Accounting by Faith: The Negotiated Logic of Elite Evangelicals' Workplace Decision-making

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Workplace decision-making is shaped by institutionally delimited and individually appropriated logics of action. Since 1997, when President Clinton issued a White House directive that protected religious expression in the workplace, religious rhetoric and symbolism have played a more significant role in the semiotic codes through which these logics are expressed. While a growing literature has attended to the interplay between the domains of faith and work, relatively little attention has been paid to the ways elite actors negotiate the sometimes competing demands of religious convictions and workplace responsibilities. In this paper, we examine how evangelicals in positions of public leadership account for the role of faith in workplace decision-making. On the basis of our analysis of interview transcripts of 360 national leaders, we construct a taxonomy of dispositions toward faith at work along two primary axes—the expression of faith in workplace decision-making and the reception of it in various situations or by particular reference groups.

SHERRON WATKINS, the former Enron executive, says that as she considered in 2001 whether she should reveal the accounting fraud that she had uncovered, faith became a mobilizing force for her actions.

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"My life had changed markedly in terms of opening up the box that was Christianity," said Watkins, and as her religious commitment deepened, Watkins became less concerned about whether she would lose her job and decided to go public with her findings.[1] By her own accounting, faith emboldened her to raise concerns, first in a private memo to CEO Ken Lay and later through the national media and in Congressional testimony. In recounting the steps she took as corporate misdeeds came to her attention, Watkins talked about reading specific Bible passages that, in her opinion, compelled her to raise concerns and not worry about the consequences: "Matthew 6 [suggests] that if you were really worried about things, then you didn't have faith that God was going to be watching out, looking out [for you]. All things work to the good of those that love the Lord. So, in many ways, my being able to go to Ken Lay was the fact that I wasn't worried that I was going to lose my job." And she credits that confidence to her deepening religious commitment.

Elucidating causal mechanisms in individual action is a complicated endeavor, especially since motivations and situational stimuli entail an amalgam of structural constraints and personal agency, as well as psychological and social forces. Yet how people *talk* about their decision-making processes is a significant indicator of how cultural cues and cognitive schema interact at the individual level. It also indicates how individuals draw upon wider cultural scripts, routines, and symbols in their own unique ways. Over time, some individual strategies of action become patterned and institutionalized as people share their stories and as individuals refashion their own self-explanations in light of what they hear from others (Berger and Luckmann 1966; Swidler 1986). Over the last twenty years, social scientists have moved away from directly mapping data onto subjective meanings. Interview transcripts do not convey meaning per se, but they provide discourses about meaning that, in themselves, are worthy of examination (Wuthnow 1987; Swidler 2000). By examining the various ways people like Sherron Watkins talk about how their spiritual commitments impact their professional lives, we can better apprehend the semiotic negotiation that occurs at the intersection of religion and public life. In the process, we see that religion provides a distinctive repertoire of cultural material by which people make sense of their decisions and actions.

In this paper, we focus on the role of religion in the accounts people give about workplace decisions. Since most Americans spend

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[1]Interview with Sherron Watkins, February 21, 2005, Houston, Texas.

more waking time at work than any other place, it is a natural context in which everyday interactions and deliberations can be studied. Despite this fruitful research setting, scholars have devoted far more attention to interpersonal interactions and individual decision-making in the context of the family, especially examinations exploring the relevance of religion, whether Christianity (Wilcox 2004), Judaism (Sullivan 1998), Islam (Predelli 2004), or other traditions. Among those few scholarly studies that have focused on the place of religion in work-place life, nearly all have framed the topic in terms of broad-based "spirituality" (Cash et al. 1993; Mitroff and Denton 1999; Garcia-Zamor 2003; Jurkiewicz and Giacalone 2004). More recently, Miller (2007) has laid out a helpful framework for evaluating the various ways that faith is invoked in the workplace, yet no one has examined the developments he describes within the context of a single faith tradition.

To address this lacuna, we chose a highly sectarian religious tradition, American evangelicalism. American evangelicalism is a useful case study for several reasons. Although evangelical adherents come from a variety of denominational traditions, they share a core set of theological beliefs about God, Jesus, heaven, hell, and who goes to both places. This allows us to keep constant an overall theological paradigm while examining the differing ways adherents engage faith in a religiously pluralistic context such as the workplace. Evangelicals also share a conviction about the importance of "bearing witness" to their faith, which means that there is an inherent religious impulse for adherents to draw upon their faith in secular society. Finally, evangelicals in the United States constitute a large enough group that we could easily find a diverse range of adherents (see Appendix for more information on how we sampled for range in drawing a diverse set of informants), and because American evangelicalism is not associated with a particular immigrant group and is not isolated to one region of the country, it provides a case study that does not fundamentally require disentangling the relations between identity-shaping forces such as religion and ethnicity, as might be the case with Sunni Muslims or Theravada Buddhists. Because of the evangelical norm of the adherent choosing his or her faith instead of simply inheriting it from one's parents ("deciding to follow Jesus," to use the evangelical vernacular), religion is a salient identity for these adherents. As such, American evangelicalism provides a useful and distinctive case study for analysis of religious identity in shaping workplace activity.

That said, American evangelicalism is a multifaceted religious tradition that includes approximately one-third of the U.S. adult population (Hackett and Lindsay 2008). Unlike Roman Catholicism or other forms of religion organized around a strong, central hierarchy, American

evangelicalism is a tradition of "kaleidoscopic diversity" (McGarvey 2004).
Socially and politically, it is far more diverse than most observers think.
Indeed, fully 70 percent of evangelicals in this country do not identify
with the Religious Right (Smith 2000). Moreover, American evangelical-
ism is a tradition drawn from four different theological streams, including
Calvinism, Pietism-Methodism, Anabaptism, and Holiness-
Pentecostalism (Lindsay 2007). American evangelicalism includes the
liturgical, Reformed worship style that is popular at institutions such as
Calvin College and Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City. At
the same time, the tradition embraces the revivalism and charismatic
worship styles of Calvary Chapel and the Brooklyn Tabernacle. The
decentralized structure of parachurch organizations such as The
Fellowship in Washington, DC (Lindsay 2006), is as much an exemplar of
American evangelicalism as is the bureaucratic orientation of large Non-
Governmental Organizations such as World Vision or Samaritan's Purse.
In sum, American evangelicalism is a tradition of enormous heterogeneity.
Despite all of this theological, organizational, and historical variety,
however, scholars recognize that evangelicalism is a distinct religious tra-
dition, one that is united by (1) a high regard for the Bible; (2) a convic-
tion that all people ought to embrace a personal relationship with God
through a conversion to Jesus Christ; and (3) a desire to lead others along
a similar spiritual journey (Bebbington 1989; Smith 2000; Noll 2001).

