RELIGION AND THE WORKPLACE

Pluralism, Spirituality, Leadership

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Contents

The changing American context

The challenge of negotiating religion and the workplace fits within a wider public context in which citizens debate the meaning of terms like religion, spirituality, ethics, diversity, commonality, conflict, and unity. This chapter explores changes in US public life that make an analysis of religion and the workplace fascinating, messy, and timely.

US citizens and leaders now confront challenges that few people had envisioned before the devastating events of September 11, 2001. Talk of religion in its myriad forms swirls in the public conversation about that tragic day and responses to it. Extremists who claimed a religious motivation for their terrorism too vividly demonstrate the power of religious ideas and commitments on adherents to produce disastrous effects. For their part, however, the overwhelming majority of US Muslim leaders and followers responded with firm rejections of any depiction of Islamic faith that supports the killing of civilians. Many commentators drew the painful image that the terrorists had hijacked Islam itself.

In the face of the attacks, religious people and nonreligious people united across boundaries to rescue the trapped, heal the sick, and comfort those who were mourning. A prayer service in the National Cathedral in Washington brought together religious and political leaders who drew upon many civic and religious traditions to mourn the dead.[1] The following weekend a memorial event for grieving families, held in Yankee Stadium and broadcast across America, testified even more fully to the tremendous religious diversity of contemporary America.[2] The event offered the prospect that political, civic, and religious leaders could draw upon various traditions to unite for a common cause. Mixed (somewhat

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[1] Rene Sanchez and Bill Broadway, "A Kinship of Grief: With Prayers and Patriotism, a Nation Comes Together," *Washington Post*, September 15, 2001.
[2] Robert D. McFadden, "In a Stadium of Heroes, Prayers for the Fallen and Solace for Those Left Behind," *New York Times*, September 24, 2001.

strangely) with popular entertainers' songs and politicians' remarks, the religious portions of the event rivaled the World's Parliament of Religions with a rich variety of prayers, songs, colorful vestments, styles of speech, and languages.

The challenge now facing the United States is whether Americans will succeed – even as the specter of terrorism makes heightened caution a prudent and appropriate response – in celebrating and protecting the tremendous religious diversity that has reshaped the nation in the past four decades. Will US citizens muster the strength and develop the critical skills to live peaceably – at work, in schools, in politics – with people of all religious traditions?

These recent events increase the urgency of such a question for America, but they do not raise completely new issues. As Diana Eck and her colleagues at Harvard's Pluralism Project have documented, America's "religious landscape" has changed dramatically. Eck contends that America is now the world's most religiously diverse nation, at least in terms of the number of active traditions and communities.[3] Long before the events of September 2001, Americans had been moving in the direction of greater religious tolerance and acceptance, even while experiencing periodic setbacks of misunderstanding, discrimination, and violence.

It is worth focusing briefly on the tradition that has received significant (if often unwanted) media attention and public scrutiny recently – namely, Islam. For their part, Muslims in the United States have long shared public spaces with people of other religious communities. They also have experienced, throughout recent decades, harassment and vandalism. American Muslims suffered each time a high-profile act of terrorism was committed somewhere in the world. Prior to the attacks of September 11, 2001, Eck noted the following:

Even while American Muslims create mainstream mosques and Islamic centers, register to vote, and become active participants in the American democratic process, newspapers bring to American homes the images of Islamic Jihad and other terrorist organizations, their rifle-toting leaders and their hideouts, creating a view of Islam as dangerous, subversive, highly political, and anti-American. When a terrorist attack occurs elsewhere in the world, American Muslims may well be among the first to condemn the attack and to speak of terrorism as anti-Islamic, but their

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[3] Diana L. Eck and the Pluralism Project at Harvard University, *On Common Ground: World Religions in America CD-Rom* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997); Diana L. Eck, *A New Religious America: How a "Christian Country" Has Now Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 2001).

voices are usually not heard, let alone magnified by the popular press. American Muslims may also be among the first to feel the repercussions, as their mosques are pelted with stones.[4]

Eck's account was prescient, though she had referred to terrorism "elsewhere in the world." When the strike occurred in the United States, some American Muslims – along with Sikhs, Hasidic Jews, and Christian Arabs mistaken for Muslims – not only experienced repercussions against their places of worship, but, in multiple cases, were beaten or murdered.[5]

