

Copyright © 2020 Wungramthan Tangkhul Shongzan

All rights reserved. The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has permission to reproduce and disseminate this document in any form by any means for purposes chosen by the Seminary, including, without limitation, preservation or instruction.

A COMPETENCY-BASED MODEL FOR GOSPEL-
CENTERED VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

by
Wungramthan Tangkhul Shongzan
December 2020

APPROVAL SHEET

A COMPETENCY-BASED MODEL FOR GOSPEL-
CENTERED VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Wungramthan Tangkhul Shongzan

Read and Approved by:

Anthony W. Foster (Chair)

Jeffrey Michael Horner

Date _____

To Chanchan,
my beloved wife and co-laborer.
She is a beautiful gift, brought to me by God's grace,
who willingly sacrificed all her other desires
but to serve the Lord and to support me in serving Him
and took on this research project as her own;
I could not have completed this endeavor without your support.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES	viii
PREFACE.....	ix
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Research Problem	4
Secular Vocational Education	4
Seminary Education Loophole	6
‘Sunday-Monday Gap’	8
Helping without Hurting	9
Problem Statement.....	12
Purpose Statement	13
Research Questions.....	13
Significance of the Study.....	13
Theoretical Significance.....	13
Practical Significance	14
Research Population	14
Delimitations of the Research.....	15
Procedural Overview	16
Terminology and Definitions.....	16
2. PRECEDENT LITERATURE	19
Theology of Work and Vocation	19
History of Christian Wisdom on Vocation.....	20

Chapter	Page
Development of the Theology of Work	24
Current Discussions.....	28
Theology of Work as Vocation	33
Work in Kingdom Perspective	36
Biblical Metanarrative as the Framework	40
Theology of Mission.....	43
Development and Issues of Mission.....	43
<i>Missio Dei</i>	46
Holistic Mission	48
Mission and Vocation.....	50
Integration of Faith, Work, and Mission	51
Strategic Mission Approaches.....	52
Marketplace Mission Movements	53
Competency-Based, Gospel-Centered Vocational Education.....	57
Conclusion	60
3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	61
Introduction.....	61
Purpose Statement	61
Research Questions.....	62
Research Design Overview.....	62
Qualitative Multicase-Study Approach.....	63
Data Collection.....	64
Instrumentation.....	65
Data Analysis	66
Research Population	68
Purposive Sampling.....	68

Chapter	Page
Description of Participants	69
Delimitations of the Research.....	69
Limitations of Generalization of Research Findings	70
Research Procedures	70
Researcher Stance	72
Research Competencies	73
Research Assumptions.....	74
4. ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS	76
Compilation Protocol.....	76
Demographic Description of Sample.....	78
Protocol for Data Analysis.....	82
Findings and Displays.....	83
Crown School of Trades and Technology (CSTT)	85
Williamson College of the Trades (WCT)	90
Master’s Ranch and Christian Academy (MRCA).....	97
Summary of the Findings	103
Evaluation of the Research Design.....	107
5. CONCLUSIONS	110
Purpose Statement	110
Research Questions.....	111
Research Implications.....	111
Research Application.....	116
Research Limitation.....	119
Further Research	119

	Page
Appendix	
1. STEPS OF STUDY/ RESEARCH PLAN.....	121
2. EXPERT PANEL	122
3. INITIAL CONTACT E-MAIL/ LETTER OF INVITATION	124
4. INFORMED CONSENT FORM	125
5. INSTITUTIONAL DEMOGRAPHIC FORM.....	126
6. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.....	129
7. LETTER OF APPRECIATION	131
BIBLIOGRAPHY	132

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure	Page
1. Location map of participating institutions.....	78
2. Framework model for a competency-based, gospel-centered vocational institution.....	106
3. Institutional model for competency-based, gospel-centered vocational education in the Majority World	117

Table	Page
1. Trades/programs offered by the institutions.....	80
2. Summary of demographic description.....	81
3. Codes (key words and phrases) occurrences	103
4. Themes and patterns identified in the three institutions	104
A1. Tentative dates for each research activity.....	121

PREFACE

The topic and discussion of this research have been a culmination of my reflection and personal journey as a village boy, a carpenter, a teacher, and a follower of Christ. My quest for educational quality and equity began at the remote Indo-Myanmar border village, where I grew up as a pastor-missionary kid (PMK), yearning to learn more and learn it better. Diminishing educational disparity and creating opportunities for all to flourish as God's image bearers have been strong convictions of my Christian pilgrim journey. As I arrive at this milestone and reflect on ways the Lord orchestrated my life through various people and occasions, I can only marvel at the sovereign, providential grace of God. I am here today, by God's grace alone, through faith in Him. Evidently, I am surrounded by such a huge cloud of witnesses to the journey and life of faith.

Many have journeyed together with me and witnessed my progress particularly in the completion of this research. I express my love and gratitude to my father and mother, Murphy and Ningtharla Shongzan, who inspired me to serve God and showed me the power of prayer. I thank my parents-in-law, Hangyui and Leishila Khayi, for raising up my wife in the fear of the Lord and for wholeheartedly supporting our commitment to serve God. I cannot thank enough Chanchan, my dear wife, who journeyed with me through thick and thin by kneeling to pray beside me numerous late nights, discussing the project after meals for hours until the plates were dried, and proofreading every single page of this thesis. And to all of our siblings, nephews, and nieces—you have seen me walk through this academic journey, and I appreciate all for your patience and support.

I want to thank those who supported me financially: Crossroads International Church in Singapore, Matt and Julie Hessians, Drew and Linda Fones, Stanley and Mui Hong, and other generous givers, who have made it possible for us to equip ourselves for

the work of the gospel. As I complete my doctoral studies today, my heart is filled with gratitude toward all of you—this success is yours as much as it is mine. I also thank Dr. Rick Griffith, from Singapore Bible College, and Dr. Daniel Chua, from Mt. Carmel BP Church in Singapore, for being advocates to both my spiritual and academic life.

I thank the Bethany Baptist Church family in Louisville, Kentucky, for being such a wonderful supporter and family in Christ. To pastor Ken Vickery, who not only serves as an influential spiritual guide to us, but has provided his personal touch by reading this dissertation in its entirety and offering invaluable feedback; to Marilyn A. Anderson, who being a sister in Christ, has done a fine job serving as English editor of this manuscript; to my fellow deacons who checked on me from time to time with constant support; and to the members of the Disciple Connect Group, who stood by me all through. I want to acknowledge the accountability support I shared among the students from Northeast India in Louisville, as well.

Finally, I thank my supervisor, Dr. Anthony Foster, who guided me with his able character—a combination of academic rigor and spiritual wisdom. Thank you to Dr. Jeffrey Horner for reading and sharpening this work with critical and eloquent comments. I also express my thanks to Dr. John David Trentham for believing in me and for all the gentle prods and the pats on the back throughout the course of study.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. (Heb 12:1-2) NLT.

Athan Shongzan

Louisville, Kentucky
December 2020

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Most of the people in the world are workers—employed or engaged in doing something to make a living. The world employment-to-population ratio in 2019 was 60.1 percent; United States has 59.8 percent; and Qatar has the highest ratio with 86.7 percent.¹ Almost 80 percent of the United States population between twenty-five and fifty-four years of age is employed.² This ratio is representative for the Christian population, as well. Typical church membership largely consists of working professionals.³ These Christian professionals normally devote six days a week to their vocations, and set aside one day to worship and rest.⁴ The above data indicate that about four of every five individuals are employed in a profession, and approximately six-sevenths (~ 86 percent) of their time is engaged in job-related activities. These facts not only reveal what people are engaged in, but also provide a paradigm for the church to appropriately relate to them. Cognizance of a world predominantly filled with working professionals presents a new perspective on Christian teaching and discipleship.

¹ International Labor Organization (ILO) reports these figures, along with future estimations, in “Employment-to-Population Ratios,” Employment Statistics, accessed January 21, 2020, <https://ilostat.ilo.org/topics/employment/>. These numbers reflect only the workers in organized labor sectors and may not necessarily include indigenous farmers or those who are engaged in unorganized vocations. ILO also estimates that 96.2 percent of the world population is engaged in some kind of work at some point of time in life.

² As per the Bureau of Labor Statistics published by the United States Department of Labor, the employment-population ratio for age sixteen and over was 60.2 percent, and the labor-force participation rate for United States citizens between ages twenty-five and fifty-four was 81.8 percent in July 2017. “Employment-population Ratio and Labor Force Participation Rate by Age,” US Department of Labor, August 9, 2017, <https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2017/employment-population-ratio-and-labor-force-participation-rate-by-age.htm>.

³ See “Working Professionals” in the Terminology and Definitions section at the end this chapter.

⁴ R. Paul Stevens, *The Other Six Days: Vocation, Work, and Ministry in Biblical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 4.

The high percentage of working people in the world, as well as in the church, should not come as a surprise to Christians who worship the God of work. About the Christian God, James Hamilton says, “The Bible opens with a depiction of God at work, and the operational understanding throughout the Bible is that God continues to work.”⁵ God worked in the beginning to create the universe (Gen 1); He is still working to renew the world and create a new heaven and a new earth (Rev 21). Human beings are created in the image and likeness of God, and placed on earth “to work it and keep it” representing God (Gen 1:28, 2:15). Although sin affected human’s ability to work out this mandate, those who are redeemed through Christ are, again, commissioned to work in making disciples of all nations by teaching them to observe what he has commanded (Matt 28:19–20). Having created as image bearers of the “working” God, human beings are ordained to work. *Imago Dei* is visibly reflected in humans’ working. The world and the churches ought to be filled with working professionals.

Recognizing the significance of work in human life and its inherent connection with Christian faith, scholars have endeavored to develop a robust theology of work and vocation. The genesis of their efforts could be traced back to the fourth-century Christian thinking introduced by Augustine, which was continued by Aquinas, later Church Fathers, and the Reformers.⁶ Having carried away from mainline discussion for some time after the Reformation, a resurgent development of a finer biblical-theological approach in the studies of work and vocation has been evident in the last three decades.⁷

⁵ James M. Hamilton Jr., *Work and Our Labor in the Lord*, Short Studies in Biblical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 18-19.

⁶ Paul A. Marshall, “Work and Vocation: Some Historical Reflections,” *Reformed Journal* 30, no. 9 (September 1980): 16–20. Marshall provides a brief historical excursus, beginning from the ancient Hellenistic views to the Christian thinking on work and vocation, in this article.

⁷ Significant works developed in this field include Leland Ryken, *Work and Leisure in Christian Perspective* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1987); Lee Hardy, *The Fabric of This World: Inquiries into Calling, Career Choice, and the Design of Human Work* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990); Miroslav Volf, *Work in the Spirit: Toward a Theology of Work* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1991); William C. Placher, ed., *Callings: Twenty Centuries of Christian Wisdom on Vocation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005); Pete Hammond, R. Paul Stevens, and Todd Svanoë provide a comprehensive

The more recent works focus on recovering the biblical vision for work and constructing a theological framework for Christian ministry.⁸

In the field of practical theology as well, scholarly studies on biblical work have gained prominence in recent years. The “faith at work movement,” advocated by David Miller, has been significant in integrating faith and work in practice.⁹ Others—like Amy Sherman, Tim Keller, and Sebastian Traeger and Greg Gilbert—have written about work and vocation on a more practical level, helping average Christians perceive their work through the lens of biblical worldview.¹⁰ James Smith presents a remarkable perspective of seeing “our vocations as ways to pursue God himself” through habit-shaping rituals forming “vocational liturgies.”¹¹ In addition, Sutrisna Harjanto has conducted an important study about spiritual formation for marketplace ministry in the Asian context.¹² A desire for equipping people to connect what they believe with what they do is at the core of each of these conversations. Christian leaders seek to develop a model framework for teaching and discipleship that will meaningfully express the biblical vision of work and vocation.

resource reference in *The Marketplace Annotated Bibliography: A Christian Guide to Books on Work, Business & Vocation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002).

⁸ See Steven Garber, *Visions of Vocation: Common Grace for Common Good* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014); William Messenger, ed., *Theology of Work Bible Commentary*, Theology of Work Project (Peabody, MS: Hendrickson, 2015); Hamilton, *Work and Our Labor*. Gene Edward Veith Jr., *God at Work: Your Christian Vocation in All of Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2002); *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology (SBJT)* published a special issue on “Vocation” with seven articles all focused on the theme of work and vocation. Stephen J. Wellum, ed., *SBJT* 22, no. 1 (Spring 2018).

⁹ David W. Miller, *God at Work: The History and Promise of the Faith at Work Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

¹⁰ Amy L. Sherman, *Kingdom Calling: Vocational Stewardship for the Common Good* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011); Timothy Keller, *Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God’s Work* (New York: Penguin, 2012); Sebastian Traeger and Greg Gilbert, *The Gospel at Work: How Working for King Jesus Gives Purpose and Meaning to Our Jobs* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013).

¹¹ James K. A. Smith, *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2016), 185-88.

¹² Sutrisna Harjanto, *The Development of Vocational Stewardship among Indonesian Christian Professionals* (Cumbria, UK: Langham Monographs, 2018).

Research Problem

The emphases on the theology of work and the efforts to meaningfully apply this theology have been evident in Christian scholarship and ministry. The church has recognized the need for recovering biblical missions in this highly industrialized post-modern world. While secular institutions—with the exception of few Christian institutions—provide most of the technical and vocational training,¹³ the church continues to explore ways to mobilize and teach working people practical approaches to connect their work to God’s work. Leaders in the academy and the church, thus, continue to develop new curricula for vocational training and discipleship. Many of these curricular projects utilize both lectures and discussions to stimulate thoughts and ideas about faith and vocation. Yet, amidst these curricular developments, no substantive conversations have taken place about whether certain pedagogical tools work better in vocational discipleship. In the wake of recovering a robust theology of work and developing a biblical framework for vocational training and discipleship, discerning what a gospel-centered vocational training and discipleship entails is still lacking.

Secular Vocational Education

A substantial part of public education is secular. About eighty-three percent of the institutions in the United States that produce the workforce of the country are non-Christian institutions.¹⁴ The number of Christian institutions that offer technical and vocational education is far less. The scenario in India, where Christianity is a minority, appears even worse with a negligible number of Christian institutions. Most of the secular

¹³ Melvin L. Barlow, “The Challenge to Vocational Education,” in *Vocational Education*, ed. Melvin L. Barlow, The Sixty-Fourth Yearbook of the National Society of the Study of Education (Chicago: NSSE, 1965), 10.

¹⁴ United States Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2018) in “Number of Educational Institutions, by Level and Control of Institution: Selected Years, 1980-81 Through 2015-16,” reports 34,576 private schools that include other religious affiliations. While there are more public schools at elementary and secondary levels, the ratio reverses at post-secondary levels with 72 percent private schools. *Digest of Education Statistics, 2016*, National Center for Education Statistics, https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/tables/dt17_105.50.asp?current=yes.

public schools run and operate under the philosophy and worldview that do not acknowledge scriptural truth. For instance, these schools generally maintain a worldview that does not accept man being created in the image of God. The humanistic view of education gives primacy to the ability and aptitude of the students, and aims at their performance and achievement. While the competency-based skill training is recognized as valuable for job and employment, these institutions hardly deal with the philosophical and ethical aspects of work, which actually have eternal implications. From a Christian point of view, secular institutions could be seen only as part of God's "common grace."¹⁵ Secular vocational education does not necessarily prepare Christian professionals for vocational discipleship.

A clear, strong philosophical basis is crucial for any kind of education with a desired goal. The foundation is all the more crucial for Christian education because its ultimate purpose is "service to God and other people for both here and hereafter."¹⁶ George Knight asserts that concern with such an objective presupposes a philosophy that involves a set of beliefs in the nature of reality (metaphysics); sources and validity of knowledge (epistemology); and basis of values and conducts (axiology).¹⁷ This philosophy is ascertained in recognizing the primacy of the overarching theological metanarrative as revealed in Scripture. The Bible provides the foundation for Christian education from each theological category within its grand narrative. A robust philosophy of education should guide the pedagogy, curriculum, and every other aspect of training and preparing future professionals and workers.

¹⁵ "Common grace" is the grace of God, by which he gives innumerable undeserved blessings to all people, both believers and unbelievers, through his sovereign plan and wisdom. See Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 657-63.

¹⁶ George R. Knight, *Philosophy and Education* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2006), 216.

¹⁷ Knight, *Philosophy and Education*, 33.

In the absence of such a framework, students from secular institutions are exposed to develop a skewed understanding of work and vocation that will shape their careers. They will fall victim to what Traeger and Gilbert describe as two main problems related to work—*idleness* and *idolatry*—both of which “are deadly misunderstandings of how God wants us to think about our jobs.”¹⁸ From a Christian standpoint, secular or classical philosophies, though not completely discounted, must be subject to the test of Powlison’s epistemological priorities.¹⁹ Any idea or philosophy that does not align with the biblical framework and, therefore, does not affirm the Christian worldview needs to be exposed and reoriented if not completely debunked.

Seminary Education Loophole

Theological seminaries have their unique and distinctly Christian vision and commitment to educating students. While all Christian higher educational institutions may seem alike to an outsider, they possess a number of variations. Duane Litfin notes that the 1966 Report of the Danforth Commission suggested four categories of Church-sponsored Higher Education in the United States: (1) the defender of the faith college, (2) the non-affirming college, (3) the free Christian college, and (4) the church-related university.²⁰ While some schools are becoming more affirming and committed to a biblical vision, others become indistinct from secular institutions.

The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) has 276 schools accredited, with a total enrollment of 72,639 students in the United States and Canada.²¹ Based on

¹⁸ Traeger and Gilbert, *Gospel at Work*, 16.

¹⁹ In his article, “Cure of Souls (and the Modern Psychotherapies),” *The Journal of Biblical Counseling* 25, no. 2 (2007): 5-20, David Powlison presents two views—VITEX and COMPIN—about the interaction of biblical authority and the value of secular sciences. While the purpose is not deciding on either one of these two models, he offers three epistemological priorities to consider in constructing a biblical framework for counseling or any area of Christian thinking, including a framework for Christian educational philosophy.

²⁰ Duane Litfin, *Conceiving the Christian College* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 13–14.

²¹ “2019–2020 Annual Data Tables,” Association of Theological Schools,

the set standards and regulations, ATS-accredited schools are known to be evangelical, confessional, and Bible-teaching institutions. In “Thinking of the Future,” Albert Mohler presents five critical recommendations for theological education: (1) recover and reaffirm the essential theological character, (2) be confessional in character, (3) forge new working relationships with the churches, (4) seek to regain curricular focus, and (5) avoid conceiving themselves as mere professional schools.²² Mohler reiterates, “A theological seminary has no right to exist apart from its charge to train, educate, and prepare ministers for service in the churches.”²³ This vision, at the least, includes hope for the theology of work, and a place for equipping Christian ministers for workplace ministries.

The vision has not been fully realized yet, though. Seven years after Mohler’s proposition of the vision for theological education, Miller laments, “Seminary training seldom addresses ‘faith at work’ and workplace ministry as a subject for theological reflection or practical training, leaving most clergy unaware and ill-equipped to minister to the needs and callings of those in the workplace.”²⁴ The vision, particularly of recovering and reaffirming the essential theological character and seeking to regain curricular focus, is not meaningfully grasped in serving the churches.

Numerous evangelical seminaries do not offer any course pertaining to the theology of work, or practical theology related to working professionals. The result is they produce a great many pastors and ministers who are not adequately equipped or prepared to teach and minister to the working members of the church. Consequently, the

<https://www.ats.edu/uploads/resources/institutional-data/annual-data-tables/2019-2020%20Annual%20Data%20Tables.pdf>.

²² R. Albert Mohler Jr., “Thinking of the Future: Evangelical Theological Education in a New Age,” in *Theological Education in the Evangelical Tradition*, ed. D. G. Hart and R. Albert Mohler Jr. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 278–83.

²³ Mohler, “Thinking of the Future,” 279.

²⁴ David W. Miller, “The Faith at Work Movement,” *Theology Today* 60 (2003): 302.

teaching of biblical truth not only sounds obscure, but also irrelevant to many. The understanding and articulation of a biblical vision of work and vocation, as they relate to the Creation Mandate and the Great Commission, had been neglected for a long time.

‘Sunday-Monday Gap’

How does this lack of attention to theological teaching and equipping for vocational discipleship affect the local churches, whose members are largely working professionals? Predictably, a gap between pew and pulpit arises. Research demonstrates that “most active churchgoers surveyed cannot remember the last time their pastor preached a constructive sermon on work.”²⁵ The working professionals of the church experience little or no relevance of their Sunday worship to their weekday work, which Miller calls the “Sunday-Monday gap.”²⁶ Many people wonder if the work that they do in their offices, campuses, factories, farms, or their homes have any significance to their faith or worship. They struggle with the question of whether their daily activities and mundane works actually bear eternal implications. Nash and McLennan discover that for many Christians, their life at church and their life at work are two “separate worlds,” and a serious disconnection exists between the two.²⁷ This disconnection has created a huge gap between what church members believe and what they do in their lives.