In this paper, we focus on the workplace lives of elite, not average,
evangelicals. Not only is there a dearth of scholarly attention devoted to
the role of religion among elite adherents (for counter-examples, see
Lindsay 2007 or Schmalzbauer 2003), but workplace elites face unique
challenges when drawing upon their racial, ethnic, or religious identities
while leading diverse workplaces (Hicks 2003). We define elites in the
same way as most of the scholarly literature—as those who occupy a
senior leadership position within a major institution of American
society (Mills 1956; Putnam 1976; Marger 1981; Dye 2002). In other
words, we treat someone as a workplace elite if he or she holds a pos-
ition of institutional authority—typically the role of president, chair-
man, or senior executive within the top-most strata of a major
organization. We differ from those who dilute the term by including
managers or lower layers of management (Ghiloni 1987; Lerner et al.
1996). Given their positions of authority, the decisions of workplace
elites ripple across the organization and can affect thousands of lives.
Because of media attention and the positions they occupy, elites' actions
receive greater scrutiny; hence, their self-accounts of workplace
decision-making provide incredibly fruitful texts through which larger
issues of identity, individual agency, and organizational context can be

explored. This is not to say that the workplace decisions of ordinary workers are unimportant or that we think religion would be less salient in the decision-making narratives offered by average employees. But workplace elites, because of their positions within the organization and the community, experience unique opportunities and constraints when it comes to drawing on their religious identities in workplace decision-making. As such, they represent an important population that has heretofore received relatively little attention.

Each informant in the study occupied at least one position of national significance in government, business, the arts and entertainment, higher education, nonprofit life, or religion. The religious profiles of the leaders interviewed are, on the whole, substantially different from that of the general evangelical population. They are, for one thing, much less likely to have simply inherited their faith tradition from their parents. Over half (56 percent) made a significant spiritual decision about their evangelical faith after age 17, and nearly one-third (29 percent) do not come from families that attended church—a figure which is double that of the general population (14 percent according to 1992 and 1998 aggregated Gallup Poll data). Many, in fact, embraced the evangelical faith while occupying positions of power, well into their adult lives. For a majority (55 percent), faith provides a sense of "calling" or meaningful vocation for their leadership positions, and nearly all (91 percent) claimed to invoke personal faith in their public roles and responsibilities. Finally, informants are far more loyal to faith-based small groups than to particular congregations or denominations.

THE INTERSECTION OF INSTITUTIONS

Roger Friedland and Robert Alford have suggested that as major social institutions have differentiated from one another over the last hundred years, domains such as the family and the state have developed their own unique "logics of action" (Friedland and Alford 1991). For example, cognitive rationality is esteemed in market relations, and therefore, cool-headed decision-making is the preferred orientation for actors within the economic domain. However, those same actors are expected to employ a different logic of action within, for example, the family. Households do not operate the same way as firms, and individuals instinctively know that they must act and react differently in the domestic and markets spheres. The institutional contexts of activity, Friedland and Alford argue, "shape individual preferences and organizational interests as well as the repertoire of behavior" that actors pursue within particular domains (232).

As Douglas (1986) has shown, what is considered rational (and irrational) action in modern life is conditioned by the way that institutions order, classify, and sanction our attitudes and behaviors. The process of ordering perspectives and actions is facilitated by institution-specific semiotic codes that govern the meanings of action. Rhetorical tropes and shared narrative structures allow people to relate their actions to others through an economy of words and as a way of building solidarity with others. These codes can also help us make sense of our own actions; in essence, shared culture and the symbols that emanate from it simplify life. At the same time, signs and codes are polysemous, so meanings may shift and be applied in multiple directions, depending on both the *expression* and *reception* of the words, stories, and accounts given.

Given this dynamic, how do people manage competing logics of action? Friedland and Alford, like many neoinstitutionalists, recognize that social structures constrain human action in significant ways. We do not act the same at work as we do at home. Yet, their framework also makes room for significant human agency. Individuals accommodate and manipulate institutional logics of action through selective appropriation, reinterpretation, and occasional repudiation. Just as Habermas suggested twenty-five years ago, the "colonization of the life world" (1984: 391) that we have witnessed in modern society entails the expansion of certain institutional logics—such as that of the economy—into the everyday interactions people have with one another beyond the economic sphere.

Of the key domains that constitute contemporary society, religion is among the most likely to make claims on other spheres, thereby coming into contact with other institutions. Friedland and Alford acknowledge the totalizing element of religion, suggesting that religious perspectives seek to offer explanations of reality "within which all human activity takes place" (248). Religious traditions that require personal conversion or a deliberately chosen religious identity are especially comprehensive in their claims over the adherent's life. Consider evangelical Christianity. The evangelical tradition of "accepting Jesus" stresses individual agency and a willingness to understand and frame all forms of activity—at work, at home, in leisure—as expressions of religious commitment (Martin 1996; Griffith 1997). Within many evangelical congregations, when a person converts to the faith, the adherent is asked to make a profession of faith that refers to Jesus as "Lord of my life." Evangelical ministers often supplement this charge by challenging the new believer to dedicate every part of his or her life to God. In other words, evangelicalism is a religious identity, but also much more.

The integrative impulse that characterizes evangelicalism means that the cultural schemas and scripts it generates are designed for wider application than those of religious traditions that draw sharper distinctions between the sacred and the mundane. Because the religious convictions of evangelicals affect many different parts of their lives, they are urged to integrate religious themes and symbols into other institutional logics. The attempt to reconcile competing logics often works in the other direction as well, with evangelicals appropriating rationales and motifs from other domains into their own ethos.