Although the number of Muslims in America has grown drastically since the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act, Muslims have been part of the United States since the earliest colonial days. African slaves brought Islam to the Americas. Scholar Allan Austin has estimated that "10% of West Africans sent to America from 1711 to 1808 were, to some degree, Muslim."[6] Competing strands of Islam existed and developed among African Americans; the early twentieth century marked a turn to more explicit claims to Islamic traditions.[7] In the present day, adherents of the Nation of Islam, led by the controversial figure Louis Farrakhan, are dwarfed in numbers by followers of W. D. Mohammed, who advocates a more orthodox form of Islam. Eck claims that African Americans comprise 25 to 40 percent of the contemporary Muslim community in the United States. Immigrants and converts make up the rest.[8]

The diversity within the American Muslim community itself is immense. When the lens is widened to examine all traditions in America – including the "homegrown" strands and those "world religions" that have been strengthened in recent decades by immigration – it becomes apparent that the varieties of religious expression have transformed and will continue to transform America. When extremists claim a religious motivation, they gain the public spotlight; yet there are many deeper, and potentially positive, trends taking place beyond the headlines.

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[4] Eck, *A New Religious America*, 223.

[5] Elizabeth Bell, "Central Valley Town Gropes with Specter of Hate Slaying; Arab American Shot in His Reedley Store," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 4, 2001; Kelly Ettenborough, Adam Klawonn, and Christina Leonard, "Valley Mourns Apparent Backlash Killing," *Arizona Republic*, September 17, 2001; Gustav Niebuhr, "Christian Arabs, Too, Are Harassed," *The New York Times*, October 15, 2001; "Flight Diverted Due to Confusion over Prayer," *Reuters Online*, October 15, 2001.

[6] Allan D. Austin, *African Muslims in Antebellum America: A Sourcebook*, vol. 5, *Critical Studies on Black Life and Culture* (New York: Garland Publishers, 1984), 35. See also Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (Oxford University Press, 1980), 5–7.

[7] For a broad overview of the strands and institutions of African American Islam in the twentieth century, see Eck, *A New Religious America*, 251–60.

[8] Ibid., 260.

THE WORLD TRADE CENTER AND THE CHANGING
AMERICAN WORKPLACE

Public attention to religion vis-à-vis the World Trade Center has focused on the beliefs – and actions – of the suicidal hijackers. The discussion has tended to overlook another significant reality. The World Trade Center was one of the most religiously diverse collections of workplaces in one of the most religiously diverse cities in the United States. Precise figures about the backgrounds of the victims, of course, are not known (and never will be known). Reliable data, however, point to the fact that these people were citizens of over sixty countries, with some reports placing the number as high as eighty. An American Red Cross chaplain at Ground Zero stated that, taken together, the victims' families speak some 180 languages.[9]

In terms of religion, of the tens of thousands of people who worked at the World Trade Center as of September 11, 2001, the Council on American–Islamic Relations reported that 1,200 Muslims were employed there.[10] Other media reports conservatively placed the number of Jews employed in the World Trade Center at 4,000. Office workers and visitors who died in the attack included Muslims, Christians, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs, and people of no professed religion.[11] The corps of volunteer chaplains who responded to support victims' families was comprised of hundreds of pastoral leaders, including Christian ministers and priests, Jewish rabbis, Muslim imams, and Buddhist monks.[12]

Located in Northern Virginia just outside Washington, DC, the Pentagon serves as the headquarters of the US Department of Defense, a (government) workplace of military personnel and civilians. The US military now employs chaplains from a range of religious traditions, including at least nine Muslim chaplains.[13] Forty military chaplains were among the very first to respond to the tragedy of September 11 and then to perform

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[9] Telephone interview with Greg Bodin, then head of the Spiritual Care Center of the American Red Cross, October 3, 2001.

[10] Glenda Cooper, "A Muslim Family in N.Y. Fears for a Son Who Loved America," *New York Times*, September 18, 2001.

[11] Ibid.; Telephone interview with Fr. Joe O'Donnell, October 8, 2001. O'Donnell is a Catholic priest who succeeded Greg Bodin in leading the Spiritual Care Center of the American Red Cross in providing pastoral care to victims' families. The "Portraits of Grief" that appeared in issues of *The New York Times* from September through December 2001 made direct reference to victims' identities as Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists.