Several other scholars have realized this gap between faith and work, as well. Robert Plummer affirms the existence of this gap: “There is widespread ignorance among both clergy and laypersons as to the rich heritage of biblical reflection on work that we find in Christian history.”²⁸ He urges professors and pastors to rediscover the doctrine of

²⁵ Miller, “Faith at Work Movement,” 302.

²⁶ Miller, “Faith at Work Movement,” 302. Nash and McLennan as well express a similar idea of this gap in their book. Laura L. Nash and Scotty McLennan, *Church on Sunday, Work on Monday: The Challenge of Fusing Christian Values with Business Life* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001).

²⁷ Nash and McLennan, *Church on Sunday, Work on Monday*.

²⁸ Robert L. Plummer, “A New Testament Professor’s Rediscovery of the Doctrine of

vocation, and prompts the need to disseminate it among students and laypeople. A great need for intentionally teaching people the connection between faith and work is evident; and even a greater need is finding a model approach for this task.

Helping without Hurting

Cognizance of the significance of work and vocation in Christian life has led Christian leaders to recognize its implications for mission, too. In his visions of vocation, Steven Garber lucidly attests, “Vocation is integral, not incidental, to the *missio Dei*.”²⁹ An inherent connection exists between a person’s daily work and God’s mission. What one does at home and in the workplace is essentially within the purview of the Lord’s ultimate plan for the individual, society, and creation—God’s mission.³⁰ Chris Wright understands God’s mission as “cosmic salvation,” which involves the whole church taking the whole gospel to the whole world.³¹ This understanding should help discern not just the way Christian individuals work and live, but also must offer directions about how the church ought to reach out to people in the workplace, particularly in the Majority World.³² The inherent connection of work and mission implies the effect of the gospel on

Vocation,” *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 22, no. 1 (Spring 2018), 10.

²⁹ Garber, *Visions of Vocation*, 18.

³⁰ In his book, Chris Wright describes God’s mission from the biblical metanarrative view of God’s sovereign purpose, “to bring the sinful world of his fallen creation to the redeemed world of his new creation,” affecting the individual people, the society, and the entire creation, which he refers to as “cosmic salvation.” Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God’s People: A Biblical Theology of the Church’s Mission* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 46. He clarifies elsewhere: “Mission was not made for the church; the church was made for mission—God’s mission.” Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 62. DeYoung and Gilbert additionally contend that the mission of the church involves the whole story—biblical narrative, and the whole gospel that includes social justice and *shalom*, apart from the Great Commission. Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert, *What Is the Mission of the Church?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011).

³¹ Wright builds his understanding of God’s mission on the expression of “the whole church... the whole Gospel... the whole world.” Wright, *The Mission of God’s People*, 26-32. This idea is derived from the Lausanne Covenant, which is an upshot of the International Congress on World Evangelization, 1974. “The Lausanne Covenant,” Lausanne Movement, accessed February 12, 2019, <https://www.lausanne.org/content/covenant/lausanne-covenant>.

³² “Majority World” is a recently emerging term, referring to the majority of humankind that

the socio-economic condition of the people, and hence it provides a perspective on ways the church can wisely reach out to the nations.

Manipur in Northeast region of India is in a typical Majority World populace. The Majority World, by definition, is characterized as economically poor, less developed, and mostly unreached people groups. In this region, poverty is rampant and the standard of living of the people is meager. An average of 63.3 percent is Below Poverty Line (BPL) according to the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI).³³ Many of them are farmers. However, the purpose of farming is primarily for family sustenance, and thus hardly any income is generated out of it. Production is no way in large-scale, but barely enough for local consumption. The basic infrastructure in which these people live is next to nothing—a typical village of a few thousand population does not have a hospital/clinic, pharmacy, police station, post office, bank, etc. Many places have no electricity and no clean drinking water. School conditions are pathetic, with poor infrastructure and resources. Most of these are tribal groups—who are marginalized, oppressed, opportunity-deprived, and suffering under the systemic corruption of the state. Their immediate concern is family sustenance and security.

By and large, people in Manipur and Nagaland are highly community oriented. They are generally simple and greatly adaptive. They live in the here and now—many of them survive hand-to-mouth—and they do not care much about the future or what comes next. They are “praying to be able to live another day.”³⁴ Although they recognize an

falls within the “Global South.” Based on the Joshua Project’s description, the Majority World population is characterized by economically poor, less developed, unreached to superficially reached people group. “Global Statistics,” Joshua Project, accessed May 8, 2019, https://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/statistics. The term is, however, utilized to actively counter the pejorative terms such as ‘developing’ and ‘Third World’ employed in the mainstream discourse.

³³ “The 2019 Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI),” United Nations Development Programme, accessed October 3, 2019, http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/mpi_2019_table_1.pdf.

³⁴ Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert, *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty without Hurting the Poor—and Yourself* (Chicago: Moody, 2012), 65.

almighty being, most of them find themselves without faith because of severe hardships in life. They also recognize rich natural resources in the region, but unable to utilize them wisely. How do Christians reach out and teach people in such situation?

The paradoxical statement, “when helping hurts,” is the title of a book by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert about effectively reaching and helping the poor through short-term and long-term missions. In this book, the authors report that Christian missions and philanthropic organizations have been working to assist the poor in the Majority World, but, most often, their efforts do more harm than help the poor, and ultimately hurt themselves.³⁵ They further diagnose that most missions failed due to the “god-complexes” of the materially rich and “feelings of inferiority” of the materially poor, which frequently develop in “the health-and-wealth gospel.”³⁶ They lament that missions among the poor failed because some “sought the King without the kingdom,” while others “sought the kingdom without the King.”³⁷

Witnessing similar situations—in which good intentions have unintended, dire consequences—Robert Lupton, in his book, *Toxic Charity*, urges individuals, churches, and organizations to “step away from traditional ‘doing for’ the poor models toward a ‘doing with’ paradigm.”³⁸ Effective evangelism and discipleship among the poor, and meaningful poverty-alleviation require transformation through the knowledge of the gospel and empowerment through their work and vocation. Viewing poverty primarily as the result of sin—broken relationship with God, Corbett and Fikkert call for reconciliation, “so that people can fulfill their calling of glorifying God by working and

³⁵ Corbett & Fikkert, *When Helping Hurts*, 27.

³⁶ Corbett and Fikkert, *When Helping Hurts*, 62–66.

³⁷ Corbett and Fikkert, *When Helping Hurts*, 37.

³⁸ Robert D. Lupton, *Toxic Charity: How Churches and Charities Hurt Those They Help (and How to Reverse It)*, (New York: HarperOne, 2011), 29.

supporting themselves and their families with the fruit of that work.”³⁹ Both King Jesus and his kingdom are sought. Any attempt to either teach or practice by neglecting or ignoring one of these aspects will probably be a ‘help that hurts.’

Problem Statement

Although there has been a resurgent awareness of the significance of work and vocation in the academy, as well as the church, the efforts to equip Christian workers for vocational teaching and discipleship are yet to take its leap. Vocational education has been, until now, either skills without a robust theology, or theory without a meaningful practice. Vital development has been made recently in solidifying the theology of work and vocation, and recovering the vision for kingdom calling.⁴⁰ In the meantime, Christian academies and churches try to develop pedagogical strategies and curricular framework for vocational teaching and discipleship.⁴¹ However, very little empirical research, if any, has been conducted to determine what constitutes Christian vocational training in terms of its philosophy, pedagogy, and practice. Moreover, an apparent gap exists in finding a prescriptive model for vocational discipleship based on the descriptive framework of the theology of work and vocation that could be transferred to the Majority World context, as well. In the efforts to bring meaningful intersection of faith and vocation as biblical missions, a well-expressed institutional and pedagogical model that concentrates on both the gospel and competency is of the utmost desire.

³⁹ Corbett and Fikkert, *When Helping Hurts*, 54 and 74. The authors opine that poverty is the state when the four foundational relationships of a person: a relationship with God, with self, with others, and with the rest of the creation—as suggested by Bryant Myers—are not functioning properly.

⁴⁰ As seen in the earlier section, the works by Garber, Sherman, Hamilton, Stevens, and Keller are remarkable, among others, as they suggest helpful ideas that can be applied for teaching and practice.

⁴¹ The Washington Institute of Faith, Vocation, and Culture focuses on developing and promoting the meaning of vocation and the common good, whereas other institutions, such as The Williamson College of the Trades, concentrate on providing distinctively Christian trade programs.

Purpose Statement

The primary purpose of this study was to explore resources for modeling a competency-based, gospel-centered vocational institution with the following objectives:

1. To construct a basic framework for organization and administration of a gospel-centered vocational institution.
2. To describe an approach to a faith-based and competency-based instructional model and curriculum design.
3. To apply the description to a real-world context of the researcher's country.

Research Questions

The main research question was: What are the key features characterizing a competency-based, gospel-centered vocational institution? This question generated a series of sub-questions, three of which are connected to the research purpose and were the focus of this study:

1. How can vocational education provide opportunities and prepare students for gospel-centered work and vocation?
2. What learning objectives and competencies need to be addressed in the curriculum to equip students for workplace evangelism and discipleship?
3. How can such an institutional model be transferred to, and effectively implemented in, Manipur, Northeast India?

Significance of the Study

Significance of this study was two-fold: theoretical and practical.

Theoretical Significance

Building on the study that had been conducted so far in the field of theology and work, this study sought to provide a deeper understanding of the pedagogical aspects of the theology of work and mission. This study explored the intersection of various

theological categories, including Christian anthropology, ecclesiology, and missiology as they relate to the theology of work and vocation. It also investigated ways Christian leaders and administrators work in conjunction with those theological understandings. It hoped that the result of this study will contribute to the literature on Christian education and mission from theological and pedagogical perspectives. It will, at least, establish a framework for vocational education and discipleship.

Practical Significance

This study attempted to discover a paradigm that helps equip workers-in-training to build their careers that are not only God-glorifying, but also God-serving. A better understanding of the factors and process that influence vocational teaching and discipleship will offer important insights into educational practice. These insights will be invaluable for Christian educators, pastors, and missionaries, or whoever is seeking to develop a teaching and discipleship model for working professionals. In addition, the result of the study will be beneficial for leaders in academia, parachurch, and the local church, both in the United States and other countries, where the result is transferable. It will be significant, especially to those who are seeking effective ways to reach out with the gospel to the poor in the Majority World through vocational training and discipleship.

Research Population

The research population for this study was defined as Christian-based, vocational-technical schools in the United States that have been in existence for more than seven years providing skill-oriented training to students. These institutions are commonly known as Christian trade schools in the United States of America.

The research population defined above was narrowed down to three sample institutions—namely: Crown School of Trades and Technology, Williamson College of

the Trades, and Master’s Ranch and Christian Academy.⁴² The selection was based on their focused field of training; accessibility, and availability of information; established track record of their vocational education; and their commitment to Christian faith.

These institutions were selected through purposive sampling, which was clearly a criterion-based selection for the particular purpose of this research.⁴³ Because the purpose of this research was to explore resources for modeling a gospel-centered vocational institution for prospective prototype-emulation, these three samples were chosen according to varied criteria and perspectives: Crown School of Trades and Technology—for gospel-centeredness; Williamson College of the Trades—for competency-based specialty; and Master’s Ranch and Christian Academy—for practicality and feasibility perspectives.

Delimitations of the Research

The study was delimited to the review and analysis of the above three selected institutions, which offer skill-oriented vocational training. The research was delimited to the availability and accessibility of literature and people who were interviewed.

Moreover, the research was delimited to three main focused aspects of studies:

(1) Educational philosophy of the institutions; (2) curriculum content and design; and (3) transferability and feasibility of the system in other contexts.

⁴² Crown School of Trades and Technology is a distinctly Christian trades and technology training school that provides skills in seven different trades at its campus in Powell, Tennessee. “Crown,” Crown School of Trades & Technology, accessed August 12, 2018, <https://crowntradesandtech.com/>. Williamson College of the Trades, at Media, Pennsylvania, provides specialized technology degree programs in six industry-related skill trades based on Judeo-Christian tradition and faith. “About Williamson,” Williamson College of the Trades, accessed October 4, 2019, <https://www.williamson.edu/>. Master’s Ranch and Christian Academy is a home-based Christian ministry in Couch, Missouri, founded and run by David Bosley, a committed Christian minister and counselor. It is a Christian therapeutic boarding school and boys-home for troubled teenage boys in the state. “About Us,” Master’s Ranch, accessed August 24, 2018, <http://mastersranch.org/>.

⁴³ Paul D. Leedy and Jeane Ellis Ormrod, *Practical Research: Planning and Design* (New York: Pearson, 2016), 165.

Procedural Overview

According to what is seen in the research concern, the purpose of the study and the research questions appear in this first chapter. Furthermore, description of the research population and the samples with the sampling technique are presented here. Chapter two is the review and analysis of precedent literature in the field of this study. Biblical-theological reflection on work and vocation—from the perspectives of the Creation Mandate, *imago Dei*, the triune God, the kingdom of God, and the Great Commission—is considered. The chapter also explores the intersection of faith, work, and mission based on Christian theology and church traditions to ultimately build a theological framework for the research on vocational education that follows.

The research used qualitative multiple case study that involves two main components as laid out by Sharan Merriam: (1) mining data from documents, and (2) interview of the institutions' leaders.⁴⁴ This approach allows the researcher to gain in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being investigated—on the success, or failure, of the institutions—and provides markers and strategies for modeling. Methodological design, research instrumentation, and procedures are described in the third chapter.

Chapter four is the analysis of findings that involves data compilation, evaluation, and interpretation. In the conclusion, which is the fifth chapter, discussions and implications of the research findings are presented. This chapter offers recommendations for an adaptable model of competency-based, gospel-centered vocational education and suggestions for further research in the field.

Terminology and Definitions

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions of terms were employed:

⁴⁴ Sharan B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998), 69. The study will broadly incorporate the six sources of evidence presented by Yin. Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2014), 106.

Competency-based. Competency is the capability of an individual to apply or utilize a set of knowledge, skills, abilities, and intellectual behaviors to successfully perform and accomplish tasks in a defined setting.⁴⁵ Any effort, approach, or system (e.g., education) based on and targeted to the development of the stated competency is known as competency-based.

Gospel-centered. Comprehending the “gospel” as the outrageous news of what God has done for us—in creation, redemption, and consummation through Jesus Christ, his death, and resurrection—to be gospel-centered is to view all of life in light of this gospel and to completely depend on this gospel as the supreme resource for all of life.⁴⁶ Every learning activity centered on, and keyed to, the truth of this gospel is considered gospel-centered. Thus, to be gospel-centered is to do everything “*in reliance on blood-bought grace and promises*” of God *displaying his grace* and showing his glory.⁴⁷

Vocation. Derived from the Latin root word *vocare*, the 1989 edition of Webster’s Third New International Dictionary defines vocation as “a summons from God to an individual or group to undertake the obligations and perform the duties of a particular task or function in life.” For this reason, vocation refers to a task or function (e.g., accounting, farming, preaching, graphic designing, nursing, writing, teaching, trading) to which one is called by God.

Vocational education. Vocational education refers to formal training for a specific vocation through theoretical instruction and practical experience. This study emphasizes skill-oriented training for technical and industrial-related trades, such as auto

⁴⁵ Deborah J. Bushway, Laurie Dodge, and Charla S. Long, *A Leader’s Guide to Competency-Based Education: From Inception to Implementation* (Sterling, VA: Stylus, 2018), 1.

⁴⁶ Dane Ortlund, “What’s All This ‘Gospel-Centered’ Talk About?” *The Gospel Coalition Blog*, September 16, 2014, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/whats-all-this-gospel-centered-talk-about/>.

⁴⁷ John Piper, “What Does It Mean to Be Gospel-Centered?” *Desiring God Blog*, November 19, 2014, <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/what-does-it-mean-to-be-gospel-centered>.

mechanics, electrical, welding, plumbing, carpentry, cosmetology, embroidery, farming, animal husbandry, and culinary art.

Work. In this study, “work” as a noun refers to the term defined by Stevens as “purposeful activity involving mental, emotional or physical energy, or all three, whether remunerated or not.”⁴⁸ While the idea clearly includes changing diapers or community service as work, it specifically refers to the labor, task, or duty one does for a livelihood.

Working professional. The term “working professional” is used to refer to any individual who is a member of a profession or any person who earns a living from such a professional activity as engineer, doctor, teacher, plumber, shopkeeper, lawyer, barber, chef, carpenter, accountant, and mechanic. Though not intentionally excluding full-time Christian workers (like pastors, evangelists, missionaries), this study concentrates on those who work in “secular” professions because the research goal is finding a model to empower people in those vocations.

⁴⁸ Stevens, *Other Six Days*, 107.

CHAPTER 2

PRECEDENT LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was exploring resources for modeling a competency-based, gospel-centered vocational institution. Finding a robust framework for such an institution involves a deeper understanding of the pedagogical aspects of the theology of work and mission. It requires exploring the intersection of four widely varying fields—theology, vocation, mission, and education. This chapter provides an overview of precedent efforts to integrate Christian faith, human work, and God’s mission, as they relate to education, particularly to vocational training. Precedent literature about the theology of work and vocation, theology of mission, and various discussions and movements related to work and mission are reviewed in this chapter. It further explores the efforts to apply the theological understanding of faith, work, and mission to Christian education in the academy and in the church.

Theology of Work and Vocation

Human beings spend most of their waking hours at work, which is an integral part of human life. Almost all adult populations of the world work in some way or another. Yet, different people understand work differently: as a way to make a living; as a means for earning; as a way to utilize time and skills; as a ministry; or as a calling. Many economists would define work basically as *whatever one does to live or survive*, which is not just “too broad,” but also “has no theological component.”¹ The understanding of work varies widely—not only among secular professionals, but even among Christians.²

¹ Ben Witherington III, *Work: A Kingdom Perspective on Labor* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), ix.

² James Hamilton observes, “work today is all too often characterized by unwanted toil, pain,

One common understanding among Christians is that their work is valuable just for evangelism among their coworkers and making money to donate to the church.³ How do Christians understand work in relation to their faith? Is there more to work than simply earning, tithing, and workplace evangelism? Does our work really matter to God? How does one discern vocation? A biblical-theological investigation into the nature, meaning, and purpose of human work and vocation is crucial.

History of Christian Wisdom on Vocation

William Placher (1948–2008) edited a book called *Callings*, in which he presented a summary of “twenty centuries of Christian wisdom on vocation.”⁴ In this unprecedented anthology, Placher gathered select passages on work and vocation from the greatest writers in Christian history, including Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, John Calvin, Richard Baxter, John Wesley, Max Weber, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and Karl Barth. Christians through the centuries have thought about the importance of work and vocation in their lives and the church. While the vocational questions that Christians face have evolved through the years, the insights summarized in this book from saints, preachers, theologians, and teachers provide a distilled wisdom for thinking about theology of work and vocation historically.

Placher organized his review into four main historical sections—the early church (AD 100–500), the Middle Ages (AD 500–1500), the Reformation (AD 1500–

and futility.” James M. Hamilton Jr., *Work and Our Labor in the Lord* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017); Witherington also points out that “many regard work as at best a necessary evil—just one more unfortunate by-product of humanity’s fall from grace.” Witherington, *Work: A Kingdom Perspective on Labor*.

³ Hugh Welchel and Robert Plummer point out this narrow understanding of Christian lay workers. Hugh Welchel, *How Then Should We Work? Rediscovering the Biblical Doctrine of God* (McLean, VA: Institute for Faith, Work & Economics, 2012); Robert L. Plummer, “A New Testament Professor’s Rediscovery of the Doctrine of Vocation,” *SBJT* 22, no. 1 (Spring 2018): 10.

⁴ William C. Placher, ed., *Callings: Twenty Centuries of Christian Wisdom on Vocation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005).