Nowhere are these dynamics more pronounced than in the workplace, in which evangelicals are encouraged to view their professional experiences as part of a "vocational calling" (Smith et al. 1998; Lindsay 2007). A growing literature has attended to the interplay between the domains of faith and work. As Hicks (2003) details, people give different explanations for what "faith at work" and "spirituality in the workplace" mean, and a good bit of personal improvisation occurs as individuals craft their own definitions of self, others, and relationships in the liminal space between these different spheres. Generally speaking, though, the "faith at work movement" is framed as a rejection of a dualist view of the world where the sacred and secular are forced apart. The most comprehensive catalog details over 2,000 groups, institutions, and organizations associated with this movement (Miller 2007), the vast majority of which were founded in the last three decades. And in David Miller's analysis, the faith at work movement has been more amenable to corporate managers than worker-centered theological movements like Christian socialism or liberation theology.

In 1997, President Clinton issued a White House directive that explicitly allowed federal employees to engage in religious expression to the same extent that they were permitted to engage in comparable, non-religious private expression in the federal workplace.[2] This meant that employees could discuss their religious views in hallways and cafeterias, just as they would discuss a football game or an upcoming vacation. Perhaps most relevant for the evangelical injunction that adherents talk directly about their faith, the guidelines stated, "Some religions encourage adherents to spread the faith at every opportunity, a duty that can encompass the adherent's workplace. As a general matter, proselytizing is as entitled to constitutional protection as any other form of speech."[3] This was a significant development, for federal guidelines on the

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[2]Guidelines on Religious Exercise and Religious Expression in the Federal Workplace, issued by the White House Office of the Press Secretary, August 14, 1997.
[3]Ibid.

workplace are followed in other office environments around the country. Because corporate America tends to follow federal guidelines on workers' rights, responsibilities, and workplace protection, whatever happens in the federal workplace eventually becomes commonplace in offices around the country. With this directive, for the first time in U.S. history, bringing one's faith to work was given governmental sanction; the American workplace has not been the same since.

Evangelicals, in particular, have seized on this development, and indeed have played a driving role in the faith at work movement. At the same time, the ways evangelicals express their faith at work is not uniform. For example, evangelical elites, who play a key role in shaping the strategies of action that characterize evangelicalism and exporting aspects of them to spheres beyond specifically religious domains, provide distinctive accounts of the ways faith intersects with professional decisions and responsibilities. Such leaders regularly engage the inter-action of a religious logic and other institutional logics with their own personal style and sensibility; however, they do so in routinized ways.

We arrived at this conclusion after analyzing the interview tran-scripts of 360 national leaders who identify in some way with American evangelicalism (see Appendix for information on the study's design and analysis). In this paper we have attempted to follow Griffith's model of critical empathy (1997) by communicating as accurately as we can the perspectives of individual informants as they related them in the research interviews we conducted, while also applying broader analytical interpretations and critical perspectives. As Griffith writes, "The lived worlds of human experience, after all, are not identical to people's descriptions of those worlds" (1997: 12). We have, therefore, reserved the right to comment on what informants are *not* saying in these accounts and to point to inconsistencies and unintended consequences that may flow from their actions.

After examining the accounts informants provided of workplace decision-making, we identified four dispositions that frame the divergent ways these elite evangelicals negotiate the intersection of faith and work. Individual understandings and vocabularies of motive constitute and coordinate action and interaction along two important axes. These include the *expression* of faith in workplace decision-making—whether it is enacted in a subtle or explicit way—and the *reception* of it in various situations or by particular reference groups—whether the informant per-ceived the context to be hostile or amenable to their faith. These categories are heuristic, of course, because the actual interaction between religious and economic domains is a dynamic, iterative process. The interplay between individual predispositions and environmental cues generated

	Expression	
	Subtle	**Explicit**
Hostile	Pragmatic	Heroic
Amenable	Circumspect	Brazen

Reception (row label, left side)

FIGURE 1. ORIENTATIONS TOWARD FAITH-WORK INTERACTION AMONG ELITE EVANGELICALS IN ACCOUNTS OF WORKPLACE DECISION-MAKING.

different ways that informants acted on their faith, indicating that context matters. The interviews are retrospective accounts by the individual actors themselves, so we recognize that reality may not exactly line up with the way that informants described the salience of faith in workplace decision-making. And without ethnographic data on each informant's workplace, we cannot draw strong conclusions about the context-sensitivity of their faith expression in the workplace. Nonetheless, these accounts provide useful categories by which we can make sense of how people frame their motivations, behavior, and interactions. The categories are pragmatic, heroic, circumspect, and brazen (Figure 1).

A TAXONOMY OF DISPOSITIONS TOWARD FAITH AT WORK

Pragmatic

Some business leaders framed their offices and companies as places where faith expressions were tolerated, but not encouraged. Others thought their workplaces were downright hostile to religious expression. A segment of elite evangelicals in such contexts opt for subtlety when it comes to appropriating their faith. When asked how faith impacts their behavior at work, these respondents spoke of the need to be "careful" and "reserved." Ron Joelson, Prudential's Chief Investment Officer, said, "You don't want to offend people who are not Christians . . . [As someone] in a position of power and authority, I don't want people to feel uncomfortable with their belief in atheism or whatever. . . . It's not a particularly good witness, in my view, to be so open about your faith in the workplace that you make people uncomfortable."[4] As Joelson suggests, many interviewees said that they want their faith to be known, but not worn "on their sleeves," since such an approach would not be well received. Indeed,

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[4]Interview with Ron Joelson, December 3, 2004, Newark, New Jersey.

93 percent of informants say that their colleagues know about their evangelical faith. Yet a majority of them selectively chose when to engage their faith in the workplace. Some worried that this might represent a compromise of their faith, that somehow it would suggest they were embarrassed to be known as an evangelical Christian. Others, however, were of different conviction. Dean Batali, co-executive producer of *That '70s Show*, said, "I don't think compromise is necessarily a negative thing."[5] Yet he also expressed deep concern that he was working for a show primarily about sex, drugs, and rock and roll:

> I say it doesn't bother me; it tortures me. The shows I've worked for [including *Buffy, The Vampire Slayer*] have been damaging to our culture. . . . I try to influence the part that I can influence, which are the scripts that I write and the jokes that I pitch. . . . I don't pitch sexual stories or drug related stories. . . . That does not mean that I occasionally don't pitch the sex jokes or mean jokes, but I try not to . . . I can point to very specific times where I've actually been able as a Christian to get a specifically Christian point of view, or a line or scene on the air, [but] it's not really an agenda I have.

Implicit in this approach is a pragmatic sensibility with respect to distinguishing between the ideal circumstance (presumed to be overt witnessing in evangelical circles) and what can actually be accomplished in a religiously diverse workplace. These informants prefer a strategy of incremental witness, as opposed to all-or-nothing campaigns for evangelical conversion among their colleagues.