[12] O'Donnell interview, October 8, 2001. O'Donnell also reported that both the New York City Fire Department and the New York Police Department are predominantly Catholic, but they also include people from many religious backgrounds.

[13] Eck, *A New Religious America*, 356.

rituals to mourn the dead. These leaders included Protestant and Catholic clergy, rabbis, and an imam. Military and civilian victims killed in the attacks also came from a range of religious backgrounds.[14]

In the shocking aftermath of September 11, it was more "newsworthy" to focus on the stated beliefs and actions of the terrorists than to focus on the faith backgrounds of the victims. In a long-term view, however, it is equally important to recognize that people of many religious traditions lived and worked together peaceably in the very buildings that were targeted by the extremists. In that respect, the coverage of these tragedies mirrors wider public coverage of religion in the United States: religiously motivated violence receives more attention than quiet religious understanding or cooperation.

The religious diversity of employees in the World Trade Center in particular reflected the very cosmopolitan nature of the firms and agencies located there. One of the reasons the victims represented so many religious traditions, of course, was that they hailed from all regions of the world. At the same time, the diversity found at the World Trade Center is a reflection of present-day New York City, one of the most religiously and demographically complex cities in the world. The wave of immigration into the United States since 1965 has affected all parts of the US, but New York, long an ethnically and religiously rich center, has been dramatically transformed. New York, once a settlement in which "the only permitted form of public worship was Dutch Reformed Christianity," is now

home to many American religious landmarks, including one of the first U.S. temples built according to ancient Hindu guidelines, the upper East Side's ultra-modern Islamic Cultural Center of New York, the first Jain temple in North America, and the nation's largest Christian Cathedral, St. John the Divine Protestant Episcopal Church.[15]

In the aftermath of September 11, commentators noted that the dream of religious freedom associated with Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty had not been disrupted by the attacks. New York was and is home to a myriad of religions.

The forces of globalization suggest that workplaces across the United States – not to mention other parts of the world – are moving toward the reality of dramatic religious diversity among employers and employees. The symbolism of the new global economy and its workforce was understood,

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[14] E-mail correspondence from US Army Chaplain Donna Weddle, September 26, 2001, and October 18, 2001.
[15] Eck, *On Common Ground,* essay on "New York City."

surely, by those who plotted the destruction of the World Trade Center. Although most companies and office complexes will not achieve the degree of diversity of that cosmopolitan workforce in the near future, it is evident that many companies will face increasingly complex religious demographics among their employees.

It is this dimension of the post-September 11 period that most clearly frames the inquiry of *Religion and the Workplace*. While it has been a gradual change, the tremendous increase in religious and spiritual diversity has transformed all aspects of American public life, including the workplace.

RELIGION IN A LAND OF IMMIGRANTS

The date July 4, 1965, marked the beginning of a new and broad period of immigration. On that day, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Immigration and Naturalization Act as he stood at the foot of the Statue of Liberty. Prior waves of immigration had arrived predominantly from Europe. Africans had come against their will as slaves in earlier centuries. Latin Americans from Mexico and further south could immigrate by land, but long-standing conflict between the United States and Mexico served to constrain that immigration. Asian immigration to America experienced a slow, steady increase during much of the nineteenth century, but, beginning in the late nineteenth century, strong anti-Asian sentiment slowed the Asian influx to a trickle. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 marked the beginning of a period that restricted Asian immigration in general – Japanese and Korean as well as Chinese. The 1924 Johnson–Reed Act severely tightened all immigration to the United States and assigned quotas by country. In 1923 the Supreme Court upheld an old statute declaring that "orientals" were not "free white men" and, thus, could not be citizens. In that particular case, Bhagat Singh Thind, a Sikh who was a US veteran of World War I and a naturalized US citizen, was stripped of his citizenship.[16] During the four decades immediately preceding 1965, the small immigrant stream hailed almost entirely from Europe.[17]

The variety of religious expression has multiplied in the decades following 1965. Numbers alone do not capture the diversity of the new landscape, but they provide some perspective. While estimates vary broadly, there are now millions of Muslims in the United States. Scholars debate figures between

[16] Eck, *A New Religious America*, 59–60.
[17] Eck, *On Common Ground*, essays on "Asians and Asian Exclusion," "Xenophobia: Closing the Door," and "A New Multi-Religious America" (sections co-authored by Rebecca K. Gould and Douglas A. Hicks); Eck, *A New Religious America*, 6–7.