1800), and the Post-Christian World (AD 1800–present). The ways Christians consider vocation changed radically during these periods, when “calling” has assumed various meanings. Placher claimed, “Even the words used sometimes mark the difference.”⁵

The early church understood “calling” as the call to Christian life involving a decision that often meant isolation from family, society, and a previous way of life. Becoming a Christian was usually associated with the risk of persecution, arrest, torture, and death; a situation still prevalent today in some parts of the world. The fundamental vocational question for people of the early-church period was whether or not they should be, and remain, Christian. Their response to the “calling” was a serious commitment to Christian faith and life.⁶

Christian faith no longer risked difficulties after Emperor Constantine became a Christian in the fourth century, and that brought the fear of becoming too easy to be a Christian.⁷ The understanding of vocation thus evolved in the Middle Ages to mean a call into a deeper religious life. For medieval Christians, vocational questions pertained to deciding between being part of their family; marrying and having children; and entering into the priesthood or the religious life in a convent. Responding to the “calling” meant almost exclusively joining the priesthood or some monastic order.⁸

Reformation brought a radical change to the understanding of vocation both in the Christian and secular circles. With the Reformation theology of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, and in Christ alone—and not by any specific or additional work—everybody who believed was understood to be called by God. Martin Luther

⁵ Placher, *Callings*, 6.

⁶ Placher, *Callings*, 23–103.

⁷ Paul L. Maier, *Eusebius: The Church History* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007), 318–27; Placher, *Callings*, 6, 31.

⁸ Placher, *Callings*, 107–201; Welchel, *How Then*, 62.

viewed that “one’s works are those God has commanded.”⁹ And in “the priesthood of all believers,” vocation was no more limited to monastery or convent.¹⁰ Just as one could be called to a life of preaching, so others could be called to farming, crafts, business, or public service. Work in every profession is elevated to the level of divine service. Luther and Calvin, along with their followers, began to perceive “every job as a vocation,” and this view was continued with the Puritans.¹¹

Placher observed continued change in Christian thinking about vocation during the last two centuries. With the advancement of industry and economy, the pattern of work and family life changed significantly, offering unprecedented options for job and career. Amid the phenomenon of what Karl Marx defined as “alienated labor,” it was difficult for the workers to feel pride in what they did and to feel “called” to their jobs.¹² Christians realized that it became ever more challenging to find meaning in the job and to stay distinct in the marketplace. “Simply living as Christian” and finding joy in whatever one does became very much part of the understanding of vocation in the Post-Christian Age.¹³ The search for what God calls us to do continues.

In addition, Hugh Whelchel discusses the “history of work and calling” by surveying the views of work as understood by varied people in history—the Greeks, the Hebrews, the early Christians, the medieval church, the Reformation, and the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Christians.¹⁴ In the pre-Christian era, the Greeks and the Jews

⁹ Gustaf Wingren, *Luther on Vocation*, trans. Carl C. Rasmussen (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2004), 76.

¹⁰ Placher, *Callings*, 7, 207, & 212.

¹¹ Placher, *Callings*, 205–10.

¹² “Alienated labor” is the phenomenon whereby the worker is made to feel foreign to the products of his/her own labor. Unlike the workers of several hundred years ago who made things for friends and neighbors, using all the skills of a craft, the modern “assembly-line” workers perform a single task on a product they never see complete for an unknown customer. Placher, *Callings*, 327.

¹³ Placher, *Callings*, 9–11.

¹⁴ Whelchel, *How Then*, 57–69.

held sharply contrasting views of work. The Greeks regarded that to work with one's hands or to work for pay was "demoralizing and demeaning."¹⁵ Influenced by Aristotle, who taught contemplative life as virtue and observed that "to be unemployed was good fortune" as it allows contemplation, the Greeks pursued leisure and reserved work for lower socioeconomic positions and slaves.¹⁶ To the contrary, the Jews placed a high value on work because they believed work was part of God's purposes in creation. The early Christians considered following Christ and witnessing through distinctive living as their vocation, which was distorted at the beginning of the Middle Ages by the concept of the "active life" and the "contemplative life."¹⁷ By the time the medieval period started, the sacred-secular divide was in full bloom. Therefore, for the medieval church, "having a *vocation* or *calling* referred exclusively to full-time church work," which usually meant becoming a priest, a monk, or a nun.¹⁸ Whelchel discovers the sharp contrast between the monastic call "from the world" and the Christian call "into the world" as the Reformers recognized that all life, including daily work, could be realized as a calling from God.¹⁹ The Enlightenment and the Second Great Awakening of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries overturned the Reformation view of work.²⁰ Consequently, "the concept of

¹⁵ Whelchel, *How Then*, 57.

¹⁶ Whelchel, *How Then*, 58.

¹⁷ Whelchel quotes Eusebius of Caesarea, who wrote about "*vita contemplative*"—sacred vocations devoted to contemplation, reserved for priests, monks, and nuns, and "*vita active*"—secular vocations dedicated to action, such as governing, farming, trading, soldering, and homemaking. Augustine similarly distinguished the "active life" and the "contemplative life," with the view that the latter was of a higher order. Whelchel, *How Then*, 61.

¹⁸ Whelchel, *How Then*, 62.

¹⁹ Whelchel, *How Then*, 63–64.

²⁰ Enlightenment is an intellectual movement that emerged during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, which seeks to understand the natural world and humankind's place in it solely on the basis of reason, without turning to religious belief. The Second Great Awakening is a movement that opposed Enlightenment ideas, emphasizing professions of faith by affirming the "spiritual" over and against the "secular." Whelchel, *How Then*, 66–67.

vocation became so closely associated with a person's *career*" that it has become almost "an idol to which we look for our identity."²¹

Scholars have reflected on the Christian comprehension of work through the centuries, and have discovered that the concept of work and vocation has been understood quite differently at various times. In one of the most recent publications, marketplace worker, pastor, and theology teacher Daniel Doriani contemplates "Work through the Ages," focusing on the influence of Martin Luther, John Calvin, Adam Smith, and Karl Marx toward contemporary views of work.²² Several socioreligious movements in the past greatly influenced the development of the theology of work too. How these developments actually shaped the Christian understanding of work and vocation is the focus of discussion in the next section.

Development of the Theology of Work

Albeit Christian wisdom on work and vocation has a history of more than twenty centuries, the emergence of theology of work as a concept is "a quite recent development."²³ Several turning points exist along the way, of which four specific markers are vital in the development of the theology of work up to the current discussion: (1) Protestant Reformation, (2) Industrial Revolution, (3) Post-World War II, and (4) Faith and work movements. These major events changed the course of Christian thinking about work and shaped the realization of the nature, meaning, and purpose of human work.

The sixteenth-century Reformation was a faith resurgence that "reclaimed for

²¹ Welchel, *How Then*, 67–68.

²² Daniel M. Doriani, *Work: Its Purpose, Dignity, and Transformation* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2019), 65–81.

²³ Cosden records that the phrase itself had only been "recently coined" as the "French Catholic theologians after World War II were the first to ask whether there was a 'theology of secular realities' and thus also a 'theology of work.'" Darrell Cosden, *A Theology of Work: Work and the New Creation* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2004), 4–5.

the church three essential truths: justification by grace through faith, the authority of scriptures, and the doctrine of vocation.”²⁴ Subsequent to the Reformation, “Protestant and Catholic thinking about vocation diverged dramatically.”²⁵ While Catholics maintained the medieval understanding of vocation exclusively to be a priest, a monk, or a nun, Protestants insisted that any job could equally be a vocation. Since then, the debate related to clergy–laity distinction and the question of what it means to serve God full-time have become much more prevalent.

Economists describe three Industrial Revolutions that transformed the modern society—the steam engine; the age of science and mass production; and the rise of digital technology.²⁶ These revolutions fundamentally altered people’s understanding of job and career. The first Industrial Revolution that began in Great Britain in the eighteenth century moved from farming to industry and commerce; shifted individuals from rural to urban life; and replaced handicrafts by machines.²⁷ Market mechanisms augmented productivity and wealth, which became the goal of work and labor. Scottish economist and deist of that time, Adam Smith (1723–1790), perceived that “the drive for productivity dehumanizes workers” as they were reduced to and labeled as “production costs.”²⁸ Karl Marx (1818–1883) also lamented the plight of laborers and low-skilled

²⁴ David Kotter laments that while the first two doctrines—justification by grace through faith and the authority of Scriptures—have been well-explored by scholars over the centuries, the doctrine of vocation has been neglected for so long that it gained its prominence only in the past few decades. David Kotter, “Milkmaids No More: Revisiting Luther’s Doctrine of Vocation from the Perspective of a ‘Gig’ Economy,” *SBJT* 22, no. 1 (Spring 2018): 85–95.

²⁵ Placher, *Callings*, 331.

²⁶ Stephen A. Marglin and Juliet B. Schor, *The Golden Age of Capitalism: Reinterpreting the Postwar Experience*, Studies in Development Economics (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1990).

²⁷ Robert C. Allen, *The Industrial Revolution: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2017), 1–7.

²⁸ Doriani, *Work*, 72.

workers, who were considered commodities and soon to be replaced by machines.²⁹ Productivity became the goal of labor, and consumption the purpose of production. The Reformers and Puritans' view of work as calling "failed to address the rapid changes brought on by industrialization."³⁰ It soon led to capitalism. Max Weber blamed the Protestant work ethic for ushering in the emergence and growth of capitalism in the West.³¹ Others attribute them to the effect of the Enlightenment, the Agricultural Revolution, or the theological shift the Second Great Awakening caused. Whatever the reason for the revolution, market economy reduced everything to prices and profits, and industrialization turned work into drudgery.³² Whelchel concludes that "by the end of the nineteenth century, the Biblical doctrine of work was all but lost to the church."³³

The decade following World War II, marked by economic growth and cultural stability, brought another shift in the understanding of work and vocation. The postwar economic boom, also known as the "golden age of capitalism,"³⁴ replaced the Great Depression of the previous fifteen years of war. The United States experienced phenomenal economic growth, and the workforce was drastically changed. Government-employed soldiers and armament-factory workers relocated to production industries and marketplaces. "The American Dream of a good job, financial security, home ownership, a

²⁹ Doriani, *Work*, 74–75.

³⁰ Whelchel, *How Then*, 67.

³¹ In his influential, yet most controversial, work that discusses the relationship between religious ethos and the development of the "spirit of capitalism," Max Weber contends that "the values of hard work and industry at the core of ascetic Protestantism made it possible for modern rational capitalism to flourish." Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (New York: Routledge, 1930), 105–25.

³² Doriani, *Work*, 76.

³³ Whelchel, *How Then*, 68.

³⁴ Marglin and Schor utilize this phrase to describe the postwar economic experience. Marglin and Schor, *The Golden Age of Capitalism*.

forty-hour work week, and paid vacations”³⁵ became popular with the perceived purpose of work primarily driven by this dream.

Hammond et al. recognize a subsequent “broad-based movement among Christians” in the West frequently described as “a lay renaissance” or “the second reformation.”³⁶ Hammond employs “the agitated pew”³⁷ to describe those Christians in the latter part of the twentieth century, who were asking questions about how their faith relates to their jobs. With this movement, the Christian faith could no longer be confined to church buildings or Sunday programs. Since then, a growing concern to understand and integrate faith and work has led to several movements and initiatives, including the “Faith at Work Movement,”³⁸ the “Theology of Work Project,”³⁹ and the most recent “Faith and Work Movement,”⁴⁰ besides several institutions and centers established for the study and promotion of faith and work.⁴¹ These initiatives bring alive the effort to

³⁵ Pete Hammond, R. Paul Stevens, and Todd Svanoe, *The Marketplace Annotated Bibliography: A Christian Guide to Books on Work, Business & Vocation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 18.

³⁶ Hammond et al., *The Marketplace*, 15.

³⁷ Hammond et al., *The Marketplace*, 15.

³⁸ Advocated by David Miller, the Faith at Work Movement “began in the 1980s, as Baby Boomers began to come of age, seeking meaning and purpose in their work, challenging old paradigms, and transforming society.” David W. Miller, “The Faith at Work Movement,” *Theology Today* 60 (2003): 303.

³⁹ The Theology of Work Project is an initiative to study how the Bible describes work and to develop and publish resources (e.g., multivolume *Theology of Work Bible Commentary*) for helping Christians apply the Scriptures and Christian faith to their work. “About,” Theology of Work Project, accessed August 18, 2019, <https://www.theologyofwork.org/about>. Also see William Messenger, ed., *Theology of Work Bible Commentary*, Theology of Work Project (Peabody, MS: Hendrickson, 2015), 1–2.

⁴⁰ Established in 2014 in “the Silicon Valley, the nexus of tech giants,” with the mission to positively impact companies that impact the world and to help Christians in the marketplace bring their best self to work. “The Story,” Faith and Work Movement, accessed August 18, 2019, <https://www.faithandworkmovement.org/about>.

⁴¹ Some notable institutions are: The Washington Institute of Faith, Vocation, and Culture (<https://washingtoninst.org/>), the Institute for Faith, Work & Economics (<https://tifwe.org/>), The 4word (<https://4wordwomen.org/>), National Faith and Work Association (<http://www.nfwa.org/>), Center for Faith and Work at LeTourneau University (<https://centerforfaithandwork.com/>), At Work on Purpose (<https://atworkonpurpose.org/>), and The Denver Institute for Faith and Work (<https://denverinstitute.org/>).

rediscover the long-neglected biblical doctrine of vocation to the church.

Current Discussions

Discussions on the theology of work and vocation continue widely today at various levels. *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology (SBJT)* focused its Spring 2018 publication on the theme of “Vocation,” and the subsequent issue of Winter 2018 on “Reflections on Vocation,” as the academy’s endeavor to rediscover the doctrine of work and vocation.⁴² In these issues, authors do not try merely to revive the Christian tradition of vocation, but call to a deeper biblical-theological understanding of work, as well. Discussions include historical reflections on vocation—particularly the great wisdom of the past from Augustine, Luther, and the Puritans—and biblical reflections on human flourishing, ethics of work, male-female roles, and celibacy, focusing on “our high calling to live as God’s redeemed image-bearers.”⁴³ Moreover, the 2019 conference theme of the *Society of Professors in Christian Education (SPCE)* was “On Vocation and Christian Discipleship.” It addressed the abiding question: How does our faith and discipleship intersect our calling and labor?⁴⁴

Hammond et al., in their book titled *The Marketplace Annotated Bibliography*, listed twelve hundred marketplace-faith-related books that various scholars, executives, laymen, pastors, and theologians wrote during the past three decades.⁴⁵ Since publication of this comprehensive list in 2002, many significant works were published in the last seventeen years.⁴⁶ Increased attention has been given to theology of work in recent years.

⁴² Stephen J. Wellum, ed., *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 22, no. 1 (Spring 2018), and no. 4 (Winter 2018).

⁴³ Stephen J. Wellum, ed., *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 22, no. 4 (Winter 2018): 1.

⁴⁴ Society of Professors in Christian Education, *2019 Annual Conference* (Minneapolis, MN: October 17-19, 2020).

⁴⁵ Hammond et al., *The Marketplace*.

⁴⁶ Recent significant works include Cosden, *A Theology of Work*; Placher, *Callings*; Larry

Professor of marketplace theology and leadership Paul Stevens summarizes various theological approaches to develop a theology of work:⁴⁷ (1) *Trinitarian Theologies*—human work is determined by the work of the triune God;⁴⁸ (2) *Creation Theologies*—work is a part of God’s original design at the creation;⁴⁹ (3) *Image of God Theologies*—humans in God’s image are given power to make decisions and make a difference;⁵⁰ (4) *Curse Theologies*—work is a result of the fall and is, thus, a curse;⁵¹ (5) *New Creation Theologies*—work is an expression of life under the new covenant and, therefore, is both redeemed and redeeming;⁵² (6) *Vocation Theologies*—work is a calling

Peabody, *Job-Shadowing Daniel: Walking the Talk at Work* (Denver: Outskirts Press, 2010); Amy L. Sherman, *Kingdom Calling: Vocational Stewardship for the Common Good* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011); Witherington, *Work*; Timothy Keller, *Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God’s Work* (New York: Penguin, 2012); R. Paul Stevens, *Work Matters: Lessons from Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012); Whelchel, *How Then*; Steven Garber, *Visions of Vocation: Common Grace for Common Good* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014); Messenger, *Theology of Work Bible Commentary*; Benjamin T. Quinn and Walter R. Strickland II, *Every Waking Hour: An Introduction to Work and Vocation for Christians* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016); Hamilton, *Work and Our Labor*; and Doriani, *Work*.

⁴⁷ Stevens, *Work Matters*, 2–4.

⁴⁸ See Gordon Preece, “The Three-Fold Call: The Trinitarian Character of Our Daily Vocation,” in *Faith Goes to Work: Reflections from the Marketplace*, ed. Robert J. Banks (Washington, DC: Alban Institute, 1993), 160–71; Robert Banks, *God the Worker: Journeys into the Mind, Heart, and Imagination of God* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1994); Christian Schumacher, *God at Work: Discovering the Divine Pattern for Work in the New Millennium* (Oxford, UK: Lion Publishing, 1998); and David H. Jensen, *Responsive Labor: A Theology of Work* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006).

⁴⁹ See John C. Haughey, *Converting Nine to Five: A Spirituality of Daily Work* (New York: Crossroad, 1989); Doug Sherman and William Hendricks, *Your Work Matters to God* (Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 1987); Leland Ryken, *Work and Leisure in Christian Perspective* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1987); Joe Holland, *Creative Communion: Toward a Spirituality of Work* (New York: Paulist Press, 1989); Paul Marshall, “Calling, Work, and Rest,” in *The Best Theology*, ed. J. I. Packer (Carol Stream, IL: Christianity Today, 1989), 193–211; and Gilbert C. Meilaender, ed., *Working: Its Meaning and Its Limits* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), 24–48.

⁵⁰ See Armand Larive, *After Sunday: A Theology of Work* (New York: Continuum, 2004); and Dennis Bakke, *Joy at Work: A Revolutionary Approach to Fun on the Job* (Seattle: PVG, 2005).

⁵¹ See Studs Terkel, *Working: People Talk about What They Do All Day and How They feel about What They Do* (New York: New Press, 1974); Jensen, *Responsive Labor*; Reg Theriault, *How to Tell When You’re Tired: A Brief Examination of Work* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1995); and Jeremy Rifkin, *The End of Work: The Decline of the Global Labor-Force and the Dawn of the Post-Market Era* (London: Penguin, 2000).

⁵² See Stefan Cardinal Wyszyński, *All You Who Labor: Work and the Sanctification of Daily Life* (Manchester, NH: Sophia Institute Press, 1995).

of God;⁵³ (7) *Spirit Theologies*—work is an expression of the Spirit’s work and giftedness;⁵⁴ (8) *Kingdom Theologies*—work is part of expressing God’s life-giving and shalom-bringing rule over all life now and life to come;⁵⁵ and (9) *Heaven and End Times Theology*—the meaning of work is determined by Christian eschatological hope.⁵⁶

A series of books on the theology of work, based on various church-tradition perspectives, has been published recently:⁵⁷ (a) Reformed perspective;⁵⁸ (b) Pentecostal perspective;⁵⁹ (c) Baptist Perspective;⁶⁰ and (d) Wesleyan perspective.⁶¹ A growing number of dissertations on marketplace theology or faith-and-work integration are also identified.⁶²

⁵³ See Placher, *Callings*; Douglas J. Schuurman, *Vocation: Discerning Our Callings in Life* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004); John Ting, *Living Biblically at Work* (Singapore: Landmark Books, 1995); Lee Hardy, *The Fabric of This World: Inquiries to Calling, Career Choice, and the Design of Human Work* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990); Paul S. Minear, “Work and Vocation in Scripture,” in *Work and Vocation*, ed. J. O. Nelson (New York: Harper, 1954), 32–115; Gordon Preece, *Changing Work Values: A Christian Response* (Melbourne: Acorn Press, 1995); and Marshall, “Calling, Work, and Rest.” 193–211.

⁵⁴ See Miroslav Volf, *Work in the Spirit: Toward a Theology of Work* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1991); and Rich Marshall, *God @ Work: Discovering the Anointing of Business* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, 2000).

⁵⁵ See Witherington, *Work*; and Sherman, *Kingdom Calling*.

⁵⁶ See Cosden, *A Theology of Work*; Darrell Cosden, *The Heavenly Good of Earthly Work* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006); and Paul Marshall, *Heaven Is Not My Home: Learning to Live in God’s Creation* (Nashville: Word, 1998).

⁵⁷ Sutrisna Harjanto lists those books in his dissertation, *The Development of Vocational Stewardship among Indonesian Christian Professionals* (Carlisle, UK: Langham Monographs, 2018), 11.

⁵⁸ See John Bolt, *Economic Shalom: A Reformed Primer on Faith, Work, and Human Flourishing* (Grand Rapids: Christian’s Library Press, 2013).

⁵⁹ See Charlie Self, *Flourishing Churches and Communities: A Pentecostal Primer on Faith, Work, and Economics for Spirit-Empowered Discipleship* (Grand Rapids: Christian’s Library Press, 2012).

⁶⁰ See Chad Brand, *Flourishing Faith: A Baptist Primer on Work, Economics, and Civic Stewardship* (Grand Rapids: Christian’s Library Press, 2013).

