of Jesus Christ is passed on from person to person, from individuals to groups, and from groups to individuals. Therefore, in the sense that there is a message (which can be conceptualized as implying beliefs and practices) which is handed over, tradition plays an undeniable role in the formation of the mode of existence in which followers of Christ partake. In the words of Smythe (2018:81), "apostolic paradosis" is "necessary". Nevertheless, the reader of the synoptic gospels and Pauline literature is also cautioned about human tradition. With reference to Paul, he presents himself as a human being who passes on 'tradition' and at the same time cautions his hearers about 'human tradition'.

Interestingly, a passage which sheds light on this tension is presented in Acts 11, where the term Christians (Χριστιανῶν) is first introduced and where one of only three occurrences of the term in the New Testament writings is to be found.<sup>45</sup> Persecuted followers of Christ came to Antioch and spoke "the word" (τὸν λόγον) to the *Judaeoi* (Acts 11:19). In addition, "men from Cyprus and Cyrene" came to Antioch and announced "the good news of the Lord Jesus" (εὐαγγελιζόμενοι τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν) to the Hellenists/Greeks (Acts 11:20). Thus, what is transmitted is referred to as "the word" and "the good news of the Lord Jesus". This is the 'traditional content', the substance of what has been passed on, so to speak. However, the text makes it clear that this human activity of passing on or handing over the word of Jesus was accompanied by God's intervening support, as "the hand of the Lord was with them" (Acts 11:21), and it ascribes the *success* of these human activities of transmission to the accompanying divine intervention, as "a great number who believed turned to the Lord"

45 On the label Χριστιανός in the New Testament and its role in the formation of Christian identity, see David Horrell (2007) and also sections 5.3.6 and 6.1.2.

(Acts 11:21). The recipients heard the message of Jesus, believed (the message), and *turned to Him*. They did not primarily turn to the apostles, or to certain teachings or beliefs, but they turned to the living Christ, as the reality to which the preaching of the apostles pointed them. According to Acts (11:26), “it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called Christians”. The status which the recipients of the message of Jesus obtained is aptly described with the term “Christians” since the term “Christians”, in the context of its historical emergence, refers to the followers of Christ as those who *belong to* or are *allegiant to* Christ (see Horrell 2007:362, Grundmann et al. 1973:529, and also Bile & Gain 2012, Blass 1895, and Spicq 1961).

In contemporary fsw research, the term ‘Christian/s’ is used with reference to a (group of) tradition(s) and its members. To evaluate this usage of the term in the light of the socio-historical context in which the term emerges,<sup>46</sup> I will now explore the possible relationship of the terms of beliefs, practices, and experience found in contemporary fsw discourses to Acts 11. In this endeavor, an anachronistic reading of the contemporary notions of beliefs, practices, and experience into the text is to be avoided.<sup>47</sup> Instead, I will try to show that if such a comparison is performed carefully, the text of Acts 11, if taken seriously, resists a simplistic anachronistic reading. It is this particular resistance the text displays which may contribute to a modification of the understanding of what it means to be a Christian in the context of contemporary fsw research, informed by Acts 11. Now, if one relates the terminology of beliefs, practices, and experience found in contemporary fsw discourses to the events described in Acts 11, it seems misleading to say that the people in Antioch simply embraced certain beliefs they were told. If the term belief is employed to describe the events

46 On the origins of the term, see Horrell (2007:362–367). On the one hand, Daniel Boyarin (2009:11–16) argues for the later emergence of the idea of a religious identity constituted by a set of beliefs and practices “abstractable from cultural systems as a whole”. On the other hand, David Horrell (2002) posits the New Testament period as crucial for the constitution of Christian identity. If both are correct, this could indicate that we should at least be hesitant to understand Christian identity as a religious identity.

47 On the problem of anachronistic interpretations of historical texts, see Skinner (2002). Regarding the role of modern analytical categories in the interpretation of ancient cultures, I like Daniel Boyarin’s (2009:10) remark: “This is not to say that modern analytic categories, such as gender or identity, should not be used in the analysis of ancient cultures but these analytic categories should be tools for exhibiting what is actually happening in the culture (and what not) whether by that name or another and not ahistorical categories that are simply assumed to be there for every culture.”

to which Acts 11 refers, it seems more appropriate to say that people from Antioch were told certain beliefs about Jesus and, subsequently, they turned to Jesus. If one refers to “the message of Jesus” as a belief or a set of beliefs, it is crucial to note that these beliefs are not portrayed as closed cognitive constructs, but that they are open in their reflecting of and pointing to Jesus Christ as present and alive. If one takes into account contemporary fsw discourses, this difference is crucial. The people from Antioch did not primarily relate to certain beliefs in a new way, nor did they primarily become members of a tradition. They did, however, relate in a new way to the person the respective beliefs point to. In this light, conceptualizing Christians as characterized by the mere adoption of traditional beliefs and practices (irrespective of the reality they are relating to), as contemporary fsw research seems to be inclined to do, ignores the localizing activity of Christians in relation to Jesus Christ as the context of the formation of their mode of existence and as the context in which their beliefs, practices, and experiences become intelligible.

Following this line of thought, I would say that the definition of a Christian proposed by Clive Staples Lewis on the basis of Acts 11 is not wrong, but potentially misleading in the light of contemporary fsw usages of the label ‘Christian’ as referring to a (religious, spiritual, or faith) tradition of beliefs and practices. Lewis (1980:XII) defines a Christian as someone “who accepts the common doctrines of Christianity”.<sup>48</sup> He arrives at his definition by arguing that in Antioch, what marked the Christians as Christians is that they accepted the teachings of the apostles. Now it is true, according to Acts 11, that those who were called Christians accepted the teachings of the apostles, but if that had been the decisive indicator, then the followers of Christ would have had to be called ‘disciples of the apostles’ or something similar. But the context of their accepting the apostles’ teaching was that “the hand of the Lord was with them” (Acts 11:21) while they delivered the message and that the teachings did not primarily consist of information to be accepted cognitively, but it was “the good news of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 11:20) which resulted in an existential turning point for those who heard the message. Although it seems in line with the account of Acts 11 to say

48 Note that my point is only that, in the light of contemporary fsw discourses (of which it is not part), Lewis’ definition can be misleading but not that it is wrong. Given the particular understanding of what Lewis means by “common doctrines of Christianity” and “accepting”, which he develops in “Mere Christianity” (1980), I agree with Lewis’ definition, and I trust there is some hope that he would have agreed with my reading of Acts 11.

that they accepted the teachings of the apostles, it is not the *teachings* to which they turned, but that their acceptance of the teachings led them to turn *to the Lord*. In this regard it was, of course, crucial for the formation of Christians that the people of Antioch accepted the teachings of the apostles, but the importance of the teachings of the apostles for the formation of Christians is inextricably linked to the particular context of the corresponding reality in which human transmission (the handing over of tradition) is located, and to the particular function of the handing-over of the teachings of the apostles to locate the people from Antioch in this context and initiate an existential turning point.

The differentiation between traditional content which is transmitted and the reality to which it corresponds also appears elsewhere in the New Testament. For example, in the first epistle of John, one finds the juxtaposition of ‘the word of life’ with ‘the life’ itself:

1:1 This is *what we proclaim to you*: what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and our hands have touched (concerning *the word of life*—1:2 and *the life was revealed*, and we have seen and testify and *announce to you the eternal life* that was with the Father and was revealed to us). 1:3 What we have seen and heard *we announce to you* too, so that you may have fellowship with us (and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ). (my emphasis).

The process of transmission is described here in a lively manner as including hearing, seeing, and touching (1:1). This process is distinguished from the content of what is transmitted, that is, “what we proclaim to you”, and “the word of life”, and this is in turn contrasted with the experience of the reality toward which the ‘traditional content’ is pointing to, the revelation of life itself (1:2). It is the experience of this reality which, in a cycle of transmission, leads to a movement of sharing (“what we have seen and heard we announce to you too”) in order to include the recipients of the message (the traditional content, so to speak) in the same reality which the author has experienced, “so that you may have fellowship with us (and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ)”. Thus, the acts of handing over tradition are framed in a particular way. In this light, in the formation of followers of Christ, the practice of handing over tradition is closely linked to the experience of the reality to which the transmitted beliefs point and is intended to include the recipients in the same reality. Generally speaking, with reference to fsw research, tradition, in the context of Christian existence, is inextricably linked to a corresponding reality which is experienced. In terms of the study of Christians, traditional beliefs and practices are to be considered in their connection to and struc-

turing toward the living reality in which they locate individuals and in which individuals locate themselves.

With this in mind, the problem of the label ‘Christian’ and the talk of Christianity as a faith tradition or a religious/spiritual tradition becomes clearer. In 4.2.1, I drew upon a sociological perspective to argue that the description of Christians as members of a tradition marked by adherence to certain beliefs and practices is reductionist if it draws a veil over the particular Christian location of individuals in which Christian beliefs and practices become intelligible. In this subsection, I have drawn upon the New Testament writings to show that such a sociological perspective is congruent with a Christian account of the role of tradition in the life of followers of Christ which is informed by the New Testament writings. In this respect, the use of the label Christian as referring to a tradition marked by certain beliefs and practices, irrespective of the corresponding reality toward which individuals are located, ignores the context in which Christian beliefs and practices become intelligible. In a synthesizing view, a reading of the New Testament accounts of tradition seems to offer a frame with which to evaluate traditional (that is, handed over) beliefs and practices for their Christianness. The crucial criterion for evaluating traditional beliefs and practices seems to be their being ‘according to Christ’. Such an evaluative scheme or frame refers to two basically different qualities, according to which traditional contents and patterns can be qualified as being either ‘according to human tradition’ (κατὰ τὴν παράδοσιν τῶν ἀνθρώπων), or ‘according to Christ’ (κατὰ Χριστόν).

First, traditional beliefs and practices can be part of a merely human tradition which ignores the reality of God in Christ. Importantly, in light of the New Testament writings, observing such tradition results in superficial and inauthentic ways of living. Human tradition, in this sense, is dead because it leaves no room for the living God, even if some might call it ‘Christian’ and apply this label to their beliefs and practices or trace their roots in history back to important Christian women and men.<sup>49</sup>

49 The difference between living in a way that is oriented toward God as a living reality, on the one hand, and toward dead human products, which leaves no room for God, on the other, can also be illustrated by reference to Isaiah’s notion of the *Elohim chai* (אלהים חיים), the living God, in the story of the liberation of Judah from an invasion by King Sennacherib of Assyria, as described in Isaiah 36f. “In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah’s reign” (Isa 36:1), after Sennacherib’s armies have marched up against the fortified cities of Judah and captured them, he sends a large army to Jerusalem, and Sennacherib’s messenger challenges the inhabitants of Jerusalem: “Has any of the gods of the nations rescued his land from the power of the king of Assyria? 36:19 Where are the

Second, and in contrast to the first quality to which the evaluative frame refers, traditional beliefs and practices can be ‘according to Christ’ and thus point to the reality of God in Christ. In terms of the formation of individual lifestyles, this is reflected in Paul’s formula “for me, to live is Christ” (Phil 1:21). In terms of concrete behavior and particular practices, the criterion seems to refer to the structuring of a practice toward the practitioners’ existential participation in Christ’s life, death, and resurrection.<sup>50</sup> On the level of thought and beliefs, the distinction between human standards and the reality of Christ is particularly emphasized in 2 Corinthians 10:3–5:

10:3 For though we live as human beings (ἐν σαρκί), we do not wage war according to human standards (κατὰ σάρκα), 10:4 for the weapons of our warfare are not human weapons, but are made powerful by God for tearing down strongholds. We tear down arguments 10:5 and every arrogant obstacle that is raised up against the knowledge of God, and we take every thought captive to make it obey Christ.

gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? Indeed, did any gods rescue Samaria from my power? 36:20 Who among all the gods of these lands have rescued their lands from my power? So how can the Lord rescue Jerusalem from my power?” (Isa 36:18–20). As a reaction, Hezekiah prays to God. He does not downplay the power of the Assyrians, but he outlines, in his prayer, an essential contrast between the so-called gods as human products and the Elohim chai (אלהים חי), the living God: “37:17 Pay attention, Lord, and hear! Open your eyes, Lord, and observe! Listen to this entire message Sennacherib sent and how he taunts *the living God*. 37:18 It is true, Lord, that the kings of Assyria have destroyed all the nations and their lands. 37:19 They have burned the gods of the nations, *for they are not really gods, but only the product of human hands manufactured from wood and stone. That is why the Assyrians could destroy them.* 37:20 Now, O Lord our God, rescue us from his power, so all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you alone are the Lord” (Isaiah 37:17–20, my emphasis). While these two chapters contain rich descriptions of the various conversations between the parties involved, there is only one short verse which describes God’s intervention: “37:36 The Lord’s messenger went out and killed 185,000 troops in the Assyrian camp.” This resulted in the liberation of Jerusalem from the Assyrians: “37:36 (...) When they got up early the next morning, there were all the corpses! 37:37 So King Sennacherib of Assyria broke camp and went on his way.” The living God liberates his people, while human products made to protect and liberate those who made them are ineffective. Transferring this contrast portrayed in Isaiah 36f to the question of the relationship between beliefs, practices, and experience, we can note that, in this light, merely ‘human tradition’ is dead because it is ‘only the product of human hands’ (and minds), whereas the value of traditional beliefs and practices is to be judged according to the degree they support someone’s orientation toward the living God.

50 In this respect, Smythe (2018) discusses centering prayer as an example of an embodied practice of spiritual kenosis.



In this regard, the mental area of thoughts and beliefs is characterized by a war, as the military vocabulary<sup>51</sup> used in this passage suggests. In terms of Christian existence, “taking every thought captive to make it obey Christ” therefore seems to be a crucial characteristic of the mental aspects of the existence of Christians. Thus, the Christian location of individuals at the embodied intersection of ‘this and other-worldly realities’ (see 4.2.1) is a location of individuals in relation to Christ. In other words, the Christian-ness of beliefs is to be judged in terms of their being structured in accordance with Christ.<sup>52</sup> This particular localization, which characterizes Christians’ relationship to tradition, beliefs, practices, and experience, needs to be taken into account in the study of Christians in work contexts. Interestingly, in fsw research, this is considered by approaches to Christian *spirituality* at work. In the following section, I will thus introduce approaches to Christian spirituality at work which, in different ways, reflect the ‘Christian criterion’ of being ‘according to Christ’ and discuss their contribution to the study of Christians at work.

### 4.3 Christian spirituality at work

The accounts which I will discuss in this section approach Christian living at work via the notion of spirituality. My review focuses on four instructive cases which entail an understanding of Christian living at work.<sup>53</sup> Vivian Ligo (4.3.1) and Inese Radzins (4.3.3) configure Christian spirituality as one form of (general) spirituality of work. André Delbecq (4.3.2) addresses the spiritual journey of a Christian manager, focusing particularly on the question of how it can (and cannot) be recognized as a *Christian* journey. Christopher Mabey and colleagues (4.3.4) position a Christian approach to leadership in the context of current discourses of spirituality at work. In my discussion, I will focus in particular on the sketch of Christian living at work which these accounts entail.

51 On the significance of the warfare imagery used in 2 Corinthians, see Bowens (2018).

52 In this sense, I think that, in line with the Pauline writings, Christian theology is to be “non-foundational” (Miller 2014:4), in the sense that “Jesus Christ *is* the apocalypse for Paul” (Harink 2003:74, quoted in Miller 2014:3f) and that “God’s self-revelation in Jesus Christ cannot be secondary or subordinate to any prior systems of meaning, idea, ethics, beliefs, or principles. Christ *himself* is the reality, and everything must be seen in his dominating epistemic light” (Miller 2014:1).

53 For further recent approaches to Christian spirituality at work, see also Buszka and Ewest (2020), McGhee (2019), Pio and McGhee (2019), and Wiebe and Driscoll (2018).



### 4.3.1 *Vivian Ligo's Christian spirituality of work*

Vivan Ligo (2011) articulates a Christian form of spirituality of work by reference to a general notion of work. She identifies five interrelated variables of work: product, process, end user, the worker, and the workplace (2011:441). As each of these five variables entails a spiritual dimension, work is to be understood as inherently spiritual. Christian spirituality of work is characterized by a particular religious perspective on the spirituality of work, says Ligo (2011:441f), which can only be described from within its context. In other words, while the (general) spirituality<sup>54</sup> of work is given with the existence of the phenomenon of work in a general sense, its particular "explication" (2011:443) may be Christian (or e.g. Islamic, or Jewish, or even atheistic, or agnostic, see 2011:446). In short, "spirituality becomes Christian when lived through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit and is mediated by participation in the life of the church," says Ligo (2011:442).

The first variable of work, 'product', refers to "the work at hand" (2011:443), understood in broad terms as including "one's craft, professional practice, or even one's daily chore" (2011:443). The second variable, 'process', refers to the method by which one proceeds. There are four precepts inherent in the concept of method, which Ligo takes from Bernard Lonergan's understanding of method: "be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, and be responsible" (Ligo 2011:443). With respect to the work process, these precepts are the basis for evaluating one's work in terms of productivity and effectiveness. The third variable, 'customer', together with the following variables, points to work's interpersonal character and to work as a relational event. The fourth variable, 'the worker', emphasises that working involves "giving of oneself" (2011:444), the participation of the "whole person, body and spirit" (2011:444). The fifth variable, 'the workplace', "encompasses not only the physical, institutional, structural, and cultural, but also and more importantly, the interpersonal settings, in which work is done" (2011:445).

Based on the inherent spiritual dimension of these five variables of work, Ligo (2011:448) proposes five criteria for "deliberately and consciously developing a spirituality". The deepening of spirituality according to these criteria can (but does not have to) be pursued "within Christianity" (2011:448):

54 Note, however, the Christian origin of the term spirituality, see Ligo (2011:446).

- 1) Does the spirituality tend toward the fullness of reality? (product)
- 2) Does it heed Lonergan's precepts? (process)
- 3) Does it have a positive impact on relationships at work? (customer)
- 4) Does it call for self-investment? (worker)
- 5) Is it open to a sense of being graced? (workplace)

In meeting the first of the above criteria, human work "becomes a participation in God's work of creation, providence, and grace", says Ligo (2011:455), in that it could display redemptive, creative, providential, compassionate, and revelatory qualities. The participative character of work is based on an "experience of a personal presence of God" (2011:454).

The second criterion is expressed, says Ligo, in Lonergan's precepts (be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, and be responsible; or: do things attentively, rightly, well, and for the sake of others). From a Christian perspective, heeding these precepts creates "a purity of heart that enables one to see God right there in the daily grind of work" (2011:456). Thus, work is lived as a form of "conscious participation in the creative act of the Holy Spirit" (2011:457).

In terms of the third criterion, work as a relational event (2011:447) exhibits the polarities identified by Erik Erikson, says Ligo (2011:447): "trust versus mistrust, autonomy versus shame and doubt, initiative versus guilt, industry versus inferiority, identity versus role confusion, intimacy versus isolation, generativity versus stagnation, and integrity versus despair". In a Christian spirituality of work, the relationships at work tend toward the former (trust, autonomy, et cetera) and away from the latter qualities (mistrust, shame, et cetera).

The fourth criterion of a Christian spirituality of work encompasses self-investment in creativity instead of self-preoccupation. In work, one becomes a participant "in God's own self-giving to creation, as well as God's self-giving within the Trinitarian reality of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit", says Ligo (2011:459). "Through the Incarnate Son, redeemed humanity finds its irrevocable place within the self-giving of the Trinity. Redeemed humanity finds itself encircled by the Trinity of Lover, Beloved, and Love" (2011:459).

The fifth criterion refers to a particular perception of the workplace: "the very concreteness of the workplace is but the embodiment of the spiritual dimension of reality, which Christianity proclaims as grace", says Ligo (2011:459). Work in the totality of its aspects can be assumed as "a participation in Christ's total act of self-giving" in his passion, death, and resurrection. Christ is present in all that is, and the workplace is "installed in the

grace-filled presence of God” (2011:460). At the same time, the workplace can be “a microcosm of sinful social structures” (2011:463), of domination and exploitation. This leads to the question of if one can “pursue a Christian spirituality of work when one is entangled in the capitalist system that is condemned as structurally sinful” (2011:464)? However, “blanket judgments on the inherent sinfulness of the structure, within which workplaces concretely exist, distance the clergy and/or theologian from where workers experience a craving for spirituality” (2011:264).<sup>55</sup> In contrast, it needs to be emphasized that workplaces need to stay “open to being graced” (2011:465). The workplace as a human construct remains a space for the *Creator Spiritus*, says Ligo. Therefore, in spite of the potentially negative aspects of work and the workplace, it “cannot be emphasized enough that the workplace is also installed in the grace-filled presence of God” (2011:465).

In conclusion, work is “sacramental” (2011:465) in that it entails, in its five variables, a spiritual dimension, which can be actualized. Work thus serves as the context for “the recognition of God who calls us to participate in the Trinitarian life of self-giving”, says Ligo (2011:465). Her approach entails both a perspective on work and an account of Christian existence at work.<sup>56</sup> Ligo’s account is conceptually based on a general analysis of work as inherently spiritual and not on a particular Christian view of work and the workplace.<sup>57</sup> To be sure, a Christian understanding of work and the workplace are offered, but less on a theoretical level and more as part of a description of perspectives which are part of lived Christian experience. While Ligo offers a general account of work as spiritual, she configures Christian spirituality as one particular way of actualizing work’s spiritual dimension. Although Christian spirituality is “stamped with Christian perspectives” (2011:442), Christian spirituality is not primarily an intellectual or mental undertaking, but the locus of spirituality is the “actual, existential or lived level” (2011:448). For Ligo, a Christian perspective on the spirituality of work is inextricably bound to the existential character of

55 A similar point is made by Schneider (2007:280f).

56 In fact, in Ligo’s account, the two aspects seem to be naturally interwoven in such a way that it would be artificial to separate them. However, I mention the presence of these two aspects here because in the following chapter on theological approaches to work contexts, I will discuss approaches which address a perspective of work without considering Christian existence as the existential context in which a (Christian) perspective on work is embedded.

57 As is the case, for example, in Daniels’s approach, see 5.4.

Christian spirituality in such a way that a Christian perspective can only be described from within its context (2011:441f).<sup>58</sup>

What marks a Christian spirituality as Christian, according to Ligo? My first interpretation was that the five criteria which Ligo proposes are intended to evaluate the Christianness of someone's spirituality. However, after I had taken a closer look at the text, the status of these five criteria in relation to Christian spirituality was not fully clear. They are proposed as a way of evaluating one's spirituality based on the five variables of work (which, according to Ligo, do not reflect a particular Christian view of work), and are first introduced without the use of specific Christian or theological terms (except for the fifth criterion). However, in the respective section heading, they are introduced as "criteria for developing a Christian spirituality of work" (2011:445) and they are used as the framework with which to explicate a Christian spirituality of work. Even though the status of these five criteria is not fully clear, there are a number of phrasings scattered throughout the text which clearly indicate Ligo's understanding of the 'Christian characteristics' of Christian existence at work (which can be linked to, but not identified with the five criteria): It is "lived through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit" (2011:442), and "meditated by participation in the life of the church" (2011:442). A particularly Christian form of spirituality is linked to faith "in God as revealed by Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit" (Kenneth Collins quoted in Ligo 2011:449). The fundamental meaning of being Christian is "to be in Christ" (2011:449). This is an "existential condition" which is marked by "the mystery of the passion, death, and resurrection of Christ" (2011:449), and which is "at once intelligible, interpersonal, ecclesial, embodied, historical, eschatological, ethical, and open to prayer, worship, and ministry" (2011:449). Work can potentially become a response to a vocation and an occasion for interpersonal communion, and the workplace can become a place to apprehend the presence of grace, says Ligo. However, as work can often be toilsome and alienating, "work itself needs to be redeemed and transformed through the passion, death, and resurrection of Christ" (2011:451). Part of the redemption of work is the overcoming of the separation of work from its inherent spiritual dimension. When work is experienced with toil, the "inherent relationship between work and spirituality" (2011:451) is obscured. The experience of work can be redeemed from a sense of drudgery and toil by overcoming the "discon-

58 Note that, according to Ligo (2011:441f), the fact that they can only be described from within their (existential) context applies to religious perspectives in general (and not only to a Christian perspective).

nection between the material and the spiritual” (2011:454). Thus, a Christian approach to work includes and redeems work’s toilsome aspects through participation in God’s creative act in the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus, says Ligo (2011:456). Our work can be “assumed as a participation in Christ’s total act of self-giving” (2011:460). In this way, Christian existence is particularly linked to “an experience of a personal presence of God” (2011:454) and one’s spirituality is completed and redeemed in Jesus Christ (2011:465). In short, Ligo accentuates some of the characteristic aspects of being a Christian at work: it is an existential condition of being in Christ, including whole people, is lived through the Holy Spirit, and is characterized by participation in Christ’s passion, death, and resurrection. While Ligo discusses Christian spirituality in relation to work (and workers) in general, I will now turn to Delbecq’s approach which focuses particularly on managers.

#### 4.3.2 *André Delbecq on the Christian manager’s spiritual journey*

André Delbecq (2004) proposes an account of the spiritual journey of a Christian manager in which he draws upon his experience of teaching executives and working with Christian executives to explore the “nature of the spiritual journey as described by the Christian business leaders” (2004:253). He follows Gerald Cavanagh in understanding spirituality as entailing a “worldview” and a “path” (Delbecq 2004:245, see Cavanagh et al. 2003:119). Thus, an executive informed by the Christian tradition should adopt a particular intellectual *perspective* and practice a set of *disciplines* for “forming the inner self”, says Delbecq (2004:245).

In terms of the respective *worldview* or ‘intellectual perspective’, he identifies four propositions often held by Christian executives. First, they see the primary role of business in providing necessary products and services, and their leadership role as a form of loving service (2004:245). Second, they see their organization as a place of community (2004:246). Third, they have a concern for organizational justice (2004:247) and, fourth, for stewardship (2004:248). Delbecq argues that the actions of these “committed” (2004:245) Christians are “congruent with the actions of many people of good will across other spiritual traditions” (2004:248). Their assumption of a Christian worldview only becomes evident by focusing on the inner life and the inner “path” (2004:249) of Christian business executives.

To describe this *path*, Delbecq (2004:249–252) creates a “composite executive”, named Sally, “composed of the stories” (2004:249) the Christian executives he worked with shared. Sally’s spiritual path deepens after she joins a “Christian Business Professional Club that meets monthly” (2004:249), where listening to the scriptures of her tradition and prayer focused on the calling as a business leader is practiced. In the early stages of her journey, she adopts two spiritual disciplines: evening reading of scripture (followed by reflection and prayer) and a daily examen (an exercise aimed at continuously integrating lessons learned from scripture reading into daily activities through daily evaluation of one’s conduct and prayer). These practices increase her self-awareness. After a while, she starts to practice “mindfulness”, that is, attending to God in the “now” of each daily activity and including short pauses between activities to remind herself to be “present” in what she is doing, says Delbecq (2004:250). This increases her ability to be present with each task or person. Later on, she includes the “contemplative practice” (2004:250) of “Christian centering prayer”<sup>59</sup>, “where she detaches from thought and affect for twenty minutes twice-daily” (Delbecq 2004:250). Thus, she learns to “detach from fears, anxieties, and self-concerns” (2004:250). Sally also begins to explore the traditional Christian practice of discernment, which helps her to listen to all points of view, to solve problems participatorily, to return to prayer, and to hold a problem in her heart, while paying attention to the movements of desolation and consolation (2004:251). Thus, she learns to include affective and spiritual insights alongside rational problem-solving. In addition, she “becomes increasingly accepting of the mystery of suffering” (2004:251) and develops an increasing understanding of Christian tradition’s emphasis on the suffering of Christ. In this way, she develops the capacity to endure difficult moments in her organization and to provide support to others in difficult situations (2004:251). Finally, “worship” (2004:252) becomes important to her, with an increased awareness of “the presence of the mystery of the Spirit at work and in the lives of colleagues” and “deepened participation in the worship of her tradition” (2004:252).

Summarizing Sally’s path with regard to spiritual disciplines and her inner journey, Delbecq (2004:252) argues that

by accepting the disciplines of reading, reflecting, and meditation with scripture, the examen (opening herself to greater inner awareness), mindfulness (being present to the Spirit in the eternal “now”), discernment, openness to suffering, and worship, Sally has tread (sic) the classical Christian path.

59 As proposed by Thomas Keating. See also Smythe (2018).

Delbecq (2004:252) proposes understanding the spiritual journey as involving “cycles of conversion” and “increased illumination and unification” which is “never over this side of death”, and that any progress on this journey is “a gift of grace”.

Delbecq emphasizes that the spiritual journey is an inner journey hidden from the observer, and that it results in leadership action that can be fully described in secular terms. Growth in the spiritual journey can be perceived by outside observers as “strength of character” and “business savvy” (2004:253). Only through insight into the personal journey of Christian executives is it possible to recognize that the “special qualities” of a leader “build on an inner foundation” (2004:253):

In one sense little separates the agenda regarding many organizational goals of a Christian and a secular humanist. Both embrace a desire to transform business in order that it evolves a human way of operating to efficiently and effectively provide for the needs of the world (Lakeland, 2003). The Christian is expected to join all efforts seeking to address such matters as environmental sustainability, social justice, and the mitigation of destructive features of globalization. At the same time Christianity asks questions provoked by its own wisdom tradition, and has a long established set of social teachings regarding the role of work, economic justice, and human solidarity (Alford and Naughton, 2001). This implies that a Christian executive informed by the tradition should bring a particular intellectual perspective to the business endeavor, and engage a set of disciplines for forming the “inner self” as a business leader (Delbecq 2004:244f).

Let me comment briefly on Delbecq’s positioning of a Christian mode of existence with regard to the mode of existence of a ‘secular humanist’. Delbecq identifies the Christian proprium of a manager’s spirituality with a particular perspective on business and the practice of a set of disciplines.

In terms of the *perspective* of Christians, Delbecq says that “in one sense little separates the agenda regarding many organizational goals of a Christian and a secular humanist” (2004:44) and argues that the spiritual journey is an *inner journey hidden from the observer, and that it results in leadership action that can be fully described in secular terms*. This manner of framing seems to be very close to the proposal of some theologians<sup>60</sup> who argue that there are no particularly Christian ethical/moral norms, but that Christianity provides particular substantiation/justification of such norms and a motivation for compliance. To me, it seems that the main drivers for adopting such a position are to create some common ground for Christians and non-Christians, and not to offend anybody who does not share a Christian commitment.

60 e.g. Rich and Oermann, see 5.3.



However, it is precisely Delbecq's concrete description of a manager's spiritual formation which substantiates the criticism of such a position. For, in Sally's case, moral and spiritual formation are so closely intertwined that it seems artificial to separate them (see in particular 2004:250f). In practice, these are inextricably linked in a way which is not captured by conceptualizing spiritual formation as merely providing the substantiation of and motivation for compliance with moral norms or values or as the 'inner' foundation of 'outer' leadership action. Rather, the case of Sally seems to suggest that the spiritual experience and the corresponding moral behavior are not two separate 'things', one merely motivating (psychologically) or justifying (intellectually) the other. If the moral behavior in question can be fully described in secular terms, such a description remains deficient. Not only does it not capture the particular psychological motivation or conceptual substantiation, *but it cannot account for its practical substantiation*, the nitty-gritty of how it comes about. If one takes a close look at the concrete existential formation of the spiritual life of a Christian, as described by Delbecq, and how it includes the development of a perspective and a lifestyle, it becomes, to me, highly questionable whether Christian life is just an option to become a nice and decent business person, just a somewhat arbitrary means to an end which could also be achieved differently.

In terms of the *practice* of Christians, Delbecq (2004) stresses that spiritual formation is facilitated by practicing spiritual disciplines. What is crucial is an attentiveness to the Spirit and, later on in the spiritual development, an awareness of the "mystery of suffering" (2004:251) and an understanding of the suffering of Christ. Delbecq (2004:252) also takes up the notion that the spiritual journey is both enacted by humans and a gift of grace at the same time.

What Delbecq does not mention explicitly, in contrast to Ligo, is the aspect of participating in Christ. However, he stresses the role of a group of Christians that supports Sally on her spiritual journey. Such a group can be interpreted, from a Christian perspective, as a form of the body of Christ. In addition, it should be noted in particular that, in the Christian tradition, the contemplative practice of centering prayer, with its focus on detaching from thought and affect, and on letting go of "fears, anxieties, and self-concerns" (2004:250) is a practice structured toward embodied spiritual kenosis and participation in Christ's death and resurrection (see Smythe 2018:77). The practice of detaching from thought and affect reflects the Pauline putting to death of one's desires and passions, the 'killing of the practices of



the body'<sup>61</sup>, and the corresponding “pneumatic vivification” (Miller 2014:130), which means participation in Christ’s suffering, death, and resurrection. Thus, even though Delbecq only explicates the practical importance of an understanding of the suffering Christ and the awareness of the mystery of suffering insofar as it helps Sally to endure difficulties at work and to provide support to others in difficulties, the consideration of a Pauline perspective points to additional possible interconnections between different aspects of the spiritual journey, as described by Delbecq, with Christians’ participation in Christ, as described, for example, by Ligo (see 4.3.1)

This brings me to the crucial point where I find Delbecq’s approach to be inconsistent: I suggest that what he (2004:244) refers to as the similar “agenda” of a Christian and a humanist *is also part of the Pauline ‘passions and desires’* or, in Delbecq’s terminology, of thought and affect, of “fears, anxieties, and self-concerns” (2004:250), from which one needs to ‘detach’ or, in a Pauline perspective, which are to be ‘put to death’. This is why, in this light, there is a difference in quality between a secular humanist way of life and a Christian mode of existence. The secular humanist with the most noble agenda one can imagine differs from the Christian, not because the agenda of the Christian is more or less noble than the secular humanist’s agenda, but because the Christian has crucified her very agenda. There are two different modes of existence at work here. The Christian relation to any humanist motive is simply that they ‘detach’ themselves from them or ‘put them to death’. In a Pauline perspective, it is such actual participation in the death and life of Christ through the Spirit which characterizes Christians. Christian existence displays both moral and spiritual quality, not because of the moral agenda of Christians, but by their very participation in the life of Christ through the Spirit, where Christ becomes the wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (1 Cor 1:30) of those who belong to and participate in Him. Thus, the lives of followers of Christ are not moral in themselves, but insofar as they display the shape of Christ. Becoming moral, in this sense, transcends any agenda to live a good or just life as a human being because it involves and participates in death and new life.<sup>62</sup>

61 Romans (8:13) speaks of the the practices of the body (τὰς πράξεις τοῦ σώματος), which are to be put to death (θανατοῦτε) through the Spirit.

62 With regard to the juxtaposition of a Christian and a secular humanist, it is interesting to note the Pauline distinction between spiritual (πνευματικός) and human (κατὰ ἄνθρωπον) (see 1 Cor 3,1–5).

In summary, in Delbecq's account the spiritual journey seems to be primarily facilitated through the adoption of perspectives (provided by tradition) and through (traditionally inspired) disciplines which are first practiced outside one's work contexts, and which then exert an influence on one's behavior at work. In Delbecq's conception, traditional perspectives and practices are thus two pillars *from outside one's work context* which provide a foundation for the spiritual journey at work. Christian spirituality at work is thus conceptualized as the inclusion of traditional perspectives and practices at work. In Radzins's approach, to which I will turn presently, spirituality is conceived of as being an internal part of work itself.

#### 4.3.3 *Inese Radzins on the spiritual nature of work in the thinking of Simone Weil*

Inese Radzins (2017:291) outlines how Simone Weil repositions work as a "site for spirituality" by drawing on Marx's notion of labor as life activity. Weil does not locate spirituality in a religious tradition, doctrine, or in personal piety, says Radzins, but in one's capacity to work. "Spirit arises in the activity of living, and more specifically in laboring—in one's engagement with materiality" (Radzins 2017:291). Materiality is crucial in this regard because "living labor requires thoughtful engagement with the world" (2017:304).

Drawing on Marx's distinction between living and dead labor, Weil criticizes capital as a force which "disrupts the individual's relation to her own work by reducing it to the mere activity of calculable 'production'", says Radzins (2017:291). The influence of capital leads to the separation of life from work. Capital has an abstracting and deadening influence on labor, disconnecting human subjectivity from "living praxis" (2017:291). In this way, "life itself is exchanged for a simulacrum of life" (2017:291). As a corrective to this influence, Weil positions living labor as spiritual. Dead labor alienates the worker from her life activity. Weil points to the possibility of individuals "feel[ing] more 'at home' while working" (Radzins 2017:293). She draws upon Marx's notion of alienation (from the product of labor, from the act of working, from oneself, and from one another) which characterizes dead labor. In contrast, living labor is a free ("as little constraint over the means of production as possible", Radzins 2017:294) and conscious activity.

This implies being thoughtful about one's work (be it "painting, plowing, writing, building, or cooking", 2017:295) and it involves the "faculty of attention" (2017:295). In dead labor, work becomes only a means to an end.

Living labor comes from what Weil calls “the world beyond”, says Radzins (2017:298), from what is unseen (thought, contemplation, or attention): “Spirit appears in the connection between the world beyond (what is unseen) and this world (the seen)” (Radzins 2017:298). For Weil, “the divine is materially present (...) the world is ‘God’s language to us’” (Radzins 2017:303<sup>63</sup>) and the beauty of the world is “Christ’s tender smile” (Radzins 2017:305) to us. Weil’s thinking suggests “an opening to the ways laboring is always and already spiritual”, says Radzins (2017:303).

With regard to the larger society one lives in, “the destructive tendencies of modern capital manifested in deadening working conditions” (Radzins 2017:304) are to be minimized. Therefore, in political life, “the spiritual concerns of workers” (Radzins 2017:304) are to be prioritized, and free and conscious laboring is to be increased, and dead labor, which objectifies the worker and neutralizes one’s life activity, is to be minimized.

What understanding of Christian existence at work is presented in this approach from Radzins/Weil? For Weil, consistent with her location of spirituality in the capacity to work and not in a religious tradition, doctrine, or personal piety, spirituality does not imply a particular religious affiliation, says Radzins (2017:303). For Weil, what is considered secular is also related to the unseen and thus implies a spiritual connection, and for her, working is spiritual and workplaces are sacred. Weil’s own “emphasis is on Christianity” (Radzins 2017:306) and she emphasizes the importance of showing “the public the possibility of a truly incarnated Christianity” (Weil quoted in Radzins 2017:306). Christianity becomes incarnated in the world by “advocating for a spirituality of work and by offering examples of what this kind of labor looks like” (Radzins 2017:306). Thus, an incarnated Christian existence is political in that it advocates a certain attitude toward work. It is interesting that Weil has a strongly Christological view of the world, and that she, at the same time, insists that work as one’s engaging with materiality is the place where spiritual formation occurs. Given this, it seems that she does not differentiate between relating to God in Christ, on the one hand, and working, on the other hand. Engaging with materiality can be somehow identified with relating to God in Christ, because the world “is God’s language to us” (Radzins 2017:303), which seems to mean seeing in this world something from the world beyond. One’s working activities are the place where we can relate to God because what we engage with is ‘God’s language to us’. In this sense, Weil’s thought, as described by

63 She also provides the original French wording: “Le monde est la langage de Dieu à nous. L’univers est la Parole de Dieu. Le Verbe” (in Radzins 2017:303).

Radzins (2017), provides an important reference, at this place in the present study, to the fact that the emphasis on Christ in describing Christian existence at work is not to be mistaken for an emphasis on a particular religious tradition or a particular religious doctrine or practice<sup>64</sup> from outside one's work context, which has to be first integrated with one's work. Rather, Christian existence can 'happen', for example when one is doing 'ordinary work', or whenever "the one who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace" (Col 1:15) is "pleased to reveal his Son in me" (Col 1:15f, see also 4.2).

#### 4.3.4 *Christopher Mabey on 'Jesus-centered ethical leadership'*

Mabey and colleagues (2017) discuss current discourses of spirituality at work and propose an account of 'Jesus-centered ethical leadership'. They argue that, in the literature on spirituality at work and on spiritual leadership, which is concerned with a Christian standpoint, the teachings of Jesus are misconstrued. Mabey and colleagues (2017:758) argue that Christian wisdom<sup>65</sup> is relevant for current leadership debates because it allows two main points of criticism against (Christian) spirituality at work to be countered.<sup>66</sup>

First, spirituality at work has been criticized as yet another means to establish monocultural workplaces. However, Jesus, as reported in the gospel of Mark, challenges the ideological hegemony, power, and privilege of the religious and political elite of his days, leading to "his eventual lynching for dissidence" (2017:759). Jesus broke the cultural taboos of his time, rather than imposing a monocultural mindset, according to Mabey and colleagues (2017:759).

Second, spirituality at work is also criticized as being a manipulative approach to the workplace. In contrast, from a Christian perspective, a "meaningful life can only be achieved by following Jesus rather than worldly organizational leaders" (2017:759).

64 Framed in beliefs–practices–experience terminology (see 4.2), Radzins/Weil prioritize concrete (work) experience over traditional practices and beliefs.

65 As contained in the New Testament scriptures and embodied in the teachings and lifestyle of Jesus (see Mabey et al. 2017:758).

66 Both points of criticism are variations of the criticism of instrumentality in approaches to spirituality at work, see also section 3.4.

In addition, a Christian account emphasizes that “it is not possible to develop personal integrity, honesty, kindness, fairness, and moral judgment by trusting in personal strength—something more than willpower and good intentions is needed” (Mabey et al. 2017:762). In particular, Jesus calls on human beings to repent and to allow an inner transformation to happen through the work of the Holy Spirit within a person (2017:762).

In conclusion, the approach of Mabey and colleagues (2017) focuses on some of the teachings of Jesus and relates them to current discourses on spirituality at work. Drawing on Jesus’s teachings, they stress the importance of repentance and of an inner transformation. In light of the approach to Christian living at work that I will outline in more detail in the following chapters, the repenting and transformed individual that Mabey and colleagues describe can be located as participating in Christ and, in particular, in his death and resurrection in a comprehensive and existential way.

#### *4.3.5 Synthesis: Embodied Christian spirituality at work*

In section 4.3, I have discussed four approaches to Christian spirituality in work contexts, all offering a unique and important picture of Christian existence at work. I suggest that they find their common ground, first, and on a very general level, in addressing the question of Christian existence at work via the notion of spirituality and, second, in taking into account, albeit in different ways and to different degrees, the reality of Christ in which Christians are localized and localize themselves. In so doing, these approaches to Christian spirituality are able to move beyond an analysis of particular strands or aspects of particular (Christian) traditions, which characterizes much of the ‘traditional strand’ of fsw research on Christians at work (see 4.1.4), to the question of the characteristics of Christian existence in contemporary work settings. In this way, they tend to appreciate that Christians are not, in a simple sense, perpetuating particular traditions, but, in living as Christians, they locate themselves at the embodied intersection of worldly and other-worldly realities and position themselves with regard to Jesus Christ (see 4.2). It is this particular localization which shapes Christians’ dynamic relationship to different aspects and elements of tradition.<sup>67</sup> In this light, the notion of spirituality seems to be a promising notion for the study of Christians at work, offering space for appreciating Christian lifestyles as

67 Nevertheless, Ligo (2011), Delbecq (2004), and Mabey and colleagues (2017) seem to conceive of the Christian mode of existence as a (primarily) traditionally shaped and informed mode of existence.

both traditionally embedded and traditionally informed, but also as transcending tradition. Having said that, the bodily qualification of Christian spirituality is also touched upon, in that Ligo indicates the comprehensive and existential character (which includes the body) of Christian spirituality, and Radzins suggests that spirituality arises in one's engagement with materiality. With this in mind, I suggest that a more elaborate analysis of the bodily character of a Christian mode of existence can fruitfully draw upon an analysis of Christians' positioning in relation to Jesus Christ, in that the latter helps to accentuate the concreteness of the former. In this regard, I suggest that the available accounts of Christian spirituality at work can benefit from a Pauline perspective (see e.g. Miller 2014), which is helpful in accentuating the actual, bodily, spiritual, and performative/practical character of Christians' participation in Jesus Christ (see chapters 5 and 6).

#### 4.4 Conclusion

In this chapter on the relationship between fsw research and the study of Christians at work, I have, first, discussed the role of the notion of tradition in fsw research and, in particular, its influence on research relevant to the study of Christians at work. Drawing on the particular Christian location of individuals at the embodied intersection of worldly and other-worldly realities, I have, second, argued that Christian individuals are not to be simplistically construed as members of a tradition in which membership is determined by adopting certain (particularly Christian, whatever that may be) beliefs and practices. I have taken up the stress on experience advocated by some proponents of contemporary fsw research and have argued that, in a Christian mode of existence, the Christian location of individuals can be specified, in the sense that beliefs and practices are to be understood in their relationship to a particular kind of experience or event, that of participating in Jesus Christ. Third, I have discussed how the location of individuals in relation to the reality of Jesus Christ is taken up in existing approaches to Christian spirituality at work.