1.8 and 6 million Muslim adults and children.[18] Together, Asian American and white Buddhists total as many as 4 million people, and roughly 1 million Hindus reside in the United States.[19] Jews number approximately 6 million persons, ranging from Hasidic Jewish persons living in relatively closed communities to Reform and secular Jews. In surveys, 86 percent of all Americans still claim Christianity as their "religious preference."[20] The Christian community, however, has become increasingly diverse in recent years. For example, while the majority of the over 30 million Hispanic Americans are Catholic, the number of evangelical Protestant Hispanic Americans is on the rise. This latter group, supplemented by increasing numbers of Protestant Asian Americans, comprises a kind of reverse missionary impact on the country whose Protestants long supported outreach efforts in Latin America, Korea, China, and other areas.

The workplace has been at the forefront of institutions affected by this post-1965 broadening. The presumed Christian homogeneity (sometimes politely widened to the "Judeo-Christian tradition"[21]) no longer fits demographic or religious reality. To be sure, such an assumed uniformity always excluded minority expressions, including Native American traditions and many aspects of African American religions. Whether this diversity is a challenge to confront or an opportunity to welcome is up for debate. Both aspects should be accorded their full due.

RELIGION AND LEADERSHIP IN THE AMERICAN WORKPLACE

Two articles from *Fortune* magazine provide snapshots of public discussion about religion and the workplace before and after the post-1965 wave of immigration. Seen together, these essays illustrate just how much has

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[18] A recent study by the Graduate Center of the City University of New York estimates there are 1.8 million Muslims; a report commissioned by the American Jewish Committee estimated 1.9 million but acknowledged another method that estimated 2.8 million (Gustav Niebuhr, "Studies Suggest Lower Count for Number of US Muslims," *New York Times*, October 25, 2001). Diana Eck uses the widely quoted estimate of 6 million (Eck, *A New Religious America*, 2–3). Critics of the lower number cite the difficulties of locating and aggregating people from various Muslim traditions, including African American and immigrant groups.

[19] Eck, *A New Religious America*, 2–3.

[20] George Gallup and D. Michael Lindsay, *Surveying the Religious Landscape: Trends in US Beliefs* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishers, 1999), 16.

[21] The problems of citing a "Judeo-Christian" tradition are well developed in the literature of religious studies. The label "Judeo-Christian" tends to assume, at the expense of Judaism, that Christians and Jews believe essentially the same things. Besides glossing over the very real and important theological and liturgical differences, it tends to subsume Jewish traditions within an umbrella that is dominated by Christian ideas and practices. See Arthur Allen Cohen, *The Myth of the Judeo-Christian Tradition* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969).

shifted in fifty years. A 1953 article by Duncan Norton-Taylor bore the title "Businessmen on Their Knees."[22] In 2001, Marc Gunther published an article entitled "God and Business" in the same magazine.[23] Understanding the differences and the similarities in these two articles can help set a historic frame for the contemporary analysis of religion and the workplace. It is also important to consider aspects of spirituality and religion and the workplace that both articles omit.

Norton-Taylor's essay sets the 1953 context by noting a "religious phenomenon" of increased church attendance and heightened general interest in religious matters in the post-war United States. Businessmen shared this new enthusiasm for religion and they sought to apply their beliefs to their work. The de facto focus of the article is not on religion in general, but on the Christian faith of a growing group of businessmen. They had created new Bible study groups and were even engaging co-workers through "evangelizing." Norton-Taylor notes that Christian men's groups had formed around the country with names such as "Christ Bearers," "Fishermen's Clubs," and the "Christian Business Men's Committee."[24]

Behind the local movement in Pittsburgh, which Norton-Taylor discusses at length, was an Episcopal priest, Dr. Samuel Moor Shoemaker, rector of the Calvary Episcopal Church. Shoemaker is portrayed as innovative for the efforts he took, not only to attend solely to the Sunday activities at the church, but also to prod his parishioners to connect their Christian faith to their labors in the business world.