⁶¹ David Wright, *How God Makes the World a Better Place: A Wesleyan Primer on Faith, Work, and Economic Transformation* (Grand Rapids: Christian’s Library Press, 2012).

⁶² See Julie V. Burke, “Theology of Work: A Working Life Retreat” (PhD diss., Catholic University of America, 2011); J. M. D. Hughes, “Theologies of Work: The Contribution of a Theological

Darrell Cosden classifies these contemporary writings on work into three categories of literature:⁶³ (1) ethical or contextual studies, in which theological reflections on work are directed to questions of ways one should do work and how to resolve specific difficulties and problems related to work; (2) theological reflections on work as part of more comprehensive theological discourses within a systematic theology; and (3) focused studies on work, in which the nature and meaning of work are the main queries in developing a more comprehensive theological construct. The first type deals with essential work ethics; the second offers random theological insights for work; and the third constructs a “theology of work.” This study focuses on the third category, which Cosden defines as a “genitive theology,”⁶⁴ in that “it does not seek to make work the governing theological theme, but to treat it from a dogmatic perspective.”⁶⁵ A deeper theological understanding of work from the dogmatic perspective should help identify the connection among work, mission, and Christian education.

Probing further into this category, Cosden holds that “the normative theological understanding of work is best construed threefold as a dynamic inter-relationship of instrumental, relational, and ontological aspects” because truly human work is constituted when these three aspects “exist together in a mutual and inter-dependent relationship.”⁶⁶

Aesthetic to Critiques of Capitalism” (PhD diss., University of Cambridge, UK, 2005); LaVonne A. Browne, “On Faith and Work: The Relationship between Religiosity and Work Values” (PhD diss., University of Missouri-Columbia, 2001); C. M. Fletcher, “Restoring the Sense of Divine Vocation to Work: A Study of Sayers, MacIntyre, and Catholic Social Teaching” (PhD diss., Anglia Polytechnic, UK, 2006); A. J. Jolley, “Bridging the Gap: How Christians Can Relate Their Faith and Their Work” (PhD diss., The University of Nottingham, UK, 2006); and Anthony E. Washington, “Never Redundant: Toward a Christian Response to Problem of Unemployment, and a New Theology of Work” (PhD diss., King’s College, University of London, UK, 2011).

⁶³ Cosden, *A Theology of Work*, 4–5.

⁶⁴ “Genitive theology” methodologically means that it is a theology “of something,” or, a comprehensive theological explanation of something. Cosden, *A Theology of Work*, 5.

⁶⁵ Cosden cites Volf, *Work in the Spirit*, 75.

⁶⁶ Cosden, *A Theology of Work*, 10.

The instrumental aspect of work refers to understanding work as a means to an end, such as economic growth, continued survival, or spiritual purposes.⁶⁷ The relational aspect refers to the way work is organized, and its effect on social order or structures in which “a person finds, or contributes to, who they are and will be in the process of working.”⁶⁸ The ontological aspect refers to the intrinsic value of work derived from the fundamental created existence and humanness “built by God into the very structures of human nature and as a result, the natural order.”⁶⁹ Building on these fundamental aspects, Cosden offers a theological definition of work:

Human work is a transformative activity essentially consisting of dynamically inter-related instrumental, relational, and ontological dimensions: whereby, along with work being an end in itself, the worker’s and others’ needs are providentially met; believers’ sanctification is occasioned; and workers express, explore and develop their humanness while building up their natural, social and cultural environments, thereby contributing protectively and productively to the order of this world and the one to come.⁷⁰

Cosden’s definition redraws the boundaries for a theology of work by incorporating a complex of issues in the “theological understanding of what work is currently, will be eschatologically, and thus should be ethically,”⁷¹ which are issues not hitherto always recognized.

Most of the approaches in the faith-and-work literature are rooted in, and related to, the understanding of vocation and creation (protology). Sutrisna Harjanto delineates that “significant departures from this traditional approach that have significant influence in today’s theology of work are the pneumatological instead of vocational approach and the

⁶⁷ An aspect of work “emphasized by John Locke, Adam Smith, Max Weber, and almost all Americans.” Cosden, *A Theology of Work*, 11.

⁶⁸ Cosden, *A Theology of Work*, 12.

⁶⁹ Cosden, *A Theology of Work*, 17–18.

⁷⁰ Cosden, *A Theology of Work*, 178–79.

⁷¹ Cosden, *A Theology of Work*, 178.

eschatological instead of protological approach.”⁷² Cosden notices Miroslav Volf’s attempt to “reconceive work by swapping the older static concept of calling (vocation) for the more dynamic concept of charisma (gifts),” and “to shift the focus of the discussion of work from the doctrine of creation (protology) toward the doctrine of the last things (eschatology).”⁷³ In his book, *Work in the Spirit*, Volf proposes a theology of work based on the concept of new creation, which he argues to be a theology that is Christian, normative, transformative, comprehensive, and contextual.⁷⁴ Another compelling approach in the faith-and-work study is the kingdom perspective espoused by Witherington, Sherman, Garber, and Stevens. For the benefit of this study, an overview of the vocational and kingdom approaches will be presented in the following sections, along with some points of departure.

Theology of Work as Vocation

Besides the most common question of “What is *calling*?” or “How do I know I am *called*?” are more-challenging questions about vocation, such as: “Am I *called* for one job or multiple jobs?” “Is there higher or lower *calling*?” “Is *calling* time-bound or eternal?” Preceding all these inquiries is a primary question—“Is work a vocation?”—which is the focus of this section.

While the Christian theology of work has been greatly shaped by the theme of vocation (L. *vocare*), similar to calling, the understanding of vocation itself has evolved variedly in the past. ‘Vocation’ was understood, at different times and context, to mean almost exclusively to become a Christian, enter monastic life, perform any paid or unpaid job, live a Christian life, join full-time ministry, study a specific course, or be employed. Martin Luther had the most inclusive understanding of vocation by viewing any job,

⁷² Harjanto, *Development of Vocational Stewardship*, 12.

⁷³ Cosden, *A Theology of Work*, 6.

⁷⁴ Volf, *Work in the Spirit*, 79–87.

including homemaking and parenting, as callings.⁷⁵ But, is there uniqueness in God calling his people to Christian ministry, or specific offices of elders and deacons, if any other mundane job is also considered a calling?

The Reformers and the Puritans felt that every Christian possesses at least two vocations: the call to become part of the people of God (spiritual/general calling), and the call to a particular line of work (external/particular calling).⁷⁶ Os Guinness, in his book *The Call*, affirms twofold vocations as *primary* and *secondary* callings of the Christian. Repeating the dualistic distinctions of “higher/lower, sacred/secular, perfect/permitted, contemplative/active, or first class/second class,” Os explains: “Calling means that everyone, everywhere, and in everything fulfills his or her (secondary) callings in response to God’s (primary) calling.”⁷⁷ Welchel elaborates the *primary calling* as including “a call to faith in Christ (Rom 8:28–30; 1 Cor 1:9), a call to the kingdom of God (1 Thess 2:10–12), a call to eternal life (1 Tim 6:12; Heb 9:15), and a call to holy living (1 Cor 1:2; 1 Pet 1:15).”⁷⁸ The *Secondary calling* flows from the primary, and constitutes (1) a call to be part of human family; (2) call to the church; (3) call to serve God’s purposes in the world through civic, social, political, domestic, and ecclesiastical roles; and (4) call to vocational work, which is commonly termed “vocational calling.”

Puritan author William Perkins wrote that “every person of every degree, state, sex, condition without exception must have some personal and particular calling to walk in.”⁷⁹ Furthermore, John Calvin recognized that God has “appointed duties for every man

⁷⁵ Placher, *Callings*, 7.

⁷⁶ Placher, *Callings*, 206.

⁷⁷ Os Guinness, *The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2003), 34.

⁷⁸ Welchel, *How Then*, 75.

⁷⁹ William Perkins, “A Treatise of the Vocations” (London: John Haviland, 1631), reproduced in Placher, *Callings*, 266.

in his particular way of life.”⁸⁰ Luther understood *klēsis* in 1 Corinthians 7:20 as primarily referring to a job or an occupation when Paul says, “Let each of you remain in the *klēsis* in which you were called.”⁸¹ Luther implicitly recognized three stations of callings during his time, which include “the nobility of lords and ladies, the clergy of priests, monks and nuns, and all the rest of the peasants.”⁸² Regardless of the types of vocation, God calls everybody according to his purposes for each one. The Reformers thought that all different types of calling have equal values, and they acknowledged no hierarchy.⁸³

Volf criticizes Luther’s understanding of work as vocation “*indifferent toward alienation in work,*” creating a “*dangerous ambiguity*” of spiritual and external calling that is “*easily misused ideologically.*”⁸⁴ He further argues that the dynamic “*industrial and information societies characterized by a diachronic and synchronic plurality of employments or jobs*” require a dynamic understanding of work.⁸⁵ He refers to the term *charisma* as an alternative framework, in which a pneumatological perspective of work developed within the eschatological framework.⁸⁶ This framework is to comprehend work from a perspective of spiritual gifts, rather than from vocational stations. Perkins linked the notion of gifts, instead of “*station,*” to calling when he said, “*according to the measure of*

⁸⁰ John Calvin, *Institutes of Christian Religion* 3.11.6.

⁸¹ Martin Luther, “Commentaries on 1 Corinthians 7,” *Luther’s Works* 28, ed. Hilton C. Oswald (Saint Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1973), 43.

⁸² Kotter, “Milkmaids No More,” 87.

⁸³ Placher, *Callings*, 205-7.

⁸⁴ Volf, *Work in the Spirit*, 107–9.

⁸⁵ Volf maintains that if the injunction to “remain” and “be satisfied” in 1 Cor 7:20 is a logical consequence of the notion of vocation, then the only way to interpret change of employment positively and, at the same time, hold to the notion of vocation is assuming a diachronic plurality of external vocations. Volf, *Work in the Spirit*, 108.

⁸⁶ Volf, *Work in the Spirit*, 110.

the gifts.”⁸⁷ Lee Hardy, affirming this approach, points out that “whereas for Luther our vocation is discerned in the duties of our station life, for the Calvinists it is derived from our gifts.”⁸⁸

Whelchel embraces a holistic approach of vocational calling as the “call to God and to his service in the vocational sphere of life based on giftedness, desires, affirmations, and human need,” which are easily identified to discover one’s vocational calling.⁸⁹ Frederick Buechner explains that “the place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.”⁹⁰ Work as vocation is hence the full expression of God-given gifts, in which true joy converges with service to God and the world.

Work in Kingdom Perspective

Another point of departure from the traditional approach to the theology of work pertains to the “eternal meaning and value” of work. The protological approach—based on the creation account, in which human beings are made in the image of God and subsequently given the cultural mandate (Gen 1:26–28)—becomes the foundational pattern of providing the intrinsic value and meaning of work. Protology, however, does not clarify if work as vocation has any eternal value and thus “still leaves room to misunderstand ordinary work as merely a part of this earthly kingdom and find its eternal value only in service to the heavenly kingdom.”⁹¹ This gap has not only widened the dichotomy between clergy and laity, but additionally created a “hierarchy of work value”

⁸⁷ Placher, *Callings*, 267.

⁸⁸ Hardy, *The Fabric of This World*, 66.

⁸⁹ Whelchel, *How Then*, 76–79.

⁹⁰ Frederick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking: A Seeker’s ABC* (New York: HarperOne, 1993), 119.

⁹¹ Harjanto, *Development of Vocational Stewardship*, 16.

based on its spiritual impact, wherein the works of the clergy are perceived as more meaningful than are those of the laity. An eschatological approach to vocational calling is imperative to filling this gap.

The impending question regards the “ultimate and eternal significance” of one’s work on this earth. Does my work really matter for eternity apart from my paycheck now? Volf developed an eschatological approach to work from a vision of new creation. Based on the two eschatological views, *annihilatio mundi* and *transformatio mundi*, he states that “if the world will be annihilated and a new one created *ex nihilo*, then mundane work has only earthly significance.”⁹² If there is continuity of the old creation into a transformed new creation, though, “then the results of the cumulative work of human beings have intrinsic value and gain ultimate significance.”⁹³ Volf argues for the eternal implication of work by asserting, “It is hard to believe in the intrinsic value and goodness of something that God will completely annihilate.”⁹⁴ In addition, Cosden maintains that “ordinary work affects and in some ways actually adds to the ultimate shape of eternity—the new creation. When we grasp this eternal aspect of work, we will have begun to experience the fullness of God’s intended purpose for us and for our work.”⁹⁵

In light of the intrinsic value and ultimate significance of vocational callings, how does one envision work from the kingdom perspective? By and large, scholars concur that “kingdom” is a dominant theme in the Bible and, therefore, acknowledge its importance. Stevens realizes that “the Kingdom is not a realm, a territory, but the rule of

⁹² *Annihilatio mundi* is the view of radical discontinuity between present and future orders due to the annihilation of the old creation. *Transformatio mundi* is the view that the world will end not in apocalyptic destruction, but in eschatological transformation. Volf, *Work in the Spirit*, 89.

⁹³ Volf, *Work in the Spirit*, 91.

⁹⁴ Volf, *Work in the Spirit*, 91.

⁹⁵ Cosden, *Heavenly Good of Earthly Work*, 2.

God,” plus *the response of the subjects*.⁹⁶ He quickly adds that “the emphasis in gospels and letters, however, is not on ‘the Kingdom’ but ‘the Kingdom of God’ (or in the more Jewish gospel of Matthew, ‘the kingdom of heaven’),” which is “in the hearts of humankind as a new creation (Luke 17:21; Matt 12:28).”⁹⁷ R. T. France affirms, “As God the king exercises his authority in his world, and people respond to it, there the ‘kingdom of God’ will be experienced in many ways. There can be no one place, time, event or community which *is* ‘the kingdom of God,’ any more than ‘the will of God’ can be tied down to any specific situation or event.”⁹⁸ The kingdom is in the believer’s life of living out the will of the Lord in the “already but not yet”⁹⁹ tension. Amy Sherman characterizes the consummated kingdom by “*shalom*” in the four fundamental life relationships: peace with God, with self, with others, and with the creation.¹⁰⁰

The concern here is to answer the question of “how work looks different in the light of Kingdom come, how work looks different if one believes Christ has changed the eschatological situation by his coming and that this affects the way we look at all we do as Christians.”¹⁰¹ Jesus came—not to grant an eternal holiday for his followers—but to work on what God called him to do. Commenting on how Jesus describes the reason he came to this earth in John 9:4 (*I must work the works of the One who sent me while it is*

⁹⁶ Stevens insists that “rule without response is less than the Kingdom.” R. Paul Stevens, *The Other Six Days: Vocation, Work, and Ministry in Biblical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 183.

⁹⁷ Stevens, *The Other Six Days*, 183–84.

⁹⁸ R. T. France, *Divine Government: God’s Kingship in the Gospel of Mark* (London: SCM Press, 1990), 15.

⁹⁹ “Already but not yet” is a theological concept holding that believers are “already” actively taking part in the kingdom of God that Jesus brought, but have “not yet” fully seen the glory that will reach its full expression at the final consummation. Matt 25:31ff.; Mark 10:15; John 18:36; 1 Cor 13:12; Heb 2:8–9; 1 John 3:2.

¹⁰⁰ In the Bible, *shalom* means “*universal flourishing, wholeness, and delight*.” Sherman, *Kingdom Calling*, 34–43.

¹⁰¹ Witherington, *Work*, 4.

day; the night comes when no one can work), Ben Witherington insists that Jesus is not talking about the twenty-four-hour cycle of day and night, but “he is looking at things from an eschatological perspective, and with some urgency.”¹⁰² Jesus knows precisely what he is called/sent to do; he has a limited duration on this earth; and he knows that he needs to get on the job. This is the vision for the vocational work of God’s people.

Such is the vision Steven Garber outlines in his *Visions of Vocation*. He sees “ordinary people doing ordinary things in ordinary places, . . . as butchers, bakers, candlestick makers—or people drawn into the worlds of business or law, agriculture or education, architecture or construction, journalism or international development, health care or the arts—are called to be *common grace* for the *common good*.”¹⁰³ Garber contends that vocation is integral, and not incidental, to God’s mission, and we work that out not just for our own flourishing, but for the flourishing of the world. Such is the vision Sherman describes of the *tsaddiqim* of Proverbs 11:10 as he envisions “what do the righteous look like?” and “what does a rejoiced city look like?”¹⁰⁴ Sherman attests to various characteristics of “a modern-day *tsaddiq*” in three dimensions—up, in, and out—to demonstrate what righteousness resembles at work.¹⁰⁵ Suggesting four useful pathways of vocational stewardship—bloom, donate, launch, and participate—she calls the church for kingdom purposes.¹⁰⁶ Both Garber and Sherman’s visions seek to understand the integrated picture of faith and work, thereby equip Christian professionals for the kingdom ministry.

¹⁰² Witherington, *Work*, 5.

¹⁰³ Garber, *Visions of Vocation*, 18.

¹⁰⁴ Sherman uses “a dancing-in-the-streets rejoicing” as metaphor for Prov 10:11 that says, “*When the righteous [tsaddiqim] prospers, the city rejoices.*” Sherman, *Kingdom Calling*, chapters 1 and 2.

¹⁰⁵ Sherman, *Kingdom Calling*, 46–62.

¹⁰⁶ Sherman, *Kingdom Calling*, chapters 9–13.

Several other books on work from kingdom perspective deal with bridging the “Sunday-Monday gap.”¹⁰⁷ Tom Nelson, Paul Stevens, Laura Nash, and Scotty McLennan furnish helpful, practical ways of connecting Sunday worship to the other six days of work.¹⁰⁸ The most recent work by Doriani (2019) offers ethical aspects of work, including faithfulness, dealing with hard places, rest, and life rhythms. While recent discussions on the kingdom approach largely focused on matters of what should be done at work, an emphasis on examining how vocational calling actually fits in God’s grand story and his mission is anticipated.

Biblical Metanarrative as the Framework

Students of the Scriptures eagerly recognize that human work is a vital theme that can be traced across the Bible.¹⁰⁹ It is, however, important to understand it from a big-picture viewpoint of the biblical story line, rather than looking at it as bits and pieces in the book. John Piper elucidates that “it is the parts that give existence to the whole, and the whole that gives meaning to the parts.”¹¹⁰ So how does one comprehend work and vocation from the standpoint of Genesis to Revelation, creation to new creation, and everything in between altogether?

The effort is seeing every part of Scripture within the framework of one God, one plan, and one story.¹¹¹ Some popular scholars consider the grand story of the Bible,

¹⁰⁷ A concept introduced in the first chapter, which occupies a crucial place of inquiry in this work.

¹⁰⁸ Tom Nelson, *Work Matters: Connecting Sunday Worship to Monday Work* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011); Stevens, *The Other Six Days*; Laura L. Nash and Scotty McLennan, *Church on Sunday, Work on Monday: The Challenge of Fusing Christian Values with Business Life* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001).

¹⁰⁹ Paul Stevens presents a series of important work-related themes throughout the Scriptures, based on biblical characters in his volume. Stevens, *Work Matters*.

¹¹⁰ John Piper, “The Great Story and the Single Verse,” *Desiring God Blog*, October 24, 2012, <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-great-story-and-the-single-verse>.

¹¹¹ Bill Jackson, *The Biblical Metanarrative: One God, One Plan, One Story* (Corona, CA:

or the biblical metanarrative from a fourfold framework.¹¹² John Stott looks at the Bible as grand human history marked by four epochs of major events: the creation (“the good”), the fall (“the evil”), the redemption (“the new”), and the consummation (“the perfect”).¹¹³ Christopher Wright uses this same schema to develop a biblical theology of the church’s mission in light of the grand metanarrative of God’s mission.¹¹⁴

In his recent volume, *Work and Our Labor in the Lord*, biblical scholar and pastor James Hamilton offers a robust biblical-theological treatment of work.¹¹⁵ Presenting from a biblical theology approach, he explores how work fits into the grand story of the Bible using a fourfold framework: (1) creation—God created man to work, to be fruitful and multiply, to fill, subdue, rule, and keep what God has made, imaging God’s own character to improve God’s creation, so that all life might flourish; (2) fall—man sinned, however, bringing death and futility into the world, so our works require constant dependence on God’s merciful instruction to flourish in fallen futility; (3) redemption—through the accomplished work of Jesus Christ on the cross, God redeems and frees people to work and serve the Lord on earth while waiting for the final consummation; (4) restoration—God will ultimately bring glorious eschatological restoration for both people and the land in which everything will be put back as it was

Radical Middle Press, 2013).