This pragmatic disposition generates a degree of angst among informants. Steven S. Reinemund, the former CEO of PepsiCo, said, "Black and white issues are easy; it's the ones that are hard that you [struggle with] as a business leader."[6] Every business leader interviewed discussed, in one way or another, ethical dilemmas and workplace challenges to their faith. Yet numerous times, these executives echoed Reinemund's sentiment—their faith did not necessarily provide clear answers to the ethical questions they encountered.

As an individual-centered faith tradition, American evangelicalism encourages spiritual improvisation (such as personally interpreting scripture or praying without liturgical language) and an individualistic ethic (Emerson and Smith 2000). However, we found that this individualistic perspective also legitimates differing ways of acting on one's

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[5]Interview with Dean Batali, September 26, 2004, Los Angeles, California.
[6]Interview with Steven Reinemund, November 13, 2004, Dallas, Texas.

faith, permitting, for example, one Hollywood evangelical to give himself permission to work for a show like *That '70s Show* without spiritual injunction while another evangelical might decide working there was not permitted because of faith convictions. On the one hand, this flexibility makes possible a pragmatic disposition wherein religious convictions represent a professional resource that can be selectively made manifest. On the other hand, the absence of specific guidelines often produced substantial tension for those willing to improvise when integrating their faith into their lives at work.

Heroic

Other informants who indicated that they worked in environments that were hostile toward faith suggested that they draw upon their faith explicitly in the workplace, undeterred by any adverse impact such action may have on their careers. Normally, in their accounts, these informants do not invoke the rhetorical trope of a hero, but in their own narratives, they are pitted against all-powerful institutions such as "Hollywood" or "secular humanism." Ken Wales, a longtime Hollywood producer, is convinced that he has not been hired because he earned a reputation early on as one who will not work for projects where he disagrees with the content of a film or television show. Other informants in Hollywood concurred; having such a reputation can, indeed, limit the number of projects one receives. And this perceived bias is not confined to the entertainment industry.

James Watt served as Secretary of the Interior during the Reagan administration. An adult convert to evangelical Christianity, Watt viewed his governmental service as an opportunity to leave a "footprint in the pages of history."[7] From the outset, Watt's public comments attracted attention for their religious references. While testifying before the House Interior Committee in 1981, Watt stated, "I do not know how many future generations we can count on before the Lord returns; whatever it is, we have to manage with a skill to leave the resources needed for future generations." This reference to "before the Lord returns" raised hackles within the Washington Beltway as critics pegged Watt a fundamentalist yearning for an imminent apocalypse. Eventually, Watt left his Cabinet post, but he has no regrets about his decision to be so public about his faith:

> I decided hey, you can't outrun [secularists] to the left, and you don't dare internalize it. You gotta fight back. So I fought back, and that was

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[7]Interview with James Watt, October 28, 2004, Wickenburg, Arizona.

why there's so much controversy. [I would describe it] as the clash of
an evangelical, core Christian with the pantheistic forces of the
environmental movement.

Lieutenant General William "Jerry" Boykin served as the Deputy
Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence, and throughout his career has
regarded his Christian faith as compatible with military service: "I've
never had any ethical or theological issues with being a soldier I
think that being a soldier is in fact every bit compatible with being a
Christian. So long as we are serving in a democracy, so long as we are
serving in a just war."[8] Boykin worked on a number of covert military
operations, including the Iran hostage rescue attempt in 1980 and the
mission to apprehend Manuel Noriega in 1989. He also commanded the
failed Delta Force mission to capture militia leader Mohamed Farrah
Aidid during which two Black Hawk helicopters were shot down over
Mogadishu, Somalia. In subsequent years, Boykin talked—sometimes in
military uniform—about the Battle of Mogadishu against militant
Muslims, and he often framed the conflict in explicitly religious terms.
Without offering a disclaimer that his comments did not represent the
U.S. military, Boykin told multiple church audiences, "I knew my God
was bigger than his. I knew that my God was a real God, and his was an
idol."[9] The comments angered many in the Muslim world, and eventually
Boykin clarified that he did not regard the "spiritual battle" as between
religions, but between good and evil with the evil being acts of individual
people like Mohamed Farrah Aidid. Several evangelical leaders denounced
Boykin's comments while others described him as a "very good man."[10]

In these and several other cases we examined, explicit expression of
religiously motivated convictions generated significant tension in the
workplace, at least in part because of the interplay between the
expression and reception of faith convictions in various forms of work-
place decision-making. Sometimes, it happens early in one's career. Ed
Moy, who most recently served as the director of the U.S. Mint but pre-
viously worked in the private sector, said that he first confronted the
challenge of "living out" his faith in the workplace with his first job:

> My employer gave me a company car, and being right out of college,
> that's a pretty nice perk. . . . The only thing we had to pay for was gas,

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[8]Interview with Jerry Boykin, June 21, 2005, Washington, DC.
[9]These include conferences at First Baptist Church of Daytona Beach, Florida, and First Baptist Church of Broken Arrow, Oklahoma.
[10]Interview with Rollin Van Broekhoven, December 7, 2004, Washington, DC.

but then we had to keep an expense report and indicate how many business miles we drove and how many personal miles we drove. . . . The first week I turned [my expense report] in, my boss came out, very, very upset. . . . He shuts the door to his office, and says, "Let me explain something around here. We in sales management never believe that the company is paying us enough, and so what we do is we measure the minimum amount of miles from home to work and back again, and that's personal miles. Everything else . . . gets dumped in the business column, and that way you get an extra fifty [to] seventy-five bucks a month. If I were to hand this in, accounting is going to ask some questions and then there's a massive audit on everyone, and we can't have that kind of trouble. So I'm telling you that if you're interested in a career here, you're going to change this expense report."

[After feeling some anxiety over the weekend while he considered the recommendation of his boss, he concluded that] a common characteristic of the people who follow Christ is that they tell the truth. So that following Monday, I gave him my expense report. As predicted, when he came back from his office, he saw it, he screamed, swore, asked me to come into his office. He said, "Well young man, I take it by this expense report that you want to end your employment at this company today."[11]

In the end, Moy was not fired from the job, but he refers to the event as a "seminal moment" that shaped his thinking about the relationship between personal faith and work.