For many other observers, such a "phenomenon" should not be seen as particularly surprising. After all, the idea that Christian (or other religious) commitments are not for worship time alone, but are guiding principles for living one's life, is not new or particularly revolutionary. But Norton-Taylor has framed his article with the claim that "[a] man's religion used to be a private matter."[25] Even if businessmen professed Christian faith before the period of religious renewal, Norton-Taylor seems to suggest, they did not usually discuss it at work. The novelty, then, is found in the explicit and intentional talk about religion in the workplace by Christian businessmen, and in the formation of groups that crossed congregational and denominational lines.

The 1953 discussion focuses almost exclusively on Protestant business leaders. Presbyterians and Episcopalians receive most of the attention, with mention of a few Methodists. Catholics get passing attention. Beyond

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[22] Duncan Norton-Taylor, "Businessmen on Their Knees," *Fortune*, October 1953.
[23] Marc Gunther, "God & Business," *Fortune*, July 9, 2001.
[24] Norton-Taylor, "Businessmen on Their Knees," 140–41.   [25] Ibid., 141.

the Christian traditions, a rabbi is quoted in general terms, and there is one reference to "a revival of Judaeo-Christian passion."[26] In 1953, then, religion in the workplace generally means Christian – namely, Protestant – faith.

The article examines high-ranking businessmen who held formal positions of authority in their companies. Norton-Taylor reports that the Rev. Dr. Shoemaker approached the members of the Pittsburgh Golf Club with his seminar on "How to Become a Christian."[27] The leaders featured are those, as the byline states, "at a peak of their worldly strength and success,"[28] a group comprised of board chairmen and company presidents. These positional leaders managed to combine Christian faith and worldly success.

That the intended audience of this movement of Christian faith consists of executives is supported by the discussion of how to take Bible studies to workers on the assembly line. Norton-Taylor cites one worker at US Steel who became fed up by his fellow workers' labor strike. The company president supported the worker's idea to begin a Bible study among his fellow workers. The article notes that, at another company that had been holding prayer meetings, "[t]here hasn't been a strike . . . in eleven years."[29] US Steel decided to spend $150,000, the article reports, to distribute *Guideposts* magazine to its workers. *Guideposts* was edited by Norman Vincent Peale, whose Protestant theology of uplifting messages and socially disengaged faith would not have challenged the basic assumptions of the American corporation. Norton-Taylor discounts the anticipated charge that this program was an attempt to pacify workers:

It would be a little ridiculous to raise the old Marxist charge that management is using religion to drug gullible workers. Management knows by this time that organized labor is not that gullible.[30]

Norton-Taylor implies that, because it would be obvious this program might be an effort to pacify workers, it must not be so. Whatever the motives of US Steel for supporting the program, the example provides evidence that the discussion of religion in the workplace in 1953 had a top-down approach, aimed at Christians in management who could carry the religious discussion to their workers.

These managers were men. In 1953, women comprised only 30.6 percent of the labor force, and many women who were in the private sector held secretarial positions. Given that women now comprise 46.5 percent of the

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[26] Ibid., 254, 256.   [27] Ibid., 248.   [28] Ibid., 140.   [29] Ibid., 253.   [30] Ibid., 254.

labor force, this demographic transition has broadened the discussion of religion and spirituality in the workplace.[31]

The reference to "spirituality" in the 1953 article means the everyday expression of Christian faith as lived out in the workplace, home, and community. For example, within a discussion of whether the new religious enthusiasm reflects "the meaning of the agony of Christ" and "the meaning of true religion," Norton-Taylor refers to "Protestant clergymen [who] were inclined to see just such a true *spirituality* at work."[32] Importantly, there is no suggestion that spirituality is somehow distinct or separate from organized religion – a distinction that took on prominence in more recent public and scholarly discussions.

The spirituality and leadership discourse looked quite different in 2001. The focus broadened beyond Christianity and beyond men. Yet parallel to the 1953 article, Marc Gunther's contemporary essay in *Fortune* begins with a discussion of a "spiritual revival" and a "groundswell of believers [who are] breaching the last taboo in corporate America" by bringing God and spirituality into business. In the current epoch, however, the movement includes people influenced by all of the world's religions and by various New Age expressions.