¹¹² Delineating the entire Scripture as a grand narrative is not unique and is evidenced in many recent works by a diverse array of scholars, such as N. T. Wright, Kevin Vanhoozer, Albert Wolters, Christopher Wright, Craig Bartholomew, and Michael Goheen. See N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and People of God* (London: SPCK, 1992); Kevin Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical Linguistic Approach to Christian Doctrine* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005); Albert M. Wolters, *Creation Regained* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005); Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006); and Craig G. Bartholomew and Michael W. Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004).

¹¹³ John Stott, *Issues Facing Christians Today*, 4th ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006).

¹¹⁴ Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God’s People: A Biblical Theology of the Church’s Mission* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 39–45.

¹¹⁵ Hamilton, *Work and Our Labor*.

before in the new heaven and new earth. Recognizing God’s intention for man to work in the beginning and in the end, Hamilton views work as our labor in the Lord today in light of what went wrong in the past and what is hoped for the future.

In his attempt to rediscover the biblical doctrine of work, Welchel presents his book from the standpoint of a past-present-future trajectory.¹¹⁶ Having seen what it was formerly and what it will be for work, he deals with how then the Christian ought to work today. Moreover, Tim Keller approaches work from a threefold biblical-metanarrative framework and notes, “If the God of the Bible exists, and there is a True Reality beneath and behind this one, and this life is not the only life, then every good endeavor, even the simplest ones, pursued in response to God’s calling, can matter forever.”¹¹⁷ Emphasizing the scriptural foundation of work, he comments that “Christians who grasp a biblical theology of work learn not only to value and participate in the work of all people but also see ways to work distinctively as Christians.”¹¹⁸

At the end of our attempt to understand the theology of work and vocation in this literature review, a grand biblical picture of work—as summarized by Hamilton in light of Christian hope—is pertinent:

God built us to do something, and in the new heavens and the new earth we will be liberated to do the work for which God fitted us when he formed us in the womb.

We can scarcely imagine, but everything that makes work miserable here will be removed. All our sinful concerns about ourselves will be swallowed up in devotion to the one we serve. All our frustration that we have to be doing *this* task, not *that* other one we prefer, will be abolished because of our experience of the one who gave us the assignment. All inclination to evil will have been removed from our hearts, so we will enjoy the freedom of wanting to obey, wanting to serve, wanting to do right. And the right that we have to do will no more be in conflict with needing time with kids or friends or spouse, because we will have forever.

¹¹⁶ Welchel, *How Then*, 57–108.

¹¹⁷ Keller, *Every Good Endeavor*, 14.

¹¹⁸ Keller, *Every Good Endeavor*, 149.

Never again will we fear that our work is futile, vain, monotonous, or meaningless, because we will see clearly that the significance of our work springs from the one we serve.

God will be everything to us. We will serve him with whole and complete hearts.¹¹⁹

With this overarching eternal vision of work and vocation, which actually stems from the metanarrative picture of creation to new-creation, further discussions on God's purpose or *telos* of our creation as image-bearers follow. What is God up to—what is his mission? What does he design his people to do—what is the mission of the church? And how does this mission affect people's work and vocation?

Theology of Mission

Mission is a vast topic. Many scholars have defined mission from various perspectives and contexts,¹²⁰ all of which carry the notion of *sending* or *being sent*—a concept that involves both a sender, and one being sent. This “sending” language is employed elaborately throughout the Bible: not only did God send his Son, Jesus Christ, to save the world, but God sent many people for his own purposes. Christopher Wright raises the next question: “sent to do what?”¹²¹ “What are we sent to do, and how does our work intersect with what we are sent for?” is the primary investigative focus of this study.

Development and Issues of Mission

Since the early church, Christians have understood mission differently in various historical epochs.¹²² Modern mission, as currently understood, came alive only in

¹¹⁹ Hamilton, *Work and Our Labor*, 103.

¹²⁰ Ott et al. list and compare four popular definitions in their book. Craig Ott, Stephen J. Strauss, and Timothy C. Tennent, *Encountering Theology of Mission: Biblical Foundations, Historical Developments, and Contemporary Issues* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), xv.

¹²¹ Wright, *Mission of God's People*, 23.

¹²² Based on Tomas Kuhn's paradigm theory, which Hans Kung utilized to divide Christianity into six major eras, Bosch summarizes the Christian understanding of mission in those six historical epochs. David Jacobus Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll,

the eighteenth century, when William Carey, “the father of modern missions,” formed the Baptist Mission Society in England and became a missionary to India.¹²³ Tracing back to the historical development since the earliest Protestant mission efforts, Ott et al. observe four major ways in which the church comprehends and practices the task of mission: (1) proclamation and conversion; (2) church planting and growth; (3) civilization and moral improvement; and (4) philanthropy, humanization, and liberation.¹²⁴ Although these categories are not mutually exclusive in practice, the first three became the emphasis among evangelical circles, while the last one gained focus in ecumenical circles starting from the early twentieth century. This trend led to the split between proclamation and compassion, evangelism and social action in mission that continues to prevail today.

Evangelism and social action were not treated as strictly separate in mission efforts prior to the twentieth century. Schools and hospitals were built in the mission fields as missionaries preached and shared the gospel. Just as William Carey is credited for his all-inclusive endeavors in both evangelism and social reform,¹²⁵ Shongzan testifies about the social, economic, and educational reformation brought by the Western missionaries through Christianity in the late 1800s to the Naga people in Asia.¹²⁶ However, a “Great Reversal” occurred by the early twentieth century—an experience of

NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 187–8.

¹²³ William Carey (1761–1834) wrote and published an essay, “An Enquiry,” in 1792 that led to the founding of the Baptist Missionary Society in England, through which he became a lifelong missionary to India. William Carey, *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*, (1792; repr., London: Carrey Kingsgate Press, 1961), also available at <https://www.wmcarey.edu/carey/enquiry/anenquiry.pdf>. See also John Smith, *The Life of William Carey: Missionary to India, the Father of Modern Missions*, The Worldwide Missionary Library, vol. 6 (Cincinnati, OH: Revivalist Press, 1915).

¹²⁴ WCC stands for World Council of Churches. Ott et al., *Encountering Theology of Mission*.

¹²⁵ Vishal Mangalwadi and Ruth Mangalwadi, *The Legacy of William Carey: A Model for the Transformation of a Culture*, 1st U.S. ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1999).

¹²⁶ Mayaso Shongzan, *A Portrait of the Tangkhul Nagas* (Ukhrul, India: Exodus, 2013).

“dramatic decline in foreign mission efforts.”¹²⁷ For instance, “the number of missionaries sent by WCC-related mainline denominations dropped from 80 percent in 1900 to only 6 percent of all North American missionaries by the end of the century.”¹²⁸ Al Tizon explains this phenomenon as a counter-reaction to two crucial waves:¹²⁹ (1) the increasing influence of liberal theology that emphasized social concern over evangelism, and (2) a shift from a predominantly post-millennial to premillennial eschatology that erased any hope for a better world before Christ’s second coming. Ott et al. claim the conciliar understanding of missions to this reversal.¹³⁰

The split between evangelism and social action in Christian mission was consequently a part of the larger fundamentalist–modernist debate that polarized the position further, impacting mission practice and theology. Fundamentalists rejected the social gospel altogether and hence shied away from any social agenda whatsoever for church and mission. Ott et al. reiterate, “Hospitals and schools were no longer seen as *means* or *partners* of evangelism.”¹³¹ On the other side, modernists avowed the purpose of mission was building a better world through social actions, which include charity, human rights, and civil liberties. This tension and polarization went on amid a larger debate over the meaning of mission between evangelicals and ecumenical.

Attentive authors distinguish the terms *mission* and *missions* for a clearer understanding of their meaning.¹³² By and large, they all agree that *mission* (singular)

¹²⁷ Ott et al., *Encountering Theology of Mission*, 134. See also David Moberg, *The Great Reversal: Evangelism versus Social Concern* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1972).

¹²⁸ Ott et al., *Encountering Theology of Mission*, 134.

¹²⁹ Al Tizon, “Precursors and Tensions in Holistic Mission: An Historical Overview,” in *Holistic Mission: God’s Plan for God’s People*, ed. Brian E. Woolnough and Wonsuk Ma (Oxford, UK: Regnum, 2010), 61–75.

¹³⁰ Ott et al., *Encountering Theology of Mission*, 134.

¹³¹ Ott et al., *Encountering Theology of Mission*, 129.

¹³² Timothy C. Tennent, *Invitation to World Missions: A Trinitarian Missiology for the*

means everything that God is doing in his sovereign purpose for the entire creation, whereas *missions* (plural) refers to all the specific and various efforts of God's people to carry out the task of mission in the world. Mission is what God does according to his great purpose and through the various methods of missions he empowers the church to perform. Therefore, one needs to first understand what God's mission is to ascertain what missions entail.

Missio Dei

Twisting John Piper's axiom, "Missions exists because worship doesn't,"¹³³ Keith Whitfield remarks, "Mission exists because God exists."¹³⁴ The two statements are actually consistent, and both declare God's supremacy in missions. Piper claims, "God is ultimate, and not man." Along this line, Wright also says that "mission is not ours, mission is God's."¹³⁵ He emphasizes, "Mission was not made for the church, the church was made for mission—God's mission." This theocentric worldview of mission is expressed in the theological understanding of *missio Dei*—that mission is primarily God's activity.

Mission is, first and foremost, a divine prerogative. In his classic work on theology of mission, Bosch affirms that "mission has its origin in the heart of God. God is a fountain of sending love. This is the deepest source of mission. It is impossible to penetrate deeper still, there is mission because God loves people."¹³⁶ Why would God do

Twenty-first Century (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2010), 59; M. David Sills, *Changing World, Unchanging Mission: Responding to Global Challenges* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 12–13; Ott et al., *Encountering Theology of Mission*, xv; Wright, *Mission of God's People*, 25.

¹³³ John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad! : The Supremacy of God in Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), 15.

¹³⁴ Keith Whitfield, "The Triune God: The God of Mission," in *Theology and Practice of Mission: God, the Church, and the Nations*, ed. Bruce Riley Ashford (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2011), 17.

¹³⁵ Wright, *Mission of God*, 62.

¹³⁶ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 392.

all that? Chuck Lawless offers four paradigms of a theology of mission that he claims, “is both the message we proclaim and a motivation for proclaiming it:” the love of a seeking God, the grace of a suffering God, the mandate of a sending God, and the worship of a saving God.¹³⁷

Timothy Tennent presents a Trinitarian framework for missions, in which God the Father is the source, initiator, and goal; God the Son is the embodiment; and God the Holy Spirit is the empowering presence of the *missio Dei*.¹³⁸ When one truly recognizes the Trinitarian involvement of mission, it becomes much clearer why Bosch clarifies that “it is not the church which ‘undertakes’ mission; it is the *missio Dei* which constitutes the church.”¹³⁹ From this perspective, Tennent concludes that “the triumphalism of human agency and ingenuity are replaced by a deepened humility and awe that God would use us” for his mission.¹⁴⁰

Both Wright and Ashford comprehend *missio Dei* from the standpoint of a biblical story line divided into four major plot movements—creation, fall, redemption, and restoration or new creation.¹⁴¹ They perceive God’s mission as a unified biblical narrative of God’s supreme plan, beginning from creation to restoration. God has a purpose and goal for his entire creation, which is his mission. All our missions essentially flow from God’s ultimate mission. His mission is what Paul described as “the whole will of God” (Acts 20:27, Eph 1:9–10). The scope is much wider than what is given in the Great Commission (Matt 28:19–20), which is ‘great,’ but not exhaustive. Although the

¹³⁷ Chuck Lawless, “A Theology of Missions: Why We Must Send Missionaries,” in *Whom Shall We Send? Understanding the Essentials of Sending Missionaries*, ed. Joel Sutton (Scotts Valley, CA: CreateSpace, 2016), 10–22.

¹³⁸ Tennent, *Invitation to World Missions*, 75–101.

¹³⁹ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 519.

¹⁴⁰ Tennent, *Invitation to World Missions*, 101.

¹⁴¹ Wright, *Mission of God’s People*, 39–44; Ashford, *Theology and Practice of Mission*, 6–16.

Great Commission captures the heart of mission and succinctly express the tasks given, the overarching mission of God encompasses the entire Scripture. Wright elaborates, “God’s mission is what spans the gap between the curse on the earth of Genesis 3 and the end of the curse in the new creation of Revelation 22,” which is “a vast, comprehensive project of cosmic salvation.”¹⁴² This mission constitutes the church.

Holistic Mission

The biblical metanarrative understanding of *mission* provides a holistic picture of *missions* for the church. A significant development in contemporary Christian missiology is the recovery of a theology of mission that “integrates faith and life, word and deed, proclamation and presence.”¹⁴³ One momentous turning point toward a more holistic approach to mission in the evangelical circle is the Lausanne Conference in 1974, in which thousands of leaders affirmed that “evangelism and sociopolitical involvement are both part of Christian duty.”¹⁴⁴ The long-suffering “evangelism–social action split” was restored; however evangelism retained the primacy.¹⁴⁵ A helpful distinction between social service and social action was established, though—the former referring to relieving human need, philanthropy, etc., but the latter referring to removing the cause of human need, political activity, structural social change, etc.¹⁴⁶

By the 1980s, considerable attention was bestowed on publication and consultations “seeking to clarify an evangelical position regarding the place of social action

¹⁴² Wright, *Mission of God’s People*, 46.

¹⁴³ Woolnough and Ma, *Holistic Mission*, ix.

¹⁴⁴ Woolnough and Ma, *Holistic Mission*, 4.

¹⁴⁵ Ott et al., *Encountering Theology of Mission*, 139.

¹⁴⁶ Ott et al., *Encountering Theology of Mission*, 140.

in mission and its relationship to evangelism.”¹⁴⁷ It resulted to adopting that “social action is a consequence of, a bridge to, and a partner of evangelism.” The kingdom perspective was emphasized as a framework to understand the holistic nature of mission beyond merely evangelism and social action.¹⁴⁸

Despite criticism from some sections, evangelicals began to accept a holistic understanding of mission. Bosch concludes his analysis of the emerging ecumenical-mission paradigm in the twentieth century accepting a multifaceted ministry: “Mission is a multifaceted ministry, in respect of witness, service, justice, healing, reconciliation, liberation, peace, evangelism, fellowship, church planting, contextualization, and much more.”¹⁴⁹ The radical clergy–laity dichotomy in Christian ministry was blurred significantly by this time, too.

The Third Lausanne Congress 2010 in Cape Town, South Africa, marks the consolidation of a return to an integrated and holistic understanding of mission. The Cape Town Commitment is the epitome of a holistic Christian mission, as a third major issue of creation care, being added to evangelism and social action:

Integral mission means discerning, proclaiming, and living out, the biblical truth that the gospel of God’s good news, through the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ, for individual persons (evangelism), and for society (social action), and for creation (creation care). All three are broken and suffering because of sin: all three are included in the redeeming love and mission of God: all three must be part of the comprehensive mission of God’s people.¹⁵⁰

This holistic understanding of mission provides a wholesome paradigm of looking at how churches integrate mission to people’s vocation and work.

¹⁴⁷ Ott et al., *Encountering Theology of Mission*, 140.

¹⁴⁸ Ott et al., *Encountering Theology of Mission*, 141.

¹⁴⁹ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 512.

¹⁵⁰ “The Cape Town Commitment,” Lausanne Movement, accessed September 19, 2019, <https://www.lausanne.org/content/ctc/ctcommitment#capetown>.

Mission and Vocation

If God ordained work from the beginning with eternal significance, he must have a purpose for man to work. Working out that objective is essentially our mission. Connecting our vocation to mission, Keller states, “A job is a vocation only if someone else calls you to do it and you do it for them rather than for yourself. And so our work can be a calling only if it is reimagined as a mission of service to something beyond merely our own interests.”¹⁵¹ What is that mission to which God calls us and is beyond our own interests? The Lausanne Covenant identified it as “the whole gospel, the whole world, and the whole church.”¹⁵²

The whole Gospel. It means the gospel of Jesus Christ is everything that brings salvation to the world. It includes all elements of God’s supreme plans and gracious gifts for the people and the entire world. The whole gospel contains everything that a person needed to be saved and live a life of worshiping God. Wright asserts that the glorious richness of the gospel is that it can transform every area of life contaminated by sin. He argues for the cosmic scope of the gospel as presented in Colossians 1:15–20, so that “the cross must be central to every dimension of the mission of God’s people—from personal evangelism among individuals to ecological care for creation and everything in between.”¹⁵³ Quite contrary to a truncated gospel of focusing one to the expense of another, the whole gospel is what God has done through his son Jesus Christ to transform individual life, the society, and the creation as a whole.

The whole world. The mission to which God calls us to the whole world includes the whole aspect of humanity as a target of restoration: physical, intellectual, emotional, and social. It seeks to restore the whole dimension of human relationships

¹⁵¹ Keller, *Every Good Endeavor*, 2.

¹⁵² “The Lausanne Covenant,” Lausanne Movement, accessed February 12, 2019, <https://www.lausanne.org/content/covenant/lausanne-covenant>.

¹⁵³ Wright, *Mission of God’s People*, 24.

with God, self, others, and the rest of creation. Furthermore, it would not limit the transforming power of the gospel merely to individuals, but would extend to cultural and structural aspects of human societies, and the entire creation. The whole gospel is not confined within the walls of the church, but intended for the whole world—including campuses, farms, recreational places and marketplaces. It is not limited to Sunday worship or prayer meeting only, but is equally transformative to every activity of life during the other six days of the week.

The whole church. The mission of God’s people would involve the whole church at the front line, as a unified body of Christ, without a division between sacred and secular works. There is no clergy-laity dichotomy and/or hierarchy of values based on the gifts and roles among the members of the whole church. The callings of pastors, evangelists, and missionaries are not higher than those of farmers, businessmen, professionals, and individuals with mundane jobs. Everybody has different roles to play in a huge orchestra of the mission of God’s people to bring the whole gospel to the whole world.¹⁵⁴ God calls each church member to perform specific job in the grand production of God’s mission, just like the modern “assembly line” worker performing a single task in the whole team. Every worker’s job is significant and indispensable to complete the whole task.

God calls everybody in the church—full-time ministers and working professionals alike (perhaps much greater number of professionals)—to accomplish the holistic mission of taking the whole gospel to the whole world. This is our vocational calling to God’s mission.

Integration of Faith, Work, and Mission

This chapter so far has provided an overview of the theology of work and vocation, and the theology of mission. The discussion makes it clear that vocation and

¹⁵⁴ Wright, *Mission of God’s People*, 272.

mission intersect in God’s purpose for the church. If everybody is called to a specific job within God’s own mission, how does this play out in the person’s work and life? How is the intersection of work and mission most adequately expressed through the life of the church? Where do faith, work, and mission integrate? How should the church be equipped for this integration? While churches have attempted through strategic mission approaches and marketplace mission movements, the integration of faith, work, and mission is discussed here as a basis for a gospel-centered vocational institution.

Strategic Mission Approaches

Churches and mission organizations have invested a great deal in establishing Christian hospitals, schools, and church planting as their major mission strategies.¹⁵⁵ In her assessment of ways missions have influenced Africa, longtime IMB missionary Melanie Clinton lists literacy, theological education, hospitals and schools among the ten ways that influenced Africa.¹⁵⁶ She, however, remarks that theological education is “a flawed effort,” failing “to examine the Scripture and develop contextualized answers to the African church’s questions,” and thus expresses the need for “re-forming partnerships with seminaries.” While not completely discounting the efforts of mission schools, seminaries, and hospitals, any kind of approach that concentrates on the work and vocation of the nationals being reached is yet to be found.

In *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, mission efforts through “the training programs of Campus Crusade (now CRU), the Navigators, InterVarsity, Youth

¹⁵⁵ Ralph Winter and Steven Hawthorne edited a collection of case studies and mission enterprises that churches conducted around the world. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne, eds., *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, 4th ed. (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2009). The Studies in Church History also witness how churches have been engaged in educational projects. Morwenna Ludlow, Charlotte Methuen, and Andrew Spicer, eds., *Churches and Education*, Studies in Church History 55 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

¹⁵⁶ Melanie Clinton, “Ten Ways Missions Has Influenced Africa,” International Mission Board (IMB), September 7, 2018, <https://www.imb.org/2018/09/07/ten-ways-missions-influenced-africa/>.

With A Mission (YWAM), and many other groups and denominations” are acknowledged.¹⁵⁷ Professional mission organizations—such as Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF), the Christian Medical and Dental Association, Medical Ministry International, and Christian Athletic Missions—work actively around the globe, too.¹⁵⁸ However, these mission agencies use certain work or careers (e.g., aviation, medicine, and sports) of the missionaries as tools for reaching out with the gospel, rather than bringing the gospel to the work or careers of the natives. A sharp difference exists between the two—one is missionary-focused; the other is mission-focused. The first one tries to use the missionaries’ job skills for gaining access to the people, whereas the latter attempts to equip the people with the gospel in whatever their work and career may be.