Two main implications of the analysis conducted in this chapter are particularly noteworthy. First, research on Christians at work needs to take account of the *dialectic* relationship between Christians and traditions. Second, this relationship can be specified by reference to the existential aspects of the category 'Christian'.

I introduced the existential aspects of the term ‘Christians’ when addressing Acts 11 in section 4.2.2 and its description of the experience of an ‘existential turning point’ (an existential localization of themselves with regard to Jesus Christ) by people in Antioch that led to their being called ‘Christians’. The existential character of being a Christian will also be crucial in the next chapter on theology and the study of Christians at work. But what are the implications of the existential aspects of the term ‘Christian/s’ with regard to fsw research as discussed in this chapter? If the existential connotations of the term ‘Christian/s’ are taken seriously, it primarily characterizes (should characterize) *people* as Christians, that is, as being located in relation to Jesus Christ in a particular way. It marks individuals as the bearers of the name of the Jewish Messiah<sup>68</sup>, as belonging to or participating in Jesus Christ.<sup>69</sup> Its primary reference points are, therefore, individuals and their mode of existence, not concepts. The application of the term ‘Christian’ to concepts is secondary and its appropriateness depends on its primary use. As long as it is clear what the term ‘Christian’ signifies, existentially speaking, one can imagine situations where it is meaningful to speak, as a secondary and extended use of the term, of Christian faith, Christian religion, Christian tradition, Christian ethics, and Christian spirituality, Christian beliefs, or even Christian music, or whatever. These phrases then refer to the faith, religion, spirituality, ethics, tradition, or whatever, *as displayed by those who are located and locate themselves in relation to the reality of Jesus Christ in a particular way*. However, if the existential connotations of the term ‘Christian’ are lost or become obscured, the usage of the term arguably becomes pornographic (displaying an outer form of something without its essence), obscuring the very characteristics of Christian living, or, to put it differently, the understanding of the term becomes merely nominal, while its existential substance is lost.<sup>70</sup> In a merely nominal usage, the term is used as a mere label that comes without clarification of what the label actu-

68 The fact that ‘Christ’ is a Jewish concept (or, more accurately, *χριστός* is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew concept *משיח*; see e.g. Grundmann et al. 1973 and Shahar 2018) can be easily overlooked by those who argue that Christianity is a religion that is separate from Judaism.

69 In other words, the label ‘Christian’, existentially understood, carries a certain normativity in terms of one’s localization in social space, in a similar way a term like, for example, ‘FC Zurich player’ does, and using it arbitrarily (in the sense of everyone can define for themselves what being a Christian means for them) is, in this respect, a project which violates the socio-existential normativity the label ‘Christian’ carries.

70 In sections 5.3.6, 6.1, and 7.3.2, I will discuss the nominal/existential distinction in more detail.



ally stands for. While there are some approaches which address the existential aspects of the term ‘Christian’ with regard to current work contexts (see 4.3), many studies seem to tend toward a nominal understanding of the term ‘Christian’, in which it is used to categorize something as Christian<sup>71</sup> without specifying what this categorization of something as Christian should mean. In summary, while this existential awareness has not become common currency in fsw research, some fsw accounts contribute to the study of Christians in contemporary workplaces by indicating the existential aspects of the term Christians as referring to modes of existence orientated toward the reality of Christ.

Even though questions of Christian existence have long been addressed by Christian theology, much of the work on fsw in general (see chapters 2 and 3) and on how Christianity relates to contemporary workplaces has been undertaken by management scholars and not by theologians.<sup>72</sup> Moreover, in fsw literature, as it emerged mainly in the context of management and organization studies, theology has been largely ignored, while theologians have proposed their own approaches to contemporary workplaces which seem to be only loosely (if at all) related to fsw research as developed in the context of management and organization studies. In the next chapter, I will address the question of the role of *theology* in the study of Christians in contemporary workplaces.

71 For examples, see the literature addressed in 4.1.4. A ‘nominal use’ of the term ‘Christian/s’ may not be the best way to characterize this practice. However, if one looks at studies on contemporary Christians at work, terms like ‘Christians’ and ‘Christianity’ seem to be used in a wide sociological or cultural sense, and *without an account of why these people or groups are referred to as Christians*. Irrespective of the question of whether they should give such an account or not, this is an interesting phenomenon. It seems to indicate that, in these cases, it is simply taken for granted that the people or groups referred to as Christians are Christians (see e.g. in Cao 2007 or Neubert & Dougherty 2013).

72 See 4.1 – 4.3. For exceptions, see 1.2.





## 5 Theology and the study of Christians at work

In the present chapter, I will discuss theological approaches to contemporary workplaces (and to workplace-related questions) and assess their contribution to the study of Christians at work. In chapter 2 (see 2.1.2), I already briefly noted that theology can be viewed, broadly speaking, as related to fsw research and the study of Christians in contemporary workplaces in two different ways. More precisely, on the one hand, theologians have been working in the areas of theological business and economic ethics, the theology of work and related areas.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, a number of management and organization scholars have begun to explore and develop theological approaches to business, management, and organization. Different academic disciplines are thus used as starting points, contexts, and target discourses for ‘doing theology’ with reference to contemporary workplaces.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, the two types of approach are also characterized by the use of different concepts and methodologies or, in other words, by different research traditions. What they share is their common use of the term ‘theological’ to qualify their approach.

Although one can clearly distinguish studies which explicitly adopt a theological approach from those which do not, it is not at all clear what *material*, that is, content-related implications or differences to ‘non-theological’

- 1 Within academic theology, the place for addressing questions pertaining to contemporary work contexts has been mainly that of theological ethics and moral theology, even though such questions can, in principle, also be addressed within other theological settings, such as practical, systematic, historical, or biblical theology. This primary localization of workplace issues within theological ethics, which seems to be dominant at least in German-speaking theology, reveals an emphasis of theological reflection *on moral aspects* of existence in the workplace.
- 2 While the research discussed so far (chapters 2–4) has been published mainly (but not exclusively) through the channels of management and organization studies (at least if one includes business ethics journals here, even though business ethics can itself be viewed as an interdisciplinary field), some of the more theologically oriented texts are also published in management and organization journals (e.g. Deslandes 2018, Sørensen et al. 2012), or in business ethics journals (e.g. Erisman et al. 2004, Mabey et al. 2017), while others are found in theological or religious studies journals (e.g. Posadas 2017, Radzins 2017, Ligo 2011, Charry 2003), or as theological dissertations (e.g. Black 2009, Whipp 2008). Additionally, theological scholars have commented on workplace-related concepts in textbooks (e.g. on ethics or business ethics), and in specific publications on the theology of work (for an overview with an emphasis on the Anglo-Saxon discussion in this respect, see Posadas 2017).

approaches, this positioning of an approach as theological should entail.<sup>3</sup> The adoption of a theological position to workplace-related questions is not a privilege of trained theologians, as management and organization scholars also propose theological perspectives (e.g. Daniels et al. 2012, Deslandes 2018, Miller 2015, Sørensen et al. 2012, Tackney 2018). Moreover, some authors also use the same entry concepts<sup>4</sup>, which are used in theological approaches,<sup>5</sup> to address Christian perspectives on workplace themes or Christian existence in work contexts, *without* them particularly or explicitly claiming to adopt a theological perspective.<sup>6</sup> And the theme of Christian spirituality in work contexts is addressed by theologians (e.g. Ligo 2011, Radzins 2017) and management scholars (e.g. Cavanagh et al. 2003, Delbecq 2004, Kennedy 2003, Mabey et al. 2017) alike, *without* them particularly claiming a theological perspective.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, there are (Christian) theological approaches which do not seem to be much interested in the existence of Christians at work, but which propose a conceptual contribution to, for example, a (Christian) *understanding* of the notion of work (e.g., Posadas 2017) or the (Christian?) theology of organization (e.g. Sørensen et al. 2012) without particular reference to contemporary Christian existence. Therefore, it is, in particular, not automatically clear that an approach to the workplace which claims to be theological actually contributes to the study of Christians at work, and it is also not clear, in more general terms, what one is doing by qualifying an approach to the workplace as theological. This terminological situation makes theology appear to be in a seemingly enigmatic relationship to the study of Christians at work.

Nevertheless, there are pragmatic reasons for considering theology to potentially contribute to the study of Christians at work alongside fsw research (as discussed in chapters 2–4). First, extant social scientific research on faith, spirituality, and religion at work, as has developed mainly within the context of management and organization studies, produces a limited picture of Christian existence at work (see chapter 4), Second, the

3 Therefore, unless otherwise indicated, I will use the term ‘theological’ to refer to approaches which the authors of these approaches themselves call theological.

4 On entry concepts, see section 5.2.

5 Such as business, work, management, et cetera, see 5.2.

6 For example, on the notions of business (Delbecq 2004, Kim, Fisher and McCalman 2009, Nash 2004, Schwartz 2006, Van Duzer et al. 2007), work (Baumgartner & Korff 1999, Forster 2014, Ryken 2004, Sikkema and Van der Werff 2015), management (Martinez 2003, Kennedy 2003), leadership (Cavanagh et al. 2003, Delbecq 1999), and the economy (Graf 1999).

7 For a discussion of four approaches, see 4.3.

study of Christians at work has no single academic home discipline and there are theological approaches which do address the theme of Christian existence at work. Therefore, such texts can be assessed for their potential contribution to crafting a social scientifically as well as theologically informed study of Christians at work.

I will approach the respective theological literature by asking the following questions: In what way do theological approaches to the workplace contribute to the study of Christians at work, and what role do theological approaches play in (mis)understanding the existence of Christians in contemporary work contexts? I will proceed as follows. First, I shall address the question of the neglect of contemporary work settings by academic theology, an issue which has been raised by some authors (5.1). Second, I will present a brief overview of concepts used as ‘entry concepts’ for theological engagement with present-day workplaces and workplace-related questions to offer a glimpse of the variety of theological engagement with workplace-related topics (5.2). In the subsequent sections, I will then discuss the potential contribution of theological approaches to the study of Christians at work by focusing on selected theological ethical approaches (5.3), and on instructive proposals for a theology of work, a theology of business, and a theology of the corporation (5.4). Finally, I will draw some conclusions with regard to theological engagement with contemporary workplaces and its relation to the study of Christians at work (5.5) by employing some of the hermeneutical lenses (see 1.4) concerning embodied Christian existence.

## 5.1 The question of a theological neglect of contemporary work contexts

It seems that academic theological reflection in present-day Western contexts tends to somehow be alienated from, at a distance to, or disinterested in ordinary workplaces, such as a business company.<sup>8</sup> For example, with respect to the German-speaking context<sup>9</sup>, a look at texts published in the

8 Interestingly, some of the more relevant theological work concerning Christian existence in contemporary workplaces has been conducted by trained theologians with extensive work experience in secular, non-academic work environments, which they usually obtained prior to their theological training (e.g. Black 2009, Miller 2007, Whipp 2008).

9 Earlier, I analyzed how German-speaking theological engagement with the business world has been focused heavily (although not exclusively) on the macro-economic level (Brügger 2010) and there, on ethics, morality and on broader questions of economic systems, and not primarily on concrete individuals working in concrete workplaces (see also 5.3).

*Zeitschrift für evangelische Ethik*, in *Evangelische Theologie*, and in the *ThLZ*<sup>10</sup> reveals that, although there are some texts on broader economic questions, the theme of the concrete role of individuals in contemporary workplaces does not seem to occupy a prominent role.<sup>11</sup> The RGG (Kehrer et al. 2018) and TRE (Preuss et al. 1995) entries on *Arbeit* seem to be symptomatic.<sup>12</sup> Several scholars have diagnosed a theological neglect of contemporary workplaces and/or the situation of Christians therein. In this section, I will discuss some of the proposed assessments of the current situation in this respect and situate the present study in relation to them.

Based on a review of current accounts of work in Christian ethics and theology, Jeremy Posadas (2017:331)<sup>13</sup> argues that work has been “a niche interest within Christian theology”. He observes that

despite such enormous impacts of work on every facet of human life, in Christian normative scholarship—by which I primarily mean Christian ethics and theology—work has barely registered as a phenomenon in comparison to the voluminous interpretations that have been produced regarding such other activities as sex, rela-

- 10 In the *Theologische Literaturzeitung* ([www.thlz.com](http://www.thlz.com), accessed 31 August 2017), I found three entries on business, 22 entries on management (most of them, with four exceptions, address management in non-profit contexts), seven entries on leadership (most of them related to non-profit and historical contexts), and 130 entries on *Wirtschaft*, which are mainly oriented toward macro-level questions. (Searches for *Führung* and *Arbeit* do not produce suitable results because most entries are not directly related to the concepts of *Führung* and *Arbeit*, as the terms also appear in titles such as “*Einführung*” and “*bearbeitete Version*”. More sophisticated search options are not currently available.)
- 11 I found one journal article by a German theologian that addresses “*Spiritualität und spirituality in der Welt der Arbeit und der Welt der Gesundheit*” (Schneider 2012; he also considers some of the contemporary fsw studies), while with regard to the Anglophone context, *Theology Today* (2003) provides a special issue on theology’s relation to the world of business, work, and the corporation (volume 60, issue 3) and also more recent articles on fsw topics (e.g., Ligo 2011, Tucker 2010).
- 12 They can be read as exercises in “how to speak theologically about work without addressing Christian existence in contemporary work contexts too directly”, resulting from a combination of an emphasis on biblical and historical aspects of *Arbeit* with a passion for the dogma that “*die biblischen und reformatorischen Aussagen über die Arbeit sind nicht unmittelbar auf den konkreten Vollzug der ‘Arbeit’ heute anwendbar*” (Preuss et al. 1995:655). Being at a distance from the *Vollzug der Arbeit*, the actual performance of work, theological engagement with work is left with the *evaluation* (“*Beurteilung*”; Preuss et al. 1995:654) of work (on the emptiness of normative work without empirical insights, see Huppenbauer & Tanner 2014:240). Such conceptual moves seem to allow a theological engagement with the theme of work from a Christian perspective without addressing actual Christian existence in contemporary work settings (see also 5.3).
- 13 See also my discussion of his account of work in more detail in section 5.4.

tions with practitioners of other religions, or war and peacemaking. Even where Christian normative scholarship has addressed economic matters, it has focused on poverty and consumption, not work (2017:331).

The “economic matters” mentioned seem to be, indeed, a main conceptual entry point for theological engagement with current workplace-related questions. In this regard, broad coverage of economic issues and related questions from theological perspectives exists (see sections 5.2 and 5.3). It seems that theological discourses related to the workplace have focused heavily (but not exclusively) on such general and broad questions like the relationship between theology and economics, or the question of overall economic systems and structures (for examples see, again, sections 5.2 and 5.3). Fred Glennon and Vincent Lloyd (2017:221) argue that such “broad-strokes” approaches, by moving from the concrete to the abstract, hinder the development of academic reflection on what they call religious ethics at work:

This tendency to move from labor itself (the laboring body, the relationship with the products of labor, the site of labor, the possible transformations of labor, collective labor organizing) to broad-strokes pictures of the global economy continues to hinder the development of scholarly reflection on the religious ethics of labor (2017:221).

In this respect, Glennon and Lloyd identify great potential in bringing the resources of religious studies and theology to questions of contemporary work contexts:

The leader of the Princeton [Faith at Work Initiative] program, former bank executive David W. Miller, argues that corporate managers who bring their religion into the workplace have a positive effect on corporate ethics and make stronger leaders (Miller 2007). Yet discussions of this type often ignore the more fundamental questions about the role that banks and corporations play in making possible the proliferation of low-paid, undignified labor for the most marginalized members of society. *These deeper questions are closed off because “faith” is understood in an essentially secular frame, as an individual conviction and as an individual, voluntary practice, not in the broader and deeper sense embraced by religious studies and theology scholars. Yet these religious studies and theology scholars have shown limited and inconsistent interest in probing how they might bring the resources of their disciplines to questions of labor* (2017:220, my emphasis).

What might be the reasons for such limited interest in questions concerning contemporary work and workplaces? Focusing on business contexts, Schneider (2007) identifies an overly negative view of capitalism as the main problem of a lack of theological engagement with contemporary workplaces. In his view, the problem is not ‘broad-strokes’, but excessively nega-

tive evaluations of capitalism, which, he argues, are of little help for Christian practitioners working in these contexts. In his view, Christian theologians, such as Daniel Bell and Graham Ward (their arguments resemble the criticism of capitalism raised by Karl Marx and Max Weber, who deemed capitalism to be essentially inhuman in its cultural core, says Schneider 2007:281), engage in “the intellectual and practical demolition of capitalism” (2007:279). This is problematic with regard to practitioners because in “consequence, very little intellectual vision exists in academia for the human potential that exists for people doing the business of capitalism” (2007:280) and therefore,

people who are committed to doing that business are left without sophisticated theory to help guide them through the complexities of modern economic life. This is sadly true of Christians who look pretty much in vain to moral theologians and ethicists for counsel on the constructive engagement of capitalism (2007:280f).

Schneider’s discussion seeks to elucidate the interconnections between the macro and individual-level implications of a capitalist culture and reflect on them theologically. He demonstrates that theological engagement with general questions of capitalism does not need to be ignorant of concrete working conditions.<sup>14</sup>

Along similar lines, Margaret Whipp (2008:90) points out that “the contextual realities which face individual Christians as they inhabit this contested sphere [of the workplace] have not been subjected to sustained, critical reflection”. This is due to the primary concern of the theological academy and the church with macro-level “questions of political–economic policy”, says Whipp (2008:90). In her view, macro-level-oriented church reports, practical theology, and theological ethical studies bear little relation to the concerns of ordinary working Christians. Thus, theological analysis of the situations of ordinary working Christians falls

between the two stools of a macro-level style of ‘public’ theology which treats matters beyond their effective reach and a micro-level style of ‘pastoral’ theology whose remit is limited to the intimate and personal matters of domestic and family life (Whipp 2008:90).

Her account, then, seeks to fill part of this gap by focusing on how Christians can speak in an appropriate way about their faith at work in the face of the “huge discursive pressures against the articulation of faith-talk, which

14 See, in particular, his interesting reflection on his car mechanic (2007:288f), but note that it seems to be *irrelevant* for Schneider’s purposes whether or not the respective car mechanic is a Christian.

most lay Christians are ill-equipped to withstand” (2008:4) and she aims at articulating a “sufficiently ‘workable’ theology” (2008:6), which may inform the education and support of Christians “for a more faithful daily apostolate” (2008:6).

Focusing particularly on practical theology and the question of the priesthood of all believers in the context of the Reformed tradition, Ralph Kunz (2018:36) outlines that practical theology is dominated by a tunnel vision focusing on pastoral practice, while, in principle, the subject of practical theology is concerned with the *Lebenspraxis* of the community of all believers. Actually, however, a pastoral theological paradigm dominates practical theology. It focuses on the *Praxistheorie* of the pastoral profession and there are, consequentially, some blind spots, in terms of the general priesthood of all believers. However, practical theology does not ignore the situation of ordinary Christians, but addresses it *through the lens of one profession* which does something for others: “Aus bildungspragmatischen und organisationslogischen Gründen richtet sich die Literatur in der Regel an diejenigen, die das Sagen haben, um (im besten Fall) andere anzuleiten, als mündige Christen zu leben“ (2018:36f). Kunz (2018:37) shows that lay<sup>15</sup> Christians *are* a topic in practical theological reflection, first, in a *Praxistheorie* for pastors, which identifies the support and development of the church in the sense of the priesthood of all believers as a central task of pastors. Second, practical theological literature provides education for those people who serve in the church. Third, practical theological literature addresses those responsible in church settings and focuses on *Gemeindeaufbau* in the sense of strengthening and developing the priesthood of all believers.<sup>16</sup>

It must be noted here that, in the light of the study of Christians at work, this is a particularly unfortunate situation. It is one thing to approach Christian *Lebenspraxis* with a professional lens or with a focus on those who have a say in the church, and another thing to approach it almost *exclusively* with such a lens. Such adoption of a particularly dominant professional lens at the expense of other perspectives seems to require a certain numbness with

15 The term laity refers to all believers and does not exclude, say, pastors (see Kunz 2018:30).

16 This situation, which Kunz describes with respect to practical theology, whereby theology has become accustomed to adopting particular lenses through which to recognize the situation of ordinary Christians, will appear again in the case of theological ethics (see 5.3). If this is conducted in an unreflected way, such practices become different variations of the implicit influence of research traditions (see also 4.1.2), which in turn, of course, becomes problematic if the use of such lenses begins to obscure aspects which would actually be relevant to the respective research endeavor.



respect to the (sometimes seemingly anarchistic) stings in the flesh which the New Testament seems to present to those who seek to conceptualize Christian existence as being decisively shaped by the interaction with ‘Christian professionals’, or with those who have a say in the church.<sup>17</sup> A particular problem linked to a professional lens is the focus on church settings (sociologically speaking) at the cost of other contexts in which Christians live. Those who study Christians in work contexts are left wondering what to do with such a distinction between Christians who have a say in the church and those who do not. With regard to contemporary work settings, this distinction seems to lose its *bildungspragmatische* as well as its *organisation-slogische* legitimacy. In this regard, Kunz (2018:46–48) outlines how newer approaches of missional ecclesiology seek to remedy a narrow focus on church settings by proposing decentralized structures and by suggesting an attempt not to bring people ‘into the church’, but to enable them to build a Christian community in their lifeworld.

In addition to the above analyses of theological reflection concerning ‘ordinary’ Christians at work, it has been suggested that a lack of understanding of *the specifics of Christian living* is a root cause of the separation of theological reflection from contemporary workplaces. Focusing on corporate contexts, Ellen Charry (2003:296) argues that “every Christian with purchasing power, investments, or a position in a firm (whether for- or not-for-profit) is part of the corporate world”. In this light, the separation of Christianity and the corporate world is made possible by a flawed understanding and practice of Christian living:

For, in truth, it is only our failure to articulate and follow through on what a godly life entails and proscribes that enables us to draw a line between our piety and our corporate embeddedness. That is, from a spiritual perspective, the tension between church and business, no matter where we are in the table of organization, is the question: *How do I live Christianly here, now* (2003:296, my emphasis)?

17 See, for example, Matthew 23:1–13 (in the context of woes against the ‘religious elite’ of the time, in particular verses 8–10: “But you are not to be called ‘Rabbi’, for you have one teacher and you are all brothers. 23:9 And call no one your ‘father’ on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. 23:10 Nor are you to be called ‘teacher’, for you have one teacher, the Christ”), and 1 John 2:27 (in the context of a warning about false teachers: “Now as for you, the anointing that you received from him resides in you, and *you have no need for anyone to teach you*. But as his anointing teaches you about all things, it is true and is not a lie. Just as it has taught you, you reside in him” (my emphasis)). A related notion with regard to teaching can also be found in the Hebrew Bible (see Jer 31:34).

In line with this question, the present study focuses on the existence of Christians in contemporary work contexts and not primarily on a theological evaluation of economic working conditions (Schneider) or faith-talk at work (Whipp), even though these questions are related to Christian existence at work. I share with Posadas, Glennon, Lloyd, Schneider, Whipp, and Charry the impression that theology seems to have somehow failed to adequately address the situation of Christians in contemporary workplaces. If we keep in mind, however, what Kunz points out in terms of practical theology, namely that it does not ignore the situation of ordinary Christians, but addresses it through a professional lens, the broader problem might be related to using 'lenses' that seem to be problematic for studying Christians at work.

Moreover, I hesitate to say that 'theology' has neglected the theme of the existence of Christians in contemporary workplaces, given the sheer amount and sophistication of theological literature available. You never know if, one day, you will find a textbook by an old Scandinavian moral theologian who has already covered it all. It also needs to be considered (again) that what runs under the label 'theology' is, in an academic context, not restricted to the discipline which calls itself by that name, but appears in other contexts as well, in particular as it concerns the workplace.<sup>18</sup> What I try to do in the following sections is to engage with some of those authors who seem to contribute theologically to the study of Christians at work, and identify and assess their contribution. But, first, I am going to sketch the use of 'entry concepts' in theological engagement with contemporary work contexts.

## 5.2 Theological 'entry concepts' to the workplace

Theological approaches to the workplace and to workplace-related questions employ a variety of 'entry concepts', that is, workplace-related concepts on which they focus their account. Common entry concepts are 'business', 'management', 'work'/'labor', 'corporation', 'organization', 'leadership', and 'the economy' in general or 'capitalism' in particular. I have already sketched the strands of fsw research which focus particularly on the notions of leadership, management, and entrepreneurship (see section 3.3), and I have also addressed the lack of clarity that comes with the use of such workplace-related concepts (3.5). In this section, I will offer a brief

18 On management scholars who characterize their approach as theological, see the introduction to the present chapter.

overview of the use of these entry concepts<sup>19</sup> employed in theological engagement<sup>20</sup> with contemporary workplaces, and below I will discuss in more detail three theological accounts of the notions of work, business, and the corporation (5.4).

With reference to the notion of *business*, the studies in question use the term business in different combinations with that of theology, such as business theology, theology of business, or theological business ethics. I think it is suitable to say that these terms tend to reflect two types of literature: one type concerned with a broader theological perspective on business (e.g. Byron 1988, Daniels et al. 2012, Heslam 2015, Roseman 2003, Sandelands 2016, Vinten 2000), and the other with theological *ethical* aspects of busi-

- 19 The term ‘entry concept’ is coined from the viewpoint of the study of Christians at work. The respective concepts may not be viewed as such by the authors who use these concepts. A theologian who develops a theological perspective on the notion of the ‘economy’, for example, may not be interested in concrete contemporary workplaces, but her/his approach is still (albeit peripherally) related to the topic. This peripheral connection allows me to look for potential contributions to the question of Christian existence at work and, approached in this way, the economy is the ‘entry concept’ with which to address concrete workplaces, although the respective theologian does not seek to address workplaces, but the economy, and therefore s/he may not agree with my qualification of the economy as an ‘entry concept’ with which to address the workplace, although s/he would probably agree that what s/he says regarding the workplace is shaped via the notion of the economy. See, in particular, my discussion of theological approaches to business and economic ethics (5.3).
- 20 In addition to entry concepts, there are ‘mediating concepts’ used in theological approaches to work contexts. These are concepts that are positioned at the intersection or to mediate between faith, spirituality, or religion, on the one hand, and work, management, business, or the corporation, on the other. For example, Simmons (2016) suggests *vocation* as the nexus of faith and work. With respect to Christian living, a number of traditional concepts, such as vocation, calling, stewardship, and co-creation, are related to existence in work contexts. These concepts are used, on the one hand, by Christian practitioners (Werner 2008), but they are also used as sources for conceptual academic work on the workplace (e.g. Diddams et al. 2005, McCann & Brownsberger 2007, Simmons 2016). In their mediating function, these concepts can be viewed as variations on the theme of the Christian location of individuals at the intersection between worldly and other-worldly spheres (see 4.2). Others build a mediating moment into their phrasing of the subject, for example ‘spirituality of work’ (Ligo 2011). Grand and Huppenbauer (2007) propose the formal notion of a ‘trading zone’ to conceptualize a mediating arena between theology and management, and position the concepts of uncertainty and intractability at the functional nexus of management and religion. Others use ‘worldview’ as a category to analytically mediate between spirituality, management, and business (Daniels, Franz & Wong 2000, see also Kim, Fisher & McCalman 2009).

ness (e.g. Behrendt 2014, Fetzer 2004, Magill 1992, Rossouw 1994, Stackhouse et al. 1995, Van Wensveen Siker 1989, Wieland 2016<sup>21</sup>, and Williams 1986).<sup>22</sup>

With reference to the notions of *work* and *labor*, the studies in question use the terms work or labor in different combinations with those of religion, theology, and ethics, such as theology of labor or theology of work (e.g. Posadas 2017, Roseman 2003, Van Erp 2017, see also the literature there), theology of working life (Whipp 2008), religious ethics of labor (Glennon & Lloyd 2017), theological ethic of work (Malesic 2017), and Christian ethic of work (Kretzschmar 2012). Others discuss a theological understanding (Simmons 2016) or a theological or ethical perspective on work (e.g. Diddams & Daniels 2008, Hauerwas 1985, Meireis 2008<sup>23</sup>, Rendtorff 2011<sup>24</sup>). I think it is, again, appropriate to say that these terms tend to reflect two types of literature: one type is concerned with a broader theological perspective on work and the other with theological *ethical* or moral aspects of work.<sup>25</sup>

With regard to the notion of *management*, some studies explicitly draw on theological reflection (e.g. Daniels et al. 2000, Deslandes 2018, Dyck & Schroeder 2005, Grand & Huppenbauer 2007, Huppenbauer 2008, Mutch 2012, Stackhouse 2003). As regards the notion of *leadership*, some publications explicitly refer to theology for studying leadership (e.g. Ayers 2006, Case et al. 2012, Dames 2014, Kretzschmar 2014, Worden 2005, see also

- 21 Wieland is an economist writing on the implications of Luther's thought on economic and business ethics.
- 22 The role of theology in business ethics has been particularly controversial, as can be observed, for example, in the 1986 special issue of the Journal of Business Ethics with articles from a symposium on 'religious studies and business ethics'. The issue opens with an article by Richard De George (1986), entitled "Theological ethics and business ethics", in which he argues that, although ethical issues with regard to business have traditionally been addressed by theologians and management scholars, *philosophers* developed business ethics as a field. In his view, given the existence of business ethics as a *philosophical* discipline, the role and tasks of theologians in business ethics is not (or is no longer) clear. The subsequent articles in the issue then present a number of reactions to De George's text, focusing on various aspects of the role of religion and theology in business ethics (e.g. Krueger 1986, Leahy 1986, McMahon 1986, and Williams 1986).
- 23 Meireis also offers a general analysis of the notion of work with reference to the contemporary German-speaking context which considers historical developments and current challenges.
- 24 Rendtorff's (2011) ethics covers both the notions of work [*Arbeit*] and the economy [*Wirtschaft*].
- 25 For an overview of the German-speaking discussion, see Preuss and colleagues (1995) and Kehrer and colleagues (2018).

the literature there). Additionally, with reference to the entry notion of the *corporation*, there are particular theologically orientated studies on it (Black 2011, 2009, 2008, Charry 2003, Erisman et al. 2004, Novak 2004, Stackhouse 1995). Others have proposed a connection between theology and the notion of *organization* (Dyck & Wiebe 2012, Miller 2015, Sandelands 2003, Sørensen et al. 2012).

In addition, various theological approaches address issues related to contemporary workplaces via the notion of the *economy*, and related concepts, such as *capitalism* and *globalization* (e.g., Cox 2016, Hill 2001, Murtola 2012, Nixon 2007, Oslington 2012, Rich 2006, Schneider 2007, Schwarzkopf 2012, Stackhouse et al. 1995) or the notion of *money* (see, e.g. Goodchild 2009). In German-speaking theology, the economy and its ethics (*Wirtschaftsethik*) have become a main focus for theological engagement with the secular workplace (e.g. Herms 2004, Honecker 1995<sup>26</sup>, Jähnichen 2015, Oermann 2014, 2007, Rendtorff 2011, Rich 2006, 1990, 1984, Ruh 1992, Ulshöfer 2015, 2001, and Wieland 2016).

While this list of theological approaches to the workplace through the lenses of the above concepts is incomplete, it offers a glimpse of the variety of accounts of theological engagement with (historical and contemporary) work contexts, and it identifies some of the main conceptual roads taken toward a theological analysis of the workplace. Before I discuss some of these contributions in more detail, let me proceed with two observations on the role of theology in studying Christians in contemporary work contexts.

First, composite terms like the ‘theology of business’, ‘theology of the corporation’, or ‘theology of organization’ seem to be at worst questionable and at best in need of an explanation.<sup>27</sup> Some seemingly use “a Christian perspective on the modern corporation” as an equivalent to a “theology of the corporation” (Erisman et al. 2004:93). A theology of something, then, equals a Christian perspective on something. Others differentiate between (academic) theological perspectives and a Christian executive’s “intellectual perspective”, that is, the convictions held by a practitioner (see Delbecq

26 Under the heading ‘the economy’ (*Wirtschaft*), Martin Honecker (1995), in his *Grundriss der Sozialethik*, discusses a number of relevant concepts, such as the economic order (*Wirtschaftsordnung*), work (*Arbeit*), profession (*Beruf*), property (*Eigentum*), money and interest (*Geld und Zins*), performance and competition (*Leistung und Wettbewerb*), and worker participation and industrial conflict (*Mitbestimmung und Arbeitskampf*).

27 If the term ‘theology’ is used with an object, then since the term ‘theology’ already entails an object, it is necessary to explain how the two objects relate to each other. This is accomplished, in my view convincingly, in the case of Black’s (2009) theology of the corporation.

2004:244). A theological perspective, then, is a Christian perspective proposed by an academic. To offer some clarification regarding the use of the term 'theology', various systematic categorizations have been proposed (e.g. on general levels of theology, see Fischer 2002:15–44; on different types of theology with reference to organization studies, see Sørensen et al. 2012:274–276). Instead of offering an additional categorization, in this study I am going to assess different accounts which claim to be theological for their contribution to the study of Christians at work.

Second, entering the study of how people live in present-day work settings through the lens of particular concepts, such as the ones discussed above, is necessarily limited in its outcomes by the very concepts that are employed. With respect to the study of Christians at work, such engagement with concepts poses the danger of us coming to understand Christian existence as a mode of existence which is somehow preoccupied with concepts.<sup>28</sup> Theological engagement with workplace issues then becomes a matter of knowledge transfer between theology and other disciplines (such as economics and management studies). Alternatively, in terms of management, Grand and Huppenbauer (2007) have proposed understanding the relationship between theology and management more in terms of a 'trading zone' than of knowledge transfer, and Huppenbauer (2008) has developed this further by arguing that, from a theological viewpoint, what is crucial in terms of communication between theology and management is not so much elaborated theories and reflections on management, but *encounters* between people who embody their message (2008:41). Relating this to the study of Christians in contemporary workplaces, I suggest adding: What is crucial in terms of studying Christians at work is not so much elaborated theories of and reflections on work/management from a theological perspective, but encounters between people who embody their message in

28 On different types of concept, see chapter 7. The study of Christians at work cannot (and should not intend to) bypass the level of concepts in order to study people (Christians). Arguably, what (or who) is studied in the study of Christians at work is dependent on the notions of 'Christians' and 'work' one employs. That said, the notion of 'Christians' differs significantly from concepts such as faith or religion (or entry concepts such as business, work, management, etc.) in that it is a concept which designates particular people (it is a 'people-concept' instead of a 'thing-concept', see also section 7.2). Additionally, as I have argued in 4.2.2, the notion of 'Christians' is not an arbitrary concept but has relatively clear content. In particular, it entails socio-existential normativity (see sections 4.4 and 7.2) in that it offers a criterion with which to decide whether people meaningfully fall under the category of 'Christians' or not.

work/management contexts and *the study of and reflection on the mode of existence of these people who embody their message.*

In conclusion, to evaluate the contribution of theological approaches to the study of Christians in secular work contexts, it needs to be noted, first, that there is no general consensus on what a theological approach to the workplace should be and, second, that consequentially it cannot be said in general terms what these approaches contribute to the study of Christians in work contexts. Therefore, in terms of the literature, individual approaches have to be scrutinized for their particular contributions to the study of Christians at work, and in terms of a thematic focus, it is not accounts of particular concepts but of people and their mode of existence that must be at the forefront of such an analysis of theological literature. In the following, I will, first, discuss theological ethical approaches to the workplace and, subsequently, address theological approaches to work, business, and the corporation.

### 5.3 Theological ethical approaches to the workplace

In this section, I will focus on five Protestant theological ethical approaches to the workplace from the German-speaking context (Graf 1999, Honecker 1995, 1990, 1980, Jähnichen 2015, Oermann 2014, 2007, and Rich 2006, 1990, 1984). While this is admittedly a small sample, I argue that this particular selection<sup>29</sup> permits an illustration of a crucial problem of theological

29 On the selection of the literature sample, see also 1.3. The intention here is to discuss some of the more prominent Protestant approaches to business and economic ethics. I will analyze the dynamics that lead to a neglect of the situation of individual Christians at work and identify important questions for the study of Christians at work which result from relating extant theological ethical proposals to the study of Christians at work. However, because of restrictions of time and space, the present review focuses on Protestant approaches and, within Protestantism, on approaches taken from the German-speaking context. The review of relevant Protestant approaches must remain incomplete, even though it includes some of the more prominent authors (other relevant contributions from the German-speaking context which I could not discuss in more detail here include Behrendt 2014, Fetzer 2004, Herms 2004, Meireis 2008, Rendtorff 2011, Thielicke 1951–1987, Ulshöfer 2015, 2001.) The problem of a focus on normative concepts at the cost of exploring how the moral conduct of Christians is actually embedded in a way of life seems to me to be also present in Roman Catholic approaches. Note, for example the Roman Catholic emphasis on ethical social principles and such ideas as the claim that business leaders are or should be, on a practical level, guided by principles (see Naughton & Alford 2012). Instead, I propose that the *catholicity* of Christian business leaders is characterized, on a practical level, not by them being



ethical engagement with the workplace, namely the de-coupling of concepts from their embeddedness in Christian existence. In the following discussion of five theological ethical approaches, I will proceed by first presenting the respective approach as it relates to Christian existence in contemporary workplaces and, second, evaluate its particular contribution to the study of Christians at work. Each of the five subsections will cover one author. In the sixth subsection, I will offer a concluding discussion of the relationship between theological ethics and the study of Christians at work.

### 5.3.1 *Friedrich Wilhelm Graf on the role of Christianity in the process of globalization*

In his analysis of Christianity in the process of globalization, the German Protestant theologian Friedrich Wilhelm Graf (1999)<sup>30</sup> addresses the role of Christians by focusing on their normative orientations. According to him (1999:627), the term ‘Christendom’ was coined in the late 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries to facilitate the identification of the essence of Christendom [*Wesen des Christentums*]. The theological proponents of the enlightenment did not search for such an essence on the level of beliefs and dogmatics, but on the level of ethics and morality. According to them, lived Christianity should be norm-guided and oriented toward Jesus of Nazareth as a moral example. In contrast, they considered questions of doctrine as secondary. However, as

guided by principles, but by them participating “in the one particular body of a crucified and resurrected Jew” (Miller 2014:198).

For a general introduction to theological ethics in English-speaking contexts, see Hauerwas and Wells (2011) and Meilaender and Werpehowski (2007). A review of recent introductions to Christian ethics in English-speaking contexts is presented by Townsend (2020). For a recent overview of Christian ethics in relation to economics and business contexts, see Melé and Fontrodona (2017), who consider in particular Catholic approaches. On Eastern Orthodox ethics, see Hamalis (2013). For an overview of Christian theological ethical engagement (considering Catholic and Protestant approaches) with economics and business in the German-speaking context, see Korff and colleagues (1999:683–780). A discussion of theological approaches to economic ethics from the US is presented by Ulshöfer (2001:282–302). For a recent discussion of Catholic approaches, see Oermann (2014:81–105) and the literature there.

- 30 Graf’s contribution is part of the *Handbuch für Wirtschaftsethik* (1999) and is untypical insofar as Graf, as a trained theologian, does not explicitly claim to be speaking from a theological position in this text, and he seems to be fluent in both the sociological and the theological literature with regard to his subject. Nevertheless, I discuss his account at this point in the present dissertation because he shares a concern for normativity with other theological ethicists, and his approach is not restricted to a detached sociological description, but he also engages in reflection on the question of appropriate norms for Christian existence, the *vita christiana*, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.



early as the 18<sup>th</sup> century, intellectuals pointed out that the Christian churches do not only differ in questions of doctrine, but also in questions of the interpretation of and solutions to ethical problems. This led to a particular interest in those confessional differences in terms of the normative orientations related to the practical formation of Christian living. Theologians and sociologists (such as Werner Sombart, Ernst Troeltsch, Max Weber, Adolf von Harnack, and Karl Holl) thus focused on idealized concepts of Christian living and their differences across Christian churches and denominations, says Graf (1999:628). Drawing upon these discussions (and in particular upon the writings of Ernst Troeltsch, Max Weber, Richard Tawney, and Alfred Müller-Armack), Graf (1999:228) concludes that the Christian churches have no consistent conception of the relationships of religious faith, ethics, and economic behavior. There are particularly significant differences with regard to their economic ethics and attitude to capitalism.<sup>31</sup>

In Graf's view, the following aspects are relevant in terms of the economic ethics of a religious tradition: the understanding of salvation and the ways and means necessary to obtain salvation, forms of organizing in the religious community, motivations that are emphasized in the religious community, and practices and ways of living that are either encouraged or delegitimized. In his analysis of Protestant cultures, Graf, following Weber, analyzes the particular virtues and values that have been propagated by Protestantism which are related to capitalism (such as discipline, diligence, and education). In different developments, these sets of values are employed and modified contextually, such as in the development of the charismatic

31 This conclusion is, of course, based on quite old empirical work, and it seems to imply a static understanding of the affiliation of individuals with Christian confessions/denominations and a linear influence of denominational affiliation on the faith orientation, ethics, and economic behavior of individuals. That is, in such a view, someone's affiliation with a particular denomination seems to determine how they live as Christians at work. If we take more recent developments into account, the influence of different denominations and traditions on individual Christians and their lifestyles seems to have become more dynamic and fluid (see 4.2.1, and also sections 1.3 and 6.1.1), where a variety of different influences come together in the formation of Christian modes of existence, and where denominational affiliation does not have to be a decisive factor. Interestingly, this dynamic situation offers itself to the search for Christian characteristics of living at work *beyond* denominational or confessional particularities or, sociologically speaking, the dissolution of denominational milieus may give way to the formation of a cross-confessional Christian milieu, that is, "die Trennungslinie verläuft immer weniger zwischen den Konfessionen und ihren Milieus und immer mehr zwischen Christen und Nicht-Christen" (Joas 2012:188).

movement in Latin America (Graf 1999:662). Just as German Lutherans played an important role in the shaping of German society (1999:656f), so do the charismatic Protestants in the capitalist developments in developing countries (1999:662). Graf (1999:665) argues in his conclusion that, instead of cultivating a thoroughly negative attitude to global capitalism, Christian communities are better off if they strengthen individual autonomy and responsibility, emphasize an ideal of an active, performance-orientated, and creative way of living, and build networks of mutual trust and solidarity. However, the acceptance of contemporary economic developments needs to be critically reflected on and it needs to be stressed that Jesus's ethos of fraternity [*Ethos der Brüderlichkeit*] is to be incorporated in institutions of lived charity (Graf 1999:666).

Graf (1999) explicitly considers the existence of Christians in his analysis of global capitalism. He is interested in the social standing of Christians and their role in shaping social and economic developments. His focus is also clearly normative in that he not only analyzes the norms and ideals that different Christian groups adopt, but also offers his own recommendation of what he holds to be the preferable Christian ideals in light of contemporary developments. The possible influence of Jesus in contemporary contexts is reduced to that of a moral example providing an ethos which can be applied. Graf thus offers a *thin* account of Christian existence. His analysis of Christian existence in work settings focuses on the ideals that the subjects adopt and, apart from his reference to Jesus' ethos, does not take further account of the reality and spirituality which followers of Christ confess shapes their lives.<sup>32</sup> In other words, his account of Christian living tends to be normatively reductionist and to stay at the surface of norms and ideals.

### 5.3.2 Martin Honecker on being a Christian at work

The German Lutheran theologian Martin Honecker (1995:1) develops his ethics as a doctrine of the good [*Güterlehre*]. He argues that theological ethics is linked to theological worldviews or interpretations of the world [*Weltdeutungen*], which refer to an overall view of reality from the perspective of the Christian belief in God. Theological worldviews encompass the basic tenets of Christian faith but are also open to experience and historical insights (1995:12). Such a worldview is, for example, contained in the doctrine of the two kingdoms [*Zweireichelehre*] and the notion of the kingship of Christ [*Königsherrschaft Christi*]. Honecker (1995:16) argues that the distinc-

32 See 4.2, 4.3, and chapter 6.

tion between the two kingdoms is not to be viewed as a dogma, but as a means to understand Christian existence and worldly reality from the perspective of faith, in order to differentiate between the duties of a Christian toward God and toward other people. According to Honecker (1995:27), commitment to the reign/kingship of Christ has been central to the Christian tradition from the beginning, but it provoked various different interpretations in terms of its implications. According to Honecker, the strength of the notion of the kingship of Christ is that it proclaims Christ's claim to rule over the world. The whole life of Christians comes under this claim, including their political and social existence. This implies a claim for unconditional allegiance to Christ. Honecker (1990:145–151) also addresses the topic of discipleship [*Nachfolge*]. After discussing different views and positions, he concludes that discipleship as *Nachfolge* should be understood as “Christian symbolic agency” [*christliches Symbolhandeln*] (1990:151), which does not impose rigid rules and norms, but demands from individuals that they make their own ethical judgments.