In 2002, *Cosmopolitan* named Jon Passavant one of the top five male models in the world. Shortly thereafter, he was invited to be the feature model in a fragrance advertising campaign launched by the most prestigious men's fashion house in the world. At twenty-one, he could not have hoped for a better way to catapult his career. As he put it, "It was with one of the biggest photographers in the world. It was with one of the biggest female supermodels in the world. . . . It's as big as it gets."[12]

The photo shoot, however, involved a picture of him in a classic tuxedo with a woman wearing pants and suspenders but no shirt underneath. "All the critical areas were covered. . . . There was nothing grotesque about it . . . but you could not have made it more gray than this picture was. . . . The fact that she wasn't wearing a shirt [gave the photo] this element of suggestiveness that took it too far. . . . This is the big break . . . but I was just torn . . . I come up into the set with my tuxedo on . . . They weren't listening to me; everyone's speaking Italian

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[11]Interview with Ed Moy, July 16, 2004, Washington, DC.
[12]Interview with Jon Passavant, February 20, 2006, New York, New York.

and like no one is getting the point that I have a problem with this."
He continues,

> A guy had flown over from Paris the night before just to supervise the
> shooting of this one picture and here I am, this no-name guy that's
> just like spoiling this. The girl is sitting there all awkward. She's won-
> dering if I think she's some gross person and everything is just falling
> apart. I didn't know this, but the producer had gone off and called my
> agent in Milan . . . and said, "Jon's ruining the shoot." . . . I'm just
> blushing and embarrassed and could not have been more awkward . . .
> I never worked for them again.

Passavant's career survived this moment when his faith convictions
kept him from doing what he thought would be essential to career
advancement, but in his mind, it easily could have gone the opposite
direction. And in some cases, it does. While analyzing the data, we
found examples of elite evangelicals who framed their resignations or
firings as resulting from their outspoken faith commitments in the face
of ethical challenges (including Sherron Watkins at Enron, Gary
Daichendt at Cisco Systems, and Bill Ewing at Columbia Pictures). We
also identified thirteen cases where informants mentioned disagreeing
with their managers because of faith-based ethical concerns.

Consider one final example from the career of Horst Schulze, who
presided over Ritz-Carlton for two decades. During his tenure, he
refused to allow adult entertainment programming through the televi-
sion systems at Ritz-Carlton hotels. For him, this was a matter of stand-
ing up for his Christian convictions. In 1996, Ritz-Carlton was
purchased by Marriott, and the corporate office directed him to install
these systems. Not only do they yield significant profits for the hotel,
but the company that owns the movie programming system agrees to
pay for the television in each room. Hence, the corporate office wanted
to cut costs and offer this service to Ritz-Carlton customers as they do
in other chains owned by Marriott. Schulze said, "They insisted that I
put this in, and I refused."[13] Pressure continued to mount, and even-
tually Schulze says that he threatened his bosses by saying, "I'm gonna
call a press conference and . . . say, 'Now [Ritz-Carlton is] in the porno-
graphy business.' [Marriott eventually backed down because they knew]
the press liked to talk to me because I'm a loose cannon. I say what I
want." Tensions with Marriott management continued until Schulze's
contract with Marriott expired in 2001.

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[13]Interview with Horst Schulze, March 1, 2005, Atlanta, Georgia.

Evangelicalism has long embraced, and many of its leaders cultivated, a framework according to which evangelicals are a marginalized subculture, bombarded by proponents of competing worldviews and standing ground against the secularizing impulse of modernity (Smith 1998). This "embattled" framework, apparent in hymn titles such as *Onward Christian Soldiers* and *Battle Hymn of the Republic*, underwrites the logic of heroism, supplying the narrative context in which career-related "martyrdom" is encouraged and applauded. As these accounts suggest, a number of elite evangelicals embrace this perspective, viewing their workplaces as hostile environments and feeling compelled to take a stand against norms or behaviors that contradict their faith. For some like Jon Passavant, this heroic stance is made in a split-second decision as photographers are putting the finishing touches on a photo shoot. For others, like Ken Wales in Hollywood, the heroic position is taken only after deliberate calculation. Regardless of how their bosses, colleagues, or coreligionists view the circumstances, these intrepid actors refuse to, as several put it, "go with the flow," lest they later regret their refusal to "take a stand." Occasionally, this heroic disposition forces the individual to resign, even after offering qualifications, apologies, or retractions. And for many, such reprisals simply confirm the antagonism of their workplaces and the bravery of their decisions.

Circumspect

In contrast to those who characterize their workplace decision-making and behavior as pragmatic or heroic in the midst of contexts that they perceive to be hostile to their faith, a number of leaders work in settings they consider amenable to religion. Among these was John Aden, who experienced a spiritual renewal within the first five years of running Mac Tools, and shortly thereafter became convinced of the need to transform both his reputation at work and his company's culture. He accounts for the situation this way:

> For two and a half years I was John Aden one way, and [after my faith transition I] needed to be John Aden the other way. I needed to figure out how to have that conversation in front of people so that once and for all we could just kind of give permission to be different.[14]

As the company's leader, Aden was in a position to introduce company values that would resonate with his faith convictions. These values—

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[14]Interview with John Aden, June 14, 2004, Farmington, Connecticut.

such as emphasizing respect for one another and holding high standards of integrity—were not full of what Aden called "God talk," but they were in line with what he referred to as "the way Jesus taught us to live." This was important, and, in his thinking, their introduction represented a subtle, yet significant way of bearing witness to his rediscovered faith. These corporate values were not off-putting to people of different or no faith, yet they were—in Aden's thinking—grounded in Christian virtues.

Peter Ochs, a residential real estate developer, expressed a similar circumspection about faith displays: "We're a values-based company. . . . The values, while biblically based, aren't avowedly biblical because I never wanted this company to be unattractive to a secular individual who wanted to do business with us."[15] Sometimes, as in Ochs's case, circumspection is mixed with pragmatic concerns, such as pleasing clients or customers. This is not always the case, however, as a number of leaders simply expressed concern that they not be perceived as aggressive proselytizers; they did not wish to be seen as "jamming my faith down anyone's throat."[16]

Those who preferred subtle ways of invoking faith at work tended toward a pietistic orientation. Pietism, which has a long history within American evangelicalism, stresses an experiential spirituality which has been synergistic with the revivalism of many evangelical churches and the entrepreneurial ethos of evangelical publishing houses. The blending of devotional piety and heartfelt worship became important touchstones within American evangelicalism and continues within the tradition today (Smith et al. 1998; Smith 2000; Noll 2001).