The Association of Baptists for World Evangelism (ABWE) also adopts the concept of utilizing one’s skill and experience (e.g., accounting, plumbing, nursing, painting, or teaching) for the advantage of the gospel, claiming that “whatever skills God has given you, He wants to use them to share the good news of His Son, Jesus Christ.”¹⁵⁹ So an engineer works in a company with the intention of sharing the gospel; a nurse, or a doctor, serves at a clinic as a medical missionary; a teacher works in a school and influences the students for Christ. This approach again implies work as merely an instrument for what is perceived as “the real missions”—evangelism and church planting, leaving out promoting the intrinsic value of work; both are essentially vital.

Marketplace Mission Movements

David Miller notes two antecedent waves—which he calls the “Social Gospel”

¹⁵⁷ Winter and Hawthorne, *Perspectives*, xiii.

¹⁵⁸ See Mission Aviation Fellowship (<https://www.maf.org/>); Christian Medical and Dental Association (<https://cmda.org/missions/>); Medical Ministry International (<https://www.mmi.org/>); and Christian Athletic Missions (<https://www.christianathleticmission.org/>).

¹⁵⁹ ABWE allows the missionaries to find their ministry focus and fit into it accordingly. “Ministry Focus,” ABWE International, accessed May 9, 2019, <https://www.abwe.org/serve/ministry-focus>.

era (AD 1890–1945) and the “Ministry of the Laity” era (AD 1945–1980)—that led to the current “Faith at Work” movement of seeking meaning and purpose in work.¹⁶⁰ He presents four ways—ethics, experience, enrichment, and evangelism—with which individuals and organizations propose to integrate faith and work, and suggests that “Everywhere Integrators”—a hybrid form of all the four types of integration—is the most ideal.

Since the beginning of Miller’s Faith at Work Movement in the 1980s, significant efforts to integrate faith, work, and mission increase in the form of Marketplace Ministry, Tentmaking, and Business as Mission (BAM).¹⁶¹ Some important resources have been published toward this end, as well.¹⁶² Steve Rundle summarizes several marketplace-mission movements:¹⁶³ (1) Tentmaking—Christian individuals find employment in a cross-cultural context, using one’s skills in the job to support his/her work of the gospel; (2) Marketplace Ministry—also known as “workplace ministry,” this movement refers to parachurch organizations’ endeavors to disciple and coach Christian

¹⁶⁰ The “Faith at Work movement has arisen largely outside the institutional church and theological academy. It is both Protestant and Catholic and encompasses a wide range of theologies, including fundamentalist, evangelical, mainline, liberal, and Pentecostal. The movement also has Jewish, Buddhist, Confucian, and Islamic participants, as well as a large number who draw on New Age philosophies and secular spiritualities.” Miller, “The Faith at Work Movement,” 303.

¹⁶¹ See Neal Johnson and Steve Rundle, *Business as Mission: From Impoverished to Empowered*, Evangelical Missiological Society, ed. Tom A. Steffen and Mike Barnett, vol. 14 (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2009); Ruth E. Siemens, “Tentmakers: Integrating Work and Witness,” in Winter and Hawthorne, *Perspectives*, 760-1; Timothy Liu, Gordon Preece, and Siew Li Wong, “Marketplace Ministry,” Lausanne Occasional Paper no. 40, Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, October 5, 2004, <https://www.lausanne.org/content/lop/marketplace-ministry-lop-40>; Neal C. Johnson, *Business as Mission: A Comprehensive Guide to Theory and Practice* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009).

¹⁶² See Wayne Grudem, *Business for the Glory of God: The Bible’s Teaching and the Moral Goodness of Business* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2003); R. Paul Stevens, *Doing God’s Business: Meaning and Motivation for the Marketplace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016); Harjanto, *Development of Vocational Stewardship*; Sebastian Traeger and Greg D. Gilbert, *The Gospel at Work: How Working for King Jesus Gives Purpose and Meaning to Our Job* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013); Russell Moore and Andrew T. Walker, eds., *The Gospel and Work*, The Gospel for Life (Nashville: B&H, 2017).

¹⁶³ Steve Rundle, “Restoring the Role of Business in Mission,” in Winter and Hawthorne, 760-61.

working professionals for effective witness in the workplace; (3) BAM—refers to businesses, often called “Great Commission Companies” or “Kingdom businesses,” created and functioning for advancing the gospel; and (4) Christian Microenterprise Development (MED)—seeks to start and run successful, God-honoring business enterprises. The last three are contemporary movements, whereas “tentmaking” has been around since the earliest Christian missions with solid biblical footings, as affirmed by Ruth Siemens.¹⁶⁴ Without trying to oversimplify their differences, one can say that the emphasis of Marketplace Ministry is on near-neighbor ministry, while the primary focus of Tentmaking, BAM, and MED is cross-cultural ministry in the Majority World.

These cross-cultural mission models possess at least two limitations. First, these models are frequently misunderstood as “missionary in disguise” method, which uses a business as a “cover” to access entry and continue ministry in difficult or “closed” countries.¹⁶⁵ While it appears to be logical to do so, “many Christians now recognize that this ‘ends justifying the means’ approach to ministry has serious integrity problems and is a poor witness.”¹⁶⁶ Another critical difficulty with these models is that most of the activities fall into Miller’s quadrant one (evangelism) and two (ethics), focusing on winning people at work for Christ and handling daily business situations in God-glorifying manners. While these initiatives are important elements to kingdom missions, there is still “room for deeper, richer, more creative faith/work integration.”¹⁶⁷ A holistic approach to mission that fosters the intrinsic value of work is still missing.

¹⁶⁴ The apostle Paul, who was a tentmaker by profession (Acts 18:3), took his work in the tentmaking trade as an essential part of his missionary strategy for several reasons—he supported himself to preach the gospel for free (1 Cor 9:12–18), added credibility to his message (2 Cor 2:17; Titus 1:10–11), and served as an example of a ministry model for his converts (1 Cor 4:12, 16; Eph 4:28–32; 2 Thess 3:7–9). Siemens, “Tentmakers: Integrating Work and Witness,” 760.

¹⁶⁵ Rundle, “Restoring the Role,” 762.

¹⁶⁶ Rundle, “Restoring the Role,” 762.

¹⁶⁷ Sherman, *Kingdom Calling*, 97.

Meanwhile, Christian missions and philanthropic organizations have been working to help the poor in the Majority World. But, most often, their efforts do more harm than help the poor, and ultimately hurt themselves.¹⁶⁸ In their intriguing title, *When Helping Hurts*, Corbett and Fikkert diagnose that most missions failed due to the “god-complexes” of the materially rich and “feelings of inferiority” of the materially poor, which frequently develop in “the health-and-wealth gospel.”¹⁶⁹ Witnessing such situations in *Toxic Charity*, Robert Lupton urges individuals, churches, and organizations to step “away from traditional ‘doing for’ the poor models toward a ‘doing with’ paradigm.”¹⁷⁰ Besides dealing with the matters of the heart—*repentance* of both the giver and the receiver—empowering the individuals through training for work is the key to effective mission.¹⁷¹

In the context of the Majority World—characterized by less-developed, economically poor, and mostly unreached places—mission schools, seminaries, marketplace ministries, and charities do not adequately prepare people to bridge the gap they experience between their faith and work. In the effort to bring a meaningful integration of faith and vocation to biblical missions, a gospel-centered, vocational skill-oriented education emerges as an effective approach.¹⁷² This project is a descriptive exploration toward this option.

¹⁶⁸ Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert, *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty without Hurting the Poor—and Yourself* (Chicago: Moody, 2012), 27.

¹⁶⁹ Corbett and Fikkert, *When Helping Hurts*, 62–66.

¹⁷⁰ Lupton, *Toxic Charity*, 29.

¹⁷¹ Both Lupton, and Corbett and Fikkert propose community partnership and empowerment through education as better alternatives to providing resources for effective Christian missions.

¹⁷² Wungramthan Shongzan, “Gospel-Centered Vocational Education for Effective Evangelism and Discipleship in the Majority World” (paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Society of Professors in Christian Education, Minneapolis, Minnesota, October 17–19, 2019).

Competency-Based, Gospel-Centered Vocational Education

Many have written about competency-based education, Christian education, and vocational education, but in isolation from one another. None have tried to tie these things together. A great way to integrate faith, work, and mission in a pedagogical enterprise is through a combination of competency-based, gospel-centered vocational education.

Competency-based education (CBE) is a learning model that focuses on students' capability to apply, or utilize, their knowledge and skills to perform and accomplish specific tasks.¹⁷³ Recent years have witnessed a growing interest in the development of high-quality CBE programs in U.S. institutions, which is projected as a "movement."¹⁷⁴ CBE-Network executive director Charla Long claims, "Today, CBE is one of the fastest-growing approaches for individuals to access a college education with more than 500 programs across the country being designed or launched."¹⁷⁵ She contends that competing in the global economy requires "the right employees in the right positions at the right time with the right credentials," and CBE is the solution.¹⁷⁶ Bushway et al. offer a practical resource for designing, building, and scaling high-quality CBE programs.¹⁷⁷ Rose Colby also shows how performance assessments, learning pathways, and competency-based grading are implemented in the CBE system for K-12 schools.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷³ Chapter 1 provides a working definition of "competency-based" for the purpose of this study.

¹⁷⁴ Amy Laitinen, in her foreword to *A Leader's Guide to Competency-Based Education: From Inception to Implementation*, by Deborah J. Bushway, Laurie Dodge, and Charla S. Long (Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, 2018), viii, and Charla Long, in her paper, "Innovation to Improve Equity: Exploring High-Quality Pathways to a College Degree" (written testimony before the Committee on Education and Labor, United States House of Representatives, June 19, 2019), refer to CBE as a movement.

¹⁷⁵ Long, "Innovation to Improve Equity," 2.

¹⁷⁶ Long, "Innovation to Improve Equity," 3–4.

¹⁷⁷ Bushway et al., *A Leader's Guide to CBE*, 29–80.

¹⁷⁸ Rose L. Colby, *Competency Based Education: A New Architecture for K-12 Schooling*

Vocational education refers to skill-oriented, competency-based training for such industrial-related trades as carpentry, culinary, mechanic, or cosmetology to ready students for employment and/or independent enterprises. Historically, “vocational education has been part of the foundation of man’s creative and progressive development.”¹⁷⁹ It is correlated with unemployment, causing people to look to it “for at least a part of the solution.”¹⁸⁰ China excels in technological and production industries, owing to its strength in vocational trainings.¹⁸¹ Because of its stress on skills and performance, CBE is appropriately expressed in vocational training. In his book, *How to Develop Competency-Based Vocational Education*, William Perry provides a manual for creating a competency-based instruction system for vocational training.¹⁸² Perry’s manual offers a CBE model for vocational training; however, it needs biblical underpinning.

A combination of competency-based and gospel-centered education is adequately perceived in the theological understanding of work as God designed it to be. In the *Theology of Work Bible Commentary of Genesis*, Messenger asserts, “God worked to create us, and created us to work.”¹⁸³ God is competent and creative in his work, and he has a perfect eternal purpose of work revealed in the gospel of Christ—hence a “competency-based and gospel-centered” model. All through the *Theology of Work Project* series, the

(Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press, 2017), 65–132.

¹⁷⁹ Melvin L. Barlow, “The Rationale for Vocational Education,” in *Vocational Education*, ed. Melvin L. Barlow, *The Sixty-Fourth Yearbook of the National Society of the Study of Education* (Chicago: NSSE, 1965), 1.

¹⁸⁰ Barlow, *Vocational Education*, 198.

¹⁸¹ Guoqing Xu, “Philosophy and Methods for China’s Vocational Education Curriculum Reforms in the Early Twenty-First Century,” *Chinese Education and Society* 47, no. 5 (September-October 2014): 57.

¹⁸² William G. Perry Jr., *How to Develop Competency-Based Vocational Education* (Ann Arbor, MI: Prakken Publications, 1982).

¹⁸³ Messenger, *Theology of Work Bible Commentary*, 1.

authors contend no sacred-secular dichotomy in work and vocation. Rather, the studies focus on integration of “what we believe—faith” and “what we do—work” in life, recognizing the authority of the Scripture over work and vocation of the Christians.

In a groundbreaking work on biblical wisdom literature, Daniel Estes provides an “important material for reflection on practical education and pedagogical theory today.”¹⁸⁴ Recognizing the canonical function of Proverbs 1–9 as the overview of the entire wisdom corpus, Estes “organizes the data into seven categories typical of pedagogical discussion:”¹⁸⁵ (1) biblical worldview, (2) values of education, (3) goals of education, (4) curriculum for education, (5) process of instruction, (6) role of the teacher, and (7) role of the learner. This work offers a holistic vision of instruction that views education as “personal formation” within a robust framework of biblical wisdom and pedagogy.

In *Conceiving the Christian College*, veteran college president Duane Litfin shares his vision of Christian higher education, in which he emphasizes Christian distinctiveness and commitment to the truth while serving the world.¹⁸⁶ Both Stanley Choi and Tuisem Shishak conducted their research on Christian institutions. While Choi perceives Christian schools as a platform for evangelism, Shishak differentiates academic from evangelistic initiative and is careful not to muddle the two.¹⁸⁷ Shirley Roels, examining how Christian institutions engage in an education for vocation, recommends that every educational initiative should aim for vocational effectiveness.¹⁸⁸ For an

¹⁸⁴ Daniel J. Estes, *Hear, My Son: Teaching and Learning in Proverbs 1–9*, New Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997).

¹⁸⁵ Estes, *Hear, My Son*, 13.

¹⁸⁶ Duane Litfin, *Conceiving the Christian College* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004).

¹⁸⁷ Stanley Choi, “The Christian School as a Means of Effective Evangelism in India: A History and Evaluation of the Saint Paul Mission School in Bangalore, India” (PhD diss., Liberty University, 2009); and Tuisem Awungshi Shishak, “Higher Education for Nagaland: A Proposal for Curriculum, Organization, and Coordination” (PhD diss., University of New York at Buffalo, 1973).

¹⁸⁸ Shirley J. Roels, “Educating for Vocation: Weaving Educational Ideas with Institutional

influential book edited by D. G. Hart and Albert Mohler, eighteen higher-education leaders and scholars contributed essays to provide a “historical perspective necessary for measuring the strength, vitality, and character as well as the weaknesses and failures of evangelical theological institutions.”¹⁸⁹ None of these resources, however, offers any suggestion for integrating competency-based vocational training into Christian institutions. Hence, the abiding question still remains—What does a competency-based, gospel-centered vocational education look like?

Conclusion

The literature review in this chapter has provided a theoretical framework for research about modeling gospel-centered vocational education. The first two sections furnished an overview of precedent literature on the theology of work and vocation, and the theology of mission. The last section focused on the efforts given so far to integrate faith, work, and mission through strategic mission approaches, especially marketplace ministries. It has come to light that, although the hitherto mission efforts offered evangelistic and ethical benefits in the workplace, an apparent gap still exists in finding a prescriptive model for vocational discipleship based on the descriptive framework of work and mission. A clear expression of an institutional and pedagogical model for meaningful intersection of faith and vocation as a biblical mission should be introduced to the discussion, which was the purpose of this study.

Practices,” *Christian Higher Education* 16, nos. 1–2 (2017): 92–106.

¹⁸⁹ D. G. Hart and R. Albert Mohler Jr., eds., *Theological Education in the Evangelical Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 17.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study sought to develop a framework for Christian vocational institutions by discerning what competency-based, gospel-centered vocational training and discipleship look like. The literature review indicated that vital development occurred in recent decades to solidify the theology of work and vocation related to Christian education and missions. So far, the nature of vocational education had either been predicated upon developing skills without the foundation of a robust theology or theory without a meaningful practice. The literature review suggested the need for conducting a focused empirical research study to determine what constitutes Christian vocational training in terms of its philosophy, pedagogy, and practice. This chapter describes the methodological design by which this research sought to identify—a well-expressed institutional and pedagogical model for vocational education that concentrates on both competency and the gospel.

Purpose Statement

The primary purpose of this study was exploring resources for modeling a competency-based, gospel-centered vocational institution with the following objectives:

1. To construct a basic framework for organization and administration of a gospel-centered vocational institution.
2. To describe an approach to a faith-based and competency-based instructional model and curriculum design.
3. To apply the description to a real-world context of the researcher's country.

Research Questions

The main research question was: What are the key features characterizing a competency-based, gospel-centered vocational institution? This question generated a series of sub-questions, three of which are connected to the research purpose and were the focus of this study:

1. How can vocational education provide opportunities and prepare students for gospel-centered work and vocation?
2. What learning objectives and competencies need to be addressed in the curriculum to equip students for workplace evangelism and discipleship?
3. How can such an institutional model be transferred to, and effectively implemented in, Manipur, Northeast India?

Research Design Overview

This research was conducted with the qualitative, multicase-study method to explore resources for modeling a competency-based, gospel-centered vocational institution. Qualitative research is a research method “for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem.”¹ This study explored the meaning institutions assigned to the problems pertaining to effective vocational training and discipleship. According to Sharan Merriam, there are four major characteristics of qualitative research: “the focus is on process, understanding, and meaning; the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis; the process is inductive; and the product is richly descriptive.”² Elsewhere in her book, she describes that “qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed”³ based on the interactions and experiences they have in their world, in

¹ John W. Creswell and J. David Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 5th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2018), 4.

² Sharan B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009), 14.

³ Sharan B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education* (San

which meaning “is not discovered but constructed.”⁴ Consequently, this qualitative study focused on the lens of vocational institutions and their leaders as they constructed the meaning of their experiences and ascribed to a framework for a competency-based, gospel-centered vocational institution.

Qualitative Multicase-Study Approach

The design for this qualitative research was best described as a multicase study. According to Merriam, “a case study is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit”⁵—an institution, in this case. Robert Yin terms *case study* as “a study that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and in its real-world context.”⁶ This research conducted an in-depth investigation of three vocational institutions in the United States. The use of multiple cases helped the researcher “to make comparisons, build theory or propose generalizations”⁷ particularly suitable for constructing a framework model of gospel-centered vocational institution. The multicase-study method was chosen also because it helped to answer research questions that were descriptive in nature—which described the key features characterizing a competency-based, gospel-centered vocational institution. Moreover, the qualitative multicase-study approach allowed the researcher to gain in-depth comprehension of the phenomena being investigated—on the success and/or failure of the institutions—thereby providing important themes as markers and strategies for replication.

Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998), 6.

⁴ Merriam, *Qualitative Research: A Guide*, 22.

⁵ Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study*, 34.

⁶ Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 5th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2014), 237.

⁷ Paul D. Leedy and Jeanne Ellis Ormrod, *Practical Research: Planning and Design*, 11th ed. (New York: Pearson, 2016), 253.

Data Collection

This qualitative multicase study employed two ways of data collection as described by Merriam:⁸ (1) mining data from documents, and (2) interview of the institutions' leaders. Data collection was primarily in the form of words or texts. Merriam classifies "data conveyed through words" as *qualitative*, and "data presented in number form" as *quantitative*.⁹ Therefore, the qualitative data consisted of "excerpts, quotations, or entire passages" extracted from *written documents* and "direct quotations from people about their experiences, opinions, feelings and knowledge" recorded through *interviews*.¹⁰ Out of the six sources of evidence Yin recommends, documentation, archival records, and interviews were incorporated in this data-collection process.¹¹

Mining data from documents. The researcher collected data from the available institutional literature, including—but not limited to—website contents, viewbooks, flyers, student handbooks, school catalogs, curricula and syllabi of the select institutions. The documents thus collected were incorporated with the data obtained from the interviews for "triangulation."¹²

Interview of the institutions' leaders. In addition, data collection was performed through the *semi-structured interview*¹³ of one key leader each (president/director/founder) of the selected institutions for about sixty minutes. The interviews were guided by a list of more-or-less predetermined questions, focusing on the research

⁸ Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study*, 69–133.

⁹ Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study*, 69.

¹⁰ Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2002), 4.

¹¹ The study will, by-and-large, incorporate and utilize the six sources of evidence as presented by Yin, *Case Study Research*, 106.

¹² Triangulation is defined as "the convergence of data collected from different sources, to determine the consistency of a finding." Yin, *Case Study Research*, 241.

¹³ Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study*, 73–74.

questions that drive this study. These interviews were audiotaped and recorded with the consent of the interviewees.