Norton-Taylor's account of the 1950s had focused on Protestant Christendom and included passing acknowledgment of Catholicism and Judaism. In contrast, Gunther's article profiles the stories of six people for whom religion, faith, or spirituality has made a significant difference in their business lives. They include a Mormon man, a Presbyterian woman, a Buddhist man, a "traditional" Catholic man, a "fully Jewish" man influenced by a number of other traditions, and an African American Catholic man who collaborates with a former Jew converted to Buddhism.

For each of these figures, Gunther examines how his or her religious or spiritual practices have affected the ways they do business. As already noted, diversity is the norm. For some, faith has made them question the kinds of work they do; a few have refused to work on their sabbath day; others have decided to contribute to their community through their business. One person criticizes the long hours that he works, but another states that he has greatly increased his work hours for eleven months of the year in order to take an annual month-long retreat in India. As Gunther describes it, the effects of faith on these individuals are generally positive, though for at least one person, "God and business . . . sometimes . . . collide

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[31] Data were obtained from the US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Historical Data, http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsatabs.htm, accessed February 15, 2003.

[32] Norton-Taylor, "Businessmen on Their Knees," 254, emphasis added.

head on."[33] Even this man, however, is presented as a highly successful businessperson.

Women are now part of the faith-in-the-workplace story. Their presence in the labor force has contributed to the increased religious diversity and willingness to talk about "private" matters in the public space. After all, women's massive entrance into the workforce made problematic the simple distinctions between the domestic sphere and public spheres upon which much of modern liberalism depends.[34]

By 2001, religion and spirituality have been distinguished and even separated. Gunther's description of one man, Richard Levy, is illustrative:

Levy, who is Jewish, had long been interested in philosophy and religion, particularly the Eastern traditions; he has, for example, practiced tai chi, a physical discipline rooted in Taoism. Like many baby-boomers, *Levy has fashioned his own brand of spirituality, which draws from a number of religious traditions.* "For me, spirituality is a very individual issue," he says. "Although I consider myself fully Jewish, I'm not a member of a synagogue. Those of us who are less affiliated have to uncover our own path, and that's hard. Especially when, at the same time, we are CEOs of fast-growing companies."[35]

Levy articulates clearly (and the author Gunther seems to concur) that spirituality pertains to the individual. Spirituality is what individual people construct, and discover, and perhaps practice. It does not require religious affiliation. It is possible to be spiritual without being religious.

Unlike the predominant theme in 1953, when religion at work was rooted in the practices of a faith community (for example, the church or synagogue), the contemporary movement of spirituality and leadership does not require such institutional religious affiliation on the part of business leaders or their employees. In fact, spirituality in the workplace becomes, for many businesspeople, an alternative form of religious affiliation.

It is significant to note that people who profess their own brand of spirituality usually do not arrive at it on their own. In addition to religious leaders and traditional holy texts that may have influenced them, a host of "spiritual corporate consultants" currently make their living talking about spirituality in the workplace and undoubtedly influence business leaders and employees. If the Protestant minister was the old paradigm of a spiritual guide, today's paradigm is the executive trainer. Bookstores are stocked with best-selling texts about work, leadership, and spirituality, with titles such

[33] Gunther, "God & Business," 78.
[34] See, for instance, Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton University Press, 1990).
[35] Gunther, "God & Business," 76, emphasis added.

as *Spirit at Work*, *Leading with Soul*, and *Synchronicity: The Inner Path of Leadership*.[36] If it is true that a growing number of business leaders are discovering themselves and their inner spirituality, they can buy any number of texts that tell them what they are likely to find. Indeed, these texts have become the latest trend in effective workplace leadership. Have they also created a new kind of religious orthodoxy?

Not all people who talk about spirituality at work have renounced organized religion, to be sure. For some people featured in Gunther's article, their religious practice and affiliation in a faith community remain a fundamental part of their identity. One leader, Dick Green, is part of a Chicago-based group of Catholic businesspeople who call themselves "Business Leaders for Excellence, Ethics, and Justice." This group was founded as a critical response to the US Catholic Bishops' pastoral letter on the economy,[37] which they saw as too negative in its assessment of capitalism. Despite the disagreement with the church statement, this group and its members remain critically engaged in the life of the Catholic church.[38]

Thus the discourse about religion and the workplace has not shifted simply from traditional religion (especially Christianity) in the workplace to individual New Age spirituality in the workplace. Rather, now there is a diversity of forms of expression in business. Adherents include practicing religious followers of all strands of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Wicca, and New Age religions; individuals of no professed faith; and as many different practitioners of "individual spirituality" as there are individuals.