Honecker (1995:445–464) addresses the notion of work by first providing a historical overview of how work has been viewed in Christian tradition. In addition, he analyzes current developments and problems (such as structural changes, rationalization, changes in the perception of work, unemployment, changes in value orientations, and future structural developments). Protestant Christians understand work as an opportunity to thank God for the salvific work of Christ and for their justification. Through justification, human beings become free cooperators with God to shape this world, says Honecker (1995:449). From a Christian perspective, work is relativized through faith, in that faith is more important than work (1995:457). Honecker argues that work should not be ‘theologized’ too much (1995:449.463), and that “Christian realism” should allow for pragmatic solutions to contemporary problems, instead of an ideological approach to work (1995:463).

Additionally, Honecker addresses ethical and sociological aspects of the notion of vocation/profession [*Beruf*]. Christian vocation encompasses one's daily living in the world (1995:465). In terms of a professional ethos, concrete duties to serve others arise out of one's profession. In addition, from a theological perspective, the Christian faith bestows meaning on one's work. Faith can even instill meaning into work which is experienced as toilsome, given that it is useful for wider society. Through the motif of the cross, which Christians are to bear as they follow Christ, they can accept toilsome work contexts and can overcome dispiritedness (1995:469). The

main vocation of a Christian is to exercise love within and without one's worldly profession (1995:470).

Although Honecker cautions against the imposition of rigid rules and norms and against the ideologization of work, his analysis focuses on (normative) views and valuations of work. Apart from this emphasis, the implications of the worldviews of the doctrine of the two kingdoms and the kingship of Christ for the world of work are only indicated fragmentarily. In other words, Honecker introduces the crucial conceptual material concerning Christian existence, but hardly brings it to bear upon the question of Christian living *at work*. One could argue that his normative focus on work is already built into his reading of the doctrine of the two kingdoms (1995:23.74),<sup>33</sup> in which the doctrine refers primarily to the *duties* of a Christian toward God and toward other people.<sup>34</sup> His focus thus tends to be limited to how Christians should view work and what they should do while working, and only peripherally considers the reality which Christians claim enables their Christian living at work in the first place.

This is partly transcended by Honecker's hint at justification as the condition which shapes a Protestant Christian's attitude toward work and his allusion to the motif of the cross, which can enable individuals to find meaning in toilsome work. These are examples of how Honecker translates existential aspects of Christian living into particular attitudes toward work. In this way, he establishes a connection between Christian existence in general and normative/evaluative orientations of Christians at work in particular. However, by taking the route of normative orientations, Honecker seems to construe a kind of cognitivist–normativist detour in the faith–work relationship, in that he seems to conceive of faith as indirectly related to work by the implications of certain understandings, such as an understanding of justification or the motif of the cross. Such a detour, however, seems to obscure the more direct, straightforward, and bodily relationship between human action and Christ, as is, for example, portrayed in the Pauline writings. In Paul, justification refers to a just and obedient bodily

33 It seems ironic that, referring to Gerhard Ebeling, he calls such a duties-oriented or normatively oriented reading of the doctrine of the two kingdoms *fundamentaltheologisch*, as it precisely transfers the existential question of Christian existence in the world away from its existential context toward an engagement with Christian existence in the world, which is narrowly oriented toward duties.

34 Another reason for this distance to lived Christian existence could be that, in this respect, Honecker's ethics seems not to be empirically informed (on empirically informed ethics, see the volume of Christen et al. (2014) and, in particular, the chapter by Huppenbauer & Tanner (2014)).

practice, where followers of Christ participate “literally and physically” (Miller 2014:5) in Christ’s death and resurrection by putting to death their passions, which are situated in the body, while the Spirit infuses their bodies with Christ’s dying and with the life of Christ’s risen body (Miller 2014:103).

While Honecker analyzes and describes the conditions and developments of the work environment in detail, he seems not to apply the same descriptive rigor to the question of Christian existence at work. While he offers a general account of Christian existence, his transfer of the analysis of Christian living to work contexts tends toward a form of normative reductionism. This tendency seems to be already inbuilt into his general account of Christian existence,<sup>35</sup> as is, for example, reflected in Honecker’s (1990:151) understanding of Christian discipleship, where he seems to identify *Nachfolge* with exercising individual ethical judgment instead of following imposed rigid rules and norms. In opening up a contrast between individual ethical judgment and following imposed rules, it seems as if the relational reality of the living Christ is suspended once it comes to questions of ethical judgment and moral agency.<sup>36</sup> Having said that, I will argue below (6.2.1) that Honecker’s remarks on the force of faith to relativize work and on the function of the cross at work correspond to crucial aspects of a theory of how Christian existence is embodied in contemporary work settings.

### 5.3.3 Traugott Jähnichen on Protestant economic ethics

The German Protestant theologian Traugott Jähnichen (2015:335) argues that Protestant economic ethics is characterized by proposing theological perspectives on economic behavior in dialog with the discipline of economics. In his view, Protestant economic ethics aims for the elaboration of impulses, that is, of relevant “maxims” (2015:335) for the development of society toward the common good. These maxims target the general public, are oriented toward rationality, and are therefore to be formulated in a way which is comprehensible to a broader public. Jähnichen (2015:336) differen-

35 Honecker discusses various positions, and it is not always clear to me which of these are also his own views and which are only views he discusses but does not share (note that Honecker’s ethics is presented in the format of a textbook).

36 Here and in his discussion on work/profession, Honecker does not seem to consider *Nachfolge* in the sense of a “relational way of life” (Oakes 2018:255), in the sense of an existential orientation toward the living Christ (an aspect which he describes, but which he does not seem to take up, see 1990:147f).

tiates between descriptive and normative economic ethics. While descriptive ethics explores a particular ethos and its consequences, normative economic ethics evaluates economic behavior and proposes alternative normative concepts. Thus, while descriptive approaches explore the norms and ideals of particular groups, Protestant ethics offer particular normative perspectives, a material system of norms (2015:344), and a theological anthropology (2015:394). Jähnichen proposes freedom, justice, and sustainability as basic norms of economic behavior. As regards individual existence in work contexts, Jähnichen (2015:387) notes that Luther discovered that all Christians enter a spiritual state through baptism, and Jähnichen argues that therefore “all humans—and not only the clergy—can view their working activities as worship or vocation [*Beruf*]”. Note the shift from ‘Christians’ to ‘all humans’ in Jähnichen’s phrasing. Does this imply that he views all humans as Christians or potential Christians?<sup>37</sup> In any case, vocation [*Beruf*] refers to the concrete place where an individual takes on responsibility. This leads to a renewed appreciation of the active life, the *vita activa*, which becomes the central place of testing and training [*Bewährung*]. Protestant ethics is positioned at a distance to economic processes because God’s economy of salvation is an economy of giving, which operates according to a logic of abundance and runs contrary to an economy based on scarcity. Christian faith knows that trust is to be put in God alone, who gives salvation freely. From this distance, Protestant ethics proposes normative perspectives in dialog with economists and practitioners.

While it appeared earlier as if Jähnichen was blurring the lines between Christians and non-Christians, the last phrasing is indicative of an awareness of a particularity of Christian existence as ‘*Christian* faith knows that God gives salvation freely’. However, Jähnichen seems to modify the understanding of a particular Christian mode of existence into common concepts devoid of their particular Christian content. By the very setup of his approach, Jähnichen comes into a position where he draws on traditional Christian content, which he then conceptually modifies in order to be receivable for both Christians and non-Christians alike. Thus, he speaks from a Christian perspective, proposes Christian viewpoints, but does not speak about Christian existence. Instead he proposes ideals to everyone as ideals inspired by Christian perspectives but modified in such a way that

37 This seems to ignore that there are, empirically, Christians and non-Christians. However, if such an obvious empirical condition is ignored, such a move needs to be substantiated.

they are acceptable for the addressees without requiring them to locate<sup>38</sup> themselves with regard to Christ. For example, Jähnichen (2015:352–355) translates “freedom through Christ” into common “protection of property rights”. The argument goes like this: Freedom is a gift from God through Christ, which is realized in the social sphere by mutual acceptance of the freedom of others and therefore, in the end, in the protection of property rights. Jähnichen thus takes an aspect which characterizes a Christian mode of being and translates it into a common concept of property rights which is Christologically empty. This is, arguably, a case for what Antony Kelly (2010:803), in another context, has referred to as “theology’s first task”, namely “to insist that faith be receptive to its own data”. I propose that this can be done by relating what has been said above to a Pauline perspective (see e.g. Miller 2014). Even though “Freedom through Christ” (Jähnichen 2015:352) might be characterized in the social sphere by mutual acceptance of the freedom of others, what is at stake is how it comes about. Freedom through Christ is not just a given cultural good which is somehow there in society, but it is embodied by individuals who participate in Christ and share in the death of Christ by putting to death their desires and by being vivified by the Spirit, in that he ‘infuses’ their bodies with the just life of Christ (see Miller 2014). Freedom through Christ, is not, therefore, concretized in the social sphere via a common concept of property rights, but is embodied by individuals who live the presence of Christ “performatively” (Kelly 2010:799).

#### 5.3.4 Nils Ole Oermann’s Protestant approach to economic and business ethics

The German Protestant theologian, historian, and jurist Nils Ole Oermann (2007, 2014) offers a Protestant approach to economic and business ethics [*Wirtschaftsethik*] which builds on the concepts of justice (including both the idea of justice as fairness and an option for the poor) and human dignity.<sup>39</sup> Both concepts are based on the Great Commandment. Oermann (2014:16) proposes an intervening [*intervenierende*] form of ethics. An intervening approach is different from a merely demanding, appellative one in that it seeks, first, to understand the economic argumentation, which it then weighs up, criticizes, or completes. Ethics must be careful to obtain the nec-

38 On the Christian location of individuals, see 4.2.

39 The present passage on Oermann is a revised version of the respective section from my master’s dissertation (2010:144–148, see also Brügger & Kretzschmar 2015:2f).



essary economic knowledge in order not to advocate simplistic moralism.<sup>40</sup> The contribution of theological economic and business ethics includes the two elements of, first, a reflection on the rules for economic action and, second, a realistic description of the existence of market participants, says Oermann. Theological ethics should use globally understandable terminology, terms like justice, charity [*Nächstenliebe*], and human dignity.

Oermann makes considerable efforts to clarify who the recipients of his ethics are, and the particularity of the (Protestant theological) perspective from which he is speaking. For Oermann, a global economic ethic from a Protestant perspective does not address a system or abstract markets, but responsible individuals. The term ‘market’ comes from the Latin *mercari* and means ‘to merchandise’ or ‘to trade’. It means merely the place of an activity (although this is now more and more a global activity) which is shaped by its participants. There is thus not an impersonal market, but individual market participants who are ethically responsible, says Oermann (2007:26f). Therefore, Protestant ethics must focus on the individual and individual responsibility before God, not on vague social terms like the common good or social justice. Terms and concepts that focus on society as a whole are too vague and lead to general demands with no clear recipient, and unclear responsibilities. It is paradoxically necessary, says Oermann, in order to prevent individualistic economics, to focus ethical analysis on individuals with their rights and duties, strengths and weaknesses (2007:410). Oermann’s aim is to develop an approach to business ethics which is clearly *evangelisch*<sup>41</sup> and Protestant<sup>42</sup>, but at the same time a global approach that can be understood and adopted by both Christians and non-Christians. It is theological argumentation and substantiation which makes an ethic a theological one. Thus, for Oermann, the distinctiveness of a Christian ethic is not a different or new ethical claim, concept, or criterion (not a normative ethical contribution), but a different view of reality (especially on the world and the economy). For his general understanding of the task of theological ethics, Oermann follows the German theologian and ethicist Johannes Fischer (2002:46f) in arguing that theological ethics faces

40 Oermann (2007:336–407) makes extended use of case studies with an emphasis on macroeconomic issues (failed states, demographic development, debt relief, global access to information technology, and corporate governance).

41 He defines the term *evangelisch* as being founded on the gospel (*Evangelium*), see Oermann (2007:16).

42 Which to him refers to an awareness of the political dimension of faith, and to the advocating of convictions (which ones?) in the midst of the world and, if necessary, to *protesting* publicly.



the hermeneutical task of describing and explaining the Christian symbolization of reality (in terms of spirit, sin, freedom, et cetera) in critical engagement with other current symbolizations of reality because the Christian symbolization of reality is obscured in contemporary Western society. Therefore, according to Oermann, the specific Christian contribution to ethics is a hermeneutical one, not a normative one. In his view, Christians and non-Christians will often come to the same conclusion about ethical matters, but because of their different views of reality, their reasoning and justification of ethical norms are different. Thus, with regard to the result of ethical reflection, Christian and secular normative ethics are (roughly) identical, but their substantiation may be very different. According to this view, Christianity should not develop approaches that are different from other business ethics approaches (no Christian ‘extra-ethics’). The main Christian task is to advocate its distinct view of reality and thus make a specific contribution.<sup>43</sup>

More specifically, Oermann focuses on the hermeneutical task of Christian ethics given with Christian anthropology.<sup>44</sup> The specific Christian element in a Protestant approach to global business ethics is its anthropological foundation in the Protestant doctrine of human nature as *simul iustus et peccator* (at one and the same time righteous and a sinner). Basing his approach on a particular conception of Christian anthropology, he seeks to develop a better understanding of economic processes. In particular, he rejects the reductionist anthropology of a *homo oeconomicus* and adopts a more comprehensive view of human beings as *simul iustus et peccator*. The Protestant concept of human nature is more suited to understanding economic life than the one-dimensional *homo oeconomicus* model, says Oermann (2007:174). For example, he suggests that the concept of human dignity, which can be derived from Christian anthropology, is universally translatable and is crucial for the global discussion on justice (2007:57–69). In focusing on its hermeneutical task, a Christian economic ethic does not seek to replace economics, but to complete it. Oermann criticizes both Catholic and Protestant approaches, which only make normative claims and demands. In his view, Christian anthropology which addresses the question

43 That is why Oermann (2007:56) prefers to speak of an “economic ethic from a Protestant perspective”, rather than a “Protestant economic ethic”.

44 Oermann draws on the biblical scriptures not as a direct source of norms, but by using biblical texts to illuminate basic ethical concepts and terms (for example, common welfare, social justice, human dignity, values, equality, and human rights), which he then applies to concrete cases.

of how the individual as created by God exists in the economic sphere is decisive in the building of a bridge between ethics and economics. The task of theological anthropology in ethics is not to make normative claims about human behavior, but to explain it. To the extent that theology can contribute and help economics to gain a broader and more realistic concept of human nature, it can contribute to a more comprehensive and therefore better understanding of people as market participants, says Oermann (2007:289).

How is the Protestant element in Oermann's approach related to ethical normativity? Oermann holds that there are universally valid ethical concepts, like human dignity. Human dignity can be based on a Christian creational argument, but it can also be based on a rational–stoic argument. Global ethical concepts must be universal. Universal means first translatable, and only second enforceable. Such concepts are valid transculturally.<sup>45</sup> Ethical concepts based on human dignity (such as the option for the poor) can also be understood and adopted by those of other faiths (e.g. Muslims or Hindus) without them having to become Christians. There are normative claims that are universally valid like the golden rule. It can be interpreted from a Christian, a Buddhist, or a humanist perspective. The claim for compliance with such basic ethical concepts is universal, but the *motivation* for compliance is different. A Christian conception of a global business and economic ethic needs to be aware of the fact that most people in the world are non-Christians. That is not a problem for a Christian ethic, says Oermann (2007:165) because, although the reasoning for ethical guidelines and the motivation for compliance differs, the guidelines themselves are often congruent. Thus, Oermann differentiates a moral/ethical substance to which ethical concepts refer from the reasoning on which they are based, and from the motivation for compliance, and locates the distinctively Protestant element on the level of the reasoning and motivation of ethical norms, while, in his view, the norms themselves are universal.

In conclusion, Oermann holds that worldly justice is important for Christians, but is penultimate. Economic and business ethics are not an option, but a necessity in the face of pressing global problems, such as failed states, global poverty, and mass unemployment. But neither Christianity nor Judaism is an appropriate basis upon which to develop economic programs or political agendas. The contribution of theology is a hermeneu-

45 As an example, Oermann offers the relation between female circumcision and human dignity. Although female circumcision seems to be accepted in some cultures, most of the circumcised would be glad if human dignity was universally enforceable.

tical–anthropological one. Theology can develop the theological–anthropological groundwork for the economy as it seeks to influence the development of economic theory. Theology and the church have the duty to engage and intervene in the economic sphere and in society, says Oermann (2007:412). Protestant theology has to speak the truth to the state, the economy, and society from the liberating perspective of the gospel.

I will now briefly note two difficulties arising from Oermann’s identification of the Christian element of business and economic ethics with Christian anthropology and its concretion by reference to Luther’s *simul iustus et peccator*<sup>46</sup>, before proceeding to relate Oermann’s approach to the study of Christians at work. First, in terms of the communication between non-Christians and Christians, it is to be noted that secular economists have themselves criticized the reductionist tendency of the *homo oeconomicus* model (see e.g. Akerlof & Shiller 2009). Now, it might be interesting for them to see that there are other perspectives which share their criticism of the *homo oeconomicus* model and argue that individuals have to be understood in a tension between their own interests and altruism (Oermann 2014:315), but it seems, in this regard, not to be true that economists are in need of theological anthropology to see human nature ‘as it really is’ (see Oermann 2014:317) or to arrive at a more nuanced understanding of human beings. What, then, is the relevance of a Protestant perspective apart from this relativization of the *homo oeconomicus* model, which also appears elsewhere? If the anthropological substantiation as well as the resulting ethical norms are not particularly Protestant, but can be replaced by other approaches, what then, from the viewpoint of non-Protestants, is the point of introducing a Protestant perspective? With this way of communicating ‘the Protestant message’, it seems to me that Oermann tends to make the Protestant element of his perspective irrelevant.

A second difficulty arises with Oermann’s (see e.g. 2014:315) identification of anthropology as the main area of a distinctive Christian contribution to economic ethics, at the exclusion of other aspects. Why should Christian anthropology be used as a hermeneutical lens, but not, say, Christology, ecclesiology, or eschatology? Moreover, is not Christian anthropology inextricably bound to Christology<sup>47</sup>? In particular, the New Testament writings on human beings, which are specifically linked to the condition of being in

46 For a recent critique of the notion of *simul iustus et peccator* in the light of an exegesis of Paul’s epistle to the Romans, see Miller (2014:5).

47 I do not know if Oermann acknowledges or advocates such a connection or not. However, I have not found such a connection made or explicated in Oermann’s work.

Christ, are not, I argue, general statements about human nature which can be abstracted from this condition.<sup>48</sup> In this light, the view that humans are sinful but accepted and justified in Christ cannot be reduced to a general statement that humans live in a tension between good and bad and between altruism and self-interest (e.g. Oermann 2014:315). Christ, then, is not a means to an end that can be used to gain a better understanding of reality and that we can then abandon for the purpose of a seemingly better dialog with non-Christians.<sup>49</sup> This, again, seems to be a case for “theology’s first task” (Kelly 2010:803), namely “to insist that faith be receptive to its own data”.

From the viewpoint of the study of Christians at work, however, the main problem of Oermann’s approach is that he does not explore a specifically Christian life in the context of work. Or, more precisely, he does describe what he takes to be the moral aspects of and the claims related to such a life, which are, however, no different, as he argues, from the moral aspects and claims related to the life of non-Christians. The shape, so to speak, of Christian life is similar to that of non-Christians if it is lived morally; only the reasoning and motivation behind it are different. The ‘Christian element’ is only used for the substantiation of Oermann’s ethic, and is, therefore, replaceable. Given that they both live morally (say in accordance with Oermann’s ethic), it would therefore not be possible to distinguish a Christian from a non-Christian individual in work contexts, except in terms of their motivation. From the perspective of the study of Christians, which is not reductionistically interested in morality in terms of normative concepts, this is, then, an *empty* proposal, or (if one takes into account Oermann’s particular Christian substantiation and motivation, although they are replaceable) a *thin* contribution to Christian living at work.

### 5.3.5 Arthur Rich’s economic ethics from a theological perspective

The Swiss Reformed theologian Arthur Rich (2006:70–75) develops a comprehensive approach to economic ethics from a theological perspective<sup>50</sup> which identifies a distinctive Christian contribution to economic ethics, but

48 For a recent study on “Christological primacy” in the Pauline writings, see Miller (2014:1).

49 See, in particular, Oermann’s summary (309–318) with no reference to Christ. I take this to be indicative of Oermann’s prioritization of anthropology over Christology.

50 This passage on Rich builds on the respective section from my master’s dissertation (2010:141f, see also Brügger & Kretzschmar 2015:3).

aims to be received by non-Christians and Christians alike.<sup>51</sup> He develops his ethics in the tradition of religious socialism (see Oermann 2007:17). Rich's approach centers on the ideas of the humanly just [*das Menschen-gerechte*] and the economically rational [*das Sachgemäße*].<sup>52</sup> As his concern is Christian groundwork for business and economic ethics, Rich argues that these terms are suited to starting a discourse between Christians and non-Christians on economic ethics. For the economy, the principle that what is not economically rational cannot be humanly just, and vice versa, is valid. The economically rational is characterized by three components: efficiency, competition, and planning. The humanly just is based on humanity [*Humanität*], which for Rich can be grounded in either a Christian or a humanist rationale. This makes the humanly just an important concept, because human dignity and charity can also be respected by non-Christians. For Rich, on the level of its normative ethical concretion, Christian existence as a Christian form of humanity [*christliche Humanität*] does not differ from general human humanity [*menschliche Humanität*].

The specifically Christian element in business and economic ethics is primarily hermeneutical, in that a Christian approach seeks to mediate between the relativity of this world and the absoluteness of divine justice, says Rich. The humanly just represents a conceptual bridge between the relativity of economic necessities and the absolute nature of faith. Christian business and economic ethics does not develop new economic principles or guidelines, but seeks to locate the relativity of this world in the absoluteness of faith and ethics. However, Rich's understanding of the Christian element of ethics goes beyond the hermeneutical dimension. The Christian *proprium* of business and economic ethics is not only a different understanding: it is that the Christian faith is always more than ethics. It is always more than claims, but it is a *form of being* which is a gift that is received, which comes from what is to come (Rich 1984:242–243). Rich's analysis of the particularity of Christian existence focuses on resurrection faith [*Auferstehungs-glauben*] as an experience of the Other [*Erfahrung des ganz Anderen*] in the midst of the reality of our world (1984:122). Christian faith is based on experience, not on ideology, says Rich (1984:119). It is rooted in the life of Jesus of Nazareth, his crucifixion and resurrection. Christian faith as resurrection faith relates to the experience of the resurrection of the Crucified,

51 For an introduction to and a critique of Rich's proposal, see Enderle (2010) and Oermann (2007:148–156).

52 Both German terms are difficult to translate. Here, I use the official translations from the 2006 English version.

to which Christians bear witness. Resurrection faith refers to faith that arises *out of the experience* of resurrection, and not to mere belief in the resurrection (1984:121).

Rich's proposal has been criticised for being formalistic, that is, for providing only abstract principles that cannot be applied (see Oermann 2007:148–156), and, more importantly (with reference to the study of Christians in work contexts), for neglecting the corporate context in which much of contemporary work takes place (see Fetzer 2004:39) by focusing heavily on general questions relating to the economic system. However, Rich is quite precise in situating the characteristic experience of Christians in the experience of the living God and, particularly, in the experience of the risen Christ (1984:122). However, since his proposal focuses more on the question of economic systems than on concrete workplaces, he does not provide an analysis of the formation of this Christian experience in concrete work contexts. While Rich thus offers a 'thick' account of Christian existence, he does not outline how the Christian in his analysis may 'walk' in work contexts.

### 5.3.6 *Theological ethics and the study of Christians at work*

So far in this section, I have discussed how Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, Martin Honecker, Traugott Jähnichen, Nils Ole Oermann, and Arthur Rich approach the workplace from a (Christian) theological perspective. I will presently discuss the relationship between these theological ethical approaches and the study of Christians at work, and draw on C.S. Lewis's understanding of Christian living, on David Horrell's work on the historical meaning of the label 'Christian', and on Colin Miller's work on Paul's theological ethics to accentuate a 'thicker' account of Christians at work. In particular, I will assess the move proposed most explicitly by Oermann and Rich in order to offer, from a Christian perspective, a (de-Christianized) ethical normative conception, which they claim should be universally applicable, that is, valid for Christians and non-Christians alike (1), before I come to a conclusion concerning the contribution of these Protestant theological ethical proposals to the study of Christians in contemporary workplaces (2).

1) In the proposals of a normative ethical conception, as offered by Rich and Oermann, the characteristic of a Christian perspective is that it provides a particular (but replaceable) substantiation of the proposed norms

and potential motivation for compliance.<sup>53</sup> In the light of the study of Christians in contemporary workplaces, such a move must appear remarkably strange. Why emphasize that you are speaking from a Christian perspective if you subsequently put so much effort into ‘de-Christianizing’ your message in order to make it acceptable or comprehensible to both Christians and non-Christians? If you are convinced that there is only one morality that is valid for all, and if you want to speak about it with regard to, say, the economy, what is the point in first articulating your Christian perspective just to hasten to add that *it does not make any difference* to your proposal in terms of the normative ethics you propose? I do not know. Many would agree with Rich and Oermann that there seems to be no specific Christian morality,<sup>54</sup> in terms of particular Christian ethical norms or a ‘material Christian ethos’, which differs from the norms adopted by other people.<sup>55</sup> However, with regard to the study of Christians at work, the problem is not so much the claim that there is no particular Christian morality, but that such approaches tend to isolate morality or ethical normativity from the rest of one’s existence.<sup>56</sup> In some way, the theoretical question of the existence or non-existence of a particular Christian ethics seems to be a distraction from the existential character of following Christ.<sup>57</sup> The very term ‘Christian’ has historically<sup>58</sup> been used from the beginning of its emergence as a politico-existential norm to refer to the allegiance or belonging of individuals to Christ. While this historical context differs from contemporary Western contexts, the normativity this early

53 Rich and Oermann suggest this most explicitly. Jähnichen seems, in principle, to follow a similar line in that he demands that ethics should be receivable for all and ‘de-Christianizes’ his ethical concepts to fit this requirement. Honecker (1980:344) also seems to argue along similar lines by pointing out that there is no particular material Christian ethos, but that the Christian faith opens up a new horizon toward the ethical.

54 See e.g. Fischer (1994:168.172.188.276), Honecker (1980:325.344), Lewis (1980:82).

55 Note, however, that the very idea of universal ethics, with which these approaches work, is not without its critics (for a recent discussion of universalism in ethics, see Hellsten 2015).

56 The fact that morality is not to be isolated from the rest of life is a point which, for example, authors who draw upon the thinking of Alasdair MacIntyre make with regard to the embeddedness of moral claims in communal traditions (see, for example, McCann and Brownsberger 2007, and for an approach to theological ethics, see Hauerwas 1983 and 1995a; see also 4.1.1 in the present dissertation).

57 See also Fischer (1994:188) on „die ganze leidige Diskussion darüber, ob es eigene ‚christliche‘ Normen gibt“.

58 See Horrell (2007, see also 2013, 2002). On Horrell’s work on the label ‘Christian’, see below in this section and in 4.2.2 and 6.1.2.



usage displays is not unlike the normativity that comes with the use of the label by contemporary Christian business managers, in that it promotes an understanding of what being a Christian is about (see 6.1), in which being a Christian is highly relevant for one's conduct. In this light, it is not clear what purpose the insistence on universally valid ethical normativity, which itself (or at least its explication) is not specifically Christian (see Rich 1984:242), serves.<sup>59</sup> In fact, if, in addition, Christian living at work is equated<sup>60</sup> with its moral aspects in such a way, then the study of Christians at work becomes superfluous, as Christian living is, in such a view, characterized by its morality, which is, then, no different from other moralities, *ergo* Christian living must be similar to other forms of living, provided they are moral. Methodologically speaking, in terms of the study of Christians, the theoretical move to abstract a de-Christianized ethical normativity (or a de-Christianized *explication* of ethical normativity) from *Lebenspraxis* is the methodological eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which would cause the study of Christians to "surely die" (see Gen 2:17). In other words, in this case, the study of Christians at work would cease to be recognized as an option the researcher can pursue.<sup>61</sup>

What I want to address here is not so much the question of whether these authors are right or wrong in terms of the ethical concepts they propose, but far more that these approaches are thoroughly misleading in terms of the picture of Christianity they present. In short, such approaches do not consider sufficiently the existential, existentially relational, and embodied character of Christian living. To explicate this, I will draw, in the

59 The circumstances, under which such a project, to me, seems understandable, is if one speaks (maybe hypothetically) from a ruling position in society, or if one speaks to someone in such a position. One can imagine that this would be the way, for example, a benevolent and committed Christian monarch speaks to her/his people. S/he does not want to be silent about his/her Christian commitment, but at the same time s/he does not want to impose her/his faith onto others, but still foster moral agency in society as a whole. Historically, the influence of Christians in Germany in the shaping of the modern state and the *soziale Marktwirtschaft* (see e.g. Graf 1999:656f, Brakelmann 1999:713–737) indicates that these may indeed be the condition which implicitly characterizes the position from which theological ethicists speak 'from a Christian perspective', that is, from the position of those who (want to) shape and influence the structuring of society. It seems that these contributions are uttered from a (hypothetical) position of influence at the 'top' of the society which they seek to address.

60 Which seems to be indirectly implied by theological approaches to work contexts which focus solely or largely on ethics.

61 Which is a remarkable effect in the light of the empirical existence of both Christians and non-Christians.



following, on C.S. Lewis's account of Christian living and on David Horrell's work on the historical emergence of Christian identity and the related use of the label 'Christian'. "For when you get down to it," says Lewis (1980:155f),

is not the popular idea of Christianity simply this: that Jesus Christ was a great moral teacher and that if only we took His advice we might be able to establish a better social order and avoid another war? Now, mind you, that is quite true. But it tells you much less than the whole truth about Christianity and it has no practical importance at all.

It is quite true that if we took Christ's advice we should soon be living in a happier world. You need not even go as far as Christ. If we did all that Plato or Aristotle or Confucius told us, we should get on a great deal better than we do. And so what? We never have followed the advice of the great teachers. Why are we likely to begin now? Why are we more likely to follow Christ than any of the others? Because He is the best moral teacher? But that makes it even less likely that we shall follow Him. If we cannot take the elementary lessons, is it likely we are going to take the most advanced one? If Christianity only means one more bit of good advice, then Christianity is of no importance. There has been no lack of good advice for the last four thousand years. A bit more makes no difference.

But as soon as you look at any real Christian writings, you find that they are talking about something quite different from this popular religion. They say that Christ is the Son of God (whatever that means). They say that those who give Him their confidence can also become Sons of God (whatever that means). They say that His death saved us from our sins (whatever that means).

Lewis explains at length the process of becoming a Christian. He outlines that by attaching ourselves to Christ we can become 'Sons of God', and thus share in the life of God and have spiritual life instead of (only) biological life.<sup>62</sup> Becoming a Christian involves a radical shift from having (merely) biological life to having spiritual life. Lewis compares this process to a statue which changes from being a carved stone to being a real human being. It is a change from being created by God to participating in the very life of God. This is a fundamentally distinct state, as Lewis points out with reference to the difference between something which is produced by human beings (such as a statue, which may have a human-like shape) and someone who is a human being (a living person). "Now the whole offer which Christianity makes is this: that we can, if we let God have His way, come to share in the life of Christ" (1980:177). The result is that every Christian becomes a "little Christ. The whole purpose of becoming a Chris-

62 Lewis (1980:156.159.161) uses the terms *Bios* and *Zoe* with reference to the New Testament terminology concerning 'life'.

tian is simply nothing else” (1980:177). Christians are ‘putting on Christ’, which is something radically different from applying ethical norms:

And now we begin to see what it is that the New Testament is always talking about. It talks about Christians ‘being born again’; it talks about them ‘putting on Christ’; about Christ ‘being formed in us’; about our coming to ‘have the mind of Christ’.

*Put right out of your head the idea that these are only fancy ways of saying that Christians are to read what Christ said and try to carry it out—as a man may read what Plato or Marx said and try to carry it out. They mean something much more than that. They mean that a real person, Christ, here and now, in that very room where you are saying your prayers, is doing things to you. It is not a question of a good man who died two thousand years ago. It is a living Man (1980:191, my emphasis).*

Lewis points out that living as a follower of Christ is, at the same time, harder and easier than trying to be good or trying to act morally. This is because Christ does not primarily demand compliance to certain moral requirements in the sense of certain duties one can fulfill and then move on:

Christ says ‘Give me all. I don’t want so much of your time and so much of your money and so much of your work: I want You. I have not come to torment your natural self, but to kill it.’ (...) The terrible thing, the almost impossible thing, is to hand over your whole self—all your wishes and precautions—to Christ. But it is far easier than what we are all trying to do instead. For what we are trying to do is to remain what we call ‘ourselves’, to keep personal happiness as our great aim in life, and yet at the same time be ‘good’. We are all trying to let our mind and heart go their own way—centred on money or pleasure or ambition—and hoping, in spite of this, to behave honestly and chastely and humbly. And that is exactly what Christ warned us you could not do (1980:196–198).

Thus, Christian living involves turning away from our “own way” (1980:198) and a re-orientation toward the living Christ. This is why it becomes misleading to claim to adopt a Christian perspective in a public context and then talk primarily about ethical norms. Christians, in this sense, are primarily followers of Christ. And the life of followers of Christ is not primarily characterized by a concern for the application of ethical norms, but for the reality of Christ. This relational orientation of a Christian mode of existence, as Lewis sketches it, seems to be the characteristic feature of Christian existence, which is obscured in Christian theological approaches to the workplace when it addresses primarily ethical norms.

The fact that the positioning work performed by some contemporary theological ethicists is somehow at variance with or ignores the existential character of living as a follower of Christ can also be illustrated by relating it to the positioning performed by Christians in the early historical contexts in

which use of the label ‘Christian’ was established. Before I explore this in more detail, I have to say a word here about the role of such a historical excursion within the overall project of the present dissertation. I introduced the distinction between nominal and existential connotations in different usages of the term ‘Christian/s’ in section 4.4. Now, usages of the label ‘Christian(s)’ can carry nominal as well as existential (or substantial) connotations, and these connotations can be present in varying degrees in different usages. Two aspects are to be considered, in my view, in this regard: First, the different usages of the label Christian are to be understood in their respective contexts, and the function of the term may vary considerably across different contexts, as is the case in any use of concepts (see Skinner 2002). Second, the very design of the term in its particular linguistic and historical context imposes particular boundaries on the different variations of later usages in terms of their meaningfulness. That is, it provides a measure of their being meaningful (see also Lewis 1980:XII–XV) in the light of the emergence of the term; it offers an orientation against which later usages can be held accountable. This measure relates, on a very basic linguistic level, to the reference to the Hebrew concept of the משיח and its Greek equivalent of the Χριστός (see e.g. Grundmann et al. 1973 and Shahar 2018), and historically to the person of Jesus of Nazareth, whose followers the term has come to denote. These connections seem to be inbuilt into the term in such a way that it can be said that a meaningful contemporary usage takes account of them, while usages empty of substantial or existential meaning (or merely nominal usages) ignore them. Interestingly, contemporary usages (see also 6.1) seem to differ not so much in terms of content (the basic content being that of denoting followers of Christ), but in terms of how much of this existential content is connoted or implied in a particular use. I use the term nominal to characterize usages that are more or less empty in terms of existential content, meaning, or substance. That is, they simply denote someone as Christian without implying certain information as to what being a Christian refers to. I refer to usages of the term Christian as existential or as carrying existential connotations, where the term is fuller in terms of content, meaning, or substance. It is, therefore, the substance of meaning displayed in the context of the historical emergence of the term which—even though it is sometimes abandoned—still serves as a criterion with which to characterize different contemporary usages. In this light, I will address here the historical situation of the emergence of the label Christian,<sup>63</sup> because it is crucial for the

63 See also section 4.2.2.

argument of this dissertation in general, and also because it is important to understand the existential connotations of the label Christian, which I argue are insufficiently considered in the theological ethical approaches to the workplace discussed.

David Horrell (2007, see also 2013, 2002), drawing upon Pliny's correspondence with Trajan (around 111–112 C.E.), describes the situation where “Christians are coming to trial for their faith” (2007:370). In terms of its content, the term “Christians” simply referred to the followers of Jesus Christ as those who *belong to* or are *allegiant to* Christ (see Horrell 2007:362, and also Grundmann et al. 1973:529, Bile & Gain 2012, Blass 1895, and Spicq 1961). The label ‘Christian’ was applied by the ruling Roman administrators as a politico-existential normative criterion, where non-compliance or compliance determined life and death. In short, Christians could choose between renouncing their Christianity or being executed. If they denied ever having been Christians or admitted to having been Christians, they were to “demonstrate their religio-political loyalty by invoking the gods and offering to the emperor’s statue, and prove their nonallegiance to Christ by reviling his name” (2007:370). Horrell notes that Pliny’s practice of capital punishment is not oriented toward certain crimes (which were sometimes associated with Christians at that time), but “for the name itself (*nomen ipsum*)—that is, merely for being a *Christianus*” (2007:371).

It is the totalitarian context of the time which brings to light the existential character of being a Christian by forcing situations where pledging allegiance to Christ results in physical death. Now suppose for a moment that someone with an attitude similar to that proposed by Jähnichen, Oermann, or Rich to the public positioning of Christians were to face the same trial<sup>64</sup>, with the choice of either renouncing the name of Christ or being executed. Now s/he might come up with a way out and offer the Roman administrator an alternative: “Let me, privately, hold the convictions I want, but publicly, I can modify and translate my beliefs in such a way that they don’t bother anyone, do no longer refer to the name of Christ, and can even

64 The execution of Christians ‘for the name itself’ does not seem to be unique to the early historical stages of Christian identity formation, as current press reports indicate (see e.g. <https://www.cbsnews.com/video/new-isis-video-shows-execution-of-21-christians/#x>, accessed 20 December 2017 or <https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2020/january/nigeria-boko-haram-kidnapped-pastor-hostage-video-testimony.html>, accessed 10 February 2020). It seems, however, to occur mainly in totalitarian contexts. On the study of Christian martyrdom in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, see Johnson and Zurlo (2014). On the related problem of the death penalty for ‘apostasy’ in Islamic contexts, in historical and contemporary perspective, see Schirmacher (2012).

serve you in developing a better society.” The administrator might have been interested, but more probably he would have said: “I am not interested in your convictions and translations, but in your *loyalty*. It is your choice: the emperor, or Christ”. The reaction would reveal the Christianity of the one facing the trial, in terms of her/his allegiance to Christ (Horrell 2007:2362). In this ultimate test of Christian identity, it is precisely the fact that the one facing the trial is forced to *publicly* take a stand, and that there have indeed been people who pledged allegiance to Christ even in the face of death, and would rather die than compromise their commitment to Christ, which reveals the existential character of Christians’ allegiance to Christ.<sup>65</sup> Now, while this test of Christian identity might be typical in totalitarian contexts and does not seem to occur in democratic contexts, it arguably reveals a *general* feature of being a Christian, irrespective of the context in which it occurs. It indicates the existential claim of Christ, which Lewis indicates with the words: “Christ says ‘Give me all’” (1980:196) and which can be referred to as “Christ’s Lordship” (see e.g. Harink 2003:74, quoted in Miller 2014:3). While the practical explication of one’s allegiance to Christ may differ from democratic contexts to totalitarian contexts, its substance stays the same.

From the Christian approaches to the workplace by Jähnichen, Oermann, and Rich, I only found the consideration of an existential allegiance to the living Christ as a characteristic feature of Christian existence in Rich’s approach. In the case of Jähnichen and Oermann, it seems to be left open what the adoption of a Christian perspective entails in existential terms. There is thus a stark contrast between the existential connotations of the label Christian, which are present in the historical contexts described by Horrell (2007), and which refer to an individual’s allegiance or belonging to Christ, and a usage of the label Christian which is mainly nominally connoted and not specified existentially, in which the label might vaguely refer to a cultural–religious heritage which can be changed, modified, and trans-

65 The test reveals an existential Christian identity via one’s verbal commitment to Christ by coupling it directly to the readiness to abandon one’s earthly life. One can imagine that the threat of such a test can bring people who have counted themselves as Christians to withdraw from such a high-priced public commitment. But note that for the actual execution, much has to come together: the coupling of a public Christian commitment with the readiness to lose one’s life (on the side of the Christians) and with the readiness to execute those who take such a stand (on the side of the administrators). In this sense, such a trial can only work as an ultimate test because one’s life is at stake *anyway* in following Christ (otherwise the Christians would not demonstrate the readiness to give up their lives.).

lated according to the situate appropriateness. The term, then becomes empty in terms of existential meaning. One is reminded here of Francis Schaeffer's (2006:19f) dictum that "the meaning of the word Christian has been reduced to practically nothing". Thus, different usages of the label Christian can be categorized according to the connotations that are predominant: existential connotations (in meaningful usages) or nominal connotations (in meaning-less usages). Of course, one can argue that there is nothing wrong with commenting, from a Christian perspective, on moral problems of our time without explicitly pointing to the existential claim of Christ, but this then, it seems to me, is far from an "authentic Christian ... mode of taking seriously Christ's Lordship over the public, the social, the political" (Harink 2003:74, quoted in Miller 2014:3).

2) In concluding this discussion of Protestant theological ethical proposals with reference to their contribution to the study of Christians at work, I contend that Graf (1999), Jähnichen (2015), and Oermann (2007) offer a thin account of Christian existence, while Honecker (1995) and Rich present a more comprehensive approach in this regard. But while Honecker, in my view, does not offer a clear analysis of Christian existence,<sup>66</sup> it is Arthur Rich who has pointed to the existential Christian condition of living one's life oriented toward the living God in Jesus Christ. Having said that, I find that the analysis of the Christian condition as it relates to daily living in contemporary work contexts suffers from the preoccupation of theological ethicists with ethical normativity in terms of normative ethical concepts. In terms of Christian living, such conceptions of living morally via an orientation toward ethical norms seem to imply an idea of 'ethics as application'<sup>67</sup> in terms of the "implementation of Christian values and principles" (Melé & Fontrodona 2017). If this is transferred to the question of daily living at work, it can lead to the (somewhat strange) idea that Christians at work are preoccupied with the intellectual application and practical implementation of certain normative ethical concepts.<sup>68</sup>

66 He discusses the traditional themes related to Christian existence, such as discipleship, the doctrine of the two kingdoms, and the kingship of Christ, but in my view without a clear outcome (which might be because of the textbook character of the respective work).

67 For a discussion of the notion of 'ethics as application' in Oermann and Rich, see Brügger & Kretzschmar 2015:2f. See also Miller (2014:136), who argues that, for Paul, just practice is not the application or implication of salvation, "but its very content". On the problem of the application of biblical texts, see Fischer (1994:193–196) and Holmes (2012:146–148).

A main reason why it is difficult to put forward the criticism of these normativist<sup>69</sup> approaches to (Christian) theological ethics as keenly as required is that Christian existence *is* and must be thoroughly moral. So when I criticize these particular normative approaches to ethics, I do not say that morality is not important in Christian life. I do, however, criticize how morality is conceptualized and taken out of its embeddedness in the existential Christian condition of participating in the life of Christ, in a way which leads, in my view, to a thoroughly misleading picture of Christianity. In Rich's (1984:121) account, this seems to be facilitated by his metaphoric understanding of resurrection<sup>70</sup>, which seems to stand in the way of appreciating the concrete bodily connection of the followers of Christ to Christ as portrayed, for example, in the Pauline writings (see e.g. Miller 2014). Taking this connection into account may reveal how Christians participate in the death of Christ by putting to death the passions of the body that tends toward sin, and they thus die with Christ and share in his resurrection and his just and good life through a "pneumatic vivification" (Miller 2014:130). According to Miller's interpretation of Paul, the just life is not the result or the application of salvation, but its very content (2014:5136).<sup>71</sup> This just, obedient practice is "genuine human action that is at the same time entirely a gift" (2014:61). As such, participation in the death and resurrection of Christ *is* the substance of Christian moral living, from which it cannot be abstracted. Lewis (1980:198) puts it this way:

As He said, a thistle cannot produce figs. If I am a field that contains nothing but grass-seed, I cannot produce wheat. Cutting the grass may keep it short: but I shall still produce grass and no wheat. If I want to produce wheat, the change must go deeper than the surface. I must be ploughed up and re-sown.

That is why the real problem of the Christian life comes where people do not usually look for it. It comes the very moment you wake up each morning. All your wishes and hopes for the day rush at you like wild animals. And the first job each morning consists simply in shoving them all back; in listening to that other voice, taking that other point of view, letting that other larger, stronger, quieter, life come

68 Which might explain why the term "intellectual" (see Delbecq 2004:244) is used to characterize Christian life at work.