Direct on-site observations—through field visits to the campuses of the three institutions—were initially proposed to record the site characteristics, classrooms, workstations, physical artifacts, and people’s activities and behaviors. This component of data collection was, however, adapted due to the travel restrictions and campus closures consequent to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Instrumentation

For obtaining the basic information of the three population institutions, a Google survey form was designed as “Institutional Demographic Form” (see Appendix 5). This form, with fourteen close-ended questions, was sent to each participant before the interview, and the survey responses were collected to understand the demographic information of the institutions.

Of the two components of this qualitative multicase study, *interviews* utilized purposely designed instruments, while *mining data* depended on the researcher’s discernment. This was because “interviewing and observing are two data collection strategies designed to gather data that specifically address the research question,” whereas documents are “ready-made sources of data easily accessible to the imaginative and resourceful investigator.”¹⁴ Hence, documents identified in the form of official statement, website contents, and institutional materials were filtered and selected as data based on the researcher’s judgment as related to the research questions.

The instrument for the interview was a set of open-ended questions for one-on-one, in-depth interview that the researcher prepared following the guidelines given by

¹⁴ Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study*, 112.

Leedy and Ormrod.¹⁵ The semi-structured interview questions were sent to the participants one week ahead of the actual interview for them to think through the questions in advance. All interviews were recorded by employing the Zoom recording function. All participants were notified about the recording, and the confidentiality of the data collected for the sole purpose of the research was additionally explained by asking them to read and sign the “Informed Consent Form” (see Appendix 4).

An expert panel, which the research supervisor approved, reviewed the prepared research questions for clarity and suitability for the research before their submission to the concerned committees. The three panel members were picked based on their background and expertise in the field of Christian education and leadership (see Appendix 2). Prior to initiating the research activities, the proposed instruments—interview questions, Institutional Demographic Form, the Consent form, and data-analysis methods—were submitted to the Dissertation Committee and the Research Ethics Committee of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary for approval. Upon the approval of the instruments, they were utilized for implementation in all the cases. This professional review and protocol exercise helped ensure the validity of the data-collection instruments, and that the research protocol accurately reflected the sought results.

Data Analysis

Delimitations of the research that focused on three main aspects of this study—educational philosophy, curriculum content and design, and transferability—were used to filter the initial data collection. This study utilized “interpretational analysis,” for which the goal is identifying significant constructs, themes, and patterns that best make meaning of the data from the case study.¹⁶

¹⁵ Leedy and Ormrod, *Practical Research*, 263–68.

¹⁶ M. D. Gall, Joyce P. Gall, and Walter R. Borg, *Applying Educational Research*, 6th ed. (Boston: Pearson, 2010), 350.

The data to be analyzed were organized and stored in a secure system in MS-Word file. All interviews were transcribed using HyperTRANSCRIBE™ 1.6.1, and every transcript was verified against the interview Zoom recording. The content documents and the transcripts of the interviews were then analyzed using HyperRESEARCH™ 4.5.0 software, an application from Researchware Inc.¹⁷

Open coding was conducted to construct initial categories, followed by the process of interpretational analysis.¹⁸ The naming of the categories, codes, themes, or patterns came from three sources: I as the researcher, the participants' words, and the literature.¹⁹ Significant themes and patterns were grouped in response to each research question. Efficacy of the categories thus derived was tested throughout the entire data, so that the categories not only “reflect the purpose of the research,” but are also “exhaustive,” “mutually exclusive,” “sensitizing,” and “conceptually congruent.”²⁰ Because this project was a multicase study, the *within-case analysis*—in which “each case is treated as a comprehensive case in and of itself”—was performed, after which the *cross-case analysis* followed, seeking “to build abstractions across cases”²¹ for vocational institution.

¹⁷ HyperTRANSCRIBE is an easy-to-use transcription tool that helps researchers transcribe audio or video data from their source to a text file. HyperRESEARCH is a solid code-and-retrieve, data-analysis program. It enables researchers to code and retrieve, build theories, and conduct analyses of qualitative data. With its advanced multimedia capabilities, this software allows work with text (including “rich text” and Unicode text), graphics, audio, and video sources—making it an invaluable research-analysis tool. It has been in use by researchers in the social sciences and other fields since it was introduced in 1991. Researchware Inc., “HyperResearch,” accessed October 12, 2019, <http://www.researchware.com/products/hyperresearch>.

¹⁸ John Creswell describes the process of interpretational analysis as “abstracting out the codes and themes to the larger meaning of the data. It is a process that begins with the development of the codes, the formation of themes from the codes, and then the organization of themes into larger units of abstraction to make sense of the data.” John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2013), 187.

¹⁹ Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study*, 182.

²⁰ Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study*, 184–85.

²¹ Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study*, 194–95.

Research Population

The research population for this study was Christian-based, vocational-technical institutions in the United States that have been in existence for more than seven years. Furthermore, these institutions are known as Christian trades schools since they provide skill-oriented training based on Christian principles. The research population defined above was narrowed down to three sample institutions, namely *Crown School of Trades and Technology*, in Powell, Tennessee; *Williamson College of the Trades*, in Media, Pennsylvania; and *Master's Ranch and Christian Academy*, in Couch, Missouri.

Purposive Sampling

These three institutions were selected through purposive or purposeful sampling strategy, which was clearly a criterion-based selection for the particular intent of this research.²² Purposive sampling is “based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned.”²³ Since the purpose of this research was exploring resources for modeling a competency-based, gospel-centered vocational institution for prospective prototype emulation, these three samples were chosen according to varied criteria and perspectives: Crown School of Trades and Technology—for gospel-centeredness; Williamson College of the Trades—for competency-based specialty; and Master's Ranch and Christian Academy—for practicality and feasibility perspectives. The selection was based on their focused field of training, accessibility, and availability of information; established track records in providing vocational-technical education and training; and their commitment to the gospel and Christian mission.

²² Leedy and Ormrod, *Practical Research*, 165 and 262.

²³ Merriam, *Qualitative Research: A Guide*, 77.

Description of Participants

Crown School of Trades and Technology is a distinctly Christian trade and technology training school, which provides skills in seven different trades at its campus in Powell, Tennessee. The school was “established in 2012 as a ministry of Temple Baptist Church in Powell” with its commitment to “excellent trades and technology training with a Bible foundation.”²⁴

Quaker philanthropist Isaiah Vansant Williamson founded Williamson College of the Trades in 1888. The college offers six industry-relevant-trade programs and “gratuitously provides students with academic, trade, technical, moral and religious education, and a living environment based on the Judeo-Christian perspective that fosters the values of faith, integrity, diligence, excellence, and service.”²⁵

Master’s Ranch and Christian Academy is a home-based ministry, founded in 1997 by David Bosley, who is a committed Christian minister and missionary. It is a Christian boarding school and therapeutic ranch for “at-risk boys” in the state of Missouri. Along with spiritual and behavioral training, “the boarding school program is heavily vocational in nature. The boys learn from general contractors in wood, metal, cement, plumbing, welding, culinary arts and electrical construction.”²⁶

A leader (founder/director/president) represented each institution as a participant in the research interview. The researcher took the stance of a “complete observer” in the data collection and analysis of each sample population.

Delimitations of the Research

The study was delimited to the review and analysis of the above three selected

²⁴ Crown School of Trades and Technology, *Student Handbook/Catalog 2019–2020* (Powell, TN: Crown School of Trades and Technology, 2019), 5; Also see Crown School of Trades and Technology, accessed August 12, 2018, <https://crowntradesandtech.com/>.

²⁵ “Williamson at-a-Glance,” Williamson College of the Trades, accessed December 27, 2019, <https://www.williamson.edu/about/>.

²⁶ “About Us,” Master’s Ranch, accessed August 24, 2018, <https://mastersranch.org/about-us>.

institutions, which offer skill-oriented vocational education. The research was delimited to the availability and accessibility of literature and the individuals who were interviewed.

Moreover, the research was delimited to three main focused aspects of study:

(1) Educational philosophy of the institutions; (2) curriculum content and design; and (3) transferability and feasibility of the system in other contexts.

Limitations of Generalization of Research Findings

Because this study was limited to skill-oriented vocational institutions, it cannot be generalized to include other types of schools or educational institutions. In addition, since the purpose of the study was constructing a model for gospel-centered vocational education, the research findings are limited to church-based institutions. Precisely, the implications, recommendations, and conclusions derived from this study are to be applied to Majority World context, specifically to Manipur, Northeast India.

Research Procedures

The particular procedural steps implemented in completing the study included the following:

1. The researcher established a plan as “steps of study” (see Appendix 1).
2. The thesis prospectus, which includes chapters (1) Introduction, (2) Precedent Literature, and (3) Methodology, was presented and defended during a closed hearing with the faculty supervisor, second reader, and the members of the research team.
3. An expert panel of three members (Appendix 2), whom the research supervisor approved, reviewed the “Interview Questions” (Appendix 6).
4. The finalized prospectus was approved by the Research Doctoral Office, the faculty, and the Ethics Committee of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.
5. Once the thesis prospectus was approved, the researcher submitted a “Letter of Invitation” (see Appendix 3) through email to the identified leader, one each from the three selected institutions, for participation in this study.
6. After all participants stated their willingness to take part in the study, the “Informed

Consent Form” (see Appendix 4) and an “Institutional Demographic Form” (see Appendix 5)—both in Google Forms—were sent to each participant, requesting their completion within a fifteen-day period. If the forms were not received within fifteen days, the researcher sent a reminder email message requesting submission of information within seven days.

7. Following the consent form, an interview date was arranged. At this stage, the researcher started mining data from documents available on websites, as well.
8. The researcher sent “Interview Questions” (see Appendix 6) by email to the participant leaders seven days prior to the interview date.
9. The researcher conducted the interview with the leader of each institution at different times through Zoom. Using the interview questions and Zoom-recording function, data were collected in accordance with the interview-protocol guidelines.²⁷
10. Transcription of the recorded interviews was accomplished using HyperTRANSCRIBE and the data were stored in the hard drive in Word form.
11. The researcher compiled and validated all the raw data—text documents and transcripts—gathered from official documents and interviews, respectively.
12. All these data were analyzed, employing HyperRESEARCH, based on the five steps of the data-analysis process given by Creswell: (1) Organize and prepare the data for analysis; (2) Read or look at all the data; (3) Start coding all the data; (4) Generate a description and themes; and 5) Represent the description and themes.²⁸
13. The researcher engaged in a detailed discussion of significant themes and patterns that made best meaning of the data in the study pertaining to the research questions.
14. The researcher then built abstractions, offering an integrated framework across the cases, and constructed a model for competency-based, gospel-centered vocational institution.
15. A “Letter of Appreciation” was sent along with a summary of report, to each participant (see Appendix 8).
16. Conclusions were drawn, and the findings were presented in the thesis.

²⁷ Creswell and Creswell, *Research Design*, 191; Leedy and Ormrod, *Practical Research*, 264-68.

²⁸ Creswell and Creswell, *Research Design*, 193–95.

Researcher Stance

Researcher stance, or researcher position, is an explanation of the researcher’s “biases, dispositions, and assumptions regarding the research to be undertaken,” for allowing readers “to better understand how the individual researcher might have arrived at the particular interpretation of the data.”²⁹ The researcher reflexively identified his biases, values, and personal background—such as culture, socioeconomic status, and past experiences that influence the conclusion of the research being brought forth.³⁰

My quest for educational quality and equity began with my pathetic village-school background in the remote Indo-Myanmar border where I grew up, as a pastor-missionary kid (PMK), yearning to learn more and learn it better. Diminishing educational disparity and creating opportunities for all to flourish through educational equity had been a strong conviction of my life from a young age. Consequently, I had worked in the field of institutional building, secondary education, vocational training, and career guidance as a community organizer, science teacher, social entrepreneur, and career counselor. My undergraduate degree in engineering, combined with my experience in the corporate world, had some advantages. I, however, realized later that true wisdom and flourishing come from God the Almighty and through his Word, the Scripture.

More recently, I developed an interest in competency-based, gospel-centered vocational education through several personal experiences: (1) years of involvement in career guidance and counseling; (2) close interaction with unemployed rural youths and their parents; (3) founding and leading a skill-oriented training center in Ukhurul, India; and (4) active involvement in church-based educational ministries. I had listened to sporadic, exciting stories of “school drop-outs” and “educated-unemployed youths,”³¹

²⁹ Merriam, *Qualitative Research: A Guide*, 219–20.

³⁰ Creswell & Creswell, *Research Design*, 183–84.

³¹ Widely used terms in the region, almost becoming an accepted socio-educational or

regarding how they struggle to survive and/or to live out their faith. On the other hand, I had additionally heard the struggles of those who had jobs, but did not have any concept of vocational stewardship and discipleship. With an insider's perspective, as from the rural tribal community, and as someone who grew up experiencing similar situations, I recognize the crucial role and advantage of vocational education. I sincerely believe that gospel-centered vocational education is an effective approach to evangelism and discipleship in the Majority World.³² This project sought to construct a framework and identify a model for such institution.

Research Competencies

This section describes the skills and abilities the researcher must have to successfully conduct the study:

1. A large amount of time and concentration was necessary for collection and assimilation of data from the available literature, including website contents, school catalogs, student handbooks, curricula, and syllabi of the three institutions.
2. The interviews required competencies in communication, organization, and in conducting the interviews. It involved technical proficiencies, such as setting up Zoom-interview meetings; recording; and handling some basic application and devices, too. Competencies in legal matters—like acquiring permission for recording, preparing consent documentation, and explaining confidentiality—were needed as well.
3. Interacting with the literature for developing the institutional framework necessitated competencies in critical thinking, theological discussion, and in-depth text study.
4. Competencies were required in the area of content analysis and interpretation, thereby ultimately summarizing the findings. Moreover, proficiency in creating and managing

economic jargon in the common peoples' language, as well as in academic literature.

³² Wungramthan Shongzan, "Gospel-Centered Vocational Education for Effective Evangelism and Discipleship in the Majority World" (paper presented at the annual conference for the Society of Professors in Christian Education, Minneapolis, Minnesota, October 17–19, 2019).

the Google Form Survey, and to efficiently implement HyperRESEARCH application were necessary.

5. Cultural sensitiveness and creative communication coupled with stylish academic writing were also required for effective presentation of the research findings.
6. While I possessed some knowledge and experience in most of these areas, I had to collaborate with my research team and also depended upon my supervisor and readers to guide me in each of these competencies.

Research Assumptions

The underlying presuppositions, or the research assumptions, that were vital to the current study included the following. These assumptions served “as the bedrock upon which the study rests.”³³

1. The commitment of a Christian educational institution should be to the Lord and his Word, then to the church, and then to society, essentially in that order.
2. Vocational education with Christian commitment and focus on both the gospel and competency helps the church influence the culture for Christ.
3. There is an identifiable and describable model of what a competency-based, gospel-centered vocational institution should constitute.
4. The selected institutions had a distinctive understanding and philosophy of vocational education, which they were able to manifest in their education systems.
5. The published official documents of the institutions provided accurate reflections of their vision, ethos, and curriculum emphasis.
6. The leaders of the institutions who were interviewed for this research had an in-depth knowledge and understanding of their respective institutions.
7. The leaders of the institutions who were interviewed for this research answered all questions accurately concerning their experiences.

³³ Leedy and Ormrod, *Practical Research*, 5.

This chapter described, in detail, the research methodology employed in this qualitative multicase study. It provided an overview of the research design and the population being studied. Data was collected from the three selected populations, utilizing the research instruments described above by following the research procedures. The researcher's stance and competencies in conducting this study were included in this chapter, along with the research assumptions at the end. The next chapter will explain the process of compilation and analysis of the collected data to be presented as research findings. These findings would then be used to explain how the researcher ultimately arrives at the conclusion in constructing the model of a competency-based, gospel-centered vocational education.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of the study that analyzed and described Christian trade schools in the United States to model a competency-based, gospel-centered vocational institution for implementation in the Majority World. The qualitative, multicase-study method enabled the researcher to take an in-depth look at three selected sample institutions for the research purpose. Focusing on the research problem introduced in the first chapter, three primary research questions that were directly connected to the threefold objectives of the study were used to guide the analysis. Implementing text analytics, the findings were presented in the form of descriptive reports.¹

In this chapter, precisely, the researcher (1) describes the means used to compile the data, (2) provides the demographic description of sample, (3) explains the protocol for data analysis and its procedures, (4) presents the findings and displays for each institution by matching the research questions, and (5) evaluates the research design.

Compilation Protocol

Preliminary demographic data was collected utilizing the “Institutional Demographic Form,” which was employed to create identification and demographic distinctions of the three institutions that established the foundation for the data analysis. This survey itself was, however, not part of the qualitative data used for analysis.

The qualitative data for analysis were gathered through: (1) mining data from documents, and (2) interviewing of the institutions’ leaders. The researcher collected data

¹ Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 5th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2014), 187.

from the available institutional literature, which were filtered, using the delimitations of the research and the research questions. Based on the researcher's discernment, significant and related data were extracted and compiled for each institution.

Data obtained through semistructured interviews were employed as the primary source for analysis. Three leaders, one from each institution—vice president of Crown School of Trades and Technology, the president of Williamson College of the Trades, and the founder and director of Master's Ranch—were interviewed for about an hour through Zoom at different times. All the video interviews were recorded by Zoom and transcribed using HyperTRANSCRIBETM 1.6.1 software. The transcripts thus obtained were verified against the interview recording for accuracy.

Qualitative data compilation was guided by the research purpose and aimed to answer the identified research questions. While purposely designed instruments were employed for the interviews, the mining of documents depended on the researcher's discernment. This approach was because interviewing gathers data for specific intended questions, whereas documents were ready-made data and needs to be filtered, based on the investigator's judgment. This discernment was made largely through the "theoretical framework" the researcher brought to the study.² The theoretical framework of this study was built on the theology of work and mission applied in Christian education, which was discussed in the second chapter. Based on those theological underpinnings, the researcher attempted to obtain the meaning of the entire data collected through both the mining of documents and interviewing the leaders. This exercise was also guided by the specific research purpose already listed for this study. In that process, a significant amount of data was carved out. The data to be analyzed were therefore organized, compiled, and stored in MS-Word format to be run through the HyperRESEARCHTM 4.5.0 software.

² Sharan B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998), 45.

Demographic Description of Sample

The research purpose was exploring resources for modeling a competency-based, gospel-centered vocational institution. Purposive sampling was employed to select the three Christian trade schools: Crown School of Trades and Technology (CSTT), Williamson College of the Trades (WCT), and Master’s Ranch and Christian Academy (MRCA). A number of demographic data were furnished to identify similarities, differences, and varieties among these selected population. This data were based on the responses the leaders of the institutions submitted using the “Institutional Demographic Form,” a Google-survey form (Appendix 5). Table 2 summarizes this data that broadly represented the population under investigation in terms of values and volumes.

Location. The participating institutions are located in three different states of the United States—Tennessee, Pennsylvania, and Missouri. Students were not limited to these three states alone, though. One of the schools had students from other countries, as well. The map in Figure 1 shows the location of the three sample institutions.

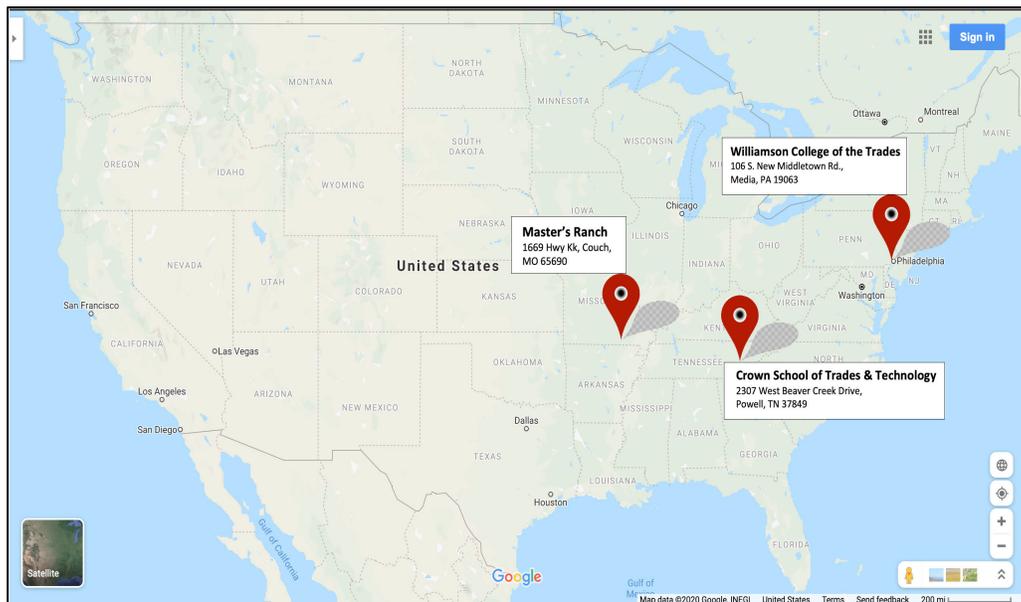


Figure 1. Location map of participating institutions

Christian commitment or church affiliation. All three institutions are Christian-based. They all have some level of commitment to the Christian faith and missions, which set them apart from secular trades and technology institutions or public schools. Crown School was established “as a ministry of Temple Baptist Church” in Powell, Tennessee, where the educational enterprise is fundamentally surrounded with the life and ministry of the church.”³ A Quaker philanthropist, Isaiah Vansant Williamson, founded Williamson College of the Trades, based on “the Judeo-Christian perspective that fosters the values of faith, integrity, diligence, excellence, and service.”⁴ Pastor David Bosley, a committed Christian minister and missionary, started Master’s Ranch, a home-based Christian ministry. Although it does not have organizational affiliation to any church or denomination, “Master’s Ranch is decidedly Christian, with morning devotions, counseling, and weekly church services” and “dedicated to the restoration and healing of families and their boys.”⁵

Year of establishment. The sample institutions have been in existence and serving the nation from eight years to more than a century. Crown School of Trades and Technology was launched in 2012 under the already-existent parent college, The Crown College, which was established in 1991. Williamson College of the Trades was founded in 1888, and Master’s Ranch was begun in 1997. The average years of existence of the three sample institutions are 54.3 years and the median is 23 years, with the oldest being established 132 years ago while the most recent was established just eight years ago.