Often this meant that faith was enacted through personal, even private, religious practices. Ann Iverson, who was one of the highest ranking women in business when she headed Laura Ashley, said that prayer guided her business decision-making: "I wouldn't make any decision . . . without prayer. When I am sitting in a board meeting now . . . I will ask God to just guide me."[17] She says that these short prayers, often given silently while sitting in a meeting, help her discern right from wrong at a visceral level. "When you're doing the right thing, your heart feels light and good, and when you feel heavy and slimed," Iverson senses things are wrong. For Iverson and others like her, religion was a resource in her work life, but the proclivity toward private expression also meant that it could be somewhat hidden from

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[15]Interview with Peter Ochs, April 26, 2004, Newport Beach, California.
[16]Interview with Peter Engel, November 15, 2005, Santa Monica, California.
[17]Interview with Ann Iverson, June 15, 2005, New York, New York.

colleagues and supervisors. Those of the circumspect disposition tended to account for faith at a very personal level, sometimes involving deliberations that took place in their own minds. Merrit Quarum, CEO of Qmedtrix, said his faith formed his conscience, what he called the "voice in the back of [his] head,"[18] directing his impressions and decisions. Circumspection was most prominent in the narratives given by very high-ranking informants like Iverson and Quarum, CEOs of the largest companies and among the most prominent public figures (although, as expected, the faith convictions of these luminaries are lesser known in the public domain than those who prefer the heroic frame).

Brazen

Some industries are more receptive to public displays of faith than others, and evangelical athletes suggested that they have significant freedom to appropriate their faith in professional life. An amenable context coupled with a tendency toward explicit religious expression generates a brazen framework in which actors willingly and without deliberation bear witness to their faith. When prompted about a particular play in the St. Louis Rams' victory in Super Bowl XXXIV, quarterback Kurt Warner responded, "Well, first things first, I've got to thank my Lord and Savior up above—thank you, Jesus." Warner, who was elected MVP for that Super Bowl performance, says his response was not pre-planned; for him, the moment just seemed right. He says, "To me, it's just about loving Jesus . . . when you love something, all you want to do is talk about it . . . and that's just how I feel about my faith."[19] At no point did Warner express concern that such a proclamation might have any impact on his career. And indeed, the owners and operators of professional sports franchises tend to tolerate a wide range of off-field speech and behavior so long as on-field performance is satisfactory.

Evangelical athletes also bring their faith to bear in interactions with other players. Consider David Robinson, the San Antonio Spurs center who won both the NBA's Rookie of the Year and Most Valuable Player awards at different points in his career. As a star player and team leader for the Spurs, Robinson (a.k.a. "The Admiral") felt an obligation to make known and act upon his evangelical faith. To this end he led the team in prayer before games—a practice that is common in high school

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[18]Interview with Merrit Quarum, July 31, 2004, Los Angeles, California.
[19]Interview with Kurt Warner, June 2, 2005, Phoenix, Arizona.

and collegiate sports but not often found in professional athletics.[20] As he relates the story, he was motivated by the Old Testament story of David: "David said . . . 'As long as I'm king, we're going to serve the Lord.' And that was what I said when I went into the locker room, 'As long as this is my team, we are going to pray together.'"[21] Not all of his teammates appreciated Robinson's perspective, but no one actively resisted, including a Muslim player on the team. Though it may have strained relations with a few teammates to some extent, indiscriminate appropriation of his faith had no adverse impact on Robinson's career. Similar trends were seen in other examples.

This brazen paradigm falls within a larger tradition of American evangelicalism that can be regarded by outsiders as triumphalistic or overzealous. It is a framework most at home within large, established institutions where outspoken Christian expression is welcome, if not expected. We find examples of its emergence within professional athletics and some other workplaces, but it is typically birthed out of the evangelical subculture. For example, McLean Bible Church is a megachurch located in northern Virginia outside of Washington, DC. The church's mission is to "make an impact on secular Washington, DC with the message of Jesus Christ."[22] By framing the church's purpose as reaching "secular" Washington, this church taps into a sensibility that percolates across American evangelicalism, one that see itself as at odds with those outside its own tradition and one that tends to draw sharp cleavages between the worlds of "churched" and "unchurched" (Griffith 1997; Wilcox 2004; Lindsay 2007). The brazen paradigm, however, only surfaces when these two worlds intersect. Without such meeting points, evangelicals would remain isolated in their own enclaves of separate institutions. This, in fact, is what distinguishes evangelicalism from fundamentalism. Whereas American fundamentalists withdraw when they come into contact with secular society, evangelicals tend to move in the opposite direction, engaging and seeking to "impact" that society around them.

IDENTITY AND RELIGIOUS EXPRESSION

Analysis of the utility of faith at work has become particularly important as the strategies of action that emanate from the religious

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[20]More often, professional sports teams have chaplains that lead prayer times and studies of scripture for the team; Robinson's active role, as a player and a team leader, in both initiating and leading the regular prayer time was unusual.

[21]Interview with David Robinson, October 1, 2004, Vail, Colorado.

[22]www.mcleanbible.org.

sphere have collided with the logic of the marketplace. And it is important to understand elite evangelicals, in particular, for they represent a religious group that has moved from a relatively marginal to more central position in American society over the last thirty years. Hence, understanding the dynamics at work for elite evangelicals can point to possible pathways for other religious groups in the years ahead. For example, the evangelistic and totalizing impulses inherent in both evangelical Christianity and a number of branches of Islam suggest that future work should examine the extent to which elite Muslims follow similar strategies of action in workplace decision-making.

By looking only at American evangelicalism in this study, we controlled for varying responses that might emerge because of major theological differences vis-à-vis other faiths or branches of Christianity. And even within this relatively homogeneous group, we found four distinct action orientations that shaped the ways elite evangelicals frame their behavior. Taken together, the case studies presented above demonstrate that the responsibility evangelical elites feel to bring their religious conviction into the workplace can be perceived as both a helpful resource and an obstacle to professional success, *depending on its application and reception.*

While nearly all evangelical elites believe it is important to integrate their faith into their work, not all are able to do so consistently in ways that are profitable to their careers and for their organizations. Some are brazen and heroic; others are circumspect and pragmatic. Practically, all report drawing on their faith for personal guidance and moral fortitude, and some occasionally bring their faith to overt manifestation among a trusted cadre of coreligionists or sympathetic associates. Others opportunistically make religion a matter of public knowledge.