69 On the "normativist misunderstanding of theological ethics", see Fischer (2002:83).

70 For a historical perspective on Jesus's resurrection, see Wright (2002). That resurrection is "real", however, is not only a historical problem, but concerns the bodily relationship of Christ with those who belong to him, as Miller (2014) aptly points out.

71 For a reformulation of Christian ethics, not as application, but as the "Spirit-led participation in the formation of Christ", see Brügger and Kretzschmar (2015:6f).



flowing in. (...) He never talked vague, idealistic gas. When He said, 'Be perfect,' He meant it. He meant that we must go in for *the full treatment* (my emphasis).

Thus, if one wants to consider the formation of moral conduct in work contexts from a Christian perspective, the observable behavior of Christians cannot be separated from the bodily concreteness of their attachment to Christ: "what we must hold together is that participation in the death of Christ is 'real' and that this participation is a visible one borne out in the church's acts" (Miller 2014:130).

## 5.4 Theologies of work, business, and the corporation

Having discussed Protestant theological ethical contributions, I will now continue the exploration of the role of theology in the study of Christians at work by discussing some proposals from the theology of work, from the theology of business and management, and from the theology of the corporation. I have chosen texts which illustrate the variety of theological engagement with the workplace, and which I hold to be instructive for the study of Christians at work. In the first subsection, I will discuss Jeremy Posadas's critical engagement with the Christian theology of work. In subsection two, I will introduce Denise Daniels' theological approach to business, management and work. And, in the third subsection, I will address Michael Black's theology of the corporation.

### 5.4.1 *Jeremy Posadas on a critical Christian theology of work*

Jeremy Posadas (2017) reviews current accounts of work in Christian ethics and theology and seeks to advance them. I discuss his work here because his approach builds on a review of important contemporary theological approaches to work and because his proposal serves well to illustrate both the potential of such an approach to work and the problems that come with a neglect of Christian existence. Posadas first analyzes the different understandings of work. Second, he draws upon 'anti-work' thinkers, arguing that they present a vital corrective to the Christian thinkers. Third, he proposes a synthesis of an 'anti-work' perspective and Christian theology of work. In the following, I will sketch Posadas's account and then briefly outline how his practical proposal could be advanced by considering more explicitly the existence of Christians in contemporary workplaces.



First, Posadas discusses the accounts of the theology of work proposed by David Jensen, Miroslav Volf, John Paul II, Esther Reed, Darrell Cosden, and Darby Kathleen Ray. Although these accounts are diverse and draw on a variety of different traditional sources, Posadas (2017:343) identifies a “remarkable degree of conceptual congruence” in these accounts, consisting of a number of shared axioms concerning the notion of work. In particular, they apply an implicit distinction between “work-in-its-essence” and work in the everyday sense of paid jobs and unpaid domestic labor. Based on this distinction, 1) work in its essence must be understood as a basic part of human existence. 2) Work in its essence is viewed as intrinsically good. This is 3) often derived from “defining God’s activity as work and extrapolating from that point” (2017:342). 4) Work which degrades human dignity is viewed as a deformation of work in its essence and not as a problem inherent to work itself. 5) Degrading work is to be redeemed by adjusting the working conditions. So much for his synthesis of current approaches.

Second, after describing this conceptual convergence, Posadas moves on to draw upon thinkers who adopt an anti-work perspective (Paul Lafargue, André Gorz, Kathi Weeks, and others). From an anti-work perspective, writers criticize the taken-for-granted concept and respective structuring of society that “wage-earning work, performed either by oneself or by others in one’s household, is the means by which people gain access to those goods and services necessary for living at all” (Posadas 2017:344). Anti-work writers argue for the recognition of “the possibility that society’s collective resources could be organized in such a way that the aggregate amount and intensity of work could be decreased while still ensuring that everyone’s basic needs are met” (2017:344) and for the decrease of work’s *dominance* over the spheres of human life. This dominance, they argue, says Posadas, is maintained through the concepts of the work society and its work ethic: “the work society is organized so that people must devote and orient much of their lives to working, often in variously degrading conditions; its governing ethic affirms that hard, honest work is a major mark of moral worthiness and a source of dignity and fulfillment” (Posadas 2017:348).

Third, by synthesizing the theology of work with an anti-work perspective, Posadas argues for the adoption of a so-called ‘refusal of work’ position in Christian theology, combined with a definition of work which is narrower than that usually adopted (the new definition would *not* include productive activity and creativity *outside the wage relationship*): “In late capitalism, work consists of all wage-earning activities, plus unwaged activities

that are necessary to enable people to perform wage-earning activities: that is work includes jobs, childcare and other caregiving, housework, and home maintenance” (2017:354). He then proposes concrete policies for the reorganization of society, which avoids the dominance of work: First, “a basic livable income guaranteed unconditionally to every member of society” (2017:350f) and second, “a redefinition of full-time work as six hours a day, without any reduction from current pay rates” (2017:351). In addition to this general redefinition of work and its related policies, Posadas suggests that the ‘refusal of work’ perspective can inspire Christian accounts of work in a number of ways: 1) the distinction between work in its essence and actual work needs to be abandoned, and it should be recognized that work “only exists in concrete forms” (2017:354) as wage-earning activities plus unwaged activities necessary to perform wage-earning activities, not as an abstract essence. 2) In this view, “God is not a worker and God’s actions are not properly defined or construed as ‘work’” (2017:355). 3) Therefore “work is not what humans were created for” (2017:355). 4) Work (as a consequence and manifestation of the brokenness of human life) “is a problem rather than a good and should be limited as much as possible” (2017:356). 5) “No one should have to work in order to live with basic human dignity” (2017:356) and therefore, 6) “Christians should constantly organize and advocate for political changes that allow everyone to be able to work less and less” (2017:357), and 7), Christians should promote a vision of worker justice that seeks “the increase of time and resources for life outside of work” (2017:358), and “the eradication of degrading and alienating conditions and consequences of work” (2017:356).

Posadas criticizes theological accounts of work as employing an *implicit* distinction between work-in-its-essence and actual work (2017:332). This move allows theologians to simultaneously embrace the notion of work as positive, while criticizing problematic current forms of work as corrupted, says Posadas. This ‘layered’ evaluation rests on the idea of work as intrinsically good and part of God’s nature. In the argumentation which Posadas criticizes, what follows from the status of human beings as being made in the image of God is that work is also a positive part of human nature. However, according to Posadas, the theologians he analyzed do not account for why the category of work “properly applies to God’s activities” (Posadas 2017:333) at all. Concluding that it does not, he argues that, from a Christian perspective, a narrower definition of work is appropriate (2017:354, see above), and that work is to be interpreted as a consequence of the brokenness of human life, and the influence of work on human life needs to be limited as much as possible. From my reading of theological

texts, I think that Posadas's identification of an implicit distinction between essential and actual work captures an important aspect. In particular, it appears to be true that in theological approaches work tends to be portrayed as good, but some forms of it as corrupted.<sup>72</sup> Theologically, the good aspects relate to creational aspects of work, while the corrupted elements of work relate to the fall or to sin. Having said that, I doubt that these two (the positive and negative) aspects of work are to be allocated to an essential (good) and an actual (corrupted) understanding of work. I cannot tell if such a distinction is really implied by the authors Posadas discusses, but in the theological account of work which I will discuss below (see 5.4.2) it seems to me more of a dialectic which characterizes actual work under the conditions of creation and fall. Be that as it may, I do think, however, that Posadas's criticism of the inhuman dominance of paid work in contemporary society can be better supported by addressing the characteristics of Christian existence and identity than by the redefinition of work he proposes. In the following, I will, first, discuss his proposal for a redefinition of work (1), and second, substantiate his criticism of the dominance of paid work by a 'thicker' account of Christian existence (2).

1) To support his practical proposals and policy recommendations, I do not think that Posadas's conceptual re-interpretation of work is necessary. Without it (which means sticking to the 'traditional' notion of work as essentially good), one has no less of a basis to criticize the fact that many people's lives are dominated by the imperative of paid work in a way which violates their human dignity. Posadas does not, in my view, convincingly make the case why a broader notion of work should be narrowed down in the way he proposes. In particular, his theological criticism of the implicit distinction between essential and actual work rests on the argument that, from a Christian perspective, it is incorrect to portray God as a worker.<sup>73</sup> Posadas concedes that "God makes concentrated efforts, pursues planned actions, persists, creates, produces", but he still insists that "God is not a worker and God's actions are not properly defined or construed as "work" (Posadas 2017:355). While this seems to be untenable as an interpretation

72 In addition to the accounts discussed by Posadas, see, for example, the account of work by Diddams and Daniels (2008) discussed in the following section.

73 A similar idea is proposed by Kathryn Tanner (2005:47): "God after all is very rarely thought by Christian theologians to make the world through labor: God speaks, and the world immediately comes to be, without any effort, without materials or tools". I can only note *en passant* that this conclusion seems to ignore that people whose professional work includes *speaking* activities do actually work and they know that speaking does not have to mean "without any effort" (Tanner 2005:47).

of relevant scriptural texts, Posadas rightly points out that the talk of God as a worker needs to be justified by those who apply it (2017:333, see also 2017:336.338.342.349, footnotes 10, 11, 14, and 21). Now, many would agree with Posadas that God does not need to earn wages according to the biblical texts. Posadas is simply applying here his own narrower definition of work (see, e.g. 2017:336.355). And it is true that the scriptural texts do not contain any specific notions of work taken from the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>74</sup> While the scriptural texts use a variety of different terms to refer to God's activities, there is, nevertheless, a textual basis which uses terminology for God's activities that displays similarities with a contemporary notion of work. This is reflected, for example, in how Bible translators *consistently* translate Genesis 2:2f by using the term 'work': "By the seventh day God finished the work<sup>75</sup> that he had been doing, and he ceased on the seventh day all the work that he had been doing". This is the wording of the NET Bible. I have not found any English translation which does not translate here with 'work'). This textual basis must be ignored to conceive of God as 'not a worker' or 'not working'. The burden of proof is thus on the side of those who want to argue *against* the notion that God is working (in the light of the biblical texts) in spite of the fact that God is clearly portrayed as working in a text like Genesis 2:2f. Posadas also criticizes an understanding of Genesis 1:28 (advocated e.g. by John Paul II), which equates 'subduing the earth' with work, and asks if this is not better conceptualized as artistry or transformation.<sup>76</sup> Here, again, Posadas applies his own definition of work as paid work and, based on his definition, he argues for the exclusion of certain activities from the concept of work to maintain his narrow definition of work. While this exercise in exegesis must remain unfinished here, I do not see the value of approaching the scriptures<sup>77</sup> by asking what may or may not count as work. This brings me to my second point.

2) In Posadas's account, Christians in their relation to work seem to be (only implicitly) defined as those who should adopt the views of and attitudes to work which Posadas suggests. This is at best a very thin account of Christian existence at work. Rather than such re-conceptualizations of

74 As they do not contain *any* concepts from the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which seems obvious, but which can easily be ignored.

75 Hebrew: מלאכה, Greek: τὰ ἔργα.

76 From an fsw perspective, one might add 'management' or 'leadership' to Posadas's proposal (note the Latin *dominium*).

77 In addition to this exegetical argument against a narrow definition of work, it also seems contradictory to Posadas's intention to restrict the dominance of paid work and to restrict the contemporary definition of work to paid work.

work, which Posadas suggests, it seems to be much more decisive, with reference to a mode of existence pertinent to followers of Christ in work contexts, to note the following: According to Ephesians (2:9), those who live in allegiance to Christ are not saved by their own “works”<sup>78</sup>, but “by grace through faith” (Ephesians 2:8). Moreover, work is not primarily something followers of Christ *do*, but they are, in the first place, the objects and receivers of God’s working activities, “for we are his workmanship” (ποίημα) (Ephesians 2:10)<sup>79</sup>. I share Posadas’s concern for mitigating the negative effects of the unhealthy dominance of paid work over the life of human beings. However, I do think that the contemporary Christian contribution to the question of work is not primarily a conceptual reformulation of what work is or should be. Rather, it is that Christians, as those who let God be the one who works on them, can witness and learn to live and act in accordance with their liberation from the stronghold of the inappropriate dominance<sup>80</sup> of work over their lives. While I think that this may manifest itself in such steps as advocating a basic livable income guaranteed unconditionally or a re-definition of full-time work as a reflection of the primacy of God’s work over human action,<sup>81</sup> it may also, at times, include “working night and day” (1 Thess 2:9) as a reflection of the dignity of human agency embedded in the life of God.

#### 5.4.2 Denise Daniels on the theology of business, management, and work

Denise Daniels draws on the work of the Dutch theologian and statesman Abraham Kuyper, who argued that the redemptive work of Jesus Christ extends across all areas of life.<sup>82</sup> I discuss her work here because it is comprehensive in its theological approach and in its coverage of the concepts of business, management, and work.<sup>83</sup> Daniels and colleagues employ the concepts of *creation*, *fall*, and *redemption* from salvation history as a frame-

78 The Greek term here is again ἔργον, as in the Septuagint version of Genesis 2:2f.

79 I will outline in chapter 6 how Ephesians 2:10 can be said to entail, in a nutshell, a whole theory of living Christianly at work.

80 See also Honecker (discussed in 5.3.2) on the relativizing force of faith on work.

81 Miller’s (2014) approach seems to question such separation of God’s work from human action. If we take this seriously, it might be more appropriate to speak of the primacy of God’s work *in* human action.

82 In various texts published together with several colleagues (Daniels et al. 2012, Daniels, Franz & Wong 2008, Diddams & Daniels 2008:63). See also her recent book on spiritual practices at work (Daniels & Vandewarker 2019).

work in order to develop a theology of business (Daniels et al. 2012), a Christian approach to management (Daniels, Franz & Wong 2000)<sup>84</sup>, and an ‘ideology’ of work (Diddams & Daniels 2008:61). In this subsection, I will present an overview of these three texts, and in the conclusion to this chapter (see 5.5) I will relate her approach to other theological approaches to work contexts.

Daniels and colleagues (2012) sketch a “theology of business”. They employ the concepts of *creation*, *fall*, and *redemption* from salvation history as a framework in order to construct a theology of business grounded in a biblical worldview. *Creation* points to the goodness of the world as created by God, the dignity of human beings created in the image of God, and the “ruling” role of humans as stewards of creation, and as participants in God’s creative activities (2012:61). Community, institutions, and corporate structures are part of the created order. They refer to business as an institution “because it is the means by which a group (society/culture) chooses to solve one of its basic social problems—in this case the production and distribution of goods and services” (2012:62f). The purpose of every institution is to facilitate abundant lives lived in relationship with God and in community with other people (2012:63). The specific purposes of the institution of business are (2012:63):

- Creating, producing, and justly distributing good products and services for people to live well
- Providing opportunities for “vocationally rich work” (2012:63)
- Facilitating and developing community
- Guarding, tending, and nurturing the earth as a shared resource

The *fall* refers to human sin as distrusting God, a denial of God’s authority and an unwillingness to accept the human role in creation as stewards. This leads to usurpation of ownership over resources (2012:64) and the corruption of work. Businesses, as well as other institutions, suffer from a particular form of corruption under the fall. Businesses intended to serve broader purposes as means to an end are becoming an end in themselves.

83 While there are many theological approaches to business (see 5.2), her approach is one of the proposals which is not limited to ethical aspects of business, but adopts a broader theological perspective, which also considers a Christian mode of existence which the present dissertation refers to.

84 This text differs from the other two in that it does not explicitly draw on Kuyper’s work and does not employ the full frame of creation–fall–redemption, but focuses more on aspects of creation and fall.

The profit motive becomes the sole and idolatrous focus (2012:64), and the purposes of business (see above) are being undermined.

*Redemption*, with regard to business, refers to the restoration of business to the purposes for which it was intended, and participation in the coming kingdom of God (2012:65). Redemption is a crucial aspect of any Christian approach to business:

Any consideration of a theology of business is incomplete without a thorough understanding of the impact of the cross, the resurrection, the outpouring of the Spirit, and the eschaton (what we are calling collectively, “redemption”). Indeed, it would be difficult to characterize a theology of business as “Christian” without a detailed understanding of the impact of Jesus Christ on the purpose and practice of business (2012:65).

Redemption through Jesus Christ is specifically linked to a suitable role of business in human life. Drawing on the New Testament writings on “principalities” (see e.g. Col 1:16; 2:15), Daniels and colleagues (2012:66) argue that Christ revealed the idolatrous corruption of institutions (as ends instead of means) “and ‘disarmed’ their ability to deceive mankind as authorities of ultimate significance”.

It is, however, difficult to clearly pinpoint the concrete contribution of redemption to a theology of business, according to Daniels and colleagues. This is due to three main debatable (and interrelated) issues: first, what is the extent of the corruption that happened at the fall, and how did this impact the state of the world? Second, to what extent is the victory of Christ at the cross already realized, and to what extent are the consequences of this victory still waiting to be worked out (the already–not yet paradox)? And third, “what will happen at the end of human history?” (2012:67) In particular, what is the relationship of the new heaven and the new earth to the existing world? Is it marked by radical discontinuity and the destruction of the world as we know it, or will the new build on the old and transform it?

Daniels and colleagues (2012) argue that differing approaches to these questions are related to different ways of conceiving the relationship between Christ and culture in Christianity, and between Christians’ attitude to contemporary culture. They draw upon a proposal by Louke van Wensveen Siker (1989), who adapted H. Richard Niebuhr’s (1951) five types of the relationship between Christ and culture to the area of business: Christ against business, Christ of business, Christ above business, Christ and business in paradox, and Christ transforming business. These five types reflect a “plethora of viewpoints” (Daniels et al. 2012:70) with differing



implications for the view of business and the life of a Christian therein. In concluding their discussion of Siker's (1989) five types of relationship between Christ and business, Daniels and colleagues (2012:70) sketch their own perspective: they argue that the cross of Jesus and his command to take up our cross and follow him points to an inevitable conflict between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world. They also point out that, for Jesus, obedience to the Father did not result in material success, but rather in a sentence of death, and that the New Testament is clear in that the followers of Christ should expect nothing better. "The cross embodies the fundamental and fierce tension between the ways of God and the ways of this world" (2012:71). In terms of a Christian's ethical orientation, sacrificial love is the one feature of Christ's life "most clearly held up as a model of behavior" (2012:71). However, the cross and Christ's resurrection are more than ethical models. They are the basis for the later outpouring of the Spirit, who now enables Christians to live according to God's Kingdom in the midst of a fallen world. Individually, Christians are, through redemption, "liberated from the idolatry of the market and set free to pursue, with assurance of power, a business life lived in obedience to Christ" (2012:73). Redemption thus involves a call to participate with God in the restoration and transformation of business (2012:75).

Daniels, Franz, and Wong (2000) outline a Christian approach to management. Based on their typology of worldviews (see 3.2.2) and their argument that different worldviews imply different spiritualities, they locate a Christian worldview as *theistic* in their framework of worldviews. Their approach is descriptive, in that they do not argue that it is "the best or only way" to understand management; rather they seek to describe how "our Christian beliefs inform our understanding and teaching of management" (Daniels et al. 2000).<sup>85</sup> For Daniels and colleagues (2000), a Christian worldview has implications for two main themes relevant to how they understand and teach management: human nature and community.

First, human nature and the human condition are marked by creation and fall: humans are created by God in God's image, yet they rebelled against God. The human condition and the nature of human work are thus "neither purely good nor evil" (Daniels et al. 2000), humans display a "dual nature".<sup>86</sup> Daniels and colleagues (2000) find similarities between a Chris-

85 This seems to be an approach similar to the one Marsden suggests: "If so and so religious belief were true, how would it change the way we look at the subject at hand? (1997:52)" (see also 4.1.2 and 7.2).

86 See also the similar view adopted by Oermann (5.3.4).



tian account of the nature of humans and current management theories, in particular in McGregor's theory X/theory Y and in agency theory.

Second, community is a significant Christian concept in that "people in relationship with one another and with God" (Daniels et al. 2000) are central to the Christian narrative. In this light, work becomes a means to honor God and serve other people. This is mirrored in a number of areas of managerial study, such as job satisfaction, leadership, and resource usage (Daniels et al. 2000). For example, from a Christian perspective, Daniels and colleagues (2000) view job satisfaction as a legitimate organizational goal. They argue, however, that the human need and desire for meaning in life can only be met when work is viewed as a vocation or calling. People are called to a given task and can thus find meaning and fulfillment and serve others at the same time. The concept of community also points to the broader social context, in which a business exists. This entails responsibilities toward other people, organizations, and the environment.

The salvation history framework, characterized by the three aspects of creation, fall, and redemption, can also be employed in an analysis of work<sup>87</sup> (Diddams & Daniels 2008). In terms of *creation*, work is to be viewed as good. Work activities, outcomes, and workplaces partake in God's creation and are therefore good. Workers have inherent dignity, are co-creators<sup>88</sup> with God, have volitional will, and are relational beings (2008:67). In terms of the *fall*, the good characteristics of work are tainted, and work becomes 'work with toil'. Work activities have become toilsome and full of sorrow. Work outcomes are not always positive. Work contexts are under the curse of the fall (2008:72f). Workers reject their dignity and their co-creation role as partners of God. Rather than practicing volition, people are prone to self-deception and personal enslavement. In addition, the fall leads to the "propensity of elevating self over other" (2008:73), resulting in distorted relationships. *Redemption*, as it relates to work, refers to God's action of reconciling creation and restoring the co-creator role of human beings through and in Jesus Christ (2008:77), which results in 'redeemed work'. Redeemed work is "objectively meaningful" (2008:77). It recognizes that people are created in the image of God and seeks to minimize toil (2008:78).

87 Note that, in their proposal of a Christian approach to management (Daniels, Franz & Wong 2000), they also address the notion of work (see above in this section, and on the problem of the semantic ambiguity of such terms as management and work, see 3.5).

88 For a critique of the theological idea of work as co-creation, see Hauerwas (1995c).

Diddams and Daniels (2008:66–71.73 – 76) show that the creation and fall characteristics of work are mirrored in current academic management theory, in particular in the disciplines of organizational behavior and human resource management theories. However, management research associated with creation and fall characteristics tends to be descriptive, “data-driven, backward looking”. Instead, they propose the paradigm of ‘redeemed work’ to “harmonize” (2008:77) the research agenda on work and management, resulting in an approach to management which is “theology-driven, forward looking and normative”<sup>89</sup> (2008:77).

In this outlook, Christians (2008:63) are those who have begun to experience Christ’s redemptive work and who are drawn to participate in God’s redemptive work in this world. Christian existence in the world is marked by an ‘already–not yet’ tension, and until “redemption has been completed in the fullness of the Kingdom of God, there will always be good work with toil. Nevertheless, this work may be redeemed” (2008:82).

Note that Daniels’s approach explicitly considers the role of Christians at work, in contrast to many of the theological approaches discussed so far. The theme of the role of Christians at work is not explicitly addressed in her text on management (Daniels et al. 2000), the earliest of her three texts that are dealt with here; it pops up in her later text (Diddams & Daniels 2008) on work, and it is most explicitly covered in the most recent text (Daniels et al. 2012) on business. The early text on management seems yet to be close to Oermann’s proposal in its conclusion that Christian beliefs inform the approach to management via a particular understanding of human nature (see above). Such an approach has a cognitive emphasis in that it does address how Christian beliefs influence an understanding of management. It has, however, no direct concern for the fact that Christian beliefs are not just ‘there’ somewhere, but they are embodied, that is, held by Christians who live as Christians in their respective contexts. Put differently, ‘Christian beliefs’ are embedded in Christian ways of living. This is the theme which unfolds in more detail in the later two publications, and in particular in the 2012 text on a theology of business. In the light of the study of Christians at work, this is an important step in broadening theological engagement with workplaces. I will, therefore, come back to Daniels’s

89 I do not think that their approach is purely normative. The three notions of creation, fall, and redemption are used by Daniels and colleagues, I would say, in different ways, including (and, in a way, synthesizing) explanatory, interpretative, descriptive, and normative usages (see also Daniels et al. (2000), who refer to their approach to management as “descriptive”).

approach in the concluding section of this chapter. But first, I will now turn to Michael Black's work.

#### 5.4.3 *Michael Black on practical corporate theology and on the theology of the corporation*

Michael Black (2009) explores the 'theology of the corporation' by drawing on sources from Jewish and Christian tradition.<sup>90</sup> I discuss Michael Black's brilliant work on the corporation here because he is fluent in various theories of the corporation and offers, to my knowledge, an unparalleled and comprehensive account of the corporation. He succeeds in accentuating the particular importance of a theological approach which, as I will point out below, indicates, at least in my reading of his proposal, a remarkable relationship between corporate contexts and what I call a Christian mode of existence at work.

Black argues that the corporation is "not natural" (2008:252), but a theological concept which "eludes purely secular analysis" (2011:1). The term is used by Black in a very broad sense, as a social institution with its *own identity*, which is distinct from other social institutions, such as families, governments, states, partnerships, clubs, et cetera (2008:50; 2011:1). However, managerial accountability (see below) of those in charge applies not only to the modern corporation, but to the democratic state, democratic society, and the church, which all have their origin in the "Pauline innovation of the use of the Roman *peculium* as a model for the church" (2011:3). The church is thus "the first corporation" (2011:2), or an "institutional representative of the corporation" (2008:51). "The distinguishing feature of a corporation—a limited liability company, for example—is that it somehow possesses an identity, a life, independent of its members. It can act through its members" (2011:1). The

corporation has its own interests, values, or criteria of choice, which are not those of its members. This is universally accepted without question. It is the formal method by which *dominium* (management) is separated from *usufructus* (benefit) and is the essential mark of the corporate relation (2011:1).

According to Black, the basic practical challenges which corporations face today occur *because* the theological character of the corporation is not considered and respected. In his dissertation, Black (2009) explores the sources

90 See also the work of Edward Wray-Bliss on some relations between early Christian thinking and contemporary corporations (2019a, 2019b).

of the corporation and traces the history of the ‘corporate relation’ from its beginnings in the Israeli covenant to the twentieth century. In ‘The crisis of the corporation’ (2011) and in ‘Speaking the Word to corporate managers’ (2008), he sketches the implications of this theological character of the corporation for corporate managers. Black’s conception of the corporation is comprehensive and far-reaching in scope and in its claims, and he also develops a comprehensive understanding of the demands of managerial practice. It is important to note that these demands are not only placed on adherents to a certain tradition (because they happen to be both managers and adherents to a certain religious tradition), but are tied to the very functioning of a corporation and its management and thus affect everyone with some relation to corporate contexts. Moreover, in Black’s (2008:47.51) view, every participant in or member of a corporation is a corporate manager. This is because the corporate relationship is fractal: “It looks the same whether one is viewing the corporation as a whole in relation to the rest of society or the relation of any component of the corporation to the entirety” (2008:47.51).<sup>91</sup> In particular, members of a corporation act on behalf of the corporation. In this regard, Second Isaiah describes the corporate character and contains the “basic rules of the game”, says Black (2008:48), as they “are still in force for those who participate in corporate life” (2008:48): managerial accountability, corporate freedom, submission to corporate identity, and corporate immunity.

Crucial to the corporate relation is *management accountability*: “Members of the corporation must be prepared always to justify their actions and submit this justification to the rest” (2008:48). YHWH’s demand does not refer to specific required actions or results. What is demanded is an explanation for what was done, a reason for what has been attempted. “What is required from the corporate manager is accountability for the criterion of his action” (2008:48). It has to be given in the form of “a scale or metric, of importance, of progress, of value, on which and in which both intention and outcome are to be measured” (2008:48). Therefore, the first managerial responsibility is the choice of the criterion of action, performance, and success. This choice has to be defended before the other members of the corporation, and before God. The manager’s intention needs to be documented in a “publicly available expression” as the “locus of accountability” (2008:48).

91 This seems to reflect the idea that the whole society, similar to the corporation, also functions corporately. A related idea can be found in Abraham Kuyper’s (see Heslam 2015:15f) comparison of society with a human body.

Related to management accountability and inherent to the corporate relation is the spiritual demand of *corporate freedom*. This freedom is paradoxical: The corporate manager is to decide upon the criterion by which s/he is to be judged. This is the demand. However, there are infinite possibilities for this criterion, says Black (2008:49). The choice of the criterion of action is beyond logic or rational argument. The information necessary for the decision cannot be known because the managerial decision on the criterion of action “actually makes the distinction between mere ‘noise’ and what is meaningful data” (2008:49). In a similar way, personal experience is secondary. Experience is not a reliable form of input for this basic managerial decision, but a consequence of it. This is the paradox of corporate freedom: “there is no compelling reason that can be found for the choice of any criterion whatsoever! Yet the choice *must* be made” (2008:49).

Black points out that participation in terms of belonging to a corporate relationship means *submission to a corporate identity*. The corporation has its own identity, and its own interests (which do not have to be those of its members). It is a distinct entity. Each member of the corporation is fully responsible for the entire “corporate body”, says Black (2008:50). Individual members act on behalf of and realize the whole: “When I act, the whole is in me” (2008:50). “Each member is the whole corporation when he or she acts in its name” (2008:50.52). This is most appropriately described neither by “representation” nor by “agency”, but by “embodiment” (2008:50.52). Corporate members embody the corporate relationship. That it is a distinct entity is not only a legal aspect of the corporation, but a theological aspect as well. Just as participation in Israel means participation in the life of YHWH, “those participating in the corporate relation can be said to be participating in the life of the Trinity itself” (2008:50). Community arises out of submission/obedience to God’s will. The command of God cannot be heard by one alone. Referring to Bonhoeffer, Black argues that community is a revelation, and that this is the case in the church as well as in the corporation. Participation in the corporate relation requires a “kenotic, perichoretic vulnerability”, says Black (2008:51). It is the demand to “empty oneself spiritually (kenosis) in order to express the corporate good in oneself (perichoresis)” (2008:50). Submission to the corporate identity entails submission to judgment and accountability to other corporate members, and “ultimately to the interests of the divine” (2011:2). Participation in the corporate relation is to “free oneself from one’s own self-interests” (2008:50). This participation is “not possible without the assistance of the Spirit, that is without becoming part of the very relation between Father and Son in our action of submission” (2008:50). In making

this point, Black epistemologically draws upon the work of Karl Barth and Hans Urs von Baltasar, who argued that “all secular relations and realities are to be explained in terms of the self-revelation of God’s Word in Jesus Christ” (Black 2008:50.52). Ontologically, Black refers to Daniel Jenkins, who indicates that every human being dwells in the word of God and lives out her/his life in God’s presence, and that therefore every human being somehow encounters God (has ‘dealings’ with God), even if s/he does not know God’s name in Christ (2008:51.53), and Edward Schillebeeckx, who argues that “in every case of true human encounter between men, revelation and faith are present” (in Black 2008:51:53). The role of the Spirit is to assist corporate managers in their kenotic and perichoretic vulnerability to other members of the corporation, says Black (2008:51).

Submission takes on the form of our expression of our view of what we hold to be the criterion of action now, and of listening to others and synthesizing a greater criterion. And “the more articulate our expression is, the more vulnerable we become” (2008:51). Submission can also assume the form of exercising authority by cutting off further discussion about the criterion. In these instances of submission, we become vulnerable. It is not possible to enter into this vulnerable condition unassisted. This is why Black refers to such acts of submission and vulnerability as “real spiritual exercises, not pious ritual” (2008:51) and as “essential habits of the corporate relationship” (2011:2). As regards his terminology, Black points out that, “‘Submission’, ‘kenosis’, ‘perichoresis’, ‘faith’, and ‘the presence of the Spirit’ are all moments of the same event” (2008:50.52), with no causal relationship intended. “Faith” is interpreted by Black as referring to being “prepared to disclose completely and subject oneself to mutual judgment as well as judgment by authority” (2008:50–52, footnote 27).

*Corporate immunity* (and ‘corporate grace’) exists with regard to two main aspects: first, the failure to appropriately decide upon the criterion of action. This failure is inevitable, for “the only thing certain about the managerial decision regarding the criterion of action is that it is necessarily and inevitably *wrong*”, says Black (2008:50, emphasis in the original). This will be forgiven within the corporate relation as long as it is “representative of a continuing attempt to articulate the true corporate interest” (2008:50). Thus, the authenticity of the criterion becomes the prerequisite for forgiveness in this regard. The case for the criterion has to be made “not based on what it is but on how it was arrived at” (2008:50). The corporate covenant guarantees its participants protection against harm as long as they attempt to act in the true interest of the corporation, says Black (2008:50).

How is this account of corporate management related to the situation of contemporary corporations? While in his first article (2008) Black takes the perceived gap between the church and the corporate world, between faith and corporate life, as a starting point, in another text (2011) he articulates a corporate theology with a focus on the current crisis of the corporation. In the modern world, the corporation has become a social monster (2011:1), an instrument of exploitation (of employees, of the environment, of national governments, of customers and suppliers, of the political system, and of the global legal system), individual repression, and social division. This happened because the essence of the corporate relation has been forgotten: all corporate members have a responsibility for answering and agreeing upon an answer to the question of what “the measure of benefit” (2011:1) of the corporation is. Among the corporate members, there is thus a relationship of mutual submission. The basic idea of the corporation is the “incorporation (and transformation) of individual interests into the interests of the whole” (2011:2). This corporate relationship has been corrupted, and corporate reform, in other words the recovery of the authentic corporate relationship, is a spiritual task “which can only be understood theologically”, says Black (2011:2), because the corporation maintains its theological character, “even in an apparently secular setting” (2011:5).

Black (2011:4) contrasts the theological concept of the corporation with “current mainstream managerial theory”. He illustrates the contrast with reference to the case of a hospital attempting to achieve independent trust status, which according to current management theory has to be judged as a success, but which at the same time “lost sight of its responsibilities of patient care” with a patient mortality rate between 27 and 45 percent higher than would be expected. According to Black, the core of current mainstream management theory is

that corporate organization requires “alignment” among its members in order to function effectively. In short everyone must be pulling in the same direction, or some equivalent euphemism. The job of the corporate executive, so the theory goes, is to ensure this alignment by first formulating a vision, strategic direction, and programme for the corporation, and then ensuring “buy in” or acceptance of these throughout the corporate hierarchy, from the janitor in the toilets to the head of finance and all the levels in between (Black 2011:4).

In such an approach, managers manipulate the behavior of subordinates toward an overall goal. In contrast, theologically understood, the relationship of corporate members is one of mutual submission, “of the junior to the senior in matters of direction, and the senior to the junior in the matter of benefit”, says Black (2011:4). Questions of *usufructus* (benefit) are decided



upon from below. “The key function of management in this process is to synthesize and reconcile competing and inconsistent formulations of the corporate intention” (2011:5). There is thus a stark contrast between “dictatorial direction” and “corporate management” (2011:5). The mutual relationship of corporate members (and the creation of the corporate entity) is not a matter of commitment by contract, but that of “enacting a covenant”, says Black (2011:5). In terms of the covenant of God with humanity, the relationship of mutual submission can be identified with the Holy Spirit (2011:5). The existence of the corporation is dependent on the continuing commitment of its members. The corporate purpose is distinct from the purposes of its members, but they are related in that the former is “constructed from” the purposes of its members (2011:5). And the corporate relation is not superior to its members’ individuality, but distinct from it (2011:6).

However, corporate ambition has become “the fundamental ethical problem of modern life”, says Black (2011:8). Ambition, that is, the drive and passion toward personal power, has used the corporation as its instrument. However, the corporation cannot be controlled because it has a life of its own. It is a person, not a tool that can be instrumentalized toward some end. It has its own ends, even if it appears to be subservient. Thus, the “corporation consumes its most talented and most willing members” (2011:7). Because of ambition, the corporation dominates modern life in a destructive way. It destroys relationships (with friends, neighborhoods, national states, and the environment). “All ambitions are merely grist for the corporate mill of power”, says Black (2011:8), and “ambition itself is the raw material of corruption” (2011:8). The “passion of ambition” (2011:8) has thus to be replaced by compassion, that is, by giving up instrumental use of the corporate relationship. The corporate relationship “is its own end” (2011:8). As such, the corporation is recognized as “a theological person with its own place in the kingdom of God” (2011:8). Christians are well prepared to contribute to the transformation needed because they have been set free from “the separation among human subjects” (2011:6). By maintaining the corporate relationship of mutual submission, “we do encounter God through others in the corporation” (2011:6): “Just as the image of God the Father in Jesus Christ is not merely a copy or an imitation or a representation, so the image of ourselves in the other is neither inferior nor defective nor misleading” (2011:6). In this relationship of mutual submission, we are to express our views of the criterion of action, to listen to the expression of others, and to synthesize a greater criterion. These are spiritual exercises (in contrast to pious rituals or managerial tech-



niques), potential steps in uncovering “the will of God in daily life”, says Black (2011:8). Thus, “searching for God” is an inherent part of corporate existence (2011:6).

What are the implications of Black’s theological conception of the corporation for the role of Christians working in corporate contexts? He argues for the importance of a perspective on the corporation rooted in Christian tradition, precisely because the concept (and its respective practice) is a product of this tradition. Overall, it seems that, for Black, corporate life requires *all* its participants (Christians and others) to live with faith<sup>92</sup> and to practice the spiritual exercises of mutual submission, express one’s view of the criterion of action, listen to the expression of others, synthesize a greater criterion, and seek to uncover “the will of God in daily life” (2011:8). Thus, “searching for God” is an inherent part of corporate existence (2011:6) for *every* corporate member. Corporate existence requires the assistance of the Spirit, that is, it requires participation in the relationship between God and Jesus Christ (2008:50). I am not quite sure what this means in terms of Christian existence in corporate contexts. It seems to imply that, since corporate existence is a product of a Christian form of existence, every corporate member participates or needs to participate, to a certain degree and in a way which seems quite existentially demanding, in a Christian mode of existence, even if they do not know God’s name in Christ (see Black 2008:51.53), and regardless of their being counted, nominally, as Christians or not. By recovering the theological character of the corporation, it can be transformed from a corporate monster into “a theological person with its own place in the kingdom of God” (2011:8). What exactly such a place of such theological people could be is not immediately clear. However, it seems that corporations, by their very existence, confront Christians and non-Christian individuals alike with the privileges and potentialities of a Christian mode of existence and with the demand to live Christianly.

### 5.5 Theology and the study of Christians at work

Let me conclude this chapter on the relationship of theology to the study of Christians at work with two observations. In so doing, I take up, first, Daniels’s understanding of Christian living and, second, her explicit consid-

92 Defined as being “prepared to disclose completely and subject oneself to mutual judgment as well as judgment by authority” (2008:50–52, footnote 27).

eration of Christians, which helps to illuminate a particular challenge of theological engagement with the workplace.

First, I would like to offer a concretization of Daniels's understanding of Christian existence at work by taking up some aspects of her approach, and by suggesting that these are more intimately related in the formation of Christian living at work than it seems at first sight. Based on this, I will then briefly indicate an agenda for Christian theological engagement with contemporary workplaces. The following passage from Daniels and colleagues (2012:71) accentuates some of the key aspects of her analysis of Christian living in business contexts:

The cross and subsequent resurrection are clearly more than mere ethical models. They stand at the decisive center of human history and mark Christ's victory over death and sin. They also are events that triggered the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. As such, they represent not only a call to self-sacrifice but also an assurance of power that enables Christians to begin to live out God's kingdom values in the midst of a fallen world. Enabled by the power of the Holy Spirit, we are both called and enabled to bring evidence of God's triumph into the world. "[Y]ou will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8) We testify to God's victory not only in words ("for the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power," 1 Cor 4:19) but by deeds that evidence the outbreaking of God's justice and righteousness.

To me, the question which arises from this basic outline is the following: In what particular way are the cross and Christ's resurrection more than ethical models? They are, as Daniels and colleagues (2012:71) point out in terms of salvation history, the basis for the later outpouring of the Spirit, who now enables Christians to live according to God's Kingdom in the midst of a fallen world. Colin Miller (2014), in his exegesis of Paul's epistle to the Romans, points out that the way in which the Spirit enables followers of Christ to live is intimately connected to Christ's dying and resurrection. In this view, the particular way the Spirit enables humans to live is itself cruciform! More specifically, Christians live according to God's Kingdom in that they participate bodily and spiritually in Christ's death and resurrection by putting to death their passions and desires, which are situated in the body, and by letting the Spirit infuse their bodies with Christ's death and resurrection, which becomes visible in just practice:

Thus the Spirit is, *in a very specific way*, the key term in participation: it cooperates with the church to put to death its evil deeds and at the same time vivifies those dying bodies and *ipso facto* makes them virtuous qua dead to passions and able to genuinely cooperate with God toward the good. The Spirit's part of the cooperation

is to ‘infuse’ sinful and in-themselves-sin-tending bodies with Christ’s dying (since dead bodies cannot sin) and at the same time with the life of Christ’s risen body as a foretaste of the new bodies church members are to fully receive in the resurrection (Miller 2014:103).

In this outlook, the spiritual and bodily character of Christian living are not in opposition but interrelated in their linkage to Christ’s body. Making a similar point, Anthony Kelly (2010:814) comments (with regard to Ephesians 2), “Here and elsewhere, the Body<sup>93</sup> and Spirit are never played off against each other but exist in a positive reciprocity: the more [there is] of the Body, the more there is of the Spirit; and the more there is of this one Spirit, the more believers are united in the Body”. These remarks of Kelly’s, alongside Daniels’s and Miller’s conceptions, may underline the importance of taking into account the bodily, spiritual, Christic, and cruciform character of Christian living in theological engagement with the workplace.<sup>94</sup>

With this in mind, *practical theology* and *theological ethics*, with regard to contemporary work contexts, can be conceived of as being concerned with exploring the particular ways in which a Christian mode of existence entails just practice at work through bodily participation “in the living Body of the Lord” (Kelly 2010:815).<sup>95</sup> A *theology of work* can address the relationship between God’s work and human agency in the formation of Christian living at work and a *theology of the corporation* can explore the corporation and the corporate mode of existence, with reference to Michael Black (2011, 2009, 2008), as an invitation (or a call) to live Christianly. A theology of *management* and *business* can explore the ways in which the Christian body is managed by an ongoing ‘putting to death of one’s passions and desires’ and the ways in which such body management facilitates management and business practices which are substantiated by the participation of Christians in Christ’s dying and resurrection.

Second, the specific setup of the approach of Daniels and colleagues to business (2012) facilitates the illumination of a particular problem which their approach avoids, but which is common in theological engagement with contemporary work contexts, as discussed in this chapter. The approach of Daniels and colleagues (2012) entails, first, a Christian *account*

93 Kelly (2010:793) capitalizes “Body” to refer to the incarnation as it expands in history. Thus “Body” refers to the “reality of the Body of Christ (...) as the point of convergence for all other considerations of the bodily dimensions of human existence” (2010:793).

94 On the spiritual and cruciform (as participating in Christ’s death and resurrection) character of Christian existence, see also Fischer 1994:186–189).

95 For a practical theology that takes up the notion of ‘christopraxis’, see Root (2014).

of the notions of business and, second, an account of *Christians* as existing in business contexts. These two can be described as different accounts, even though they are related, because they have different subject matters. In the first case, the subject matter is that of business (which is, in this case, approached from a Christian/theological perspective). In the second case, the subject matter is that of *Christians* living in business contexts. In other words, the approach of Daniels and colleagues offers conceptual space for Christians to live as Christians in the respective contexts. This contrasts with other theological approaches; for example, most of the theological ethical approaches to workplaces discussed in this chapter (see 5.3), which are confined mainly to the first option (a Christian or theological account of business or work), or if they consider the question of the existence of Christians, make the case that a Christian perspective on work contexts can be made intelligible without reference to the particular existence of Christians (e.g. 5.3.5).

I will refer to Pierre Bourdieu's notion of the habitus in this section in order to argue that the Christian account of something and the account of Christian existence therein or in relation to it are intertwined, and that what in Daniels's approach falls somehow naturally together necessarily needs to be considered together, and that approaches that dissociate a (Christian) theological approach to work contexts from Christian modes of existence in work contexts deprive themselves of their existential grounding, without which they can neither be practiced nor made intelligible. In the case of Daniels and colleagues (2012), the conceptual starting point and basis is the former (the Christian account of work or business as an overall framework), and it implies the latter (the account of Christian existence as the existential *localization*<sup>96</sup> of Christians that live within business or work contexts). Existentially, I argue that the latter is inextricably bound to and dependent on the former. Bourdieu's account of the habitus, which I will introduce presently, helps to illuminate why such localization is practically relevant in the formation of particular lifestyles.