For all of the differences noted here between the contexts of 1953 and 2001, some important similarities remain. First is the assumption that the workplace is essentially a secular sphere – at least until religious or spiritual people seek to transform it. Only four decades prior to 1953, however, scholars such as the Social Gospel theologian Walter Rauschenbusch spoke of "Christianizing the social order," which included the application of Christian principles to American business.[39] Although Rauschenbusch was impressively thoughtful about just how to apply Christian ideas to the

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[36] Jay Alden Conger, ed., *Spirit at Work: Discovering the Spirituality in Leadership*, first edn., The Jossey-Bass Management series (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994); Lee G. Bolman and Terrence E. Deal, *Leading with Soul: An Uncommon Journey of Spirit*, first edn. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995); Joseph Jaworski, *Synchronicity: The Inner Path of Leadership*, ed. Betty S. Flowers, first edn. (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 1996).

[37] National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Economic Justice for All: Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy* (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1986).

[38] Gunther, "God & Business," 78.

[39] Walter Rauschenbusch, *Christianizing the Social Order* (New York: Macmillan, 1912).

workplace, there was little public debate at the time that questioned whether "Christianizing" was a positive thing to do. Just a year before Rauschenbusch published *Christianizing the Social Order*, Frederick Winslow Taylor issued his *The Principles of Scientific Management*, marking the beginning of the modern, autonomous business sphere in society.[40]

The contemporary spirituality and leadership discussion often proceeds without this wider historical frame of the de facto Christian establishment in American society that predated it. This oversight avoids the question of whether Christian influences remain part of the workplace environment even when Christians do not explicitly evangelize. The 1953 framework involved "recovering" such a Christian influence upon business, without acknowledging that the influence was part of the culture all along. The 2001 discussion also fails to note the predominance of Christian symbols and influences in the business realm and in society as a whole – or the possible problems of such a reality for an increasingly diverse workforce. Instead, the contemporary literature seems to celebrate the mutual interaction of a variety of religious and spiritual practices and ideas, all on an ahistorical and equal footing. Does it not matter that Christian symbols and ideas and holidays continue to have culturally established status in US workplaces and wider public life? Precisely how it matters is the more difficult issue.

Another similarity between the 1953 and 2001 articles is that they each profile positional leaders – persons who have brought their religion or spirituality into the workplace via the executive suite or the management floor. Gunther calls the contemporary phenomenon a grassroots movement, but by this he means that he sees no person or group of persons orchestrating a national movement. Gunther examines how religion and spirituality pertain to those people with formal positions of authority in particular workplace organizations. Like Norton-Taylor, he portrays formal leaders as the ones who introduce faith into the workplace – as if religion and spirituality would otherwise be absent.

There are various problematic aspects of this framework. First, the almost exclusive featuring of people who have reached positions of influence contributes to the narrative that faith leads to success. Although many (but not all) authors insist that the interest in religion and spirituality is *not* associated with the end of increasing profit, the very structure of the discussion is biased to suggest that religion contributes to material success.

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[40] Frederick Winslow Taylor, *The Principles of Scientific Management* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1911). The story of the movement toward more humanistic models of management is found in Joanne B. Ciulla, *The Working Life: The Promise and Betrayal of Modern Work* (New York: Times Books/Random House, 2000).

Few if any stories spotlight people who have given up positions of power –
or renounced the business sector altogether – because of their faith. Even
those persons who have stood up for their faith and paid some price in terms
of their career have found ways to recover and to be financially successful.

Another problem with the exclusive emphasis on people in formal posi-
tions is that, by default, it neglects consideration of workers or followers. Is
it that such persons do not have faith? Do they need their bosses to intro-
duce them to religion or spirituality? Do bosses become "spiritual guides,"
as at least a few articles suggest in all seriousness?[41] There are, of course, rea-
sonable alternate explanations for what is occurring. Perhaps authors and
journalists simply find it more interesting to cover the faith of successful
managers than to profile the faith of assembly line workers, secretaries, or
middle managers. Such a preference would be related to the success bias
noted above. Or there is yet another possible explanation: workers may
be more constrained than managers to express their religious views in the
workplace. That is, they may be less inclined to have such conversations
with managers or co-workers because they feel more vulnerable than their
bosses. Whatever the cause or set of causes for the focus on formal leaders
in these articles, it is important to expand the analysis to include followers
as well as leaders and to study the ways in which religion and spirituality
in the workplace concern both followers and leaders.