Why do some, but not others, opt to exercise such discretion? Our analysis suggests that differentiation is a function of the presuppositions that inform each particular public leader's integration strategy. For some, the totalizing logic of religion in general—and the integrative imperative of the evangelical ethic in particular—translate religious affiliation into a master identity (Thumma 1991) that must be brought to the fore in every context. Theirs is an aggressive approach to integrating faith into professional life, emphasizing active and open manifestation of explicitly religious conviction and the pursuit of opportunities to advertise their faith. For these, attesting to one's faith ("witnessing" in evangelical parlance) is the categorical imperative that trumps all other moral concerns, and failure to do so represents hypocrisy. It is as if these leaders and aspiring leaders are plagued by the Calvinistic angst that Weber ([1905] 2002) described, striving always to

prove themselves worthy of divine favor. In this contemporary Protestant ethic, however, the impulse to confirm one's spiritual status leads not to asceticism, but public expressions of faith.

For those inclined to this approach, the moral calculus that applies in the workplace tilts toward a Weberian ethic of ultimate ends, according to which pursuit of the good—in this case divine favor—is paramount. This rules-oriented perspective emphasizes proximate duties at the expense of more distant and widespread consequences. Moreover, the identification of witnessing as the primary religious duty means that fidelity to God requires active stance-taking, even—and perhaps especially—when such activity entails conflict with competing norms. Indeed, the heroic disposition serves an important confirmatory purpose within pockets of the evangelical community, where it is presumed that the faithful are at odds with secular society and that their faith expressions will be repudiated by others.

Weber contended that "the more a religion of salvation has been systematized and internalized in the direction of an ethic of ultimate ends, the greater becomes its tension in relation to the world" (1978: 576). Although Weber's principle is not axiomatic (since the degree of tension hinges on the ultimate end in view), in this case his statement has a great deal of merit, as efforts to bear witness to one's faith are most visible when set in relief against competing symbols and practices. Elite evangelicals who described a more explicit approach to incorporating faith at work tended to see their workplaces from a Manichean perspective, as sites where they participate in the cosmic battle between good and evil. The consequences of such confrontations are less important to their initiators than the motives for engaging them; though people may be offended and careers jeopardized, such are appropriate prices to pay for performing one's duty.

But such direct confrontation is not the only approach. Many other evangelical elites endorsed a broader, more flexible view of the integrative task wherein faith is relevant to every sphere of activity but need not represent the primary consideration in every decision or interaction. These leaders implement a macro-level perspective, emphasizing the strategic pursuit of long-term influence. This is less connected to Weber's ethic of ultimate ends and more akin to a qualified version of his ethic of responsibility. In this way, evangelical elites seek the material and spiritual good of their coworkers, clients, and organizations, but reserve for God the ultimate responsibility for such outcomes. They are merely obligated to contribute, as responsible stewards, to the work of God in this world. This qualified ethic of responsibility recasts the traditional Protestant ethic in significant ways. Angst is

replaced with security, compulsion replaced with freedom. Evangelical elites who adhere to this ethic are free to do all the good that can morally be done, without the weight of ultimate responsibility for ensuring that any specific consequences occur in a certain time or way. They can, therefore, be patient, waiting for the right context in which to manifest their faith.

While "tenure" processes differ by industry and confer relatively more or less freedom of expression and immunity from disapprobation, in most organizations advancement—especially to high-level leadership —is accompanied by greater freedom, influence, and respect, each of which facilitates more public appropriation of faith-based resources. Perhaps these elite evangelicals are able to draw on their faith as a resource because leadership positions grant them the prerogatives and authority that lower-level workers do not enjoy. However, these elite evangelicals never talked about such freedoms to bear witness in their interviews. The very fact that they could choose to act or not represents a degree of control unavailable to most lower-level workers. Social factors such as workplace stratification may very well be driving the extent to which elite evangelicals are able to negotiate their faith commitments in the context of competing logics of action. None of these observations, however, were found in the various leaders' accounts, perhaps reflecting the impact of the increased scrutiny and publicity that accompanies higher-profile positions.

Also, unlike those who are wholly immersed in the evangelical subculture, many elite evangelicals, and especially those who articulated a subtle approach to religious expression, came across as culturally bilingual when justifying professional decisions, equally facile with religious and secular logic and vocabulary. In one setting, a business decision might be explained in biblical terms, in another an expression of values, and in another simply a smart business decision. Religion represents, therefore, one of several resources for making and justifying decisions, and on the whole, it appears to be made explicit only when it is likely to be well received.

Evangelical elites for whom religion represents one of several tools in a cultural "toolkit" (Swidler 1986) often described a deliberately dramaturgical approach (Goffman 1959) to workplace interactions, presenting themselves one way to coreligionists and differently to other groups or mixed audiences. As Goffman predicts, these elite evangelicals do not see their "frontstage" behavior as more truthful or genuine than "backstage" behavior. For most, the presentation of different "selves" to different audiences is not inauthentic at all. In contrast to some of their coreligionists, these evangelical leaders are quite

comfortable in different contexts and with different groups. We acknowledge, therefore, that this study's sample is not without bias. These are interviews with successful evangelicals, ones who have garnered significant professional recognition. If pressed, every one of them would likely profess ultimate allegiance to their religious affiliation, but most also demonstrate a tendency to pick their battles carefully. In general, elite evangelicals prefer to circumnavigate moral dilemmas and conflicts of allegiance rather than incite conflict borne of religious conviction. Recognizing the potentially incendiary nature of religious confrontation, successful evangelical leaders steer clear of such minefields, particularly early in their careers.

The fact that most evangelical elites only selectively broadcast their faith does not mean that the impact of their faith is negligible. In fact, those who are most strategic and circumspect about utilizing religious resources regularly garner significant influence. Evangelicals who attain elite status gain access to modes of influence that are not available to lower-level leaders and managers. These include sponsoring corporate chaplains or faith-based small groups, integrating evangelical convictions into business practices, incorporating religious rhetoric into company speeches, and connecting their organization's purpose to some expression of religious faith. These are all forms of significant influence reserved for evangelicals who are able to navigate their way to the top of their professions.