The texts discussed in this chapter on the role of theology in the study of Christians in contemporary workplaces pursue a variety of different purposes and objectives, which are sometimes quite far removed from my interest in the study of Christians at work. For example, a Christian theological perspective on work can be related to the theme of Christian existence at work merely by proposing a certain view of and attitude to work which, it argues, Christians (or even everyone) should adopt, without offering an

96 On the Christian location of individuals, see 4.2.

account of what it means to be a Christian at work, apart from the contention that Christians should hold the proposed views and attitudes (see e.g. the discussion of Posadas, 2017, in 5.4.1). They thereby somehow implicitly equate Christian living at work with holding these views and attitudes. Or they can be even more loosely related to Christian existence, in that they claim that their views and attitudes are proposed *from* a Christian perspective but addressed *to* everyone (see in particular the authors discussed in 5.3). From the perspective of the study of Christians at work, such forms of Christian theological engagement with the workplace are deficient in that they claim to *speak from* a Christian perspective, but do not offer *localization* or an understanding of the Christian position from where they speak. Such approaches are therefore characterized by a ‘certain blindness’, to borrow a term from William James, as far as their own position is concerned. This lack of localization, then, can be referred to as the ‘blindness’ problem<sup>97</sup> of theological engagement with contemporary work contexts.

This distinction of a Christian perspective on *work contexts* from an account of *Christians at work*, which is the backbone of the ‘blindness’ criticism of theological approaches to contemporary work contexts, can be substantiated by reference to what some have referred to as a habitus. I will briefly sketch here the notion of a habitus as it is relevant for this distinction.<sup>98</sup> According to Pierre Bourdieu (2006:315), a habitus is what translates the necessities and facilities linked to particular conditions of existence into a particular lifestyle. Particular lifestyles, as they emerge in relation to different areas of cultural practices, such as sport, music, food, politics, language, food, clothing, cosmetics, et cetera, are defined within a “space of lifestyles” (2006:315), within an area of “stylistic possibles” (2006:315). The habitus is embodied “by implementing one of the stylistic possibles offered” (2006:315), in other words by living in a particular or distinct way. The notion of the habitus thus serves to account for 1) the practices and products of an agent, and 2) the capacity of an agent to *classify* practices and products (perception, appreciation, taste). These classificatory judgments of practices and products are linked *to a bird’s-eye view of social space dependent on*

97 With regard to the efforts of theologians to orient people, one is reminded of Jesus’s characterization of the “Pharisees and experts in the law” as “blind guides” (Mt 15:1), and of his subsequent remark that “if someone who is blind leads another who is blind, both will fall into a pit” (Mt 15:14).

98 For a more detailed engagement with Bourdieu’s notion of the habitus, see chapter 6.1.

*one's position within it*, says Bourdieu (2006:90f).<sup>99</sup> The habitus thus refers to the “common root” (2006:291) of both one's own (classifiable) practices and one's classificatory judgments (of the practices of others and of oneself).<sup>100</sup> Someone who presents, say, a (Christian theological) normative ethical perspective on work contexts without addressing the existence of Christians within the respective contexts isolates one of Bourdieu's aspects (that of classificatory judgments) and dissociates it from its existential context (Christians who may hold such a perspective) and from the bird's-eye view of social space (in this case, work contexts), which is dependent on this existential position. Such de-coupling of Christian concepts from their existential embeddedness is, however, a move, I argue, which cannot be performed, either practically or conceptually, without losing their very essence. This linkage between Christianity as a form of existence at work and a Christian perspective on work contexts is part of the substance of my criticism of extant theological approaches to work contexts, which claim to offer a Christian perspective on the subject, but do not consider Christian living as an actual mode of existence distinct from other modes of existence.<sup>101</sup>

99 See the related observation by Mellor and Shilling (2014:281), who argue that actors are routinely forced to take “an ‘external’, third-party view of their own practices, asses them in relation to others, and plan according to changing contexts”.

100 This relationship between evaluation and behavior is, I think, also reflected in the observation that how someone lives is related to their worldview or understanding of reality (see e.g. Brügger 2010, Cavanagh et al. 2003, Daniels et al. 2000, Honecker 1995:11–13, Kim, Fisher & McCalman 2009, Kim, McCalman & Fisher 2012, Rendtorff 2011:7, Rossouw 1994), and to a hermeneutical emphasis in theological ethics on the symbolization of reality (see e.g. Fischer 2002, Oermann 2007). In a similar vein, with reference to spirituality, Cavanagh and colleagues (2003:119) have argued that spirituality entails a worldview and a path. In theology, a way to take seriously the importance of the bird's-eye view on social space for human agency is the hermeneutic emphasis on the Christian symbolization of “*Lebenswirklichkeit*” (Fischer 2002:82) and its practical, localizing, and orienting character. Oermann (2014:18f) seems to intend to bring this to bear on business contexts, but his resulting theological–anthropological groundwork for economics seems to offer little more than an expansion of an understanding of the human being as a *homo oeconomicus* to that of a *simul iustus et peccator* (2014:314f).

101 One could argue that Christian moral theologians or ethicists do offer existential localization in terms of the normative conception or the particular norms they propose as points of orientation for living in contemporary workplaces. However, the theologians discussed are quite explicit in pointing out that these norms are not meant to be descriptive of a Christian mode of existence but are intended for everyone. Moreover, such norms seem to be only loosely related to concrete modes of existence, and they

Arthur Rich (see 5.3.5) addresses the question of Christian existence and offers an understanding of it, but does not bring to bear the general understanding of Christian existence upon the analysis of one's concrete living in the workplace, apart from normative criteria and maxims (Rich 1984:172).<sup>102</sup> Thus, except for some normative guidelines which are offered, it seems that the Christians in such an analysis have not yet learned to *walk* in contemporary work settings and appear, in this regard, 'paralyzed'. This is, then, the 'lameness' problem of theological engagement with contemporary work contexts. In this respect, chapter 4.3 indicated that the notion of spirituality seems to offer some potential conceptual space (for theologians and others alike) to explore the 'existential legs'<sup>103</sup> of an account of Christians at work.

To be precise, identification of the blindness and lameness problems is, in the first place, not a *general* criticism of the texts under discussion, but an evaluation relative to the question of the contribution of theological engagement with the workplace to the study of Christians at work. It can, of course, always be countered by saying that the authors *did not intend* to offer such a contribution. The serious question, then, in this regard is what the point of Christian theological engagement with work contexts is if it does not account for the mode of existence by which it is nourished and sustained. Of course, one could argue that others have addressed the question of Christian existence in general terms and that theological engagement with workplace-related topics is only concerned with the implications of Christian existence at work. This seems to be right, but then one has to deal with the fact that some authors seem to do this in such a way that theological insights are abstracted from the respective mode of existence in such a way that Christian existence becomes a non-topic, and one is left wondering why they claim to advocate a Christian perspective at all. In contrast to this, I have, in this chapter, also discussed authors who do explicitly consider Christian existence (in particular Arthur Rich and Denise

neither entail a view of social space nor of one's position within it, apart from the contention that these norms are proposed as characteristics of an ideal way of living in respective contexts. See also Paul, who describes in Galatians (5:13–25) two different modes of life (addressing followers of Christ), the life according to the Spirit and the life according to the flesh. He presents both a view of the different possibilities of living ("the space of lifestyles"; Bourdieu 2006:315) and a view of the preferable option (the position to be chosen within it).

102 In particular, Fetzner (2004:39) has indicated that Rich addresses questions of the economy in his ethics but neglects concrete corporate contexts.

103 On ecclesiological legs, see Miller (2014:6).

Daniels). As Daniels's approach indicates, both 'blindness' and 'lameness' can be remedied by explicitly addressing the role of Christians in contemporary work contexts. Thus, in terms of such 'blindness and lameness', while some extant theological approaches to contemporary workplaces are deficient or reductionist in their account of Christian living at work, others indicate a cure. In short, extant theological engagement with contemporary work contexts is to be complemented by the study of Christians at work.





## 6 The formation of the Christian body at work

In the present chapter, I will propose a sketch of the contours and contents of the formation of the Christian body in contemporary work settings. With the notion of ‘the Christian body’ at work, I take up the Christian (see e.g. Lewis 1980:63f) identification of the many bodies of those who live as Christians<sup>1</sup> with the place of the formation of the one body of Jesus Christ. In this respect, I will address two main aspects of the study of Christians at work: first, the framing of Christian existence at work (6.1) and, second, the embodiment of Christian existence at work (6.2). In doing so, I will use three different sources. First, I will draw on a theoretical sketch developed on the basis of data from our study of Christian managers in Switzerland.<sup>2</sup> Second, I will use Pierre Bourdieu’s work on the habitus (6.1) and Viktor Frankl’s work on meaning in life (6.2) as conceptual backgrounds, as well as some additional perspectives or ‘hermeneutical lenses’<sup>3</sup> to further explore and accentuate the contours and contents of the Christian body at work. Third, I will relate this discussion to some of the accounts<sup>4</sup> introduced in the first five chapters of this dissertation. While drawing on these three sources, I will propose ‘being a Christian’ or Christian existence as a key category in the study of Christians at work. I will argue that, in terms of the existential aspects of the term Christian, the two emphases—first, on the reality of Jesus Christ and, second, on the bodily and concrete character of Christian living—can be brought together to specify the bodily participation of those who live as Christians in the formation of the body of Christ in contemporary work settings.

Let me, in the remainder of this introduction to the present chapter, comment on the status of the theoretical sketch of Christian existence in contemporary workplaces which I developed on the basis of the above-mentioned empirical study of managers.<sup>5</sup> The theory proposed is intended as a contribution to the general study of Christians in contemporary Western contexts. Because the sample is geographically and functionally limited to Christian managers in German-speaking Switzerland (see 1.3),

- 1 Which, from an existential stance, includes those who live as Christians, while rejecting, for various reasons, the (nominal) label ‘Christian’ (see 6.1.2).
- 2 On the data used and the method applied in the data collection and analysis, see 1.3.
- 3 For an overview of the hermeneutical lenses used in this dissertation to explore Christian embodiment, see 1.4.
- 4 See the target discourses described in 1.2.
- 5 On the role of practitioner perspectives in the study of Christians at work, see also 1.4.

further research will be needed to advance the proposed theory to explicitly cover sections of the workforce, first, in other geographical contexts and, second, who are not usually considered to be ‘managers’<sup>6</sup>. The empirically grounded theoretical sketch considered in this dissertation consists of two main parts: first, a map of understanding to frame Christian existence at work (see 6.1) and, second, a sketch of the characteristic elements of how Christian existence is embodied in contemporary work settings (6.2). In the present dissertation, the function of the theory developed on empirical grounds is thus, first, to complement the conceptual work of this dissertation with regard to practitioner framings of Christian existence at work and, second, to provide the basic building blocks of a theoretical sketch of the embodiment of Christian existence at work. As the empirical grounding of the proposed theoretical sketch is limited by the sample of Christians studied, this chapter will not only introduce the theoretical sketch developed on empirical grounds, but also indicate its potential broader viability by relating it to extant research on Christians at work and to the various theoretical approaches indicated above.

## 6.1 Framing Christian existence at work

In the present section, I will, first, introduce a map of understanding<sup>7</sup> which seeks to capture the different connotations in the practitioner use of the terms Christian and Christians and their function in framing Christian existence at work. Second, I will compare the notion of Christian existence to Bourdieu’s notion of a habitus to argue for the priority of the existential aspects of the terms Christian and Christians in the study of Christians at work.

### 6.1.1 *Mapping the framing practices of Christian managers in Switzerland*

The study of Christians at work, as proposed here, takes into account the Christian practice and self-localization as displayed by Christians at work, and seeks to refrain from arbitrarily imposing conceptions which are at odds with self-localization by practitioners. The hermeneutical frame or map of understanding I am going to sketch in this section takes up practitioner experiences and perspectives and locates them within the context of

6 On the semantic ambiguity of the term, see 3.5.

7 My use of the term ‘map of understanding’ is inspired by Alexander’s (2018) article of the same title (on faith in early Christianity).

an overarching framework or map. Thus, the frame proposed here is not identical with the perspectives proposed by the subjects studied, but takes them into account and offers a gentle systemization which seeks to abstain from imposing competing overriding conceptions that obscure Christian localization practices. It seeks to accentuate the positioning work of the practitioners studied. For example, most of the individuals studied distance themselves from the label religion/religious and consider themselves practicing Christians, but not as religious. The map of understanding I propose does not ignore this crucial positioning work by categorizing the respective subjects as religious simply because this is a common category used in academic research concerning Christians, but seeks to capture what these individuals are doing by positioning themselves the way they are.<sup>8</sup>

The basic category with which to frame the study of Christians at work is the category of being a Christian [*Christsein*]. While this seems to be a trivial observation, it must be noted that extant research relevant to the study of Christians at work uses other categories. While in management and organization studies, faith, spirituality, or religion are used as the basic categories (see chapters 2–4), theological approaches tend to conceptualize Christian existence at work under the rubric of ethics or morality (see chapter 5). All these concepts can be included in a map of understanding for the study of Christians at work, but none of them necessarily carries conceptual priority over the category of being a Christian. This means nothing less than while in extant research the category ‘Christian’ is usually construed as a subcategory of, say, faith, spirituality, religion, or ethics, in a hermeneutically oriented study of Christians at work, the notions of faith, spirituality, religion, and ethics can themselves become subcategories of the broader category of being a Christian (see below in this section). With the conceptual prioritiza-

8 There seem to be parallels with the more prevalent self-identification of individuals as ‘spiritual but not religious’ (see Fuller 2001) or SBNR, which became prominent around 2001 (see Johnson et al. 2018:122). Google Scholar (accessed 25 May 2018) has no direct matches for CBNR or ‘Christian but not religious’, while the Recherche-Portal of the University of Zurich (accessed 28 May 2018) shows one article directly matching the search for ‘Christian but not religious’ (a 2018 study on Christian hardcore punk in the United States by Amy McDowell). See also Buszka and Ewest’s (2020:63) reference to research from the Pew Research Center in the United States indicating that, in 2017, 27 % of those surveyed identified themselves as ‘spiritual but not religious’, and 35 % within that group of ‘spiritual but not religious’ also identified themselves as being Protestant (!).

tion of the category Christian, the categorical<sup>9</sup> connotations carried by the term Christian as used by the practitioners studied can be taken into account. To be sure, there is also a different practitioner usage of the term Christian, in which other connotations are predominant, and in which the term can indeed function as a subcategory of the categories of, say, religion, faith, or spirituality (e.g. P5:41<sup>10</sup>; P9:197), similar to its predominant use in fsw literature (for examples, see 4.1). The frame of understanding I will propose here is intended to capture these different usages.

The main distinction which characterizes the frame is that between being a Christian nominally or being a Christian existentially. The nominal way of being a Christian is, according to the accounts of the managers studied, biographically determined by being born into and raised within a (family) context, which is, on paper, Christian,<sup>11</sup> and in which Christianity is practiced to different degrees and in different forms. The nominal mode of being a Christian can (but does not have to) include a variety of elements, such as participation in religious education activities, service attendance, family prayer, membership in a congregation, and also the holding of certain beliefs (for example, in the existence of God, e.g. P5:61; P9:21.91 – 95). Even though the nominal mode can include a considerable amount of activity, what characterizes it as nominal is that it is not experienced as something which is personally relevant or of concern (e.g. P14:33–35.45). In this mode, for example, the holding of a general belief in the existence of God can coincide with the making of derogatory jokes about Jesus on the cross (P5:61).

In contrast, in the existential mode of being a Christian, Christian practice and identity become a matter of personal concern and relevance. I have called the shift from a nominal to an existential mode of being a Christian the ‘activation of Christian existence’ [*Aktivierung des Christseins*].<sup>12</sup> All<sup>13</sup> the

9 On the differentiation between the categorical/existential and the categorizing/nominal connotations of the term, see below in this section.

10 P5:41 stands for research participant 5, paragraph 41 in the respective interview text. If a second or a third interview was conducted with the same participant, this is indicated in the following format: P5:41, or P5<sup>2</sup>:41, respectively.

11 All our research participants grew up as Christians (see 1.3). As the nominal level is also the level of nominal religiosity (see below), the frame could, however, in principle be expanded to include people who are, nominally, Buddhists, Hindus, Jews, Muslims, or adherents of any other religion (see below).

Christians studied recount a form of activation as a crucial aspect of their biography. The different forms of activation can be differentiated between according to the presence or absence of experiences, processes, and practices of initiation, such as a conversion or baptism (e.g. P5:56–69; P7:185–197; P14:45), and in terms of their singular or developing character on a time frame. While some experience the activation as a singular event (e.g. P9:132–139), others experience it more as a process of intensification (e.g., P18:320–346; P8:155.180 – 187). Additionally, while for some the activation experience is more of an inner process (e.g. P5:56–69), for others it directly and immediately affects their life circumstances and, in particular, their professional orientation (e.g. P6:36f; P7:185–197; P9:109–127). In spite of this emphasis on personal relevance, many participants in the study recount that it was through the witnessing of and participation in positive relationships with other Christians that they became Christians themselves, existentially speaking (see e.g. P5:56–69; P7:185–197; P10:77; P13:52;

- 12 As all the participants in our study come from a Christian background (that is, their starting position prior to the activation was on the nominal Christian level), our sample does not cover cases of the activation of Christian existence experienced by individuals from other religious backgrounds. It is, however, documented that there are people from various backgrounds other than Christian ones (in particular, Jewish, Hindu, and Islamic) who come to follow Jesus (see e.g. Adeney 2009, Miller & Johnstone 2015). Some of them refrain from applying the label ‘Christian’ to themselves, a phenomenon which is, in Christian missiology, sometimes referred to as ‘insider movements’ (see e.g. Asad 2009; for the debates and some examples concerning the phenomenon in Hindu contexts, see Baagø 1967 & 1968, Boyd 1974, Chetty 1969, Hoefer 2001, Kent 2011, Richard 2005, and Vinod 2013; as far as Muslim contexts are concerned, see Anderson 1976, Brown 2007, Cobb 1969, Cumming 2009, Goldsmith 1976, McCurry 1979, Miller & Johnstone 2015, Parshall 1998, Riggs 1941, Tennent 2006, Travis 1998, Travis & Woodberry 2010, Wilder 1977, Wolfe 2011 & Woodberry 1989; on Jewish contexts and Messianic Judaism, see the literature discussed in 6.1.2). The framing of such a mode of existence then becomes more complex. If individuals from other than Christian backgrounds live as Christians, existentially speaking (on the characteristics, see below), but refrain from using the label Christian for themselves, they could be described, in the light of the frame presented here nominally, as non-Christians, who live in a mode of existence which is identical to that of those who are Christians, existentially speaking.
- 13 The case of P4 differs from that of the other participants in this regard, in that she self-identifies as a Christian nominally, but her activation indicates a strong emphasis on what Schneuwly Purdie & Stolz (2014:94) refer to as “alternative spirituality” mixed with Christian spirituality, and combined with an emphasis on the importance of faith and spirituality at work. From the data that we have from her, I am at present unsure where to localize her within the frame because it is not clear if her Christianity means more to her than merely a status on paper.

P14:31.46 – 58). Activation is thus experienced individually but mediated socially.

While for some, the shift from a nominal to an existential mode of being a Christian is marked by starting to engage in Christian practices, such as service attendance (P10:77.163), engagement in Christian practices can also occur on the nominal level. The crucial factor is not one's engagement or level of engagement in a Christian practice, but the relevance one ascribes to it.

In terms of its substance, the characteristics of an existential mode of being a Christian as described by the practitioners studied can be relatively clearly defined, even though the different profiles display different nuances and different configurations of the basic characteristics.<sup>14</sup> A Christian mode of existence is characterized by three main orientations of, first, an emphasis on a personal relationship with God (e.g. P2:20; P5:61.120 – 123; P7:50; P9:23.33 – 35.95 – 99.119.198 – 207.215 – 219; P10:55–57.77; P14:81) and, second, an emphasis on Jesus Christ, or an individual's orientation toward Christ (e.g. P5:107–109.119 – 123.127; P6:24.147; P6:58; P7:19–20.189.193; P9:23.33 – 35.95 – 99.109.119.125.198 – 207.215 – 219) and, third, an individual's orientation toward the Bible (e.g. P2:20; P5:61.67.107; P7:147.193; P9:23; P14:90–93). These three aspects do not seem to compete with each other in terms of different foci, but are interdependent, and orient and reinforce each other.

The distinction between a nominal and an existential mode of being a Christian makes it possible to account for some remarkable phrasings which go unnoticed in a one-dimensional understanding of the use of the term Christian, which refrains from differentiating between the two modes. One of the managers studied spoke about his Christian upbringing: "I grew up as a Christian and then had a phase where I was not interested in God at all (...) And then I met my wife, who was also not a Christian" (P6:107).<sup>15</sup> He (P6:106–111) characterizes his upbringing as Christian because his parents, initially, were active in a church and, later, became committed Christians (P6:111). In the first usage, the main connotations of the term Chris-

14 In this respect, our study thus reflects Hans Joas's (2012:187f) observation of the dissolution of confessional milieus and the formation of an interdenominational Christian milieu, where it is valid that „die Trennungslinie verläuft, immer weniger zwischen den Konfessionen und ihren Milieus und immer mehr zwischen Christen und Nicht-Christen.“

15 Original German quotation: „Ich bin christlich aufgewachsen und hatte dann eine Phase in der ich gar nichts wissen wollte von Gott (...) Und dann habe ich meine Frau kennengelernt, die auch nicht Christ war.“

tian seem to have a categorizing or nominal function. He grew up in a Christian context and not, say, in a Buddhist or Muslim environment. But then, following his Christian upbringing, there was “a phase where I was not interested in God at all” (P6:107). In practice, this meant that he abstained from visiting church services for some time. Note that, sociologically speaking, one could easily continue to categorize him as a Christian (*vis-à-vis* Muslims, for example) at this stage, even in his time of distance from God and the church. However, in terms of his Christianness, P6’s verdict is clear: “And then I met my wife, who was *also* not a Christian” (P6:107, my emphasis). Although he only says it implicitly, for P6 his disinterest in God made him, actually, a non-Christian. This reflects what I call an existential standpoint. He does not refer to himself as a Christian in this particular biographical stage *because he was not living as a Christian* at that time, that is, his (nominally) being a Christian did not characterize his mode of existence. For him, his nominal status is not the point here, but his way of life and his attitude to God. In his biographical account of his relationship to the institutional church, P6 only mentions a break in his attending services, but not canceling his church membership. For example, in the framework of Stolz and colleagues (2014:94), he would have to be categorized as institutionally religious, experiencing a temporary decrease in intensity of his institutional religiosity, resulting in temporary categorization of his religiosity as institutionally distanced. During these changes, the model would continue to categorize him as a Christian, ignoring the existential concerns at stake during these changes in his life.

P6 then goes on to describe how he has become acquainted with the church again by being invited to a service of worship by his mother, but that his particular way of practicing his faith<sup>16</sup> did not begin then, but when he started to pray regularly at work because of a challenging business project he was responsible for (P6:36f). The framework based on the distinction between a nominal and an existential mode of being a Christian makes it possible to differentiate in this case: while, nominally, P6 grew up as a Christian, the activation of his Christian mode of existence occurs much later in his biography. And, existentially speaking, being a Christian merely nominally does not count as being a Christian. Thus, there are, in this respect, two different ways of using the word Christian.<sup>17</sup>

16 I will discuss the role of the term faith below in this section.

17 Whereas, on a nominal level, being a Christian is an option *vis-à-vis*, for example, being Jewish or being a Buddhist, the optionality changes with regard to the shift from a nominal to an existential mode of being a Christian: the activation is characterized by the



Another manager in the study describes his religious upbringing as a member of a church (including being baptized as a child, participating in religious education, and later being married in a church setting) and explains how it was only later that he had an activation experience, when he became active in a community of committed Christians and was rebaptized as an adult: “And then I realized: this conscious decision—because before I had already believed, *but I had still not really felt like a Christian*. But this then somehow helped” (P10:163; my emphasis).<sup>18</sup> Again, sociologically, one could have already categorized P10 as a Christian prior to his activation experience, a Christian who then intensified his Christian engagement. And intensity can indeed be a way to describe the existential mode in contrast to a nominal mode. However, P10’s concern here is different. He did not feel not active enough, or that his engagement was not intense enough. He did not really feel like being a Christian *at all*.

“Really” serves here as a marker for the existential mode of being a Christian. What appears, on the level of the hermeneutical frame, as the distinction between an existential and a nominal mode of existence, appears on the level of the language of some of the Christians studied as certain markers or qualifiers of their Christianness. In addition to “really”, other terms<sup>19</sup> are used, such as “confessing Christian” [bekennder Christ] (P5:41), “Christian who believes in the Bible” [bibeltreuer Christ] (P5:107), “committed Christian” [engagierter Christ] (P14:45) “devout Christian” [gläubiger Christ] (P5:130; P13:6.48), “convinced Christian” [überzeugter Christ] (P9:23; P14:227), or “practicing Christian” [praktizierender Christ] (P8:9). This way of qualifying one’s Christianness is a remarkable practice. First, it takes into account that it would not be clear to everyone what I meant if I just said: “I am a Christian”. The particular qualification that is

realization that there is more to being a Christian than being it nominally, and by embracing the newly realized substance of a Christian mode of existence. In this sense, a Christian mode of existence is concerned with the substance of being a Christian, and activation, Christianly understood, is an existential matter concerning one’s attitude to God, Jesus Christ, and the Bible. Of course, one can imagine that the existential–nominal distinction could also be applied to being a Jew or a Muslim or whatever, but what marks the framework proposed here as a framework concerned with Christian existence is the particular substance which characterizes Christian existence and its particular embodiment (see the following section).

- 18 Original German quotation: „Und dann habe ich gemerkt: Dieser bewusste Entscheid – Denn vorher hatte ich schon geglaubt, aber *mich doch nicht so wirklich als Christ gefühlt*. Aber das hat dann irgendwie geholfen.“
- 19 With different connotations that reflect the individual configurations of the characteristics of a Christian mode of existence.

performed implies, first, a kind of theory of the space of relevant possibilities of how the term Christian can be understood and, second, the localization of oneself within this space. For example: “Given that there are practicing Christians (whatever this entails) on the one hand, and people who call themselves Christians without practicing their Christianity, on the other hand, I am a *practicing* Christian.”

Such acts of positioning can also be observed in how the terms faith, spirituality, and religion are used. None of these terms is used exclusively with regard to Christian modes of being. That is, all these terms can, but do not have to be categorized as Christian (Christian faith, etc.). What catches one’s eye is the absence of sympathy and sometimes even explicit antipathy toward the concept of religion. Only one out of 18 research participants describes himself as religious (P11:255). In a systemizing view, and with reference to the proposed hermeneutical frame, the terms religion and religious seem to be used predominantly with reference to a merely nominal mode of being a Christian. However, it must be clarified that nominal does not qualify one’s religiosity here, but one’s being a Christian. In such a view, one can be ‘existentially religious’, but still be a (merely) nominal Christian. That is, nominal does not mean here that one’s being religious is irrelevant to how one lives one’s life, but, as the interview passages below will indicate, being religious is understood as being *at odds* with key characteristics of being a Christian. In other words, one’s religiosity might be highly relevant for daily living, but in a way which is perceived as inauthentic or incongruent with the characteristics of Christian existence. In this outlook, one might be, at the same time, a Christian on paper and highly religious in ways which do not qualify as authentically and existentially Christian (or the other way round: one can be a Christian, but not religious, see e.g. McDowell 2018).<sup>20</sup> This amounts to regarding Christianness and religiosity as basically different categories (which can but do not necessarily overlap).<sup>21</sup> Thus, the terms religion/religious are mostly not used for self-designation, but to designate a mode of being Christian which contrasts with an existential mode. Faith, on the other hand, can be used, in contrast to religion, to refer to an existential mode:

20 In this light, a statement like ‘I am a practicing Christian’ can mean something radically different to ‘I am religious’. On the differences between the nominal–existential distinctions with regard to religiosity and with regard to being a Christian, see also 7.3.2.

21 Note that I am still synthesizing practitioner views here, for further theoretical consideration of the concept of religion with regard to Christians, see 6.1.2 and 7.3.2.

P13: For me, there is a clear separation between faith and religion—I do not know if you define it in the same way.

Interviewer: Define it.

P13: (Laughs) For me, faith designates a relationship between a human being and God. And religion is *a human-made system*,<sup>22</sup> with rituals, structures. For example, when I go to church on Sunday, this is actually religious behavior, isn't it? However, it can—religion can support faith, but it can also hinder it. Religion is also often misused by human beings. That some pastors or preachers or whoever say: You have to do this and that now; because God told me, you have to do this now. And in this regard, I am always very skeptical. I say, it is always directly between God and me. And another person does not have to tell me what to do. Thus, this is really also a call for independent thinking, independent searching, and I—that is why for me the Bible is so central—I use commentaries from time to time which help me to understand certain expressions, for example in the Old Testament, where it can get quite complex and you ask yourself: “What does God want to say with this story? I do not understand it at all.” And then you read commentaries and you start to understand.

But, as I said, this separation between faith and religion is very important for me, *and therefore I try hard not to become a religious person* who gets caught up in such compulsions, to put it like that. And then, he says, you have to go to church every Sunday, and if you don't do it—this always results in stress, which I see in many—this exists in all religions, also in the Free Church, in Catholicism, in the Reformed Church. Of course, this exists in the other religions, too (P13:42; my emphasis).<sup>23</sup>

22 Note that this particular way of criticizing religion mirrors the New Testament critique (and criticism) of tradition as displayed in the synoptic and Pauline writings (see 4.2.2).

23 Original German text:

P13: Für mich gibt es eine starke Trennung zwischen Glaube und Religion – ich weiss nicht, ob Sie das gleich definieren. Interviewer: Definieren sie es. P13: (Lachen) Für mich ist Glaube eine Beziehung zwischen Mensch und Gott. Und Religion ist ein *von Menschen gemachtes System*, wo Rituale drin sind, Strukturen. Zum Beispiel, wenn ich am Sonntag in die Kirche gehe, ist das eigentlich religiöses Verhalten, oder? Es kann mir aber in Glaubens- Religion kann dem Glauben helfen, sie kann aber auch hindern. Religion ist auch das, das dann oft von Menschen missbraucht wird. Dass irgendeine Pastoren oder Prediger oder was auch immer anderen sagen, du musst jetzt das und das machen, weil Gott es mir gesagt hat, deshalb mach du jetzt das. Und hier bin ich immer sehr skeptisch, ich sage, es ist immer direkt zwischen mir und Gott. Und ein Dritter muss mir hier eigentlich nicht dreinreden. Also, das ist wirklich auch eine Aufforderung zum selbständigen Denken, zum selbständigen Suchen, und ich – deshalb ist für mich die Bibel so zentral – ziehe manchmal schon auch Kommentare und so zu Rate, die mir helfen, gewisse Worte zu verstehen, vielleicht des Alten Testaments, wo es manchmal etwas komplex ist und du denkst, was möchte Gott jetzt sagen mit dieser Geschichte, das verstehe ich jetzt gar nicht. Und dann liest du Kommentare und kommst so ein wenig auf diese Spur.

Note that the anti-religious stance is closely linked to the characteristics of an existential mode of being a Christian, as identified above: an emphasis on a personal relationship with God, an emphasis on an individual's orientation toward the Bible (see P5:107–109; P13:42) and an emphasis on the centrality of Jesus Christ<sup>24</sup>. These can be also found in a passage from another participant with his own theory of and positioning<sup>25</sup> against religion:

P5: All the cathedrals and also all the religious things I do not really like anymore. I used to like them a lot. But I think religion is *too severely human-made*<sup>26</sup> and interpreted too much by what someone read or skipped through in the Bible, at best. And I think: these religions are not my thing. This is why I am consciously a person *who believes in the Bible*, a *Christian* who believes in the Bible, and for me—well, I respect the religions, Catholicism, the national church, Reformed, and their contexts; that is not the problem. But I just have the feeling: I prefer to orient myself toward the original rather than to what anyone has said about the original.

Aber eben, diese Trennung zwischen Glaube und Religion ist mir sehr wichtig, und *ich möchte deshalb versuchen, möglichst kein religiöser Mensch zu werden*, der in solche auch Zwänge oder so dann hineingerät, sag ich jetzt mal. Und dann sagt er, du musst jeden Sonntag in die Kirche gehen, wenn du das nicht machst – Oder, das gibt dann immer diesen Stress, den ich manchmal sehe in vielen – Also das gibt es in allen Religionen, das gibt es auch in der Freikirche, es gibt es im Katholizismus, es gibt es in der reformierten, es gibt es natürlich in den anderen Religionen.

24 Not explicitly in the passage quoted above, but also in P13:42.

25 Even though we did not systematically ask for a positioning toward religion, four participants (in addition to P5 and P13, see P4:76f and P9:103) brought up the theme. While these four indicate antipathy toward the general concept of religion, others show reservations with regard to other religions (P6:147; P6'50; P9:49). It is crucial to note that the more systematic (d)evaluations of religion are related to the characteristics of Christian existence, as shared by the other participants (relationship with God, orientation toward Christ, Bible-orientation). Based on this, and on my general impression from the field, and what Joas (2012:187) has called the formation of an interdenominational Christian milieu (at the cost of a dissolution of confessional milieus), I estimate that many of the people living, existentially speaking, as Christians probably share some of the reservations about the category of religion. With regard to one of the church contexts, in which two of the managers studied are active, a negative attitude to religion seems to be a common tendency (this impression was confirmed to me in a personal conversation with Rafael Walthert, who conducted fieldwork in the respective setting (see Walthert 2013; on the 'evangelical rejection of religion', see also Hamilton 2018 and Luhrmann 2012). In addition, a critique (and criticism) of the notion of religion can also be found in Christian theological approaches (see also 6.1.2).

26 Note, again, that this particular way of criticizing religion mirrors the New Testament critique (and criticism) of tradition, as displayed in the synoptic and Pauline writings (see 4.2.2).

Interviewer: That is, religion is—can you say that?—too rigid, too structured?

P5: Yes, and it actually distracts people from Jesus. What has always disturbed me—I am Catholic, or I was—I can interpret a little bit—it has always disturbed me that Jesus is such a little boy in the picture, while Mary is such a metre-high statue. It simply misses the point. So somehow, you are consciously or unconsciously distracted from Jesus even though in the end it says in the Bible: no one comes to God except through Jesus, through the redemption that Jesus made for us. That is what I miss in religions: it distracts people from the center (P5:107–109; my emphasis).<sup>27</sup>

The category of religion(s) is primarily used here to label something from which P5 distances himself (a nominal mode of Christianity) and is juxtaposed or contrasted with what I have called the characteristics of an existential mode of being a Christian. An issue which seems to be related to this kind of relativization of religion is that the question of church membership and the positioning within different Christian traditions and denominations seemed to be of secondary relevance for the research participants.<sup>28</sup>

27 Original German text:

P5: Die ganzen Kathedralen und auch das Religiöse ist nicht mehr so ganz mein Ding. Früher habe ich das sehr gern gehabt, aber ich denke, die Religion ist *zu stark vom Menschen gemacht* und zu sehr interpretiert durch das, was er in der Bibel allenfalls gelesen und überlesen hat. Und ich denke: Diese Religionen sind jetzt nicht mein Ding. Deshalb bin ich auch ganz bewusst ein bibeltreuer Mensch, ein bibeltreuer Christ, und ich kann jetzt mit – also ich achte die Religionen, Katholizismus, Landeskirche, Reformierte, Umfeld, das ist alles nicht das Problem. Aber ich habe einfach das Gefühl, ich orientiere mich lieber am Original als an dem, was irgendjemand über das Original erzählt hat. Interviewer: Das heisst, das andere ist Ihnen – kann man das so sagen? – zu starr, zu strukturiert? P5: Ja, und es lenkt eigentlich von Jesus ab. Was mich immer stört – ich bin ja katholisch, ich habe ja daraus – oder gewesen – ich kann ja ein bisschen interpretieren – mich hat einfach immer gestört, dass Jesus so ein Kleiner ist im Bild, während Maria so eine meterhohe Statue ist. Es geht einfach an der Sache vorbei. Also irgendwie lenkt man bewusst oder unbewusst von Jesus ab, wo doch im Endeffekt in der Bibel steht: Niemand kommt zu Gott ausser durch Jesus, durch die Erlösung, die Jesus für uns gemacht hat. Das ist halt das, was ich bei den Religionen vermisste: Es lenkt vom Zentrum ab.

28 On denominational orientations, see 1.3 and 4.2.1. If one asks how the research subjects relate to different denominations and ecclesiastical traditions, one can find a dynamic and often non-linear relationship across the faith biographies of the managers studied. In addition to the traditional Christian churches, (which sometimes offer ministries focusing on professionals and business people), a number of other organizations play a role in the formation of the research subjects' Christian lifestyles, such as organizations of Christian business people (e.g. CGS, the Gideons, ICCG, IVCG, and VCU), work-related groups, such as prayer groups either within a particular company or those open to employees and/or managers and entrepreneurs across different organizations (such as the *Unternehmergebet* meetings in various Swiss cities).

This *nondenominational* approach is important to me, that is, interdenominational. Also, I do not like it when people focus too narrowly only on their own congregation. (...). This business prayer meeting [Unternehmergebet] is also—is for believers, but irrespective of their denomination, I don't even know where most of them go to church. I also don't like it when it gets so rigid in a congregation that you have the feeling that there's a mainstream there now and everyone does it because others do so, and so on—that's when it becomes religious for me. And that is why I always enjoy interdenominational stuff (P13:176).<sup>29</sup>

While the participants express a general respect for the diversity of different churches<sup>30</sup> and other religions (see e.g. P5:107), the question of one's relationship to the Christian denominations seems to be located predominantly on the nominal level and thus seems not to be of utmost relevance for being a Christian at work, even though most of the research subjects are active churchgoers.<sup>31</sup>

While the terms religion and religiosity are thus linked primarily to the nominal level of Christianity, the terms faith and spirituality can both be used to designate an existential mode of being a Christian, even though faith seems to be the term which many of the managers studied prefer over spirituality. In addition, the term faith can also be used on a nominal level. It is then used in a way comparable to that of religion:

But now, in a secular setting, it would be totally inappropriate to want to pray there. It would also be strange for those people who do not have the same faith or do not have such an *intense* faith (P5:41; my emphasis).<sup>32</sup>

- 29 Original German quotation: Mir ist dieses *nondenominational*, also dieses Überkonfessionelle sehr wichtig. Ich habe es auch nicht gern, wenn es da so „Gmeindli“-Denken gibt (...). Dieses Unternehmergebet ist auch – es ist für gläubige Leute, aber egal, welche Konfession, ich weiss von den meisten nicht einmal, wo sie überhaupt in die Kirche gehen. Ich habe es auch nicht gern, wenn es dann so eng wird in einer Gemeinde, dass man das Gefühl hat, da hat es jetzt einen Mainstream und alle machen das, weil es die anderen machen und so – da wird es dann für mich religiös. Und deshalb habe ich immer Freude an überkonfessionellen Sachen.
- 30 P7(:50) compares the variety of Christian churches and traditions with the variety of the animal kingdom.
- 31 Irrespective of whether the participants were churchgoers or not, a crucial factor that accompanies the activation experience is relationships to other Christians who are perceived by the participants as living authentically as Christians.
- 32 Original German quotation: Aber jetzt in einem Kreis, in einem weltlichen – das wäre natürlich *far away*, da irgendwie beten zu wollen. Es wäre ja auch komisch für jene Menschen, die nicht den *gleichen* Glauben haben oder nicht so einen *intensiven* Glauben haben.

The context of the passage is the question of whether the respective manager would pray openly at work, for example in a meeting. Viewed through the lens of the hermeneutical frame proposed here, one can observe a shift of levels in the terminology used. The ‘same faith’ is, on a nominal level, equal to the ‘same religion’. However, most of the people P5 talks about here, that is, the people he works with, do in fact have the same religion *on paper*. Nevertheless, it would be strange for them to pray at work, but why? While they may have the same faith nominally, their faith might not be as intense as that of P5, which seems to be a polite way of saying that the others are Christians only on paper, existentially speaking.

In sum, living in a Christian mode of existence or being a Christian in existential terms can be framed in contrast to being a Christian merely on a nominal level. As a Christian way of life usually becomes relevant somewhere in the course of a manager’s biography, the passage from a nominal to an existential mode of being a Christian can be referred to as the activation of Christian existence, in which being a Christian becomes relevant to how individuals live their lives. From the sketched framing practices of Christian managers, one can suggest that, in their way of using the term, the label Christian primarily carries connotations that indicate an existential (or categorical) qualification, that is, a qualification *of people* living in a particular mode of existence. In contrast, the (categorizing) use of the label Christian as a subcategory referring to (members of) a particular religion or faith (vis-à-vis, therefore, such labels as Buddhist, Hindu, Jew, or Muslim) is secondary. With regard to the terms faith and religion, the managers studied display a tendency to use the term religion with reference to the nominal level and the term faith with respect to the existential level of being a Christian.

One could argue that, irrespective of the empirical material presented here as a basis for the development of the theoretical sketch of the framing of Christian existence with respect to work, the above sketch is theoretically coherent in its own right. If one defines an existential mode of being a Christian as a form of existence in which being a Christian is relevant for how one lives one’s life (at work and elsewhere), in contrast to a nominal mode of being a Christian, where one is a Christian mainly on paper (which has little or no relevance for one’s daily way of living and conduct), it seems to follow logically that there must usually be some form of activation where one transitions from the nominal to the existential level, assuming that being a Christian on paper is the (biographical) starting position—and apart from the hypothetical (and in the Swiss context arguably unlikely) case where being a Christian has always been relevant with regards to how one



lives one's daily life (in this case, biological birth and activation would coincide). In the following section, I will build on the empirically identified existential positioning of practitioners as Christians. In particular, I will discuss the existential aspects of the term Christian(s) on a more general theoretical level, in particular against the background of Pierre Bourdieu's notion of a habitus, to argue for 'being a Christian' or Christian existence (instead of faith, spirituality, or religion) as a basic category with which to study Christians at work.

### *6.1.2 Pierre Bourdieu's habitus and the existential meaning of the label 'Christian'*

The theme of the existential characteristics of being a Christian, as identified in 6.1.1, is not exclusively found among practitioners, but also in extant fsw research and theological approaches to the workplace. In particular, it flashes up in the writings of Delbecq (2004:251), who points to the importance of the suffering Christ for the Christian manager's spiritual journey (see 4.3). It is also reflected in the proposal by Mabey and colleagues (2017) of a "Jesus-centered interpretation of spiritual leadership". They note Jesus's lynching for dissidence and indicate that "a meaningful life can only be achieved by following Jesus" (Mabey et al. 2017), and point to the necessity of an inner transformation (which displays parallels to what I call activation) through the Holy Spirit (see 4.3). The existential meaning of the term Christian is also touched upon by Heslam (2015). He, drawing on the writings of Abraham Kuyper and his distinction between particular (or special) and common grace, outlines the workings of particular grace as that by "which people turn from their sins, put their trust in Christ, receive the regenerating work of his spirit, and inherit the gift of eternal life" (Heslam 2015:9). Daniels and colleagues (2012) refer to it by noting that "we acknowledge that Christ lived a life in perfect obedience to the Father" (2012:70). They outline that "the result of His perfect obedience, however, was not material success but rather a sentence of death by the cruelest instrument of torture then known to the Roman Empire" (2012:70) and point to "Christ's command that we emulate His life by taking up our cross and following Him" (2012:70). In this subsection, I will explore the existential connotations of the term Christian by drawing on the Pauline writings (and in particular Miller's interpretation of Paul) and Horrell's work on the historical emergence of the label Christian(s) and by relating this work to



Bourdieu's notion of the habitus.<sup>33</sup> When it comes to the question of the existential meaning of the term Christian with regard to particular contemporary forms of living, Bourdieu's notion of the habitus is instructive because it brings together various aspects which concern the formation of particular lifestyles.<sup>34</sup> Bourdieu's account of the habitus is probably the best known and most influential one, but the notion can already be found in the writings of earlier authors.<sup>35</sup>

Bourdieu's "Distinction: A social critique of the judgment of taste" (2010<sup>36</sup>) is an analysis of social stratification in France which explores the function of tastes in ordering the relations between social groups, classes, and class fractions. Bourdieu describes the allocation of economic and cultural capital. He uses a number of interrelated concepts and notions, such as social space, lifestyles, the habitus, agents, and cultural practices. I will focus here on Bourdieu's notion of the habitus, describe it in relation to other relevant concepts, and then relate it to the notion of being a Christian in order to accentuate both the correlations and differences between a habitus and a mode of existence pertinent to Christians. In my discussion, I will proceed according to the following logic: According to Bourdieu, (1) *classes* and class fractions are configurations or different types of distribution of economic and cultural (2) *capital* (2006:287.315). A class is characterized by relatively homogenous (3) *conditions of existence* (2006:315). The necessities and facilities linked to these conditions are translated into a particular (4) *lifestyle* by what he calls a (5) *habitus* (2006:315), which can be recognized in the (6) '*stylistic affinities*' (see 2006:294) of practices. Finally, I will discuss (7) the emergence of Messianic Judaism with regard to the formation of Christian lifestyles as an instructive case study of the difference between nominal Christianity and the existential formation of Christian living.