Both essays in *Fortune* neglect other important aspects of religion and
the workplace. The approach in each article is to analyze the faith of indi-
viduals. For example: how does a faithful Presbyterian manager live out his
belief in Jesus when hiring and firing? How should a Buddhist organize her
time and priorities and treat her co-workers? We do not see more difficult
issues addressed concerning, for example, religious dress or speech in the
workplace, such as: may a Sikh employee wear his turban or his *kirpan*
(ritual dagger) at work? May an employee protest a company product by
appeals to Jewish teachings? Neither article offers a detailed analysis of the
organizational culture and structure and their impact upon the expression of
religion and spirituality. A focus on the institutional level would ask a vari-
ety of questions such as these: does a particular corporation create a secular
atmosphere? Does the company, rather, promote an effective establishment
of Christianity? (Tests: Does it play Christmas carols over the loudspeaker in
December? Is the company closed on Good Friday or Easter Monday?) Do
the managers pay for and require attendance at spirituality seminars? Does
the organization have and uphold a nondiscrimination policy to protect

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[41] See ch. 3 below.

people of "minority" religions? These questions address the *institutional*, and not just the *individual*, aspects of religion and spirituality in the workplace. Leadership can create or stifle the institutional space for individual religious expression.

Finally, neither article confronts the challenges of religious diversity directly. A product of its context, the earlier article assumes, without seeing a need for justification, that Protestant Christianity is the paradigmatic religion within a wider Christian tradition. Norton-Taylor suggested in 1953 that Protestants were bringing their faith back into the workplace; Catholics and Jews were welcome to do the same, with the assumption that their practice looked similar to the Protestant model. Forty-eight years later, Gunther's article is indeed broad by comparison in choosing and describing six protagonists; in this way, Gunther certainly gives a taste of the contemporary variety of religious and spiritual expression. Yet his treatment of these six leaders gives no consideration to the possibility that any of the traditions or expressions – whether Christian, Buddhist, or New Age – could be at odds with one another or might lead to conflict in the workplace. While Norton-Taylor, for instance, at least saw a dilemma in 1953 about whether Christians should evangelize in the workplace, Gunther chooses not to address such a potentially divisive question. Rather, there is an assumption that the disparate religions coexisting in the workplace will lead to better performance on the part of leaders – and indeed to more enlightened leadership and a pleasant work environment. Religious and spiritual expressions may well lead to a richer workplace, but that conclusion should only be drawn after the challenges and potential conflicts have been fully considered.

CONCLUSIONS

The examination of the articles from *Fortune* has introduced many of the issues about religion, leadership, and the workplace to be explored in the following chapters. The articles suggest that many individuals seek to integrate their working lives with religious or spiritual ideas and practices for a multitude of reasons. The diversity of religious commitments and expressions deserves close attention, along with an analysis of organizational values and culture. Thus, when different people speak about "faith in the workplace," or "spirit at work," or "the soul of business," they often are referring to quite distinct conceptions and realities. Indeed, understanding how various advocates of these concepts, including conservative Christians, liberal Christians, orthodox Jews, Muslims, Wiccans, and New Age individuals,

can manage to use similar language but mean many different things is one of the tasks of this inquiry.

The voluminous literature on religion, spirituality, and leadership tends to be a-contextual. That is, it overlooks factors that provide important information for understanding the contemporary interest in this phenomenon. The popularity of talking about religion, spirituality, and even leadership in the workplace is part of wider US trends in religion and society. The tremendous increase in diversity of religious traditions represented among Americans has broadened the public conversation. At the same time, many Americans have moved their spiritual quest for self-fulfillment, meaning, and purpose outside of the confines of organized religion. For some people, this has meant leaving their church, synagogue, or mosque altogether; for others, it has entailed enriching or expanding their religious faith by learning from other traditions. The study of leadership and management has shifted from a more rationalistic model to include attention to the whole person – which for some scholars reaches to the spiritual and religious dimensions of the human person. The movement toward bringing matters religious and spiritual into the workplace is not an isolated one; it is, rather, part of the wider trends of a changing American society.