AN EVANGELICAL LOGIC OF ACTION

In describing the tension that supposedly inheres between religious logics and other institutional logics, Friedland and Alford argue that "Contemporary Christian religions attempt to convert all issues into expressions of absolute moral principles accepted voluntarily on faith and grounded in a particular cosmogony" (249). Evangelicals, who invest primary authority in the Bible, would appear to fit this characterization. We have seen, however, that the action-orientation employed by most evangelical elites does not match this description. There is, in fact, no comprehensive set of moral principles that finds universal acceptance among elite evangelicals. Their assessments of their workplaces are divergent, their responses to workplace choices are divergent, and they select divergent ways of framing their decisions and actions. If this is the case for a religious tradition that is based on a highly salient identity chosen by the adherent, imagine the diversity of responses for adherents of traditions where religion is a less salient identity.

The thrust of the evangelical imperative—and that of many other religious traditions—is to make activities meaningful, to endow them with religious significance. But within this broad mandate, there is room for different forms of meaning-making. From the narratives evangelicalism provides, elite adherents are free to choose and customize according to personal disposition and professional context. This flexibility permits these leaders to understand fundamentals of the market's logic (such as profit maximization) as compatible with religious ends. By framing capitalistic behavior in ways commensurate with a moral and/or spiritual perspective, evangelical elites fulfill the integrative imperative required by their faith commitments. Thus, for a significant number of these public leaders, the logic of religion in their self-accounting is not so much juxtaposed against the logics of their professions but infused into them.

Evangelical elites who embrace this perspective serve as carriers (Weber [1921] 1965) of a distinctive evangelical logic of action, working with the grain of their institutional cultures to bridge the secular and the sacred. With access to multiple and potent channels of influence, elite evangelicals find themselves well positioned both to draw upon and transmit ways of thinking and acting between professional contexts and the world of faith. As we have seen, nearly all evangelical elites are sufficiently motivated to do so, and those predisposed to subtler modes of faith expression are particularly well equipped to do so. For these, the ethic of responsibility guides their integrative efforts by encouraging them to contemplate the broader meaning and consequences of their work and enabling them to act without assuming ultimate responsibility for the results. Their cosmopolitan sensibility enables them to communicate with diverse constituencies, honing a cultural bivocality that can speak with one voice in multiple registers. And selective appropriation of religious resources helps them avoid confrontations that might derail their careers, enabling them to thrive professionally in environments perceived to be amenable or hostile to faith-oriented action and discourse. The growing presence of evangelicals among the American professional elite (Lindsay 2007) implies that greater numbers of public leaders actively but selectively incorporate religion in the workplace. For evangelical elites who embrace a more explicit and less selective approach to appropriating their faith, workplaces perceived to be hostile to such appropriation often produce sufficient tension to engender voluntary or involuntary parting of the ways. At the same time, the burgeoning faith at work movement could open up spaces for more explicit faith expressions by evangelicals and members of other religious traditions alike. The extent

to which these phenomena shape the professional landscape will be worth tracking for years to come.

APPENDIX: EMPIRICALLY EXAMINING FAITH AT WORK

Data for this article are based on semi-structured interviews with 360 elite informants in six arenas of influence: (1) government/politics; (2) arts/entertainment/media; (3) religion; (4) the nonprofit/social sector; (5) higher education; and (6) business/corporate life. In order to focus on the role of the evangelical movement among America's leadership cohort, practically all of the religious leaders interviewed in the study were evangelical.

Informants for this study were selected using a two-stage method of sample selection. At the outset, the first author identified the nation's largest organizations within the evangelical tradition. Using a variety of personal and professional relationships, he interviewed 157 leaders of evangelically oriented institutions. Most of these informants serve or have served as president or chief executive of at least one evangelical organization or initiative. At the end of these interviews, informants were asked to identify national, public leaders for whom Christian faith was an important aspect of their life. Since these institutional leaders were associated with evangelically oriented organizations, most of their recommendations involved individuals who either would identify as "evangelical" or who were very familiar with American evangelicalism through contact with at least one program or institution. Almost all of these institutional leaders volunteered to help secure contact details and/or request an interview with the individuals they recommended. Because of these personal connections, many public leaders who would not normally grant a university researcher an hour-long interview agreed to participate in the study at the recommendation of our mutual contact. This technique, the "leapfrog" method for informant selection (Lindsay 2007), generated unusual access to leaders in government, business, and culture ($N = 203$) without the usual impediments of secretarial gatekeepers or organizational barriers.

To generate diversity within the sample, informants were recruited using a variety of intentional measures, including age, region of the country, race and ethnicity, as well as industry and sector of work. The technique, which involves sampling for range but not necessarily representativeness (Weiss 1994) among the 360 informants, allowed for a controlled exploration of differences across certain groups while recognizing that the sample is nonrandom. Beyond the principal sampling categories of sector-and-industry, we balanced the sample by securing

informants from different regions of the country as well as at least twenty-five women and twenty-five people of color (African Americans and Latinos), both of which are vastly underrepresented groups among the American elite (Dye 2002). Among political informants, we worked to ensure that both parties were well represented, and the study included over thirty informants who were first-, second-, or third-generation immigrants to the United States.

Interviews were conducted at seventy-two research sites, ranging from Boston to Los Angeles and Miami to Seattle. Study participants came from all four regions of the country: the Northeast (34 percent), the South (29 percent), the Midwest (10 percent), and the West (27 percent). Interviews ranged in length from 35 minutes to over 4 hours, with an average length of 63 minutes, and were conducted in informants' offices and homes as well as in restaurants, coffee shops, hotel lobbies, and at conference centers. Questions focused on social and religious backgrounds, professional and personal networks, organizational affiliations, public responsibilities, and career trajectories, as well as attitudes and motivations on a range of subjects. The interviews were digitally recorded and then professionally transcribed, after which a research associate checked the accuracy of the transcripts and sent copies of them to informants who requested the opportunity to review their remarks.[23] The cleaned interview transcripts were then coded along forty-six variables for various demographic and religious categories.

Informants include two former Presidents of the United States; forty-eight Cabinet secretaries and senior White House staffers from the last eight administrations; 101 CEOs or senior executives at large firms (both public and private); three dozen accomplished Hollywood professionals; over ten leaders from the world of professional athletics, and over 150 leaders from the artistic, nonprofit, educational, and philanthropic arenas.

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[23]Thirteen percent of informants requested the opportunity to review (and possibly edit) their comments.

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