1) As regards *classes*, one could argue that, while Bourdieu's habitus is concerned with classes, when it comes to the meaning of the term Christian, the broader sociological category to which the term refers is that of

33 On Mellor and Shilling's notion of the religious habitus, see 4.2. For a review of Bourdieu's writings pertaining to religion, see Rey (2007).

34 The following passage on Bourdieu draws upon my unpublished seminary paper on the habitus and Messianic Judaism, written under the supervision of Tamar El Or. See also my discussion of some aspects of Bourdieu's habitus concept in 5.5.

35 See Mellor and Shilling (2010:207f) and the literature there.

36 Originally published in French in 1979.

religion. In such a view, a Christian habitus is a religious habitus<sup>37</sup>. The idea that ‘Christian’ is a religious category seems to be taken for granted in many of the fsW studies discussed above (see 4.1). Interestingly, this view, however, not only runs contrary to practitioner intuitions (see 6.1.1), but also seems to be somewhat at odds with the use of the term ‘Christians’ as it historically emerged. Historically, Χριστός (‘Christ’) is a distinctively Jewish concept (Grundmann et al. 1973)<sup>38</sup>. And Χριστιανός (that is, ‘Christian’, or ‘follower of Christ’) was the term outsiders most probably first used in Antioch to refer to the disciples of Jesus.<sup>39</sup> The term is used very early (in the letters of Pliny to Trajan) in the context of political loyalty (Horrell 2007:362.370.372). Thus, while in Bourdieu’s account the habitus refers to the category of class, the term ‘Christians’ historically seems to have been related to the category of *politics* (see Horrell 2007:362). However, if we take note of the reported historical origins of the term, as well as of the historical and cultural development of the Jewish and Christian communities<sup>40</sup> for a contemporary understanding of the label Christian, both a purely religious<sup>41</sup> and a purely political understanding of the label Christian(s) seem to be deficient. Rather, it seems that the attention provoked by the people who were called Christians was related more to their being adherents of Jesus than to a particular specification they displayed in terms of a broader category, be it politics or religion. It thus seems to be more appropriate to say that, historically, the terms ‘Christians’ and ‘Christian’ can be thought of as

37 Note that Mellor and Shilling’s notion of the religious habitus explicitly refers to the category of religion (see 4.2).

38 Or, more precisely, Χριστός is the Greek equivalent of the *Hebrew* concept of the משיח (see e.g. Grundmann et al. 1973 and Shahar 2018).

39 As reported in Acts 11 (on the historical status of Acts 11, see Horrell 2013, 2007. See also my discussion of Acts 11 in chapter 4.2, and on the politico-existential character of the label Christian, see sections 5.3.6 and 7.2).

40 On the so-called parting of the ways, see Boyarin (2004a) and Becker and Reed (2003).

41 From a historical perspective, the category of ‘Christian’ is arguably older than the Western concept of religion. Daniel Boyarin (2009:11–16) has forcefully made the case that “‘religions’ were invented in the fourth century” (2009:16). He points out that the emergence of the idea of a religious identity constituted by a set of beliefs and practices “abstractable from cultural systems as a whole” (2009:12) served to construe a Christian identity distinct from Judaism. In this view, historically speaking, negotiations around the meaning of the label ‘Christian’ brought forth the category of religion, which served to construe a Christian identity distinct from Judaism (a term, which Boyarin claims, was invented by Christians). In particular, he points out how the “mapping of a border with something Christianity will call Judaism will make the new Christian self-definition as a ‘religion’ work” (Boyarin 2004a:xii).

related to but transcending contemporary Western categories, such as religion<sup>42</sup> and politics. Formally, the category Christian is not a new type of category in that there have, historically, been other categories construed on the basis of a name or title of a person to denote followership.<sup>43</sup> Substantially, it clearly marks a new generic social state (that of being allegiant or belonging to Christ), which can, arguably, not be fully subsumed under the sociological categories of, say, religion or politics, although it seems to be somehow related to them. Historically, the term ‘Christians’ refers to a group of individuals whose life has become characterized by belonging or allegiance to Jesus Christ (Horrell 2007:362). As such, the categorization of someone as ‘Christian’ implies a particular view of social space in which two main groups of people are differentiated between, those who belong to Christ and those who do not. The category ‘Christian’ thus, in terms of its historical substance (that of belonging or allegiance to Christ), displays a generic or categorical or existential quality. This categorical quality, to a certain extent, conflicts with a contemporary categorizing (or nominal) religious usage of the term, in which religion is set as the generic category and where the term Christian marks one subtype of the category religion. The categorizing connotation, which is predominant in contemporary usages of the term Christian as a subcategory of the category religion (or faith, or spirituality), however, seems to obscure the categorical and existential connotations which the term Christian may also carry in both historical and contemporary usages.

The tension between different connotations that different usages of the term Christian imply, that is, the tension between the existential and categorical connotations on the one hand, and the nominal and categorizing connotations on the other, can be illustrated by systematizing the existential and categorical connotations of the term Christian by drawing on a Pauline

42 In addition to Boyarin’s historical conclusion that fourth century Christians employed the category religion to frame their Christianness (which implies that the term Christian is older than the Western concept of religion), it is to be noted that, contemporarily, there have been Christian voices which have been critical of religion (for an analysis of practitioner criticism of religion, see Hamilton 2018, Luhrmann 2012, McDowell 2018, and the analysis of contemporary Christian managers in Switzerland in section 6.1.1 of the present dissertation). Additionally, there has been a long tradition of Christian theological critique and criticism of religion (see e.g. Dalferth & Grosshans 2006, Feil 2000, Tietz 2006). See also the notions of a *religionsloses Christentum* and a *nicht-religiöse Interpretation* as made popular by Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1998, for a discussion see Gremmel & Huber 2002 and Hamilton 2018).

43 For example, *Καίσαρῖανοί* or *Ἡρωδιανοί* (see Grundmann et al. 1973:529).

perspective<sup>44</sup> on the mode of existence pertinent to followers of Christ, and by contrasting this with a contemporary Western categorizing usage of the term and, in this respect, by contrasting a ‘religious person’ with a ‘Christian’. Now it needs to be noted that the allegiance or belonging of Christians is to a person whom they claim died and rose again.<sup>45</sup> This is not only relevant in that Christians claim that their belonging is to a person who is alive:<sup>46</sup> it is particularly relevant in specifying Christian allegiance or belonging to Jesus Christ as including participation<sup>47</sup> in the death and new life of Jesus Christ. In this respect, what separates the Christian from a religious person is an existential difference. Religious people, no matter whether they refer to themselves (nominally) as Christians, Muslims, or whatever, are still mainly characterized by being living people. In contrast, the term Christian, existentially understood, does not primarily qualify a particular *human* form of existence.<sup>48</sup> One cannot become a Christian, in this sense, by choosing to adopt certain traditional ‘Christian’ beliefs and practices or ways of life. Being a Christian is not first and foremost a lifestyle in this sense, but a ‘deathstyle’. There is an existential barrier between being a human being and being a Christian, as the Christian individual participates in the death of Jesus Christ, and thus in the *full death* of the human person as we know it.<sup>49</sup> Christians’ participation in Christ’s

44 On Paul’s terminology with regard to the followers of Christ, see Horrell (2007:365f).

45 The participation of individuals in the crucified and resurrected Jesus Christ has been particularly developed in the Pauline writings (see e.g. Linebaugh 2018).

46 See, for example, the Pauline writings referring to the term faith as a current relationship (Oakes 2018:257); and Maydiou’s (1954:302) insistence that “Christ is not and cannot be a past phase of history”.

47 On the notion of participation in Pauline thought, see for example Davey (2019), Eastman (2018), Hays (2008), Linebaugh (2018), Miller (in particular, 2014:102.130 and the literature there), and Rabens (2018).

48 See also Paul’s reproach to the Corinthians that they ‘walk as humans’, that is, “κατὰ ἄνθρωπον” (1 Cor 3:3f, see also section 4.3.2). Such a reproach makes no sense if one fails to consider Paul’s understanding of the addressees as participating in Christ’s death and resurrection, which radically distances them from ‘human ways of life’ before death, so to speak. In this light, there seems to be no “Christian humanity” (Rich 1984:122) apart from a crucified and dying form of humanity, that is, apart from humans who share in Christ’s death and resurrection.

49 Paul makes it as clear as possible in Romans 7:1–6 that he is not speaking metaphorically here in terms of death. The notion that the Romans have ‘died to the law’ is, I contend, not a metaphorical way of employing the notion of death. On the contrary, Paul illustrates in his example of the married couple that it is *indeed* death which is required to be released from the law (see Romans 7:6; on Romans 7, see also Miller 2014 and the literature there).

death and resurrection offers a way to begin to understand why Christians facing a trial can choose to be executed rather than reviling the name of Christ.<sup>50</sup> They must somehow be convinced that their execution will not diminish their status of being alive in Christ. A manifestation of a similar Christian fearlessness can be found in the non-violent protests of the American civil rights movement, as described by Martin L. King on the day prior to his assassination:

We aren't going to let any mace stop us. We are masters in our nonviolent movement in disarming police forces; they don't know what to do. I've seen them so often. I remember in Birmingham, Alabama, when we were in that majestic struggle there, we would move out of the 16th Street Baptist Church day after day; by the hundreds we would move out. And Bull Connor would tell them to send the dogs forth, and they did come; but we just went before the dogs singing, "Ain't gonna let nobody turn me around." Bull Connor next would say, "Turn the fire hoses on." And as I said to you the other night, Bull Connor didn't know history. He knew a kind of physics that somehow didn't relate to the transphysics that we knew about. And that was the fact that there was a certain kind of fire that no water could put out. And we went before the fire hoses; we had known water. If we were Baptist or some other denominations, we had been immersed. If we were Methodist, and some others, we had been sprinkled, but we knew water. That couldn't stop us. And we just went on before the dogs and we would look at them; and we'd go on before the water hoses and we would look at it, and we'd just go on singing "Over my head I see freedom in the air." And then we would be thrown in the paddy wagons, and sometimes we were stacked in there like sardines in a can. And they would throw us in, and old Bull would say, "Take 'em off," and they did; and we would just go in the paddy wagon singing, "We Shall Overcome." And every now and then we'd get in jail, and we'd see the jailers looking through the windows being moved by our prayers, and being moved by our words and our songs. And there was a power there which Bull Connor couldn't adjust to; and so we ended up transforming Bull into a steer, and we won our struggle in Birmingham. Now we've got to go on in Memphis just like that.<sup>51</sup>

Sociologists have taken account of this being in relation with what is beyond human existence by using notions such as transcendence (see e.g. Pollack & Rosta 2015:70) or "other-worldly realities" (Mellor & Shilling 2014:275). Transcendence does not, however, only appear on the level of Christian existence as a phenomenon studied by sociologists, but also on the level of the sociological categories applied. With regard to the sociolog-

50 On the execution of Christians, see also Horrell (2007) and chapter 5.3.6 in the present dissertation.

51 <https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkivebeentothemountaintop.htm> (accessed on 10 July 2018).

ical categories of faith, spirituality, or religion, while they can be used to approach the phenomenon of Christian existence at work, in a way Christian existence also transcends these sociological categories of faith, spirituality, and religion because in Christian existence, human existence is transcended in that Christians share in Christ's death and resurrection.

2) As regards *capital*, according to Bourdieu, classes and class fractions are configurations or different types of distribution of economic and cultural capital (2006:287.315). In this respect, the category of Christianity, existentially understood, relates to configurations or different types (the Christian and non-Christian type) of distribution of particular *spiritual* capital, which entails the spiritual experience of what Kuyper (see Heslam 2015:9) refers to as special grace and, in particular, the experience of participating in Christ. More specifically, the 'Christian spiritual capital' is that of being a beneficiary of the workings of the Spirit, who 'infuses' human bodies with Christ's dying and resurrection (see Miller 2014:103). Here, participation or non-participation in Christ becomes the crucial criterion for differentiating between different types of distribution of spiritual capital.

3) In Bourdieu's account, a class is characterized by relatively homogeneous *conditions of existence* (2006:315). The conditions of Christian forms of existence are marked by one's immersion in the body of Christ, risen from the dead, while the conditions of non-Christian forms of existence are marked by non-allegiance to Christ<sup>52</sup>. For Bourdieu, the necessities and facilities linked to these (class-related) conditions are translated into a particular *lifestyle* by what he calls a *habitus* (2006:315). In terms of Christian existence, the basic condition of being immersed in or belonging to Christ translates, in interaction with the contextual cultural, political, economic, and religious conditions, into a variety of lifestyles pertaining to the variety of forms in which a 'Christian habitus' (such as a Pentecostal or Amish habitus) can be shaped. However, what marks these lifestyles as Christian is not nominally belonging to a group such as the Pentecostal or the Amish, but the conditions of existence marked by the respective people's membership in the living Christ.

4) How does the habitus operate according to Bourdieu? Cultural practices are defined within a "space of *lifestyles*" (2006:315, my emphasis), within an area of "stylistic possibles" (2006:315). There are different areas of cultural practice, such as the fields of sport, music, food, politics, language, food, clothing, cosmetics, et cetera (2006:315). The habitus works in all areas of practices (2006:297f). Each area has its stylistic possibles. The

52 In other words, by not living *κατὰ Χριστόν* (see e.g. Collosians 2:8–9).

different dispositions of a habitus are embodied, that is, specified, in each field of practice “by implementing one of the stylistic possibles offered” (2006:315), in other words, by living in a particular or distinct way. In a similar way, the condition of being a Christian is, in light of the Pauline writings, related to particular lifestyles by one’s being ‘clothed’ with (or invested into, or localized within) Christ.<sup>53</sup> This condition radically relativizes other features of one’s social profile, such as nationality, legal and religious status, occupation, and gender (see e.g. Galatians 3:26–28; Colossians 3:11). It entails a lifestyle which is characterized by the way Jesus Christ treats those who belong to him: loving, joyful, peaceful, forgiving, patient, kind, and gentle (see Galatians 5:22–25; Colossians 3:11–17). This is the spirituality of the Christian life, as those who are allegiant to Christ live by the Spirit and are called to live in accordance with the Spirit (Galatians 5:25). They let the Spirit produce in them what has been referred to as the ‘fruit of the spirit’, which is characterized, according to Galatians (5:22f), by love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. This is, in Galatians, contrasted with the “works of the flesh” (Gal 5:19), which are, among other similar things: sexual immorality, impurity, depravity, idolatry, sorcery, hostilities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish rivalries, dissensions, factions, envy, murder, drunkenness, and carousing (Gal 5:19–21). Christians are thus confronted with two “stylistic possibles” (Bourdieu 2006:315) in terms of lifestyle. They can live *either* in accordance with the Spirit or with the flesh. These refer to a Christian and a non-Christian way of living. It is important to note that descriptions of the Christian lifestyle like those presented in Galatians 5 are poorly understood if taken as a list of moral norms that stand for themselves. Yes, Christian life is marked by love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.<sup>54</sup> However, this is not first a list of ideals that are prescribed, but a description of qualities of the life lived by “those who belong to Christ” and “have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires” (Gal 5:24). If there is a Christian imperative, it is not first: “be kind, be loving, be patient and so on”, but rather “participate in Christ, perceive, embrace and understand that you are crucified and raised with Christ, and live accordingly”. While living a non-Christian lifestyle is still a possibility for Christians, it is a lifestyle which is in radical conflict with their status as Christians. The expe-

53 Note that the term ‘Christian’ does not occur in the Pauline writings. On Paul’s terminology with regard to the followers of Christ, see Horrell (2007:365f).

54 For an account of Christian agency in a virtue ethics framework, see Miller (2014).



rience of consistency<sup>55</sup> or inconsistency between one's Christian status and one's lifestyle<sup>56</sup> seems to be best understood as part of a process of renewal and of being conformed<sup>57</sup> to the image of Jesus Christ (see Colossians 3:10, Romans 8:29), where one learns to live according to the stylistic possible that is congruent with one's status as a Christian. Sociologically, this process can take on many different forms, as the variety of activation experiences reported by the managers we studied indicates.<sup>58</sup>

5) According to Bourdieu, the habitus is characterized by two capacities: First, the capacity of an agent to produce "classifiable practices and works" (2006:291), and second "the capacity to differentiate and appreciate these practices and products" (2006:291), that is, the ability to produce classifying operations and classificatory judgments (2006:291, see also 5.5). The social world, which is the space of lifestyles, is constituted by the relationship between these two capacities. Thus, the habitus refers to the "generative formula" (2006:291), the "two major organizing principles of social space" (2006:297). Therefore, the notion of the habitus serves to account for 1) the practices and products of an agent, and 2) the capacity of an agent to classify practices and products (perception, appreciation, taste). These classificatory judgments of practices and products are linked to a bird's-eye view of social space dependent on one's position within it (2006:90f).<sup>59</sup> In a similar way, according to the Pauline tradition, in the

55 Compare also the notion of activation as discussed in 6.1.1, which refers to the shift from nominal to existential, that is, of becoming existentially what one has already been on paper.

56 Interestingly, Miller (2014) argues that the content of this status (the 'indicative' in the Pauline writings) is no different in content from its corresponding lifestyle (the 'imperative' in the Pauline writings). Rather, the lifestyle *is* the content of the status, which can be both described and prescribed. In this respect, Miller contends that Paul's indicative statements in Romans 5 and 6 do not refer to a cosmic or forensic state, but "describe the church's consistent behavior rather than its cosmic 'state', but he also points out that this consistently holy action is not unassailable" (Miller 2014:103, see also 2014:4).

57 On the notion of being conformed to the image of Christ with regard to contemporary spirituality discourses, see Kohli Reichenbach's 'Gleichgestaltet dem Bild Christi' (2011).

58 Our study of the activation experiences of Christian managers uses the 'body pedagogics' approach by Mellor and Shilling as a sensitizing conception (see section 1.4 and the literature there). It focuses on the three elements of, first, the *means* and activities through which people encounter key dispositions, second, the *experiences* and perceptions they have while they acquire or fail to acquire these dispositions, and third, the embodied *outcomes* (dispositions, orientations) of this acquisition.

59 See also Mellor and Shilling's (2010:202) definition of a habitus as a "socially structured bodily disposition", of which taking an external, third-party view of one's own practices is an essential part (2014:281, see also 4.2.1, 5.5).



Christian condition of belonging to Christ, a Christian is sealed with the Spirit of God, who enables both the production and discernment of Christian lifestyles.<sup>60</sup> The discerning capacity, similarly to the producing capacity, is not given with the status of an individual per se, or with a decision to become a member of Christian tradition, but is given by the Spirit (1 Cor 12:10) with an individual's status as being "in Christ". The production and discernment of Christian lifestyles is reflected historically in the development of Christian practices, Christian theologies, Christian ethics, and Christian forms of spirituality. In this sense, what marks practices, theologies, ethics, and spirituality as existentially (and not merely nominally) Christian is their being based on their producer's allegiance or belonging to Christ. In other words, the Christianness of cultural products is dependent on the Christianness of the one who produces them.

6) According to Bourdieu (2006:294), within a social group with relatively homogenous conditions of existence, there is a "stylistic affinity", that is, the practices of a whole set of agents are systematic (the product of the application of identical or interchangeable schemes) and systematically distinct (from the practices constituting another lifestyle) (2006:293). This creates an "immediately perceptible family resemblance" (2006:294) in the practices of all agents of the same class, in a way that is comparable to handwriting, which is

a singular way of tracing letters which always produces the same writing, i.e., graphic forms which, in spite of all the differences of size, material or colour due to the surface (paper or blackboard) or the instrument (pen or chalk)—in spite, therefore, of the different use of muscles—present an immediately perceptible family resemblance, like all the features of style or manner whereby a painter or writer can be recognized as infallibly as a man by his walk (2006:294).

A similar metaphor of lifestyles as handwriting in the sense of an "immediately perceptible family resemblance" (2006:294), which can be clearly recognized by its readers, also occurs in the New Testament writings. Paul argues that the followers of Christ in Corinth embody a letter from Christ, read by everyone, "written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on stone tablets but on tablets of human hearts" (2 Cor 3:3). In this sense, the presence of Christians living a Christian lifestyle in work contexts can be interpreted as the embodiment of letters from God to the people present in the workplace, which can be read by everyone. The identical or

60 See also Vivian Ligo's (2011) contention that a Christian perspective can only be described from within its context. The discernment of a Christian lifestyle is, in this light, a gift of the Spirit.

interchangeable scheme which is applied in the production of Christian lifestyles is the image of the Son (Romans 8:29, see also Kohli Reichenbach 2011) and, in particular, his death and resurrection, in which Christians participate. It must be noted here, again, that according to Miller's (2014:4f) interpretation of Paul, Christians' participation in Christ's death and resurrection is quite concrete in that they put to death their passions and desires, situated in the body, and thus die with Christ, while the Spirit infuses their bodies with Christ's dying and with the just life of Christ. Existential Christian practices are thus systematically distinct from the practices constituting other lifestyles. Here, one again encounters the generic character of the Christian category. With reference to the Christian condition, there are only two main lifestyle producing schemes, one non-Christian and the other Christian. These are the image of Adam and the image of Christ, referring to one's Christian (in Christ) or non-Christian, that is, Adamic, status (in Adam). "For just as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive" (Romans 5:22). "And just as we have borne the image of the man of dust [Adam], let us also bear the image of the man of heaven" (1 Cor 15:49)<sup>61</sup>. This reference to Pauline thought in the light of Bourdieu's handwriting metaphor may indicate, again, that being a Christian is not first a nominal affair. In other words, the question of whether or not someone is called a Christian is of lesser importance than the question of whose handwriting someone's life represents.

7) Thus, Bourdieu's notion of the habitus serves well as a conceptual background frame with which to sketch the existential connotations and contours of the term 'Christians', as referring to people who are allegiant to or participate in Christ. There are, as has become obvious, tensions between the widespread contemporary usage of the term 'Christian' as a nominal religious category and an existential understanding of the term. The practitioners we studied (see 6.1.1 and Brügger 2018; Brügger, & Huppenbauer 2019) deal with these tensions by adhering to their use of the label Christian, but at the same time qualifying the term and specifying what they mean by it. In culturally and nominally non-Christian contexts, the embodiment of these tensions can be observed in recent developments, where adherents to different religions turn to Christ, while at the same time they choose to reject, nominally, the label Christian and seek to follow

61 See also Romans 5:12–19; 1 Cor 15:21f.45 – 49.

Christ within their own religious context.<sup>62</sup> While the reasons for nominally rejecting the label ‘Christian’ differ from context to context, they seem to have in common their rejection of the Christian label as understood with reference to contemporary Western cultural and religious forms of life, while at the same time embracing the existential substance of a Christian mode of existence as characterized by one’s participation in Jesus Christ. This is made possible, first, by a reductionistically nominal usage of the label Christian, where the term is emptied in terms of its existential meaning, and is applied to people and their lifestyles in Western contexts where, historically, many Christians have lived. As many of these people tend not to live as Christians, existentially speaking, and as it is no longer clear what the label Christian signifies at all, this vacuum of meaning is filled by the simple (mis)interpretation that Western lifestyles (or values<sup>63</sup>) are Christian lifestyles. Suddenly, the term has received a new meaning, and contemporary Western forms of life seem to represent a ‘lived’ (mis)interpretation of the term, which is taken seriously by those who embrace the existential substance of Christianity while rejecting its label.

Given the historical roots of the label Christian, both the contemporary Western reinterpretation of the term as a cultural and religious category, which seems to render the question of one’s allegiance to Christ irrelevant or secondary, and the practical rejection of contemporary Western Christian labeling and its respective ways of life represent remarkable moves of social identity construction. Within a global context, we now find ourselves in a situation where some people hold on to the label Christian but reject its existential content, while others embrace its content but reject the label. One such movement, which serves well as an illustrative case, has been referred to as Messianic Judaism. According to Rudolph (2016:355), Messianic Jews, that is, Jews who “have claimed to follow Yeshua (Jesus) as the Messiah of Israel while continuing to live within the orbit of Judaism”, existed in the first four centuries AD and reappeared in the eighteenth century. Shapiro (2012:1) defines Messianic Judaism as

62 For example, in Jewish, Muslim, or Hindu contexts (on the ‘insider movements’ phenomenon, see the literature mentioned in 6.1.1). On the related notion of “inreligionization”, which calls for not only, say, “an Indian Christianity”, but “a Hindu Christianity”, see Bosch (1991:477f).

63 On the problem of the category of values with regard to Christian living, see Brügger (2010:111–117) and the literature there.

a movement of people who identify as Jews and self-consciously embrace—although to degrees that can differ quite widely—Jewish culture and religious tradition, while at the same time maintaining a belief in the divinity of Jesus, the Trinity, and the authority of the New Testament.

There is a strong emphasis on beliefs in the phrasing of the ‘Christian element’ of Messianic Jewish identity in the above definition. In more relational terms, a Messianic Jew is described as a “Jew who has come to faith in Yeshua” (Shapiro 2012:4) or simply as JYD (Jewish Yeshua-Disciple, see Nerel 2013). Messianic Jews emphasize the Jewishness of Jesus and the early church. The current movement grew out of the broader historical phenomenon of participants in Christianity who are of Jewish birth (Shapiro 2012:4). While in the nineteenth century a Hebrew–Christian movement emerged, a combination of factors (see Shapiro 2012:4; Ariel 2012:319) led these participants in Christianity in the late 1960s to prefer their Jewishness as a cultural context for their religious practice and to reject the label Christian.

Using Bourdieu’s (2006:315) terminology, Messianic Judaism can be described as a social group with relatively homogenous conditions of existence with regard to its positioning in the context of the wider Jewish and Christian traditions. For Bourdieu, social construction of the identity of a group can be observed in the practices performed by the agents who are part of the group. In this respect, the practices of Messianic Jews can be read as a “system of distinctive signs” (2006:291). Their social identity is “defined and asserted through difference” (2006: 293). They “manifest their distinction” (2006:295) through practices, such as Messianic Jewish worship music<sup>64</sup>, the stylization of Messianic Jewish circumcision ceremonies (Reason 2004), or in the negotiation of the role of women in contemporary Messianic Judaism (Kollontai 2009). Thus, Messianic Jews find their position in “a system of oppositions and correlations” (Bourdieu 2006:296). In all its diversity, Messianic Judaism is characterized by its rejection of the Christian label, and its embracing of Yeshua as the Messiah, of Jesus as Christ. Thus, the movement of Messianic Judaism has become an embodied prophetic question mark which challenges the labeling of contemporary

64 Dance and music are of particular importance in Messianic Judaism. There is an impressive number of Messianic Jewish musicians and composers with a distinctive style of music, in which traditional Jewish elements are combined with elements from contemporary Christian worship music. Dancing is also part of Messianic Jewish culture, in both distinctively Jewish and in typically charismatic ways, see Hocken (2009:101).

Western ways of life as Christian<sup>65</sup>, to which its existential meaning has become secondary or irrelevant. Arguably, if the lived interpretation of the meaning of the label Christian in Western contexts had not departed from its original meaning (where ‘Christian’ and ‘Messianic’ are equivalents linguistically), maybe there would have been no need (for contemporary Messianic Jews) to reject the label Christian, nor would there have been a need for Christians to construe the category Christian as a religious category in contrast to Judaism (in the fourth century, see Boyarin 2009, 2007 & 2004b).

To conclude, to frame and understand Christian existence in contemporary working contexts, I argue that it is crucial to rediscover the primacy of the existential and thus categorical connotations of the term ‘Christian’ over the nominal and thus categorizing connotations. The basic meaning of the term is lost if its existential character is ignored. Used in a merely nominal sense, the term is emptied and becomes prone to misinterpretations<sup>66</sup>. Christianity, in existential terms, is a category of its own. Even though the categories of faith, spirituality, and religion have become the common categories with which to study Christians at work, the Christian label with its existential connotations displays a certain resistance to being fully subsumed under these three categories.<sup>67</sup> I have thus drawn upon an analysis of the framing practices of practitioners (6.1.1) and upon a conceptual interpretation of the Christian category against the background of Bourdieu’s habitus (6.1.2) to make the case for ‘being a Christian’ or Christian existence as the basic category with which to frame the study of Christians at work. Having addressed the framing of Christian existence (at work), I will now turn to the question of how a Christian mode of existence is embodied at work.

## 6.2 Embodying Christian existence at work

In the present section, I will, first, discuss crucial elements of Christian embodiment at work as identified on the basis of our (see 1.3 and Brügger 2018; Brügger & Huppenbauer 2019) empirical study (6.2.1) and relate this to Viktor Frankl’s idea of finding meaning in life (6.2.2). I will argue that Viktor Frankl’s notion of meaning in life serves well as a conceptual back-

65 By Westerners or by outsiders.

66 With regard to an original and existential understanding of the term.

67 On the relationship of the study of Christians to these terms, see also chapter 7.

ground to accentuate the contours and contents of the Christian body at work.

### 6.2.1 *Distancing, connecting, and investing*

In this section, I will first introduce a theoretical sketch of the embodiment of Christian existence at work, which is based on our empirical data, as configurations of the three movements or dynamics of distancing, connecting, and investing (1). Subsequently, I will indicate how aspects of these three movements can be found in extant research, in particular in current sociological and theological approaches (2), and in the fsw and theological literature discussed in chapters 4 and 5 (3).

1) One of the steps I conducted when analyzing the data was to group together all passages in the interviews or fieldnotes that I thought could be roughly characterized as descriptions of scenes of ‘Christian existence embodied at work’. When I first looked at these descriptions, I discovered a recurring element which I first coded as “letting go”. This code entailed a number of codings<sup>68</sup> which displayed various forms of establishing a distance between oneself and one’s work, or between oneself and a particular problem one encounters in relation to one’s work. These acts of distancing could be either ritualized or informal. They could be part of an intentional act to practice one’s faith or they could be more implicitly present in a manager’s behavior.

What struck me then was a kind of dissonance: the research participants are all highly active people, managers and entrepreneurs in busy and fast-paced business environments. How could it be that the main element of how they live their Christianity at work was by distancing themselves in some way from their work? When I read the respective codings again, I noted two aspects which occurred in addition to the distancing I first discovered: First, they also entailed strongly active elements of engagement, but the action the managers took seemed to be somehow mediated by the distance they were able to establish beforehand. Second, I found that both movements, that of distancing and that of active engagement, were related to and somehow dependent on the experience of a connection with God. From a systemizing perspective, there are thus three interrelated dynamics or movements present in a manager’s embodiment of Christian existence at work: *distancing* from ‘the world’, *connecting* with God, and an active engage-

68 That is, text passages from our observation and interview data which I coded under the respective code. On the coding method, see 1.3.

ment with ‘the world’, which, for reasons I will explain below, I have called *investing*. This outline allowed me to formulate the working hypothesis that the embodiment of Christian existence at work can be described as being characterized by different configurations of the three elements of distancing, connecting, and investing. In the following, I will describe possible relationships between the three dynamics and criteria for specification of the three dynamics based on descriptions of scenes from our data.

Let me now turn to addressing the relationship between the movements of distancing and investing. It is important to note that, according to their basic intention, these are contrary movements: distancing oneself from the world runs contrary to an active engagement with the world. However, it is the particular combination and dosage of the two elements which are of importance:

P3: Pausing is important to me. It's unbelievable how many thoughts go through your head all the time. I notice how difficult it is when I try to take just ten breaths without thinking about anything. Just ten breaths. I also do it at work before I have to do something.

Interviewer: Pausing?

P3: Yes. Before I write a letter or an e-mail, for example. Otherwise, I work on something and think about ten other things at the same time. If I just sit quietly for a moment first, I can then concentrate better on one thing. (P3:15–18).<sup>69</sup>

P3 thus first distances himself from the thoughts in his mind. This is a kind of semi-ritualized practice<sup>70</sup>, in which he interrupts the stream of daily activities by sitting and consciously breathing for a moment.<sup>71</sup> The investing, that is, the active engagement with the world to which P3 refers

69 Original German quotation:

P3: Das mit dem Innehalten ist mir wichtig. Es ist unglaublich, wie viele Gedanken einem so die ganze Zeit durch den Kopf gehen. Ich merke das, wenn ich versuche nur zehn Atemzüge zu nehmen, ohne dabei an etwas zu denken, wie schwierig das ist. Nur zehn Atemzüge. Ich mache das auch beim Arbeiten, bevor ich etwas erledigen muss.

Interviewer: Das Innehalten?

P3: Ja. Bevor ich einen Brief oder eine E-mail schreibe, zum Beispiel. Sonst arbeite ich an etwas, und studiere gleichzeitig an zehn anderen Sachen herum. Wenn ich zuerst kurz einfach ruhig dasitze, kann ich nachher besser ganz bei einer Sache sein.

70 Another example of the integration of a semi-ritualized practice with a similar structure can be found in P1:(10). She employs a body technique from contemplative prayer (standing still with an awareness of body and breath) in hectic moments at work.

71 The connecting element (see below) is not mentioned here directly. It may well be implied indirectly insofar as the distancing activity mentioned is actually transferred into the work setting from the context of a scripture-reading practice (in a non-work setting)



here, can be described in two different ways: in terms of the currency of what he invests, it is, first, *paying attention* to the task at hand, such as writing an e-mail.<sup>72</sup> Second, more generally speaking, P3 invests *himself* in the task at hand, in that he can “concentrate better on one thing” [*ganz bei einer Sache sein*] (P3:15)<sup>73</sup>. This self-investment is made possible by the freedom experienced through prior distancing from thought and distractions.<sup>74</sup> Thus, the movement of distancing seems, in this case, to enable the later investment. The movements of distancing and investing can vary in terms of their objects and mode (distancing) and of their currency and targets or projects (investing).

P6 offers another case. After some turmoil in the company which employed him, he has decided to start a new business:

I could have gone back to being a manager at a company now. But then I might have buried my talents. Someone told me that prophetically: “No, do this now, it will increase your talents.” And I think in that sense life has already changed massively in that direction, that I’m even more prepared—So we’re risking everything at the moment, it’s *all in*, and if it goes wrong, we won’t have a house afterwards, just an old caravan or the offer to stay with some good friends in L10<sup>75</sup>. We have fewer possessions at the moment than we’ve ever had before because we’ve *invested everything* (P6:97, my emphasis).<sup>76</sup>

in which P3 leads a group through a phase of breathing/body awareness in preparation for the collective reading of a biblical text (P3:9–14). Interestingly, while the preparation is similar in work and non-work settings, the scripture reading in the non-work-related spiritual practice is, in the work setting, replaced by the performance of the work-related task at hand. Of course, one could argue that the structure of spiritual practices is often intended to create an effect which lasts longer than the practice itself (see e.g. Walthert 2013). From the perspective of Christian embodiment at work, it seems that Christian practices, such as worship services, mirror the triad of distancing, connecting, and investing (see e.g. on distancing as *Unterbrechung* with regard to worship services, Meyer-Blanck 2011:348.394 – 396) and are structured toward the practical formation of Christian individuals who are capable of navigating their relationship to the world on the basis of their relationship with God.

72 See also my discussion of Tucker/Kierkegaard (chapter 4) and Smith (chapter 3) on the important role of attention in the experience of spirituality or faith at work.

73 On the importance of self-investment, see also Ligo (2011:444.448; and 4.3.1).

74 See also Delbecq’s (2004:250) notion of detachment “from thought and affect”.

75 Names of places are anonymized.

76 Original German text: Ich hätte jetzt wieder als Manager in eine Firma gehen können. Aber ich hätte dann vielleicht meine Talente vergraben. Das ist mir auch prophetisch gesagt worden von jemandem: „Nein, mach jetzt das, es wird eine Vermehrung der Talente geben.“ Und ich glaube, in diesem Sinne hat sich das Leben schon massiv in diese Richtung verändert, dass ich noch bereiter bin – Also wir riskieren momentan alles, also es ist *all in*, also wenn es schiefgeht, haben wir nachher kein Haus mehr, nur noch einen



While, in P3's case, the object of distancing was his thought and distractions, P6 indicates a distance from his own possessions. However, he does not totally distance himself in the sense of completely giving his possessions away, but the inner distance toward his possessions allows him to constructively invest them. The distancing element occurs here not primarily as an act, but as an aspect which shapes his attitude of freedom to his possessions, which then enables an act of investment. The target or project in which he invests is, in P6's case, establishing a new enterprise, while in P3's case it is the writing of an e-mail or letter.<sup>77</sup>

P6's case also indicates what I have termed 'connecting' as an additional element, which is crucial to enable and understand both the movements of distancing and investing. For P6, the connecting aspect occurs, first, in his experience of being led by God to invest his possessions in the start-up company and, second, in the relativization of the worth of his possessions and of 'worldly success'<sup>78</sup> in the light of his relationship with God:

P6: Well, I was never really scared or anything. Somehow—we said: "Yes, if we go bankrupt, we go bankrupt." I always told the banker: "Look, the only thing you don't know is that we have an old caravan (laughter), and we're keeping it, right!" And when I now see how everything is going, I have to say that it really is a miracle. So we have now made a six-digit profit in our second quarter—the third quarter of this year—from zero. So, sure, what we invested is not yet paid back. Exactly, we bought on the 27<sup>th</sup> in the morning, and we learned that we were actually in the red with the company T<sup>79</sup>, instead of in the black, right. And we received two orders—

uralten Wohnwagen oder das Angebot von guten Freunden, bei ihnen in L10 zu schlafen. Wir haben momentan so wenig Besitztum wie noch nie, weil wir *alles investiert* haben.

77 P6's case is paradigmatic in that it inspired the naming of the category of investing vis-à-vis that of distancing. As the category of 'investing' refers to Christians' active engagement with the world, one could also have used embodiment or engagement here. However, as the movement of investing is inextricably linked to the movements of distancing and connecting, it seems to be more appropriate to reserve the notion of embodiment for the overall formation of Christian existence at work as including distancing, connecting, and investing. As activities of investing, that is, forms of engagement with the world, are those that can be primarily perceived by an observer, it seems appropriate to say that acts of investing provide the overall embodiment of Christian existence at work with its *clothing* or outer shape. On the Latin *investio*, see Lewis and Short (1879). On *vestio*, see also Lewis (1890) and Lewis and Short (1879). See also the Greek ἐνδύσας (as in 1 Peter 3:3).

78 Another example is P10:(179–185), who describes how bonus payments play an important role for many working in the finance industry, and that because of his faith this is not so important to him.

79 Company names are anonymized.

on the 27<sup>th</sup> when we signed! So I don't know, that's probably all God can do to say: "I'm with you, I support you in this, and it will go well." I do not know if it really will go well.

Interviewer: But it feels like it will?

P6: I just have faith that it will go well.

Interviewer: You have faith. Or do you have faith, but it does not feel like it will go well; it is neutral?

P6: It doesn't always feel the same, you know? (P6:128–132).<sup>80</sup>

P6's confidence as an entrepreneur is based on his relationship with God (connecting), through which this-worldly realities lose their ultimate grip (distancing) and become the arena for enacting his faith (investing).

In the light of our data, the connecting aspect in how Christian existence is embodied at work can be specified in relation to different forms of distancing. In one type of connecting, it involves intentional distancing in the form of an interruption of the stream of activities which is recognizable for the observer (e.g., P1:10; P3:15–18; P15:356), and which serves to create space for connecting with God.<sup>81</sup> It seems in particular it is the use of

80 P6: Also ich hatte auch nie gross Angst oder so. Irgendwie auch – Wir haben gesagt: „Ja wenn wir Konkurs gehen, gehen wir halt Konkurs.“ Ich habe dem Banker immer gesagt: „Schau, das Einzige, das du nicht weisst, ist, dass wir einen uralten Wohnwagen haben (Lachen), und diesen behalten wir, gell!“ Und wenn ich jetzt sehe, wie alles am Laufen ist, dann muss ich sagen, das ist ein riesiges Wunder. Also wir haben jetzt in unserem zweiten Quartal – im dritten Quartal dieses Jahres – einen sechsstelligen Gewinn gemacht – von null. Also, sicher, es ist noch nicht zurückbezahlt, was wir investiert haben. Eben, wir haben am 27. am Morgen gekauft, wir haben erfahren, dass wir eigentlich in der Verlustzone sind da beim Unternehmen T, statt positiv, oder. Und wir haben zwei Aufträge bekommen – am 27., als wir unterschrieben haben! Also ich weiss nicht, mehr kann Gott wahrscheinlich gar nicht machen, um zu sagen: „Ich bin mit dir, ich stehe dir hier bei, und das wird gut kommen.“ Ich weiss es ja auch nicht, ob es wirklich gut kommt.

Interviewer: Aber es fühlt sich so an?

P6: Ich glaube einfach, dass es gut kommt.

Interviewer: Und du glaubst es. Oder glaubst du es, und es fühlt sich nicht so an, es ist neutral?

P6: Es fühlt sich nicht immer gleich an, gell.

81 Note that the object of connecting can, in principle, also be oneself (e.g.: „Und ich nutze schon noch viel so Pausen (...) bewusst, um so wie zu mir oder zu Gott auch zu finden“ P15:294) or other people (e.g. P10 (P10:57) argues that his attitude toward other people is directly influenced by his relationship with God). In particular in interruption techniques inspired by Christian contemplative practices, concern for oneself is not in

bodily techniques which serves to combine the aspects of distancing and connecting into a singular practice:<sup>82</sup>

Singing, for example. So, when I sing in my apartment or in the car or wherever, it also happens that I have a physical sensation—singing is something physical—and at the same time I distance myself from what I usually do or what otherwise occupies me, in a connection with the numinous, with God, and that I then feel gifted because I see it from the outside, because I feel loved, because I feel privileged (P7:171).<sup>83</sup>

While in this first type of connecting, the movement of distancing is intentionally included, in another type the connecting aspect accompanies the stream of activities as a background melody which can, for example, shape the attitude of an individual to her/his work and to other people s/he encounters while working (see e.g. P5:63–65.121 – 123.133 – 145<sup>84</sup>, P10:55–57; P14:61.99.111 – 117.161.171). In some cases, there are interruptions to the stream of activities, but they may be so subtle that they are barely recognizable by an observer, for example natural pauses in conversations used for connecting with God (P15:294, also in P15:318–343), or sequences in a meeting where others are talking (P2:20–51.60 – 68). P2's case is very interesting in this regard. When leading a session of a hectic meeting, he seems to continually oscillate between subtle interruptions as forms of distancing, active engagement with meeting participants, and

competition with that for God, as these techniques create space for individuals *in their relation* to God. In terms of interpersonal communion, while it is conceptually the individual relationship with God which enables positive relationships with other human beings (e.g. P10:57), many of the participants in our study recount that it was through the witnessing of and participation in positive relationships with other Christians that they became Christians, existentially speaking (see e.g. P5:56–69; P7:185–197; P10:77; P13:52; P14:31.46 – 58). On activation as a phenomenon which is experienced individually, but mediated socially, see 6.1.1.

82 For another example, see also P3's breathing technique, discussed above.

83 Original German text: Zum Beispiel beim Singen. Also wenn ich in meiner Wohnung singe oder im Auto oder wo auch immer, passiert das auch, dass ich eine körperliche Sensation habe – Singen ist etwas Physisches – und gleichzeitig in Distanz trete zu dem, was ich sonst mache oder was mich sonst beschäftigt, in einer Verbindung mit dem Numinosen, mit Gott, und dass ich mich dann beschenkt fühle, weil ich es von aussen sehe, weil ich mich geliebt fühle, weil ich mich privilegiert fühle.

84 In paragraphs 133–145, P5 explicitly discusses the role of intentional interruptions and concludes that they are *not necessary* to maintain a relationship with God during the working day, although intentional interruptions may sometimes be helpful. This is conceptually interesting, in that God and the world are not construed here in an oppositional way, but one's relationship with God is characterized as a crucial aspect *of* one's living in the world.

seeking a connection with God in what he is doing, which he refers to as “reconnecting” (P2:62).<sup>85</sup>

In more general terms, the relationship between Christian individuals and God thus serves as the nerve center from which both their detachment from the world (distancing) and their engagement with the world (investing) are orchestrated. The individual relationship with God serves as the stable ground or archimedic point from which the dynamic relationship to the world characterized by the dialectic of distancing and investing is organized. The dialectic of distancing and investing allows movements in both directions, which means that there is no given conceptual or temporal priority of distancing over investing. Rather, the relationship between the two seems to be cyclical. As human beings always find themselves already thrown into some form of engagement with the world, the stream of activities of investing serves as the context for movements of distancing, which then in turn serve as the basis for movements of investing and so forth.

In summary, Christian engagement with the world (investing) emerges in a dialectic tension with Christian disengagement from the world (distancing), while both Christian engagement with (investing) and disengagement from the world (distancing) are orchestrated from and characterized by the individual’s relationship with God (connecting). Different situations of Christian embodiment can thus have different emphases with regard to the dialectic between distancing and investing (distancing might be more prominent in one situation than investing or vice versa). Embodying a Christian mode of existence at work can thus be understood as being characterized by different configurations of the triad of distancing, connecting, and investing.

The three characteristic dynamics of Christian embodiment can be further specified with regard to different variations in concrete situations. Moments of distancing can be specified with regard to different objects from which someone distances her- or himself (such as people, roles, thoughts, emotions, ambitions, expectations, possessions), modes (ritualized, semi-ritualized, informal), and action reference, in that they either comprise separate acts (e.g. a break from work to pray or meditate) or accompany existing (work-related) acts (e.g. in the form of particular attitudes or orientations). Moments of connecting can also be specified with regard to their action reference, and with respect to their being more

85 To study such situations of embodiment, it was crucial to combine observations with interviews, where we first observed a situation and could afterwards ask participants about their experience in a particular situation (see 1.3).

explicit or implicit (which often means they are more or less observable for the researcher, or even not directly observable). Moments of investing can be specified in terms of the currency that is invested (e.g. attention, money, ‘oneself’) and of the project or target in which it is invested (e.g. a person, a task, a project, a business).

While in extant research, particularly in fsw research and in theological approaches to the workplace, singular aspects related to distancing, connecting, and investing are addressed, so far I have not found a general characterization of Christian existence at work similar to the one proposed here. However, it must be noted that the theoretical sketch of the embodiment of Christian existence at work proposed here displays strong similarities with extant sociological and theological approaches which have not focused particularly on work contexts, but which can nevertheless be relevant for Christian existence at work. In the following, I will thus discuss the sketch’s correspondence to two broader contemporary sociological approaches and one theological account (2) and, subsequently, turn (again) to fsw research and theological approaches to the workplace as presented in chapters 4 and 5 to explore how the concepts of distancing, connecting, and investing can be said to be reflected there (3).

2) Mellor and Shilling (2014:281) describe Christian forms of life as particular actualizations (“instaurations”) of a religious habitus which draw upon the “three central features of the Christian cultural ‘repertoire’” (2014:283):

- (i) a focus on individuals being drawn out of their societies (by opening their bodies and minds to a transcendent, other-worldly sphere) (...), (ii) the development of a relationally-defined but unique sense of personhood (arising from the experience of communion with God) (...) and (iii) acquiring the capacity to reflect upon, interrogate and deploy the individual conscience (in engaging morally with, and identifying religious potential within, secular society) (2014:283).

Their first feature of the Christian cultural repertoire can be said to describe the movement of distancing in sociological terms (“individuals being drawn out of their societies” 2014:283) enabled through connecting (“by opening their bodies and minds to a transcendent, other-worldly sphere” 2014:283). Mellor and Shilling’s second feature describes what I have called connecting as “the development of a relationally-defined but unique sense of personhood (arising from the experience of communion with God)” (2014:283). Their third feature can be said to describe, in sociological terms, what I have called investing as “the capacity to reflect upon, interrogate and

deploy the individual conscience (in engaging morally with, and identifying religious potential within, secular society)” (2014:283).

In a similar vein, Pollack and Rosta (2015:66) argue that different forms of religious meaning, first, work with the distinction of transcendence and immanence and are orientated toward a transcendent sphere.<sup>86</sup> Second, they (the forms of meaning) make transcendence accessible in that they reintroduce the distinction between transcendence and immanence into the realm of immanence. Pollack and Rosta (2015:66) refer to Niklas Luhmann in calling this second step a “re-entry”. While Mellor and Shilling’s three central features of the Christian cultural repertoire seem to be roughly congruent with the different aspects of what I have called the triad of distancing, connecting, and investing, Pollack and Rosta’s transcendence–immanence distinction and transcendence orientation relate to the distancing and connecting elements of the triad proposed, and their ‘re-entry’ seems to be roughly congruent with the *investing* movement. Pollack and Rosta’s account particularly seems to capture the idea that this kind of engagement with the (immanent) world carries with it the prior movements of distancing from the world (the transcendence–immanence distinction) and of connecting with a (transcendent) God.<sup>87</sup>

In theological terms, the triad resonates with writers who emphasize the participation of Christians in Christ’s incarnation and, in particular, his death and resurrection (e.g. Kelly 2010, Miller 2014, Nelson 1995).<sup>88</sup> In Miller’s (2014:4f.102f) reading of Paul, followers of Christ participate (connecting) bodily and literally in Christ’s death and resurrection by putting to death their passions and desires, situated in the body (distancing), and they thus die with Christ, while the Spirit ‘infuses’ their bodies with Christ’s death and resurrection life (connecting). They participate in the new life of

86 One could argue that it is not “the different forms of religious meaning” (2015:66) which work with the distinction of transcendence and immanence, but the sociologists who study these forms.

87 Some of the research subjects in our study might agree with the transcendence–immanence distinction, the transcendent orientation, and the notion of re-entry, as proposed by Pollak and Rosta, but would probably disagree with the labeling of the overall complex as ‘religious’, arguing instead that their relationship with God transcends the notion of religion (see e.g. P13) and that the label ‘religious’ is, therefore, not well-suited to it. In addition to the perspective of the managers studied, it would also be interesting to hear the perspectives of non-Christians on Pollack and Rosta’s conception of religion since it seems to be a paradigmatic reformulation of John 1:14 (I have not found an explicit reference to this text!).

88 I follow Kelly (2010) in understanding Christ’s death and resurrection (and ascension) *as part of* Christ’s incarnation.

Christ, which becomes visible in just (2014:136) practice (investing). In short, they “practice the body of Christ”<sup>89</sup>. In terms of investing, Miller argues that the habitually practiced actions called for in Romans 12–15 are the contents of what Paul means in Romans 5 by just practice and in Romans 6–8 by “a life free from the sinful passions of the body and serving God obediently” (2014:136). The imperatives of Romans 12–15, then, are “a command to *continue to be Christians*, to be Christ” (2014:138, my emphasis) in how they live their lives.

Miller’s interpretation is important to understand the role of Christians as members of Christ. This helps to put the triad of distancing, connecting, and investing, which occurs in the data of our study, in the right context, from a Christian (theological) point of view. In short, Christians’ relationship to Jesus Christ cannot be reduced to one aspect of Christian embodiment at work (e.g. that of connecting), but the reality of Christ is also to be understood as the context in which the whole set of dynamics of Christian embodiment at work, as specified by the movements of distancing, connecting, and investing, takes place. While many interviewees emphasize the centrality of Jesus (e.g., P5:107–109.119.121; P7:185–197; P9:23.33 – 35..90 – 99.119.125.198 – 209.215 – 219; P13:52–56.136; P15: 129–130138.176 – 178–180.186.220.242), there is a particular passage which indicates the presence of Jesus as the transformative reality in which Christians are to live. The context of the passage is the question of how to deal with fear:

It’s very simple: when a child has a nightmare, and always when this occurs in social relationships in which love for children prevails—I take this for granted, I’m sure it is the case with you, too—then we become socially so much more intelligent. And when a child has a nightmare, I do not explain about REM phases to it, but I go to it, give it closeness, and I take its fears seriously without believing them. I really listen, without submitting to them in order to dissolve them. And then I notice physically and mentally exactly the moment at which the child comes down, namely when it starts listening to me. Before that, only my presence is important. And that is what Christ does. Christ is simply present at first; he works through his presence, it’s always like that. In the Bible, I can read wherever I want to: as soon as Christ enters the scene, everything changes. Those who were quite self-confident before are now quite insecure (laughter), and those who were afraid before draw hope.

I have read with great interest the rites<sup>90</sup> of the Jesuits. By Ignatio. In his morning rites, he—as early as in the, I think it was in the 17th century—did almost systemic constellation work in his imagination. He always said: Imagine now all your figures

89 Which is the title of Miller’s book (2014).

90 P7 refers here to the spiritual *exercices* of St. Ignatius. The term “rites” is also related to the Ignatian tradition (see the Chinese rites controversy).



in your fantasy world that are relevant today—today, very practically. So: Who are you meeting? Which debts or which problems do you have to solve? Imagine all this exactly: Where are you, and what does it look like? And then (P7 hits the table) add Christ. And now something happens. And this is very practical—there is an effect (P7:19–20).<sup>91</sup>

While this passage indicates Christ as the reality in which to live, others describe how Jesus Christ relates to distancing and investing (P6:147), and how they relate to Christ's dying and resurrection in various ways, such as when a difficult situation is 'brought to the cross of Jesus' in prayer (P9:129.181.193 – 197), or by meditating on Christ's dying and resurrection (P15:176–180), or by celebrating the Lord's Supper, particularly in challenging situations (P17:97.271 – 283). This indicates that, even though the Pauline notion of participation in Christ's dying and resurrection cannot be said to be part of the standard repertoire of convictions described by the Christian managers studied, it is also not totally foreign to some of them. And maybe more importantly: the dynamics related to participation in Christ can be encountered in numerous places across our empirical data. The Christological framework with which the triad of distancing, connecting, and investing can be situated, as referring to different aspects of Christians' participation in Christ, seems to me the most crucial aspect of Christian embodiment at work addressed in Christian theology. One might surely find much more theological material which addresses one or more

91 Original German quotation: Es ist ganz einfach: Wenn ein Kind einen Albtraum hat, und immer, wenn es in einem sozialen Gefälle, in welchem eben Liebe herrscht zu den Kindern – ich setze das jetzt einmal voraus, ich bin mir sicher, es ist so, bei dir auch –, dann werden wir sozial so viel intelligenter. Und wenn ein Kind einen Albtraum hat, erkläre ich ihm nichts über REM-Phasen, sondern ich gehe hin, gebe ihm Nähe, und ich nehme es in seinen Ängsten ernst, ohne diese zu glauben. Ich höre wirklich zu, ohne mich dem zu unterwerfen, um es aufzulösen. Und dann merke ich physisch und psychisch ganz genau, wann das Kind runtergepaced ist, nämlich dann, wenn es anfängt, mir zuzuhören. Davor ist nur meine Präsenz wichtig. Und das ist das, was Christus macht. Christus ist einfach zuerst präsent, er wirkt durch seine Präsenz, es ist immer so. In der Bibel kann ich lesen, wo ich möchte: Wenn Christus die Szene betritt, wird alles anders. Die, welche vorher ganz sicher waren, sind jetzt ziemlich unsicher (Lachen), und die, welche vorher verängstigt waren, schöpfen Hoffnung. Ich habe mit viel Interesse die Riten der Jesuiten gelesen. Von Ignatio. Der hat – bereits im, ich glaube, das war im 17. Jahrhundert – in seinen Riten am Morgen fast systemische Aufstellungsarbeiten gemacht in der Fantasie. Er hat immer gesagt: Stelle dir jetzt alle deine Figuren in deiner Fantasiewelt vor, die heute – heute, ganz praktisch – relevant sind. Also: Wen triffst du? Welche Schulden oder welche Probleme musst du lösen? Stelle dir das alles genau vor: Wo bist du, und wie sieht das aus? Und dann (P7 schlägt auf den Tisch) stelle Christus dazu. Und jetzt passiert etwas. Und das ist ganz praktisch – Wirkung.



facets of the triad of distancing, connecting, and investing. While I cannot delve into this in more detail here, let me indicate briefly that the movement of distancing resonates, for example, with the notion of “Unterbrechung” (disruption) in German theology, such as in the work of Friedrich Schleiermacher<sup>92</sup>, Eberhard Jüngel<sup>93</sup>, or Johann Baptist Metz<sup>94</sup>.

3) Aspects of Christian embodiment at work, as sketched here on an empirical basis, are also addressed in fsw literature and in theological approaches to contemporary work contexts. In the following, I will sketch how the dynamics of distancing, connecting, and investing can be seen to be reflected in these bodies of literature.

In terms of investing, Ligo (2011:444; see also 4.3.1) outlines that working involves “giving of oneself” (2011:444), participation of the “whole person, body and spirit” (2011:444), and that the spirituality of work calls for self-investment (2011:448). In her approach, the fourth criterion of a Christian spirituality of work encompasses self-investment in creativity (instead of self-preoccupation). In terms of the reality of Christ as the context of Christian embodiment, according to Ligo (2011:449), “to be in Christ” is the fundamental meaning and existential condition of being Christian. This condition is marked by “the mystery of the passion, death, and resurrection of Christ” (2011:449). Work, in the totality of its aspects, can be assumed as a form of “participation in Christ’s total act of self-giving” (2011:460) in his passion, death, and resurrection. In work, one becomes a participant “in God’s own *self-giving* to creation, as well as God’s self-giving within the Trinitarian reality of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit” (2011:459; my emphasis). “Through the Incarnate Son, redeemed humanity finds its irrevocable place within the self-giving of the Trinity. Redeemed humanity finds itself encircled by the Trinity of Lover, Beloved, and Love,” says Ligo (2011:459), thus emphasizing the connection between what I have called investing and connecting.

In the case of Delbecq’s (2004:249–252; see also 4.3.2) “composite executive” named Sally, which he uses to describe the Christian manager’s spiritual journey, the facets of Christian embodiment described above can also be observed. In the early stage of her journey, Sally adopts two spiritual disciplines: reading of scripture in the evening followed by reflection and

92 As an “Unterbrechung der Geschäftstätigkeit” (interruption of business activities), see Meyer-Blanck (2011:396) or an “Unterbrechung des bürgerlich-geschäftlichen Lebens“ (interruption of civic-commercial life), see Stroh (1998:326).

93 See e.g. his *Unterbrechungen* (1989) and on Jüngel, see Meyer-Blanck (2011:395).

94 See his *Unterbrechungen* (1981).

prayer (connecting) and a daily examen, that is, an exercise aimed at continuously integrating lessons learned from scripture reading into daily activities (investing) through daily evaluation of one's conduct and prayer. Later, she starts to practice 'mindfulness', that is, attending to God in the 'now' of each daily activity (combining connecting and investing) and including short breaks (distancing) between activities to remind herself to be 'present' in what she is doing (Delbecq 2004:250). This increases her ability to be present with each task or person (investing). She then starts to include the "contemplative practice" (2004:250) of "Christian centering prayer", "where she detaches from thought and affect for twenty minutes twice-daily" (distancing), where she learns to "detach from fears, anxieties, and self-concerns" (2004:250). Sally also begins to practice discernment, which helps her to listen to all points of view, to solve problems participatorily (investing), to return (distancing) to prayer (connecting), and to hold a problem in her heart while paying attention (investing) to the movements of desolation and consolation, says Delbecq (2004:251). Thus, she learns to include affective and spiritual insights alongside rational problem-solving (investing). Additionally, she develops an increasing understanding of the Christian tradition's emphasis on the suffering Christ and, in this way, develops the capacity to endure difficult moments in her organization (distancing and connecting) and to provide support to others (investing) in difficult situations (2004:251).

While Delbecq proposes understanding the spiritual journey as involving "cycles of conversion", one could phrase this in the terminology proposed here by saying that oscillating between the movements of distancing and investing is continually orchestrated by one's relationship with God. The spiritual journey progresses by grace, according to Delbecq (2004:252). It involves "increased illumination and unification", which is "never over this side of death". Interestingly, the idea of growth is not prominent in the accounts of the Christian managers we studied, although the notions of maturing (P2:70; P15:92) and intensification (e.g. P2:70; P18:320–346) do occur, the idea of a shift or passage (with more or less clear temporal boundaries in terms of the managers' biographies) from a nominal to an existential status of being a Christian<sup>95</sup> features more prominently.

According to Radzins (2017; see also 4.3.3), living labor implies being thoughtful about one's work, be it "painting, plowing, writing, building, or cooking" (2017:295), and it involves (an investment of) the "faculty of attention" (2017:295). While in dead labor work becomes only a means to

95 What I have termed activation, see 6.1.

an end, living labor comes from what Simone Weil calls “the world beyond”, says Radzins (2017:298), from what is unseen (thought, contemplation, or attention). This focus on the ‘world beyond’ can be said to imply a form of distancing from (or relativization of) ‘this world’. “Spirit appears in the *connection* between the world beyond (what is unseen) and this world (the seen)” (Radzins 2017:298; my emphasis). One’s engagement with the world (investing) is to be understood in the context of one’s relationship to the divine (connecting): For Weil, “the divine is materially present (...) the world is ‘God’s language to us’” (Radzins 2017:303) and the beauty of the world is “Christ’s tender smile” (Radzins 2017:305) to us.

Mabey and colleagues (2017; see 4.3.4) argue for “Jesus-centered ethical leadership” (2017:757). This requires one’s distancing from trusting in personal strength through repentance and an inner transformation through the work of the Holy Spirit (connecting) within a person.

According to Cavanagh and colleagues’ (2003; see 4.1.4) sketch of a Christian account, while humans are made to live in a relationship with God (connecting), there is a human tendency “to place fundamental confidence and hope in a spiritual substitute for God” (2003:130), such as wealth and success. Therefore, Jesus calls on human beings to repent (distancing and connecting), change their direction, and reorient their priorities (investing) toward God (connecting). Following Jesus involves a radical change (distancing) which “is paradoxically both given by God and enacted by humans” (2004:130) (investing which includes connecting and distancing). It is in the community of followers of Christ that the “Christian story takes on bodily existence” (2003:131), which indicates that Christian embodiment is not an individualistic endeavor, but takes place as Christians participate in the body of Christ.

Honecker (1995, see 5.3.2) points out that, from a Christian perspective, work is relativized (distancing) through faith (connecting), in that faith is more important than work (1995:457). In addition, from a theological perspective, the Christian faith bestows meaning on one’s work. Faith can even instill meaning into work which is experienced as toilsome, given that it is useful for the wider society. Through the motif of the cross, which Christians are to bear as they follow Christ (connecting and investing), they can accept toilsome work contexts and can overcome (distancing) dispiritedness (1995:469).

According to Black (2008:50; see 5.4.3), each member of a corporation is fully responsible for the entire “corporate body”. Individual members act on behalf of and realize the whole: “When I act, the whole is in me” (2008:50). “Each member is the whole corporation when he or she acts in

its name” (2008:50.52). This is most aptly described not by “representation”, nor by “agency”, but by “embodiment” (2008:50.52). Corporate members embody the corporate relationship. Such embodiment seems to mirror Christian embodiment, in that it entails the aspects of distancing (of oneself from oneself), of connecting (to the corporation), and of investing (‘act in its name’). As the church is “the first corporation” (2011:2), Black’s remarks may shed light on the relationship of the individual to the whole in Christian embodiment. Miller (2014:198), drawing on Martyn (2010), says that “it is not the individual Christian that acts as Christ but the church who does”. However, seen from the perspective of Black’s corporate theology, this is not a question of either the individual or the whole, for “When I act, the whole is in me” (Black 2008:50), as I am practicing not myself but Christ.

For Black, corporate existence seems to be similar to what I refer to as Christian existence, as “those participating in the corporate relation can be said to be participating in the life of the Trinity itself” (2008:50). In particular, corporate existence requires assistance from the Spirit, that is, it requires participation in the relationship between God and Jesus Christ (2008:50). Thus, for Black, corporate life requires *all* its participants (Christians and others) to live with faith<sup>96</sup> and to practice the spiritual exercises of mutual submission (distancing), expressing one’s view of the criterion of action (investing), listening to the expression of others, synthesizing a greater criterion, and seeking to uncover “the will of God in daily life” (2011:8). Thus, “searching for God” (connecting) is an inherent part of corporate existence (2011:6) for *every* corporate member. Black’s approach sheds light on Christian existence in its relationship to contemporary corporate life. While what I have described as the nominal mode of being a Christian seems to be largely irrelevant for corporate life, the features of an existential mode of being a Christian as described above seem to be critical for corporate life. In particular, what I have described as the characteristic dynamics of embodied Christian existence could be regarded in the light of Black’s work as qualities necessary(!) for the corporate relationship to ‘work’, that is, for corporations to function appropriately.

According to Daniels and colleagues (2012; see 5.4.2), Christians are, through redemption, “liberated from the idolatry of the market and set free to pursue, with assurance of power, a business life lived in obedience to Christ” (2012:73). Redemption thus involves liberation (distancing) and a

96 Defined as being “prepared to disclose completely and subject oneself to mutual judgment, as well as judgment by authority” (2008:50–52, footnote 27).

call to participate with God (connecting) in the restoration and transformation (investing) of business (2012:75).

I have only briefly indicated how these aspects of the embodiment of Christian existence at work appear in current fsw and theological research related to contemporary work contexts. One could also proceed in a more systematic way, by focusing on singular aspects, such as connecting and describing in more detail how that aspect is covered by different authors, for example by Cavanagh and colleagues (2003), Tucker (2010, see also 4.1.), or Lynn and colleagues (2010<sup>97</sup>, 2009, see also 2.2.). However, the purpose of my short tour through relevant research in this section was not to provide a complete systematic review of how these aspects of embodied Christian existence are addressed in extant research. My intention was mainly to show that, even though the terminology I use to describe facets of Christian embodiment is to a certain degree (but not completely) new, the content of these dynamics is already present and described in extant research. And different nuances and aspects of Christian embodiment at work addressed in research literature can be plausibly framed under the headings of distancing, connecting, and investing. What I sought to describe in this section based on empirically grounded theory development and theoretical reflection is that, in real-life situations, different dynamics and facets of Christian embodiment come together in particular combinations and variations. Thus, while there can be myriads of totally different situations of Christian embodiment at work, there are at the same time a few patterns and characteristic dynamics that are present across a variety of concrete situations of Christian embodiment at work.

In addition, some of the authors discussed in this section identify the person of Jesus Christ as the reality in which Christian embodiment is situated. To explore this from yet another angle, I will draw upon the work of Viktor Frankl, an author who also occurs in fsw literature. In the following, I will use his work on meaning in life as the conceptual background against which to accentuate the contours of the Christian body at work.

97 See their focus on relationship (with God) as a main dimension of faith at work (2010:232).

### 6.2.2 Viktor Frankl's meaning in life and the Christian body at work

'Meaning' is a term often employed in contemporary research on spirituality at work (see chapters 2 and 3)<sup>98</sup>. Some fsw authors have particularly drawn upon the notion of meaning in life (e.g. De Klerk 2005, Driver 2007, Lips-Wiersma & Morris 2009). The concept of meaning in life was originally proposed by the neurologist Viktor Frankl, a concentration camp survivor and the founder of logotherapy. Because of its strong conceptual connections to fsw discourses, and because I think it holds some promising potential for the accentuation of crucial aspects of Christian living, I will sketch, in the following, some of the key aspects of his approach (1) and then relate them to Christian living at work (2).

1) Logotherapy is an approach to psychotherapy which is based on the assumption of a "will to meaning" as a particularly human phenomenon. Frankl (2015[1977]) diagnoses a comprehensive crisis of meaning: In contrast to animals, no instincts tell human beings what they have to do, and in contrast to former times, no traditions tell them what they should do. Not knowing what they have to do, nor what they should do, humans often do not seem to know exactly what they actually want (2015:11.123). This leads to a fundamental crisis, existential frustration, a feeling of meaninglessness, says Frankl (2015:12.15).<sup>99</sup>

Frankl points out that Maslow<sup>100</sup> held the human will to meaning to be the primary orientation of human beings (2015:16) and that he situated meaning among the higher needs in his hierarchy of needs. However, Frankl questions Maslow's idea that, in order to pursue the higher need for meaning, lower needs must first be met. Frankl (2015:16) points out that the question of meaning in life can arise exactly in a situation of crisis and unmet lower needs, "when one is at one's worst" [*wenn es einem am dreckigsten geht*].

98 Additionally, it appears in theological approaches, in particular in Honecker's (1995:469) account (see 5.3.2), according to which the Christian faith bestows meaning on one's work.

99 For a different perspective on the veining influence of tradition, see the discussion of Mellor and Shilling's (2014) account in 4.2. They describe the same development differently by arguing that the influence of traditions is still there, but that the way in which traditions and individual lives are interrelated has changed.

100 On Maslow's relation to fsw discourses, see 2.1.3.

For Frankl, human existence is fundamentally marked by an orientation toward meaning, and thus by self-transcendence:

(...) the fact that being human always points beyond oneself to something that is not oneself—to something or to someone: to a meaning that needs to be fulfilled, or to another human being that we lovingly encounter. In service to a cause or in love for a person, a human being fulfills himself. The more he is absorbed in his task or devoted<sup>101</sup> to his partner, the more he is human, the more he becomes himself. He can only realize himself to the extent that he forgets himself (...). (2015:17)<sup>102</sup>

The experience of fulfillment, of happiness, *accompanies* the fulfillment of meaning in life. The former is an effect of the latter (2015:18f). Meaning cannot be given to a situation or invented or produced, it has to be *found*, to be discovered, says Frankl. Meaning cannot be created (because it is already there). Meaning [*Sinn*], as it is implied in concrete situations, has an objective quality. What can be created is either nonsense [*Unsinn*] or a subjective feeling of meaning [*subjektives Sinngefühl*], says Frankl (2015:29).

The process of finding meaning is similar to that of the perception of a body in space, or “gestalt perception” [*Gestaltwahrnehmung*] (2015:29). Each situation with which life confronts a human being comprises a demand, a “requiredness” (2015:28f.124). But while gestalt perception refers to the perception of a body in relation to a background or spatial context, the finding of meaning refers to *the discovering of a possibility against the background of reality*.

According to Frankl, it is *possible* to find meaning. Human beings are guided by their conscience [*Gewissen*] in finding meaning. Conscience is an organ of meaning [*ein Sinn-Organ*] (2015:30). Conscience can be defined as the ability to discover the unique meaning which is hidden in every situation. As a genuinely human organ, one’s conscience is, however, of a fleeting nature, and until the very end of life it does not allow human beings to know for sure whether they have really fulfilled the purpose of their lives or whether they only believe they have fulfilled it. Despite this uncertainty,

101 Note the parallel in the German original between *hingegen* (devoted) and *Aufgabe* (task).

102 Original: (...) die Tatsache, dass Menschsein allemal über sich selbst hinausweist auf etwas, das nicht wieder es selbst ist – auf etwas oder auf jemanden: auf einen Sinn, den zu erfüllen es gilt, oder auf anderes menschliches Sein, dem wir da liebend begegnen. Im Dienst an einer Sache oder in der Liebe zu einer Person erfüllt der Mensch sich selbst. Je mehr er aufgeht in seiner Aufgabe, je mehr er hingegen ist an seinen Partner, umso mehr ist er Mensch, umso mehr wird er er selbst. Sich selbst verwirklichen kann er also eigentlich nur in dem Masse, in dem er sich selbst vergisst (...).



human beings are called to obey [*geboreben*] the voice of their conscience and, firstly, to listen [*borchen*] to its voice (2015:30). This is why education should not only transfer knowledge, but develop and differentiate a person's conscience, which means improving her/his ability to hear the demand inherent in each situation (2015:31). This means education for responsibility.

Meaning in life thus refers to the concrete meaning of a concrete situation. It is the requirement of the hour [*Forderung der Stunde*] (2015:31). It is addressed to a concrete individual person. Every day and every hour have their meaning, and as human beings are unique, there is a *particular* meaning for everyone. The meaning which inhabits a situation is unique. Thus, meaning in life is ever-present, but it changes from situation to situation and from person to person (2015:32). The ability to find meaning is independent of gender, intelligence, education, or religiosity<sup>103</sup>. There is no situation or person to which or to whom life does not offer a particular meaning. Because of this particularity of meaning, a psychotherapist cannot tell anyone *what* this meaning is but only *that* there is meaning. The fact that life never loses its meaning is due to the possibility of finding meaning, even in suffering.

A person may find meaning in three ways, in Frankl's view: first, by doing or creating something, second by experiencing something or loving somebody, and, third, in the case of unavoidable suffering or an unchangeable situation, by enduring one's fate with the right attitude. Thus, even the tragic aspects of human existence, such as suffering, guilt, and death, may be transformed into something positive by facing them with the right inner attitude, says Frankl (2015:33f). Through this, suffering can become transformational, leading to inner maturity and growth.

Enduring suffering is a crucial form of meaning. What is important is *how*, that is, with which attitude we endure unchangeable and unavoidable suffering, says Frankl. Suffering is the highest dignity of a human being compared to finding meaning through commitment to a task or loving another person. Why? In terms of being creative and fulfilling a task, there are the two categories of success and failure. In terms of suffering, the two relevant categories are despair and fulfillment. These are in a different dimension than success and failure. Thus, for the suffering person, failure may be compatible with fulfillment, while this seems impossible from the viewpoint of the task-orientated person. Nevertheless, there is a primacy of

103 Frankl holds that someone who is consciously areligious may be unconsciously religious at the same time (see e.g. 2015:38).



finding meaning through doing something, being creative, and fulfilling a task (*homo faber*) over finding meaning through enduring suffering with the right attitude. Only when suffering is *unavoidable* does its endurance become the necessary path to finding meaning. Enduring avoidable suffering would be waggery [*Mutwille*], says Frankl (2015:87–89).

Frankl indicates some implications of his account of meaning for the questions of leadership and management: in terms of leading or working with other people, it is crucial to become aware of the other person as s/he is meant in her/his secret form [*den gemeinten Menschen und seine geheime Gestalt*] (2015:51). Thus, we are not to take people “as they are”, but as they are with regard to their meaning in life (2015:14). Meaning is a particularly human phenomenon. It relates to the noetic or spiritual [*das Geistige*], which Frankl (2015:94) distinguishes from the somatic [*das Somatische*] and from the mental aspects [*das Psychische*] of human beings (2015:53).<sup>104</sup>

With regard to management, Frankl points to the problem of a confusion of means and ends. First<sup>105</sup>, it is to be noted that the experience of happiness and delight/lust is a *side effect* of finding and fulfilling meaning in life. They can thus not be found by directly pursuing happiness or lust, but by finding and fulfilling meaning in life. Frankl (2015:77) refers to the direct pursuit of happiness and lust as “neurotic”. The primary striving of human beings is thus not orientated toward happiness and lust, but toward meaning. Second, like lust and happiness, power is also secondary to meaning: power may be a necessary instrument with which to fulfill one’s meaning in life. It is thus secondary to the primary meaning orientation. If the pursuit of power becomes someone’s primary orientation, this demonstrates a neurotic motivation and a departure from the genuinely human orientation toward meaning, says Frankl (2015:77f). In particular, the primary orientation toward power is “the disease of managers” (2015:83), often encountered in its most primitive expression, the ‘will to money’.<sup>106</sup>

The goal of Frankl’s logotherapy is to reorient a client toward meaning. For Frankl, the Greek term *logos*, as it is used in ‘logotherapy’, stands for ‘spirit’ [*Geist*] and ‘meaning’ [*Sinn*] (2015:85.101). Our meaning in life is the

104 In psychotherapy, it is therefore necessary to differentiate between symptoms that are caused on the noetic, the mental, or the somatic levels, according to Frankl.

105 This first point is, in Frankl’s account, not formulated with particular respect to management. I describe it here because the second point, which is concerned with management, is linked to this first point in that the two are different forms of a confusion of means and ends.

106 Note the parallel to the observation made by Daniels and colleagues (2012:64) that under the conditions of the fall, businesses become ends instead of means (see 5.4.2).

essential element of who we are as people. A biography is the temporal explication of a person, says Frankl (2015:95). Self-transcendence of the person toward the *logos* refers to the specific human phenomenon that human existence always points beyond itself toward meaning (2015:101). Being human can be defined as being responsible because human beings are responsible for fulfilling a meaning (2015:102). Meaning in life is also key to Frankl's conception of freedom: human beings are subject to biological, psychological, or sociological conditions and are, in this sense, not free. Human beings are not 'free from' in terms of conditions, but 'free to' in terms of having the freedom to respond to the conditions they face (2015:113). This freedom is given even in the midst of unavoidable suffering, which can only be endured.

2) Of particular relevance for the question of Christian existence at work is Frankl's understanding of finding meaning, which he argues can be compared to that of the perception of a body in space, or gestalt perception [*Gestaltwahrnehmung*]. Let me reiterate what appear to be the crucial aspects in this regard before I relate Frankl's account to Christian living at work. Each situation with which reality confronts a human being comprises a demand, a "requiredness", says Frankl (2015:28f.124). As gestalt perception refers to the perception of a body in relation to a background or spatial context, the finding of meaning refers to the discovering of a possibility against the background of reality. This possibility is, however, closely tied to the situation at hand; it inhabits it, so to speak. However, what is not specified here is that the meaning of a situation, once discovered as a possibility, also needs to be *realized* or embodied. The realization of meaning seems to be implied in Frankl's notion of finding meaning (2015:29).<sup>107</sup>

At this point, let me suggest a parallel between Frankl's account of meaning and the embodied character of Christian existence. A Christian who reads Frankl's work might be reminded that the term which Frankl uses for meaning (*logos*) is the same term as is employed in the Johannine prologue to refer to the Word becoming flesh.<sup>108</sup> Of course, the semantic contexts of Frankl's and the Johannine use of the notion of the Logos differ, and in terms of content, they seem to differ at least with regard to

107 And specified, in particular, in his three ways of finding meaning (see above and 2015:33).

108 On the Johannine prologue with regard to fsw research, see also Bartunek's (2006) account (see also 4.2.1).

the personified understanding of the Logos as put forth in John's gospel.<sup>109</sup> However, I suggest that Frankl's conceptual frame of meaning may serve to elucidate such phrases as 'the formation of Christ' (see Bonhoeffer 2005:99) or 'the practice of the body of Christ' (see Miller 2014) in concrete contexts.<sup>110</sup> In particular, I suggest that the terminological parallel can be used to indicate a parallel in terms of content between Frankl's meaning in life and a Christian mode of existence. What is, in Frankl's general account, termed meaning, refers, in a Christian mode of existence, to the person of Jesus Christ. If we read the Johannine prologue through Frankl's eyes, it could be read as 'the meaning became flesh and took up residence among us' (see John 1:14). In turn, in a Christian reading of Frankl, Christ is the personified meaning toward which the existence of Christians is structured, and He becomes embodied, formed, or practiced in the concrete<sup>111</sup> life of Christians.<sup>112</sup>

This observation can also be linked to Ephesians<sup>113</sup> 2:10<sup>114</sup>: "For we are his workmanship, having been created in Christ Jesus for good works that God prepared beforehand so that we might walk in them"<sup>115</sup>. By taking account of the possible relation (indicated above) between Frankl's approach and the Johannine prologue for an interpretation of contempo-

109 In Frankl's account, it seems to me that meaning can, but does not have to be, personified, in that finding meaning can, in some situations, refer to loving a person (e.g. 2015:33).

110 Bonhoeffer (2005:99) identified "*how Christ may take form among us today and here*" (2005:99) as the main Christian ethical question, and Miller (2014, see the title of his monography) says that those who participate in Christ *practice* the body of Christ. Theologically speaking, the notion that contemporary Christians act as members of the body of Christ and thus embody Christ has been described as an 'ongoing incarnation' (see 1.4, and also 4.3.3 on Weil's "incarnated Christianity"). With reference to systematic theology, the 'ongoing incarnation' is a concept at the intersection of theology, Christology, pneumatology, ecclesiology, anthropology, and ethics.

111 See Bonhoeffer's contention that Christian ethics is not about abstract principles, but about a person, about the form or shape [*Gestalt*] of Christ, and the formation [*Gestaltung*] of Christ among us today and here (1992:87).

112 I have already noted (see 6.2.1) how the participation of Christians in Christ's death and resurrection resonates with the movements of distancing (from the world) and of investing (oneself in the world).

113 On Ephesians, see Petrenko (2005) and the literature there.

114 αὐτοῦ γὰρ ἔσμεν ποίημα, κτισθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ἐπὶ ἔργοις ἀγαθοῖς οἷς προητοίμασεν ὁ θεός, ἵνα ἐν αὐτοῖς περιπατήσωμεν.

115 This more literal rendering of the last subclause is actually provided by the online NET Bible in a footnote (<https://net.bible.org/#!/bible/Ephesians+2> accessed online on 1 June 2018), while the normal translation reads "so we may do them".

rary Christian living in the light of Ephesians 2:10, we can specify the meaning of Christian embodiment in work contexts. If the process of finding meaning consists in discovering a possibility against the background of reality, as Frankl says, the question is what exactly do individuals *perceive* if they discover the meaning of a situation? In case the meaning is related to taking a certain action or loving someone, individuals must perceive *themselves* (in a realm of possibility, according to Frankl) as doing the particular deed or loving the respective person. How can this be related to an understanding of contemporary Christian existence? Christians who are in the process of finding the meaning of a situation also perceive themselves, but not primarily in a realm of possibility, but as being *created<sup>116</sup> in the body<sup>117</sup> of Christ* (“we are his workmanship, having been *created* in Christ Jesus”). Christians can thus perceive or see themselves *in Christ* as doing the “good works that God prepared beforehand so that we might walk in them”. Thus, Christian individuals can see or perceive the situation in question, themselves, and the meaningful action performed, person loved, or suffering endured, all in the context of the reality of the body of Christ. This is why, although the concrete deed, love, or attitude required in a given situation still needs to be performed, acting it out does not transfer the deed from a realm of possibility into a realm of reality. Because these works have been “prepared beforehand” in the reality of Christ, they are real already, which is why those in Christ can “walk in them”. To use Weil’s terms (see Radzins 2017:298), the Spirit appears in connecting “what is unseen” (the world beyond), but no less real, with “the seen” (this world). The language of Ephesians of ‘walking in prepared works’ suggests that, in Christian living, God’s action and human action somehow come together, a thought which is reflected by contemporary authors who say that Christian action is “both given by God and enacted by humans” (Cavanagh et al. 2003:130) or that it is, at the same time, genuine agency that is enacted, and totally a gift (see Miller 2014:61). In other words, Christian individuals embody themselves as they already are (embodied) in Christ. As Ephesians 2:10 refers to the crucified, risen, and ascended Christ (see, in particular, also Ephesians 1:20), it is the crucified, risen, and ascended Christ who is embodied on earth by the community of followers of Christ (1:22f).<sup>118</sup>

116 This is a creation which seems to be based on being raised from death with (συνήγειρεν) Christ, see Ephesians 2:6.

117 See Ephesians 1:23.

118 On Christ’s ascension as a new phase of His incarnation, see Kelly (2010:801.805).

I have offered above (see 6.2.1) a sketch of how Christians' bodily participation in Christ's death and resurrection can be conceived of in terms of distancing, connecting, and investing. Moreover, while there is an intimate, hidden, and thus individual dimension to such an embodied way of life, it is nevertheless visible<sup>119</sup>, and it is at the same time thoroughly individual and communal. It takes place in the here and now of individual situations in which individual Christians are placed, but it also connects them with the community of all Christians, existentially speaking, who are encompassed by "the living Body of the Lord" (Kelly 2010:815)<sup>120</sup>, in whom the agency of Christians is situated and whose presence Christians live "performatively" (Kelly 2010:799).

In this chapter, I have addressed the formation of the Christian body at work by focusing on the framing (6.1) and the embodiment (6.2) of Christian existence at work. I have drawn upon empirical data from Christian managers, as well as upon different theoretical sources, with a view to exploring and describing some of the key existential and dynamic qualities of the formation of the Christian body at work.

119 See Miller (2014:130): "What we must hold together is that participation in the death of Christ is "real" and that this participation is a visible one borne out in the church's acts".

120 In this sense, in the light of Ephesians, the Christian body can be said to be at work continually, not just in work situations or work contexts, and it expands over "all things" (Eph 1:22), but its work is not marked by an unhealthy dominance (Posadas 2017:330.352) over human lives, but by peace (Eph 2:14) and rest (Mt 11:28).

## 7 Conclusion

In this concluding chapter, I will first offer a brief review of the main line of thought of the body chapters (2–6) of this dissertation. Second, I will take up the case from chapters 4–6 for the category of ‘Christians’ as the key concept for research on Christians at work and set it in the broader conceptual context of relevant research. Based on the case for ‘Christians’ as a basic category, I offer, third, a conclusion in the form of some conceptual implications, findings, and clarifications regarding five main terms that feature prominently in research relevant to studying Christians at work, that is, faith, spirituality, religion, ethics, and tradition.

These are not final but concluding remarks in that I seek to bring to bear my endeavors thus far on the terminological–conceptual challenges of theological and social scientific research relevant to the study of Christians at work. However, the remarks are not final in any sense as far as the terminology is concerned, since I will advocate an approach to the study of Christians at work which takes the actual embodied existence of Christians seriously and allows it to constantly and dynamically inform any given terminology.

### 7.1 Recapitulation

Let me recapitulate the main line of thought in the present dissertation so far.<sup>1</sup> I have addressed the study of Christians at work by asking how Christians live as Christians in contemporary work settings (in Western contexts), and how Christian existence is embodied at work. To engage with these questions, I have employed three different types of data (or voices), consisting of, first, two bodies of relevant extant research (fsw and theological approaches to work settings), second, empirical data on Christian managers and, third, a diverse set of literature to explore and accentuate the embodied and bodily character of Christian existence.

To orient the review of extant research, I have used the following six questions and discussed them in the course of chapters 2 to 5:

1 The following passage is not congruent with, but necessarily overlaps with the overview given in 1.5. While 1.5 provides an outlook, the present section offers a retrospective recapitulation as preparation for some concluding remarks regarding terms and concepts used in the study of Christians at work.

- 1) How are fsw constructs defined in the literature? (chapter 2)
- 2) How is fsw related to and situated in theoretical contexts in terms of academic disciplines and discourses, important thinkers and methodological traditions and approaches? (chapter 2)
- 3) How can fsw as a research area be presented from an overview perspective, and how can the research area be structured? (chapter 3)
- 4) What theory building efforts have been undertaken, and what aspects of a theoretical analysis of fsw are addressed? (chapter 3)
- 5) In what way does fsw research contribute to the study of Christians in contemporary workplaces? (chapter 4)
- 6) What can theological approaches to work contexts contribute to the study of Christians at work? (chapter 5)

Chapter 2 provides an overview of fsw in theoretical contexts and of definitions of fsw key terms and constructs. I have identified three main questions from current fsw research (see 2.1.1, 2.2.5): 1) What is fsw?<sup>2</sup> 2) How are spirituality (or religion, or faith) and work related? 3) How can spirituality (or religion, or faith) be integrated at work? With regard to these questions and the definitions of fsw terms, I have identified in extant research the two problem areas of, first, the vagueness, abstractness, and confusion that comes with these terms and, second, of the relation of fsw terms to the term Christian/s. In particular, even though faith, spirituality, and religion (at work) are the main terms used in fsw research that can (but do not have to) refer to what is at stake with regard to the existence of Christians at work (their faith, spirituality, or religion), these terms, as defined in fsw research, remain not only vague in general terms, but in particular with regard to the study of Christians at work since the relationship of fsw terms to the terms ‘Christian’ and ‘Christians’ remains unclear.

In chapter 3, I have offered an overview of the theoretical contours and contents of current fsw research focusing on the theory of spiritual practice, different levels of analysis of fsw, the notions of leadership, management, and entrepreneurship in the light of fsw, and ways of assessing fsw. I have shown how parts of the vagueness–abstractness–confusion problems can be remedied by drawing upon existing fsw theory. However, some vagueness of general fsw terminology remains, and the relationship of fsw terms to the terms Christian and Christians remains unclear as well. In addition, I have described the use of workplace-related concepts (such as management, work, business, leadership, etc.) as an additional termin-

2 More precisely, what is spirituality (or religion, or faith) at work?



ological challenge in fsw research. Subsequently, I have argued that, while the terms faith, spirituality, and religion at work must remain somewhat vague if approached from a general theoretical perspective, a possible way out of this terminological impasse is offered by the term Christian(s). In particular, I have suggested that from the basis of a clarification of the term Christian(s), the notions of faith, spirituality, and religion can be situated and clarified, not in general, but *in their relationship* to the study of Christians at work.

In chapter 4, I have sketched the roles that tradition plays with regard to fsw research and described how in fsw research Christians are mainly conceptualized as members of a tradition (or of a group of related traditions) where membership seems to be marked by the adoption of particular beliefs and practices. Then, I have considered the particular relationship between Christians and tradition from a sociological perspective, as well as from a Christian perspective which draws on traditional sources. Sociologically, Christians can be described as being localized and localizing themselves at the embodied intersection of worldly and other-worldly realities. I have also looked at how, with reference to Acts 11, the constituting feature of Christians can be described as an existential experience where they are localized and localize themselves with regard to Jesus Christ. I have argued that these different sources all point to an existential and existentially localizing event and experience that is, in a sense, more central to an appropriate understanding of Christians than certain beliefs and practices. The centrality of this existential element, which potentially disrupts and transcends tradition, indicates the dialectic relationship between Christians and tradition. The consideration of the dialectic relationship between Christians and tradition makes it clear that a simplistic and linear construal of Christians as members of a particular tradition marked by certain beliefs and practices is deficient. Subsequently, I have outlined how these more existential aspects of being a Christian are addressed in extant accounts of Christian spirituality at work. This research indicates the role of the existential and existentially disruptive experience of participating in Jesus Christ for the formation of a Christian mode of existence in present-day work settings.

In chapter 5, I have addressed theological approaches to contemporary workplaces. Here, after introducing the question of a theological neglect of present-day work settings and common entry concepts, I have discussed a selection of accounts that offer theological engagement with current work settings. While some accounts explicitly consider the existence of Christians in work contexts, others display what I have termed the 'blindness' and 'lameness' problems of theological approaches to the workplace. In terms

of ‘blindness’, some theological approaches address or propose Christian theological perspectives on work and workplace-related issues, but tend to ignore Christian existence as the actual existential location in which a Christian perspective on work contexts is necessarily embedded. The ‘lameness’ problem characterizes a theological approach which does consider Christian existence but does not address in particular how a Christian mode of existence may ‘walk’ or be embodied in contemporary work contexts. Theological approaches that do explicitly consider the existence of Christians in present-day work settings indicate the direction for the cure of such theological blindness and lameness.

Taking note of the fact that I explored theological *contributions* to the study of Christians at work, this seems to be a rather negative assessment of the role of theology in the study of Christians at work, at first sight. And it is true that I think that some of the theological approaches to contemporary workplaces carry unnecessary baggage (I do not know why), which hinders the study of Christians at work. However, I also wanted to demonstrate that theology has more to offer than unnecessary baggage. In 5.3.6 and 5.5., I employ the notion of ‘Christians’ as an alternative theological ‘entry concept’ to work settings. In particular, I have drawn upon C.S. Lewis’s understanding of Christian living, David Horrell’s work on the history of the label ‘Christians’, Colin Miller’s work on Paul’s theological ethics, and upon Anthony Kelly’s work on the expanding incarnation to sketch how the concept of Christians can open up a space to bring to bear various key theological, Christological, pneumatological, ecclesiological, anthropological, and ethical aspects upon the question of how people live their lives (at work and elsewhere).

In chapter 6, I have sketched the formation of the Christian body at work. The notion of the ‘Christian body’ at work takes up the Christian identification of the many bodies of those who live as Christians with the one body of Jesus Christ. I have further developed how the terminological–conceptual challenges of fsw research with regard to the study of Christians at work (chapters 2–4), as well as the ‘blindness and lameness’ challenges of theological approaches (chapter 5), can be remedied by focusing on the term ‘Christians’ and by recovering its existential aspects. I have argued for employing the notion of ‘being a Christian’ or Christian existence as key to the study of Christians at work. In particular, I have built on the framing practices of Christian managers and used an empirical analysis of scenes of Christian existence embodied at work to sketch the dynamics (‘distancing’, ‘connecting’, and ‘investing’) of Christian living in present-day work settings. In addition, I have discussed this empirically informed account of

Christian existence at work on a broader theoretical level, by using two major theoretical accounts as the conceptual background: Bourdieu’s habitus and Viktor Frankl’s meaning in life, as well as some extant fsw and theological research to flesh out various existential aspects with regard to the study of Christians at work. The comparison between a Christian mode of existence and Bourdieu’s habitus underlines the existential aspects of the notion of ‘Christians’. The juxtaposition between Frankl’s meaning in life and Christian existence accentuates how Christians realize and embody their being in Christ in particular situations.

In sum, the chapter offers a conceptual picture of the dynamic formation of the Christian body at work and indicates how the concept of ‘Christians’ may serve as a conceptual meeting point for crucial theological, Christological, pneumatological, ecclesiological, sociological–anthropological, ethical, and managerial–organizational considerations with regard to work contexts.

In the following section, I will introduce the three main terminological–conceptual conclusions of this study and take up the case for employing the notion of ‘Christians’ as a basic category. This will then serve as the basis for my outlining of some orientations with regard to other key terms used in research relevant to studying Christians at work in section 7.3.

## 7.2 The basic category of ‘Christians’

The main terminological–conceptual conclusions are:

- 1) I propose the notion of ‘Christians’ and the related notions of ‘being a Christian’, ‘Christian existence’, and ‘Christian living’ as the basic concepts for research on Christians in contemporary workplaces (what I call ‘the study of Christians at work’).
- 2) If terms like faith, spirituality, religion, ethics, and tradition are employed in the study of Christians at work, it is necessary to clarify what these terms mean with regard to Christians.
- 3) Combined notions such as ‘Christian faith’, ‘Christian spirituality’, ‘Christian religion’, ‘Christian ethics’, or ‘Christian tradition’ are potentially *misleading* in the context of relevant contemporary discourses. They should be employed with caution in the study of Christians at work.

That is, it usually has to be clarified what the two combined terms mean individually, as well as in relation to each other.<sup>3</sup>

To flesh out these three conclusions concerning the terminological–conceptual landscape of the study of Christians at work, I will again draw on the three different types of data or voices already mentioned.<sup>4</sup> The case has been developed and substantiated in chapters 4 to 6. First, I will now locate it within the problem of the conceptual landscape of relevant research, more specifically within the context of different *types* of concept employed in relevant research (1). Second, I will return to the question of the substance of the term with a view to different academic disciplines and perspectives (2).

1) Conclusion 1, that the notion of ‘Christians’ and the related notions of ‘being a Christian’, ‘Christian existence’, and ‘Christian living’ should be employed as the basic concepts for research on Christians in contemporary workplaces, can be restated in the following way. Research on Christians should not so much focus on exploring concepts or ‘*things*’, such as faith, spirituality, or religion, but *people*, that is, Christians.

- 3 The need for clarification is not only given in the case of explicit uses of terms like ‘Christian religion’, but also and probably even more so when the category ‘Christian’ is implicitly understood as a ‘religious’ category. See, for example, McGhee (2019): He first discusses spirituality at work and then, when turning to the question of what Christian spirituality at work is, immediately begins to discuss the relationship between ‘spirituality’ and ‘religion’ with reference to ‘institutional religion’ and ‘tradition-orientated religion’ without saying a word about the relationship between the categories ‘Christian’ and ‘religion’. See also Buszka and Ewest (2020:63), who state that “The title of this book, *Integrating Christian Faith and Work: Individual, Occupational and Organizational Influences and Strategies*, includes the term faith and also refers to religion in its mention of Christianity. The term spirituality is not stated, but implied as many people would agree that, for them, spirituality is a part of faith and religion”. This statement is remarkable in that it assumes that as soon as you use the word ‘Christian’, you (automatically?) refer to ‘religion’. They move on to say that the term ‘faith’ “allows us to include both the Christian *religion* and the *spirituality* of the Christian faith within our discussion” (2020:64). Then, they define the terms religion, spirituality, and faith in general and with regard to work, but not with regard to ‘Christians’. In this and the next section, I will propose a different route: I will argue that terms like faith, spirituality, and religion can only be understood with regard to Christians at work if the meaning of the term ‘Christians’ is clarified and taken into account when employing such terms.
- 4 These are, first, the two main bodies of extant research (as presented in chapters 2–5), second, empirical data from the study of Christian managers (as presented in chapter 6) and, third, a conglomerate of literature which addresses the bodily and existential character of Christian living. For a more detailed description of these three types of data (or voices), see sections 1.2 – 1.4.

Now, one might say that the notion of 'Christians' is also a concept, and that research cannot avoid concepts and just study people instead. Concepts are indispensable for research in that they serve to determine what or who is studied. And that is true. Nevertheless, the emphasis called for in the above conclusion is crucial. While all of the above terms are 'concepts', they represent very different kinds or *types* of concept. Simply put, 'Christians' is a 'people-concept', while faith, spirituality, and religion are 'thing-concepts'.

To understand this differentiation better, it might be helpful to look at the terminological landscape and the different types of concept that are used with regard to research relevant for the study of Christians at work. First, there are concepts employed with a theological emphasis, like creation, fall, redemption, or justification (e.g. Daniels et al. 2012, Honecker 1995). These are theological concepts or concepts with a theological emphasis because they describe something related to God or to God's work (and how this relates to contemporary workplaces), or in the case of the 'fall', a basic condition concerning the relationship between God and human beings, which is relevant for work contexts.

Concepts of the second type include a stronger theological–anthropological focus and concern the God-given role of humans at work. These are concepts like stewardship, vocation, calling, or co-creation (e.g. Diddams et al. 2005, McCann & Brownsberger 2007, Simmons 2016, Werner 2008, see also section 5.2.). These concepts have a mediating function and are located at the intersection between the theological and anthropological levels, or between God's work and human actions or roles. For example, the concept of calling refers to the notion that God calls someone to do certain work.<sup>5</sup>

Concepts of a third type can be described as anthropological or sociological with regard to how they are employed in relevant research. These are concepts such as faith, spirituality, religion, tradition, ethics, or morality. In fsw research, they seem to be mostly (but not exclusively, see section 2.2) attributed to human individuals or groups, and denote the faith, spirituality, or religion of person or group XY.

5 The differentiation between type 1 and 2 is not always strict, but it can be a matter of different degrees of emphasis. I have mainly allocated concepts to type 1, where God is usually considered the main agent, while in type 2 concepts, there is more of a combination of Godly and human action. However, depending on one's interpretation of a concept, the allocation in the typology might differ. For example, in the case of justification, if it is primarily considered to be something that God does, it would be a type 1 concept. However, if one ascribes human action a key role in justification alongside God's action (as Paul does according to Miller 2014:96f), it could also be considered a type 2 concept.

It is to be noted that the employment of concepts of the third type *does* something with regard to the first- and second-type concepts. First- and second-type concepts appear in a different light, so to speak, as soon as a third-type concept enters the scene. In particular, third-type concepts have an explicative, anthropologically descriptive and framing function with regard to the concepts of types one and two. For example, the concept of redemption per se refers to God's action with regard to the created world. If it is framed as part of someone's faith, spirituality, or religion, this concept becomes a *belief*.<sup>6</sup> The significance of this shift can hardly be overstated. First, the concept referred to the relationship between God and creation *as a reality*. Afterwards, it becomes part of the ideological content of, say, one's faith. In other words, it becomes something that is 'just in the heads' of some people who, for example, have a particular faith. While, per se, the notion of redemption could also be used as an academic concept to explore contemporary workplaces (see e.g. Daniels et al.2012) and thus as a lens to view reality, if subsumed as part of the faith or religion of XY, it becomes a concept denoting a certain view or opinion held by XY.<sup>7</sup> The reality it refers to, then, is no longer the reality the concept denotes per se, but that of someone holding a certain view. In this way, current uses of third-type concepts have a tendency to transfer and dissolve the theological substance of first- and second-type concepts or to reframe and reduce theological concepts anthropologically or sociologically.

In principle, a term like faith does not have to be used in such a theologically reductionist way. It can also be used in a way closer to the use of second-type concepts above. It could then refer to something like a person who has faith or trust in God. In this way, theological awareness would be maintained. However, that is not how the term is usually used in the fsw literature discussed in this dissertation. In a sense, what Cantrell (2015:24) proposes (see also 4.1.2), drawing upon Marsden (1997:52), is an attempt to connect third-type concepts with first- and second-type concepts in a way

6 For an example, see 5.3.3 on Honecker's use of the concept of justification. Even though justification is a theological concept, he actually seems to employ the concept not on a theological but on a sociological–anthropological level. In other words, he seems to focus not so much on implications of justification for work, but on implications of the fact that people hold a belief in justification for their attitude to work.

7 Interestingly, it seems that Daniels and colleagues (2000) work with a reversed order based on a similar logic by employing 'worldview' as the basic concept with which to differentiate between different kinds of spirituality. The concept seems to be similar to 'beliefs' in its function of denoting convictions people hold, but broader in its content (it can refer to, say, a set of beliefs).

that avoids reductionism and preserves the original meaning of first- and second-type concepts. In particular, he argues that scholars should be free to investigate issues in the form of the question “If so and so religious belief were true, how would it change the way we look *at the subject at hand?*” (Marsden 1997:52, my emphasis). In other words, just because theological concepts can be described or framed as beliefs certain people hold, this does not mean that we cannot address the reality that theological concepts refer to. However, with regard to research relevant to the study of Christians at work, these third-type concepts tend to become the basic categories on which all other aspects are to be understood and framed (for examples of how spirituality or faith serve as basic concepts of comprehensive frameworks of fsw, see 3.2.2).<sup>8</sup>

If these concepts of the third type are used as basic concepts, or as the basis of comprehensive conceptual frameworks, there are two other types of concept that are employed in relevant research that refer to particular dimensions or aspects of these basic concepts. A fourth type refers to concepts and terms that are used as *functional* subcategories of the basic concepts, such as experience, practice, ideology, beliefs, et cetera, as subcategories of, say, spirituality.<sup>9</sup> A fifth type refers to concepts that seem to be used more as *substantial* subcategories of one of the basic categories, for example concepts like meaning, connectedness, or innerness as aspects or dimensions of spirituality.

So it seems crucial to be aware of the fact that there are very different types of concept at work in relevant research. My first conclusion regarding apt terminology for research concerned with Christians in contemporary work is that the concept of ‘Christians’ should replace concepts like faith, spirituality, or religion *as the basic concept*. In contrast to the latter, which are ‘thing-concepts’, the former is a ‘people-concept’. It is an excellent concept that provides a conceptual meeting point for key managerial–organizational<sup>10</sup>, sociological–anthropological, and theological aspects relevant to the study of Christians at work and thus avoids reductionist tendencies that

8 I think that broader (not specifically work-related) frameworks based on such notions as religiosity (see e.g. Huber 2009) are prone to similar reductionism.

9 One could also add here the ‘moral norms’ on which theological research sometimes focuses (see 5.3).

10 An interesting source to draw upon in pursuing this avenue further could be Michael Black’s (2008) “Theology of the corporation. Sources and history of the corporate relation in Christian tradition”. See also my interpretation of Michael Black’s understanding of (contemporary) corporate life as a call to live Christianly (see 5.4.3, 5.5 and 6.2.1); on Black’s theology of the corporation, see also 2.2.4, 3.1.2, 3.2.3, and 4.1.1).



usages of other concepts as basic concepts are prone to. Sociologically, it denotes people as Christians, as being allegiant to or belonging to Jesus Christ. With regard to management and organizations, it denotes people who dialectically participate in the dynamics of distancing and investing. Theologically, it is non-reductionist but opens up a space in which it is possible to bring together the theological, Christological, pneumatological, ecclesiological, anthropological, ethical, and practical aspects relevant for how people live their lives. While employment of the notion of ‘Christians’ opens up a conceptual space, it also provides some conceptual boundaries to what meaningfully falls under the category ‘Christian/s’. In the following, I will therefore look again at the semantic field of the notion of Christians.

2) Until now, it has become obvious that studying Christians at work displays *a certain resistance to comprehensive conceptual analysis* with the use of the concepts of faith, spirituality, religion, ethics, and tradition. Etymologically and historically, the term ‘Christians’ refers to *people* whose existence is characterized by their *allegiance* or *belonging to Jesus Christ*. This characteristic is, with regard to the historical origins and to the existential aspects of the term, the primary criterion for applying the label Christian(s). While interpretations or evaluations of the content of this criterion may differ, for example from different theological or sociological perspectives, the criterion itself has an objective quality, that is, it entails socio-existential normativity, irrespective of one’s standpoint.<sup>11</sup> In other words, ‘Christians’ is not an arbitrary concept, even though the boundaries for its proper use are sometimes violated.

If the substantial–existential connotations become lost in certain usages, the term is then used in a merely nominal way. The two differently connoted usages of the term Christian(s), substantial–existential and nominal, correspond, in the light of our empirical analysis,<sup>12</sup> to two modes of being a Christian, that is, either nominally or existentially. While the nominal *usage*

11 On the particular normativity of the term, see also 4.4., 5.2, 5.3.6. Note also that the term was not first used for self-designation but by ‘outsiders’.

12 The nominal–existential framework of being Christian represents more than a practitioner perspective, even though it is informed, in part, by practitioner perspectives. With regard to our empirical study, it is a systematization of biographical practitioner accounts which resonates with current academic accounts of Christian existence at work (see 4.3), as well as with a historical and etymological analysis of the label Christian(s) (see 4.2, 5.3 and 6.1). On the theoretical status of the empirically grounded theoretical sketch, see the introduction to chapter 6. On the role of practitioner perspectives in the study of Christians at work, see 1.4.



of the term is empty in terms of existential Christian content, substance, or meaning, so too is the nominal *mode of being* a Christian in terms of substance, that is, it refers to a mode of being a Christian merely on paper.

Now, the existential Christian condition of allegiance or belonging to Christ may be related to various forms of beliefs, practices, and experiences, which may or may not be categorized with reference to such concepts as faith, religion, spirituality, ethics, or tradition. However, in the light of the existential aspects of the label Christian(s), the moment such an analysis no longer takes into account the primary Christian criterion of being in a state of belonging to Christ, the term 'Christian' is used, in a sense, in a pornographic way (by displaying an outer form of something without its essence).<sup>13</sup> However, one might say that because of its focus on Jesus Christ, the above description of the normative criterion for proper application of the term 'Christians' reflects merely an 'inner Christian' or theological ('insider') understanding of the term, while, say, a 'secular' sociological ('outsider') perspective cannot take account of the reality of Christ that Christians refer to. Therefore, one might say they ('non-Christians', 'outsiders', or 'ideologically neutral' academics) have to describe Christians in terms of certain beliefs and practices without reference to Christ. But this would be a strange argument. The term 'Christians' denotes 'followers of Christ', irrespective of whether those using the term 'believe in Jesus' and irrespective of their opinion, evaluation, or interpretation of Jesus Christ or of those who belong to him. The term 'mountaineer' relates to mountains and mountain climbing regardless of my opinion, evaluation, or interpretation of mountains or of those who practice mountain climbing and irrespective of whether I am a mountaineer or not.<sup>14</sup>

13 See also 4.4.

14 See also the extensive discussion of questions of definitions of Christians and Christianity in the anthropology of Christianity (for an overview, see Robbins 2014; and Bialecki, Haynes & Robbins 2008; on definitions of 'a Christian', 'Christians', or 'Christianity', see also Bialecki 2012, Bräunlein 2013:252–259, Frankiel 2003, Garriot & O'Neill 2008, Hann 2007, McDougall 2009, Robbins 2003). Robbins (2014:166) notes that most (but not all) anthropological work on Christians has been based on people who self-identify as Christians and in some sense also as committed Christians. He also notes that anthropological work has been criticized for being idealist and culturalist in its understanding of Christianity (Robbins 2014:162), treating Christianity as "something like a culture" (2014:62), emphasizing Christian cosmological conceptions and values rather than, for example, institutions. As an alternative to an idealist emphasis, Robbins (2014:163) points to a study that focuses on 'schism' as a key process of Christian group formation (Handman 2014), and to a study that identifies the capacity of Christianity to plant "enduring institutional structures operating at local, regional and international

In this section, I have further developed my case for the concept of ‘Christians’ as a basic concept for studying Christians at work by indicating how it can be situated in a conceptual landscape and by arguing that the concept opens up a crucial conceptual space but also provides relatively specific conceptual boundaries. On the basis of the notion of ‘Christians’<sup>15</sup>, the main terms used in extant research relevant to the study of Christians at work (such as faith, spirituality, religion, ethics, and tradition) can now be located, evaluated, and clarified, not ‘in general’ but as far as the study of Christians is concerned.

levels” (Barker 2014:179) as a defining characteristic of “the two thousand year expansion of Christianity across the globe” (2014:179). However, other research indicates that “institutional structure, regardless of ‘cultural’ content, may not be enough to define Christianity as a topic for comparison after all” (Robbins 2014:167). Comparability is a crucial question, in particular in light of the diversity of cultural manifestations, which has prompted some to argue that there is no Christianity, but only Christianities (see Robbins 2014:167, Frankiel 2003:282). Critics of the anthropology of Christianity have also been concerned that the topics it studies “are not specific to Christian populations” (Robbins 2014:164). Some also criticize that anthropologists “proceed as if they know what Christianity is apart from the various instances they study” (2014:162). A crucial point, then, is that of how one approaches questions of cross-contextual specifics of Christianity (be they ‘cosmological’, ‘cultural’, institutional, related to social processes, et cetera), and additionally, questions of who decides what counts as ‘Christian’, the anthropologists or those whom they study. In light of such conversations, the understanding of Christians I propose here is, on a very general level, a historically informed sociopolitical one, indicating continuing allegiance of ‘Christians’ to a person, Jesus Christ. This understanding has been developed in a process moving back and forth between conceptual and empirical work, and thus between ‘academic’ and ‘practitioner’ notions and understandings. More specifically, it is non-cultural, that is, it acknowledges that Christians are culturally diverse, even though being Christian may contextually resonate or dissonate with various particular forms of culture. It is non-idealist, even though being Christian may contextually resonate or dissonate with various conceptions and ideas, but embodied and existential, in that it recognizes people’s allegiance to Christ as a bodily and existential form of participation in Christ’s death and resurrection. Patterns of such participation (such as those described by Colin Miller (2014) or in chapters 4 to 6 of this study) can be recognized by the sensitive observer, irrespective of whether a researcher self-identifies as a Christian or not, and irrespective of whether the research subjects consciously adopt a conception of themselves as participating in Christ in such a way (on perspectivity, see also 1.4).

15 And the related notions of being a Christian, Christian existence, and Christian living.

### 7.3 Terminological–conceptual orientations

In the present section, I will relate the main insights of this study thus far to three important terms and concepts which are used in fsw research and theological approaches: faith, spirituality, and religion (at work). I will offer some basic orientations regarding their use with reference to Christians at work. In addition, I will consider the terms ethics (which is particularly important in theological approaches) and tradition, since they also play a role in framing and shaping extant understandings of Christian existence at work.

#### 7.3.1 Faith and spirituality

In chapter 2, I have described how the terms faith and spirituality are used in fsw research in a variety of different ways (see 2.2). In chapter 4, I have introduced contributions to Christian living at work that employ the notion of spirituality (4.3). With regard to faith, in the light of the present diversity of uses, it cannot be taken for granted that it is clear what the term faith, in general, means, or what the term ‘Christian faith’ (e.g., Buszka & Ewest 2020:64, Jones 1997:149, Lynn et al. 2010:682), in particular, should mean.<sup>16</sup> Thus, if the term ‘Christian faith’ is used without clarification of the terms ‘Christian’ and ‘faith’, such a usage becomes merely nominal, that is, empty in terms of content, and the term per se signifies little more than faith *xy*. In light of the existential meaning of the term Christian(s), however, such a nominal usage becomes *misleading* in an fsw research context because it ignores the term’s reference to the existential condition of one’s allegiance or belonging to Christ. This influences the reader toward assuming that ‘Christian’ is merely a nominal subcategory which identifies one type of faith, and individuals as members of that faith. What is problematic about this? With regard to its existential aspects, such a move is not, immediately, a change in the content of the term Christian but a change in its usage. However, this move entails substantial emptying of or a nominal reduction in terms of the existential character of the concept. With regard to the term faith, this is remarkable, given the fact that in Christian tradition, ‘faith’ has been a crucial concept used to refer to people’s allegiance to Christ (see e.g. Konstan 2018, Oakes 2018). It has to be kept in mind, again, that the term ‘Christian’ was originally applied *to people and not to things*. Its application to

16 Interestingly, this combination does not seem to be used very often in fsw literature.

‘things’ is secondary, and its appropriateness is dependent on the term’s primary use. In the phrases ‘Christian faith’ or ‘Christian spirituality’, the term Christian characterizes faith or spirituality as that which is displayed by those who are allegiant to or belong to Christ. However, if the term ‘Christian’ is used in an undetermined and merely nominally categorizing way, for example to refer to a member of a faith or spiritual tradition, these primarily existential and categorical connotations tend to get lost.

With regard to the practitioners studied, one finds the terms faith and spirituality both used on the existential level of being a Christian (see e.g. P5:41, P8:25, P13:42) and the term faith also on the nominal level (e.g. P5:41). On an existential level, the terms are sometimes used as shorthand for Christian existence or ‘being a Christian’. Importantly, in an existentially connoted usage, the categorizing connotations seem to fall away, while the categorical connotations remain in place. What does this mean? The faith of Christians, existentially understood, is for them not simply one possible option among a variety of other options of a similar kind, like choosing between a red or a blue car. The existential Christian optionality is different. In terms of Christian existence, coming to faith takes place on a frame of only two options: It is a question of one’s orientation toward God, which is either marked by faith or not. It is a matter of embracing ‘something’ or not embracing it, and not a matter of choosing one particular type (among many others) of a kind.

With reference to the mode of existence pertinent to Christians, it might be helpful to follow Michael Black (2008) in conceiving of faith and spirituality as moments of the same event (as Black does with reference to corporate existence): “‘Submission’, ‘kenosis’, ‘perichoresis’, ‘faith’, and ‘the presence of the spirit’ are all moments of the same event” (2008:50.52). With regard to Christian existence, then, faith can indicate both an existential trust in Christ and the convictions related to it.<sup>17</sup> More basically, Christian faith refers to faith or trust in God as displayed by those who are allegiant to or belong to Jesus Christ. Spirituality accentuates the “pneumatic vivification” (Miller 2014:130) of sharing in Christ’s death and in the life of the risen Christ.

17 See Tucker (2010:26) on the distinction of faith as trust and as proper understandings. On the Augustinian *fides qua creditur/fides quae creditur* distinction, see McGrath (2011:409). However, Konstan (2018:247f) draws upon the work of Teresa Morgan to argue that the classical Latin *fides* and the corresponding Greek *pistis* do *not* refer primarily to propositional belief, but to relational trust and confidence (see also Alexander 2018, Morgan 2018, Oakes 2008).

### 7.3.2 Religion

Religion, as used in fsw research<sup>18</sup>, is also a term which is potentially *misleading* with regard to Christians. As religion and faith are sometimes used synonymously, the notion of religion used in a categorizing way shares some of the problems of a categorizing or nominal use of the notion of faith (see above). In chapter 6.1, I presented some examples of how Christian practitioners distance themselves explicitly and clearly from the concept of religion by displaying an attitude to it which resonates with a long tradition of Christian theological critique and criticism of religion.<sup>19</sup> I can empathize with much of that criticism. Personally, when I read or hear the term ‘religion’ employed with regard to the study of Christians, the experience I have is often similar to listening to a concert where at a certain point a mistuned instrument is played. You suddenly recognize the wrong tune, without having to think about it first. If you repeatedly and on different occasions hear the same instrument playing wrong, you start wondering if the instrument is even suitable to play in such a setting. This reflects, in a sense, my current attitude to using the term religion in the study of Christians at work. I have yet to find an approach of which I could say: “Here, the concept of religion has really helped to understand Christians at work better.” However, it is difficult to give an account of *why* the instrument is mistuned, even if it is intuitively clear *that* it is the case.

In the following, I will problematize the relationship between ‘Christians’ and ‘religion’ and try to substantiate my claim that the category of religion/religious is unsuitable for use *as a basic category* or concept in the study of Christians at work. First, I will address a possible objection against my attempt to offer a theoretical framing of Christian existence that does not employ the concept of religion (1). Then, I will outline three problems with regard to the employment of the term religion with reference to Christians (2–4). Subsequently, I will discuss a possible solution to these problems (5) and then offer a conclusion concerning the use of the concept of religion in the study of Christians at work (6).

1) The existential–nominal distinction and the criterion of personal relevance, with which the framing of Christian existence proposed in chapter 6 works, seem to be (at least partially) mirrored in Brotheridge and Lee’s

18 On the broader discussion of the concept of religion, see for example Kippenberg and von Stuckrad (2003), Knoblauch (2006), Pollack and Rosta (2015), or Woodhead (2011).

19 See the literature referred to in 6.1.2. In addition, see Metz’s (1981) critique and criticism of civil religion and Hallesby’s (1954) basic work ‘Christian or religious?’.

(2007:291, see also 2.2.4 & 3.4.1) distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic religiousness (see also Clark & Dawson 1996, Longenecker, McKinney & Moore 2004, Walker, Smither, & DeBode 2012). Therefore, one might say that the proposed framing of Christian existence rests on a distinction that is not specifically Christian. And that is true. In particular, Brotheridge and Lee (2007:303) argue that the “individual difference variable in organizational research” is the “nature of one’s religiosity rather than one’s religious affiliation”, in other words it is not one’s nominal categorization, but what one is concerned with which matters.

It is, however, not the issue of personal relevance per se which makes the proposed understanding of being a Christian distinct from being religious, but the specific character of being Christian. In 6.1.1, I have outlined how religiosity and Christianness can be understood as different categories which can, but do not have to, overlap, and where existential religiosity, even within a ‘culturally Christian context’, and existential Christianness do not have to match (and might be incongruent in certain respects). In other words, and with reference to the above objection against an understanding of the category ‘Christian’ as independent from ‘religion’, the fact that both religiosity and Christianness can be differentiated between according to a nominal–existential schema does not indicate anything particular about the relationship between the concepts ‘Christians’ and ‘religion’; much less is it an argument in favor of understanding the category ‘Christian’ as a subcategory of ‘religion’. A nominal–existential framework might, in principle, also be applied to being a Buddhist, or to being a student, a spouse, or to many other labels.

2) With regard to Christian living in work contexts, one of the problems that comes with using the term religion with reference to Christians is that religion somehow seems to denote or imply a distinct sphere or realm of life or society. And if Christian living is categorized as religious, it seems to become conceptually separated from other spheres or realms. This, then, reflects what can be referred to as the political character of the term,<sup>20</sup> the intention to confine a religious sphere and separate it from the rest of life or society. Thus, the use of the term religion with reference to fsw and Christian existence (for example, in phrases like ‘Christian religion’ or ‘Christian religiosity’) seems to be prone to reinforcing conceptual separation between Christian existence, on the one hand, and work contexts, on

20 See, for example, Asad (1993:28), who describes what seems to me to be the ‘political’ intention inherent in the modern Western construction of the concept of religion.

the other, as belonging to different realms.<sup>21</sup> However, in taking account of the existential aspects of the term Christian, being a Christian concerns the totality of one's existence and is irreducible to religion (or faith, or spirituality) if understood as a category referring to a particular area or sphere of life or society.

3) An empirical case in point against an encompassing understanding of the category of religion, under which Christianity can be subsumed, is presented by the existence of 'insiders' (see 6.1). The term is used to refer to individuals or groups who display an orientation in accordance with the characteristics of Christian existence without nominally adopting the label Christian as they stay within the orbit of their religious socialization, for example as Hindus, Jews, or Muslims (see 6.1 and the literature there).<sup>22</sup> In other words, these are 'Christians' without a religious or cultural identity as 'Christians'; they are non-Christians, nominally speaking, but Christians in existential terms. The existence of such 'insiders' questions an understanding of Christianity as a simple subset of the broader category 'religion'. Viewed through the lens of the concept of religion, the existence of 'insiders' indicates that Christian existence seems to be a phenomenon that transcends religion, which cannot be captured by a simple use of the idea of religion. Being a Christian then does not so much refer to one's being a member of a particular 'religious group' but to one's existential participation "in the one particular body of a crucified and resurrected Jew" (Miller 2014:198).

4) In the light of the existential character of Christianity, there is a third problem that comes with using the terms religion and religiosity to refer to Christian modes of existence. As pointed out in 6.1.2, what can be sociologically categorized as religion or religious is, arguably, in terms of Christian existence, part of what is to be 'put to death' with Christ, as is any

21 This conceptual separation seems to me to be a main reason why some proponents of fsw research seem to be so concerned with 'integration' (see, e.g. 2.1.1). And the conceptual separation is, in turn, made possible by focusing on a 'thing' (religion) instead of people (Christians) (on 'thing-concepts' and 'people-concepts' see 7.2). See also the evaluation of such separation in the respect of 'thinking in terms of separate realms' from a theological ethical perspective by Dietrich Bonhoeffer (2005).

22 The insider phenomenon has also been described as "crypto-religion" (Kent 2011; on crypto-religion with regard to Christian contexts, see also Robbins 2010).



other aspect of human existence. In Christian living, ‘religious’<sup>23</sup> intentions and ambitions are to be crucified. In this light, one might well say that Christians are to be religious as though they were not, like

those who have wives should be as those who have none, 7:30 those with tears like those not weeping, those who rejoice like those not rejoicing, those who buy like those without possessions, 7:31 those who use the world as though they were not using it to the full. For the present shape of this world is passing away (1 Cor 7:29b-31).

If Christians are to be religious as though they were not, this indicates a *dialectic* relationship between Christians and religiosity. This brings me to the next point.

5) Could the problems of the concept of religion described above with regard to the study of Christians be resolved by taking seriously the dialectic character of Christian embodiment as sketched in 6.2? In terms of the embodiment of Christian existence, it can be said that the relationship of Christians to religion is dialectical, in a similar way that their relationship with the world *in general* is dialectical. If engaging in religion or being religious plays a role in the embodiment of Christian existence, it is continually relativized by the individual’s relationship with God (connecting) and by the movements of distancing (disengagement with religion) and investing (engagement in religious activities), which are orchestrated via this relationship. Such a dialectical understanding of the role of religion in Christian life would take the existential aspects of Christianity seriously. It understands religion as a possible aspect of Christian life and not as an overall category under which Christian living can be subsumed.

Regardless of that, some researchers may still want to study Christians at work under the label of religion or argue that their understanding of religion is able to capture existential Christian aspects. In my view, the point is not so much which label is used, but whether they help to account for central aspects of Christian existence when Christians are studied. For example, Mellor and Shilling (2014; see 4.2.1 & 6.2.1) have offered an understanding of Christian lifestyles as religious which takes seriously the existential char-

23 One can, of course, say that ‘religion’ should be understood as an analytical sociological category and should not be taken to refer directly to particular phenomena. However, I do not think that this reflects a dominant usage of the term in fsw research. But even then, employment of an analytical term should not create more analytical problems than benefits.

acter of being a Christian.<sup>24</sup> The example of Mellor and Shilling indicates that one can, in a sense, understand Christian existence as a subtype of religious existence and still take the specifics of Christian existence seriously. Or, to take another example, it seems that an understanding of religion that works with the notion of transcendence (e.g. Joas 2017, Knoblauch 2004, Pollack & Rosta 2015) might be well prepared to take into account an understanding of conduct which is marked by the participation of individuals in the death and resurrection of another person. For example, as far as I understand Pollack and Rosta's understanding of religion, they could argue that an understanding of Christian conduct as marked by participation in the death and resurrection of someone is a typical case of a religious understanding of conduct. This is because such an understanding is, first, marked by the distinction between transcendence and immanence (life, death, and resurrection), and then by the reintroduction or 're-entry' of the transcendence–immanence distinction into immanence in stating that it is actual conduct (immanence) which is marked by participation in the death and resurrection of another person. Thus, a Christian understanding of conduct and particular concepts of religion, such as that proposed by Pollack and Rosta, do not seem to be completely incongruent or incompatible.

However, it needs to be noted that the claim that comes with such an understanding of 'religion' seems to be that there are similar patterns of dealing with and relating to 'transcendence' across a wide variety of different phenomena or groups of people. It seems to be this similarity of patterns which is used to justify the employment of the term religion with regard to a broad range of different phenomena and contexts. What is someone who studies Christians at work to make of such a far-reaching claim? I do not know whether it is reasonable to claim that such similarities exist or not. Furthermore, to me, such a question of similarities seems to be largely irrelevant to the advancement of the study of Christians. Therefore, I am somehow indifferent to a claim that I consider to be thus far removed from the study of actual Christians at work. Put differently, I am not concerned so much about whether there are such similarities or not, but I am much more concerned that research related to Christians at work takes seriously and explores central characteristics of Christian existence (rather than speculating or assuming that there are patterns at play in Christians related to a hypothetical higher order phenomenon or category). Most importantly,

24 Note however, that their approach resonates well with an understanding of living as participating in the death and resurrected life of Jesus Christ, even if they do not explicitly refer to it.

and irrespective of what one thinks of the academic study of such a presumed phenomenon or category, such an endeavor is a *different* project with a different purpose than the study of Christians.

6) So even if it seems to be possible to employ the term religion in a way which is sensitive to Christian existence, I think the problems that are linked to using religion as a basic category for studying Christians should not be underestimated. And, in spite of the discursive pressure in contemporary academic discourses to categorize Christianity as a subcategory of religion, I cannot see a compelling conceptual reason to do so. After all, as a researcher concerned with studying Christians at work, I am not interested in religion, but in Christians.

That said, those doing research on Christians might as well have to find a dialectic approach to engaging in related discourses and to dealing with the term religion, given its current predominance in relevant academic discourses. There might be times when it will be apt to protest explicitly against inappropriate uses of the term religion with regard to Christians or against unsuitable conceptualizations of Christians. At other times, it might be more appropriate to “*gib dem Aff die Banane*”<sup>25</sup>, as my doctoral supervisor is wont to say, and continue our work without initial protest and enter relevant conversations, even at the risk of others using unsuitable terms and concepts to label and (mis)understand our work.

### 7.3.3 *Ethics and morality*

In the case of the terms ethics and morality as used in extant research relevant to the study of Christians at work, a (maybe natural) tendency can be observed. If Christian existence at work is studied under such labels as ethics or morality, it tends to be reduced to its moral or ethical aspects, while the constitutive existential features of Christian living are ignored. While I have discussed such reductions at some length with regard to theology (5.3), they can also be found in (social scientific) fsw research. Van Buren’s work (1998) can serve to illustrate this particular problem, as encountered in fsw research that focuses on ethics-related fsw outcomes (see 3.4). Two things tend to be confused in research on ethical or moral

25 A Swiss German expression, literally meaning “Give that monkey this banana.”

outcomes of religion<sup>26</sup> at work.<sup>27</sup> In particular, integrating one's religion with one's work is identified with and thus reduced to living morally at work. With an explicit reference to Christianity, Van Buren speaks of “making the Monday connection” (1998), by which he means integrating what one hears in church on Sunday into one's work on Monday or during the workweek. He seems to automatically imply that ‘the Monday connection’, that is, the religion–work relationship, is mainly a matter of morality. However, it is one thing to explore the ethical dimension of the religion–work relationship, but something very different to *reduce* the religion–work relationship to its ethical or moral dimension. And no reasons are provided for why such a reduction should be appropriate.<sup>28</sup> As Weaver and Agle (2002) indicate, the “religion–behavior linkage” (2002:93) is (more) complex. To reduce it to morality or to conceptualize religiousness as a (mere) motivation for ethical action (e.g. Clark & Dawson 1996) appears to be a kind of ethical imperialism in which the religion–work relationship is reduced to its moral or ethical dimension.

It is interesting that religion becomes the victim of such moral reductionism. Spirituality seems to be less vulnerable to such ethical imperialism.<sup>29</sup> In the light of a comprehensive map of (different aspects of) spirituality, such as that proposed by Smith (2008, see 3.2.2), the reductionist tendency of a study of spirituality at work which focuses exclusively on ethical aspects becomes obvious. If one addresses mainly ethics-related outcomes of spirituality at work, one's focus would, in the light of Smith's map, mainly be on the outer layers of spirituality, while one would ignore its more central aspects. ‘Central’, in terms of Smith's map, implies causal. For Smith (2008), these inner and outer manifestations (inner qualities and outer modes of behavior) of spirituality are dependent on a more central

26 For the problems inherent in the usage of the term religion, see above.

27 It seems to be mainly a matter of conceptualization as to whether one understands moral outcomes as an integral part of lived religion at work or whether one conceptualizes moral agency as a consequence or implication of lived religion, which is separate from, but related to the construct of religion at work.

28 This would be a difficult point to argue in favor of. An equation of religion at work with adherence to moral norms, for example, can be criticized with reference to the notion of ‘free agency.’ From a Christian perspective, it could be argued that Christian existence is not characterized by strict adherence to moral norms, that is, not by being a ‘slave’ to moral norms and values, but by being free (see the discussion of Eberhard Jüngel's notion of the gospel as ‘wertlose Wahrheit’ and Luther's notion of ‘freedom’ in Brügger (2010:111–117)).

29 See the discussion above on ethics-related outcomes of fsw (3.4.1) and the dominance of studies which work with the notion of religion in this set of studies.

aspect of spirituality, of which they are consequences, and the practical applications, observable actions, and outcomes of the outer domain arise “automatically” (Wilk et al., quoted in Smith 2008:7) from the inner experience of spirituality. Within such a framework, ethical norms and behavior cannot stand alone as they are consequences of the spiritual experience. In the light of Smith’s map, it becomes clear that spirituality in organizations is not to be reduced to its inner and outer manifestations (views, values, convictions, and corresponding behavior). Instead, he argues, these manifestations are grounded in something more central and direct, in what he terms the ‘spiritual experience’. In this view, there are not certain values, views, convictions, or modes of behavior at the heart of spirituality at work, but the spiritual experience. However, even if one does not agree with Smith’s particular conception of how the different aspects are related, the point that moral agency is but one aspect of spirituality remains important.<sup>30</sup> In terms of ‘faith–work integration’ (e.g. Miller, Ewest & Neubert 2018), ethical reductionism would consist of mistaking the whole process of living one’s faith at work for one particular aspect of it, that is, ethical frameworks and moral agency, and thus faith at work would be mistaken for or reduced to being moral and acting morally at work.<sup>31</sup>

With regard to being a Christian, morality is existentially embedded. Christians behave morally at work by living “the presence of Christ performatively” (Kelly 2010:799), which is an embodied and spiritual endeavor (see 5.3.6, 5.5, and chapter 6). If one addresses only normative ethical concepts at work, even from a so-called Christian or theological perspective, but ignores their embeddedness in embodied Christian existence, it is as though one is trying to understand a flower by solely analyzing the color ‘red’, or a tree by only exploring its colors or the shape of its leaves. Yes, these colors or shapes might be important for a particular flower or tree, but they are only one aspect of it.

#### 7.3.4 Tradition

In 6.2.2, I have drawn upon Viktor Frankl’s notions of ‘gestalt perception’ and ‘finding meaning’ and related them to Ephesians 2:10 with a view to understanding the formation of ‘the Christian body at work’. In particular, I

30 In a Christian reinterpretation, Smith’s (2008) spiritual experience could be identified with the spiritual experience of participating in Jesus Christ.

31 See also David Miller and colleagues’ (2018) typology in which the “Ethics” type is one type (out of four) with regard to how faith and work can be integrated.

have suggested that the formation of the ‘Christian body’ in contemporary work settings takes place as individuals perceive themselves as being made in Christ for good works that God has ‘prepared beforehand’, and as they ‘walk in these works’, by enacting and embodying at work their life in Christ. Let me, with this in mind, close this dissertation with a remark on the notion of tradition in Christian life.

I have outlined and criticized above how, in fsw research, Christians at work seem to be construed as members of a particular (group of) tradition(s) whose conduct and convictions can be described in terms of particular traditional practices and beliefs (categorized either as Christian, or with reference to one of the Christian ‘sub-traditions’). Now, this way of putting things seems to be useful in the study of the particularities of various Christian groups and their relationship to work contexts (see 4.1.4). However, to understand the *Christianity* of particular ‘Christian groups’, the dialectic relationship between Christians and tradition (see 4.2) needs to be considered. Thus, I have indicated how the relationship of Christians to tradition is not linear (no mechanical reproduction of certain ‘traditional’ beliefs and practices), but dynamic and dialectic in that they relate to an event and experience that transcends or even disrupts tradition (4.2 – 4.4) and which shapes their relationship to tradition and their attitude to, say, traditional beliefs and practices.

However, approaching the subject matter in this way via a traditional lens still seems to imply that the traditional content of Christian living, that which is ‘handed over’ or transmitted, is primarily these traditional practices and beliefs. Yet, if we take into fuller account the existential condition of being a Christian in understanding tradition, things again present themselves differently. The traditional content, that which is handed over in a Christian mode of existence, is not primarily particular practices and beliefs, but rather I myself am handed over and will, of course, place myself in danger (see Smythe 2018:83) by participating in Christ, in his “total act of self-giving” (Ligo 2011:460), “in the Trinitarian life of self-giving” (2011:465). We die with Christ to live with Christ. And so, while we are working,

we are experiencing trouble on every side, but are not crushed; we are perplexed, but not driven to despair; we are persecuted, but not abandoned; we are knocked down, but not destroyed,

always carrying around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our body. For we who are alive are constantly being handed over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our mortal body.

As a result, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

(2 Corinthians 4:8–12)



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## Appendix: Themes in fsw overview articles

	Benefiel 2007	Fornaciari & Lund Dean 2009	Gundolf & Filser 2013	Miller & Ewest 2013a	Benefiel, Fry and Geigle 2014	Houghton, Neck & Krishnakumar 2016	Total
Methodology & method	x	x		x	x		4
History of spirituality at work					x		1
Cultural drivers of the phenomenon				x			1
Definition(s) of spirituality at work		x		x	x	x	4
Attitudes (organizational or individual) toward spirituality at work		x		x			2
The relationship of spirituality and work or work-related factors (including the question of spirituality and performance) <sup>1</sup>		x	x	x	x	x	5
Spirituality at work and ethics		x	x			x	3
How to integrate spirituality (best practices)	x	x	x			x	4
Spirituality at work and leadership						x	1
Management education with respect to spirituality at work		x					1
The (il)legitimacy of instrumentalizing spirituality; justification of spirituality at work	x				x	x	3
Legal issues					x		1
Organizational development and spirituality	x						1

Figure 2 Overview of topical clusters and overview articles

- 1 Some authors distinguish between outcomes of spirituality at work on an individual, team and organizational level.