³ Crown School of Trades and Technology, *Student Handbook/Catalog 2019–2020* (Powell, TN: Crown School of Trades and Technology, 2019), 5.

⁴ Williamson College of the Trades, “Williamson’s Mission,” *Student Handbook 2019–20* (Media, PA: Williamson College of the Trades, 2019), 4.

⁵ “About Us,” Master’s Ranch, accessed May 4, 2020, <https://mastersranch.org/about-us>.

Focus areas. The research population was selected according to the focus areas of their programs, which were vocational and skill-oriented training in various trades. Table 1 lists the trades/programs provided by the institutions. All three institutions concentrate on young students between thirteen to twenty-six years of age, with twenty years as the mean age. Most students hailed from challenging backgrounds, such as economically poor, behaviorally difficult, or academically marginalized. A school might specifically emphasize one of these concerns more than the others, though. While two institutions offered coeducation, the other one focused solely on the boys. One of the three institutions accepted students who were already Christians, with a required recommendation from the applicant’s pastor; the other two schools are open to all.

Table 1. Trades/programs offered by the institutions

<i>CSTT</i>	<i>WCT</i>	<i>MRCA</i>
Auto/Diesel Technology	Carpentry/Construction Technology	Agriculture and Animal Husbandry
Cosmetology	Horticulture, Landscaping, and Turf Management	Auto Mechanic
HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, and Air-Conditioning) Technology	Machine-Tool Technology	Brick Masonry
Welding Technology	Masonry/Construction Technology	Carpentry
	Paint and Coating Technology	Computer Basics
	Power-Plant Technology	Concrete
		Culinary Arts
		Electricals
		Plumbing
		Welding

Institutional capacity. Two of the three institutions had about 30–40 full-time and part-time staff each, with approximately four hundred on-campus students; one of

them had an additional hundred-plus online students. The third institution had a much smaller capacity, with fewer than ten staff members and about twenty-six students enrolled at a time. While two institutions charged an average program fee (including admission, tuition, and other academic-related fees) of fifteen hundred dollars per month, the other one offered its programs completely free. Two institutions had an annual budget of about ten million dollars, and the third institution had annual budget of approximately two million dollars in the last year. Dropout rates were extremely low, which means retention rates were high, except for one of the institutions with about 30 percent dropout rate in the last five years. The average postgraduation employment rate was 93 percent.

Table 2. Summary of demographic description

	<i>CSTT</i>	<i>WCT</i>	<i>MRCA</i>
Year of establishment	2012	1888	1997
Location	Powell, Tennessee	Media, Pennsylvania	Couch, Missouri
Church affiliation	Baptist	Independent	Independent
Number of focused programs	4	6	10 (offered at different times)
Number of full-time staff members	35	40	9
Number of part-time staff members	25	32	–
Number of students enrolled	500+	500	26
Retention rate	70%	80%	80%
Postgraduation employment rate	85%	97%	–

Protocol for Data Analysis

The process of data analysis, implementing HyperRESEARCH™ 4.5.0 software, involved four stages of qualitative study—organization, coding, analysis, and reporting. First and foremost, the researcher *organized*, compiled, and stored the data according to the compilation protocol as described above. All the source data were in text form stored in MS-Word file. Second, the researcher worked with the source data through the process of *coding*, either by supplying a standard list of terms for coding or allowing the source material to suggest codes for analysis—the researcher used some of both. In HyperRESEARCH, a code is a word or phrase that designates an idea. When coding, the application scanned the data sources for particular ideas and concepts, and labeled sections of the source material with codes that encapsulate those concepts. If a certain code relationship existed in a case, the Theory Builder function of the application automatically added a theme code to the case to indicate this relationship. The theme codes that expressed the ideas and concepts served as the basis for further *analysis*.

When analyzing, the researcher employed the code references created at the time of coding to tag sections of the source materials with codes. At this stage, the researcher attained conclusions about what the pattern of the coding and the recurring theme revealed about the data. This action was accomplished by searching code relationship, analyzing code frequency, and making a visual layout of the codes showing how they were related. Code lists, code matrixes, and other ways of visually presenting analysis and distribution of codes were included in the *reporting*, which was the final stage of qualitative study.

The researcher utilized “interpretational analysis,” the goal of which was identifying significant constructs, themes, and patterns that best made meaning of the data from the case study.⁶ When coding was achieved to construct initial categories, the

⁶ John Creswell described the process of interpretational analysis as “abstracting out the codes and themes to the larger meaning of the data. It is a process that begins with the development of the codes, the formation of themes from the codes, and then the organization of themes into larger units of abstraction

naming of the categories, codes, themes, or patterns came from three sources: the researcher, the participants' words, and the literature.⁷ Significant themes and patterns were grouped to answer the given research questions. Efficacy of the categories thus derived were tested throughout the entire data, so that the categories not merely “reflect the purpose of the research,” but were additionally “exhaustive,” “mutually exclusive,” “sensitizing,” and “conceptually congruent.”⁸

Data collected through document mining were used to triangulate the interview data. Triangulation is the convergence of data collected from multiple sources to confirm the emerging findings.⁹ The data were analyzed, first of all, for *within-case analysis*, in which “each case is treated as a comprehensive case in and of itself,” and then for *cross-case analysis*, “offering an integrated framework covering multiple cases.”¹⁰ The next section therefore presents the findings and displays of each of the three institutions individually, followed by a section on the summary of findings from the cross-case analysis.

Findings and Displays

The researcher presents in this section the findings from the analysis of the data triangulated from interview transcripts with the documents from the institutional literature for each of the three institutions. The analysis of the data was displayed in tables of code lists, figures, and selected direct quotes from the respondents as stated in the interview and as written in the institutional documents.

to make sense of the data.” John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2013), 187.

⁷ Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study*, 182.

⁸ Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study*, 184–85.

⁹ Yin, *Case Study Research*, 241; Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study*, 204.

¹⁰ Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study*, 194-95.

Qualitative research was a research method “for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe”¹¹ on a certain issue, which was Christian trade schools in this case. The findings were reported as the meaning institutions assigned to the issues pertaining to effective vocational training and discipleship. In addition, Sharan Merriam also asserts that “qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed”¹² based on the interactions and experiences they have in their world, in which meaning “is not discovered but constructed.”¹³ Consequently, this section focused on the lens of vocational institutions and their leaders as they constructed meaning of their experiences and ascribed to a framework for a competency-based, gospel-centered vocational institution.

Findings for each of the three institutions were presented first separately as *within-case*, and then combined as *cross-case*, according to the research questions. The main three research questions, which were directly connected to the three research objectives, respectively concerned the philosophy, pedagogy, and practice of Christian-based vocational institutions. The first question dealt with the educational philosophy that provided a framework for organization and administration of such institution. The second question concentrated on the pedagogical approaches that devised the instructional model and curriculum design. The third question concerned with practical application of the described model institution for transferability to other locations and contexts. Findings of the analysis pertaining to these three research questions were displayed for each institution, using this basic structural format.

¹¹ John W. Creswell and J. David Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 5th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2018), 4.

¹² Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study*, 6.

¹³ Merriam, *Qualitative Research: A Guide*, 22.

Crown School of Trades and Technology (CSTT)

Data-source materials for this institution included twenty-four pages of text materials collected from the school's website and thirteen pages of transcribed text from the 48:43 minutes-long interview with the vice president of CSTT (Interview A). The online mining of documents was performed during the months of April through June, 2020, and the Zoom interview was conducted June 25, 2020 (Thursday), at 2:00 PM (Eastern Daylight Time). These source materials were supplied to HyperRESEARCH for open coding. The coding process implemented a list of key terms or phrases both provided by the researcher, as well as suggested by the source material for analysis.

Key terms and phrases that demonstrated significant occurrences in the text and were thus used as codes included Bible study, Christian-based, committed leadership, competency-based, gospel-centered, integrity, ministry-focused, residential community, spiritual elements, spiritual foundation, and trade skills. These codes were applied to relevant categories based on the research questions. Five codes plainly described the respondent's educational philosophy and therefore furnished the institutional framework. Several codes indicated the pedagogy of the institution and ways the contents were delivered. A few other codes provided inferences for practical application and imitation.

Educational philosophy. CSTT's philosophy of education is clearly based on the Christian worldview. As a school established with a fundamental Baptist church, it unashamedly declared that "our philosophy grows out of our theology."¹⁴ The institution believed that the educational objective was "to develop the mind of Christ," for which "God's Word is the cornerstone," and "the supernatural work of God is necessary" to achieve that goal.¹⁵ The school leaders felt that a Christ-centered education provided the

¹⁴ "What We Believe," The Crown College, accessed May 8, 2020, <https://thecrowncollege.edu/about-crown/what-we-believe/>.

¹⁵ The Crown College, "What We Believe."

basis for all of life. Hence, the school offered to its students a foundation for all of life through Christ-centered education in trades and technology. This foundational philosophy of Christ-centeredness in education was expressed lucidly in its mission statement:

The mission of Crown College is to train men and women to follow the Lord Jesus Christ and to equip them to fulfill His purpose by providing education in which Christ is preeminent, and where the highest academics are united with ministry application for the sole purpose of glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ. This mission continues as graduates of the Crown College of the Bible train others.¹⁶

Another foundation on which Crown School of Trades and Technology built was the competency-based concept. The respondent explained that “competency-based means you don’t just have students take subject matters to get an average of ‘C’ to graduate, but they are actually competent in every skill they are required to perform in the given task, and confident in every step they’ll be doing on the job” (Interview A). The competency-based model was implemented in the CSTT auto/diesel, HVAC, cosmetology, and welding-technology programs.

The distinctiveness of CSTT was the combination of Christ-centeredness and competency-based in trade programs. It emphasized competency-based skill training for the students to be able to perform their given tasks at the workplace on the one hand, and the spiritual elements of knowing God and growing in Christ to be able to serve and glorify Him on the other. They are two prongs basically—excellent technical skills and faithful Christian life. They should go side by side in the teaching and learning process. And “faculty is the key to success of our education system” (Interview A). This commitment was perceived in the life of the faculty who were not only skilled instructors, but God-fearing servants. The same commitment was expected of the students:

So, when they graduate from our school, they cannot only be a great auto-technician or welder who serves their customers, but they’ll be a good member of a local church as a teacher, deacon, or whatever, and they’ll be supportive and reliable

¹⁶ “Mission & Objectives,” The Crown College, accessed April 22, 2020, <https://thecrowncollege.edu/about-crown/mission-objectives/>.

members in the community wherever they go (Interview A).

This twofold undergirding educational philosophy was described by the codes—Christian-based, competency-based, gospel-centered, spiritual foundation, and committed leadership—suggested by the text materials. Moreover, it was obvious in the pedagogical approaches displayed below.

Pedagogical approaches. The underpinning educational philosophy was substantiated in the pedagogical approaches defined by codes like Bible study, chapel, integrity, ministry-focused, residential community, spiritual elements, and trade skills. To begin with, CSTT was a selective institution—selective in admission of students. “And they do have to self-proclaim that they are Christian and get the pastor’s recommendation to get admission here” (Interview A). As a Christian trades school, the faculty possessed the liberty to share, teach, and mold the students in such a way that they had full authority and accountability, which were not always possible in other schools. The respondent noted how they instilled spiritual foundation in the students:

We have chapel three times every week, and they go to church services Sunday morning and Wednesday evening. And then they are involved in the ministry. We have Bible clubs in all the hostels, and they are involved in that. We have nursing homes, door-to-door evangelism, and soul-winning ministry. So, every student is involved in ministry one way or another. In the classrooms, they have the Christian foundation of 16–17 credit hours of Bible courses. And that includes the OT and NT Survey, Bible Doctrine I and II, Creation Science, Personal Evangelism, and Living the Christian Life taught by our pastor (Interview A).

The other distinctive feature of CSTT was the residential requirement for all students. Every student stayed on campus, and that fact made it possible for them to participate in the activities that enhanced spiritual growth. Devotional life, church attendance, and ministry participation were first and foremost of the general expectations for every student at Crown.¹⁷ CSTT leaders recognized that their students were right out

¹⁷ Crown School of Trades and Technology, “General Expectations,” *Student Handbook/Catalog 2018–2019* (Powell, TN: Crown School of Trades and Technology, 2018), 5.

of high school and, as such, they were susceptible to social and behavioral evils. Creating an environment that was conducive to both academic learning and spiritual growth was paramount. Having created such an environment, the respondent blatantly claimed that “our students don’t do drugs; they don’t even drink or smoke. They certainly have employability skills and good morals. They show up on time. They are honest people of integrity” (Interview A). This result was rooted in the “spiritual, educational, and social objectives” that the school laid out.¹⁸ It took the intentional efforts of preparing the students for both workplace competency and integrity.

When asked about the emphasis on either faith elements or skill competencies in the school’s learning objectives, the respondent replied:

Well, in careers, its about employability and making a good living. But the faith part is for eternity. You are impacting their life after death. There’s no career path that really prepares you for that. Many people focus on the here and now, on this earth. They work just for the paycheck and to get by the work. But most people hardly understand the eternal significance of what they do at their schools and workplaces. We prepare our students for both here and there (Interview A).

The school recognized the unique advantages of the trade-skills program for Christian missions since it opened up myriad avenues and doors for the gospel, which were otherwise closed. The respondent narrated a story of affirmation:

One of our welding graduates said that one of the main reasons he likes welding is he could be out at a workplace that was not likely to find Christians, because some of the employees may be kind of rough around the edges. But he was excited about the fact that he could be an influence and a positive example for people in the workplace (Interview A).

This was a rare opportunity created by a Christian-based, competency-based trades program, such as CSTT. The primary objective of the school for their students was “to enhance their Christian living and prepare them on how to use their skills in the workplace and in the community, and to be a viable Christian influence after they

¹⁸ “Mission & Objectives,” The Crown College, accessed April 22, 2020, <https://thecrowncollege.edu/about-crown/mission-objectives/>.

graduate” (Interview A). The twofold approach to training for both skill competencies and Christ-centered living, was deeply embedded in the pedagogy of the school.

Practical application—transferability. Committed-Christian-skilled faculty members, residential community, competency-based training, and Scripture-based teaching were the salient features of CSTT. While the competency-based model and residential requirement could be adopted almost everywhere, regardless of religion and location, Bible-based teaching and other spiritual elements necessitated explicit Christian-based commitment and administration. “There are just few private Christian colleges that have trades programs. And few other schools that have trades will teach Bible-based lessons” (Interview A). It was important that teachers had the freedom, along with the authority to train the students in a Christ-centered, Scripture-based environment. An overtly Christian-based institution could provide that freedom and authority.

CSTT accepts only Christian students. An individual seeking admission to Crown must be a professing Christian and should have a recommendation from his or her pastor. The respondent shared some thoughts about this requirement:

I don’t know if you are looking to bring in Christian students only, or you want to bring non-Christians into a Christian environment and influence them in some ways. That is something you would need to decide. Either way, if you require the students to take Bible-related lessons, then they have the opportunity to learn about those things once they get into the program. So, that’s okay (Interview A).

One important concern for practical application and transferability is the availability of committed-Christian-skilled faculty—skilled craftsmen who were able to teach and were devoted to Christian education and mission. According to the respondent, “At Crown, God provided good faculty. We rounded up some really good folks last summer. But that may not be possible everywhere all the time” (Interview A). As a result, dedicated leadership and faculty, along with Christian-based commitment and administration were critical areas for practical application and transferability.

Williamson College of the Trades (WCT)

An interview was held via Zoom with the president of the college for 53:56 minutes on May 20, 2020 (Wednesday), at 10:00 AM (Eastern Daylight Time). The recording of this interview was transcribed into a fourteen pages text document (Interview B). The data were triangulated with the thirty-two pages of text materials collected from the college website, student handbook, catalog, president’s report, and the strategic-planning document during April and May 2020. These documents were used as source materials and supplied to the HyperRESEARCH application.

The source materials were scanned for relevant ideas and concepts pertaining to the research questions and accordingly assigned codes both manually and automatically, utilizing the Autocode window for further analysis. Significant codes included accountability, Bible study, career fair, chapel, character building, committed leadership, competency-based, employability, excellence, faith-based, focus on poor children, free education, gospel-centered, integrity, residential community, role model, servant-leader, skills versus character, spiritual foundation, trades skills, and whole person. These codes were analyzed based on the categories relating to the three research purposes and corresponding research questions—educational philosophy, pedagogical approaches, and application–transferability. Some codes were clearly categorized, while many codes overlapped in two or three categories.

Educational philosophy. Meaningful codes relevant to the educational philosophy of WCT were precisely captured in the vision statement of the college. “Williamson develops the entire student, spiritually, socially, and professionally, emphasizing academic, trade, technical, and moral education in a structured community based on Judeo-Christian principles, without charging for tuition, room, or board.”¹⁹

¹⁹ Williamson College of the Trades, “Williamson’s Vision,” *2019–2020 Catalog* (Media, PA: Williamson College of the Trades, 2019), 3.

Williamson believes in the development of the entire person—spiritually, socially, and professionally—by integrating academic, technical, and moral education, which is a holistic approach to education. This holistic education, based on Judeo-Christian principles, was provided through a living environment of a structured residential community. Founder Isaiah V. Williamson envisioned this approach in 1888: “In this country every able-bodied, healthy young man who has learned a good mechanical trade, and is truthful, honest, frugal, temperate, and industrious, is certain to succeed in life, and to become a useful and respected member of society.”²⁰ Williamson believed in the integration of trades and faith to enhance skills plus character for the success of an entire person. This spirit was displayed in the college’s core values, which were “faith, integrity, diligence, excellence, and service.”²¹

Williamson thought that faith and spiritual foundation were as important, if not more significant, than the technical skills in the educational enterprise. That was why it was crucial to equip the students in their faith as much as they were readied for their trade skills. Elaborating on this fact, the respondent attested:

It is important to think about faith. If you focus on the things of the world as important, you’re gonna be disappointed. So, it’s much more than “I get a great job, I get a paycheck, I am buying all this stuff for myself, and I am living a good life.” It is about eternity. Faith is the key element of our character that develops to stay at Williamson that—yes, you got a degree; you got a good job. But you got to be a good husband; you are a good father. You serve the community; you are active in the church. It is the whole-person concept. So, it is not just about learning how to cut a wood, or a board, lay a brick. It’s about much bigger things (Interview B).

For WCT, education was training the entire person for bigger goal of eternity. Regarding eternal purpose, the respondent affirmed, “I believe that we are sent here for a purpose; part of it is to spread the Word of God and bring as many with us. And on the

²⁰ Williamson College of the Trades, *2019–2020 Catalog*, 8.

²¹ Williamson College of the Trades, *2019–2020 Catalog*, 3. See also “Williamson at-a-Glance,” Williamson College of the Trades, accessed April 3, 2020, <https://www.williamson.edu/about/>.

final day, we are accountable to God to give a report” (Interview B). For this reason, at Williamson, skills without character or trades devoid of faith were deficient education. The college was committed to preparing the students for both work competency and integrity—for both skills and character. When it came to teaching skills and character, the respondent posited: “Skills are easy. You can teach in the classrooms ways to use the equipment, how to use the tools and machines, and all that stuff. Character building is a little different. The kids need structure and discipline to develop that kind of character, which can only happen in a community” (Interview B).

Williamson considered residential community as vital and foundational to a holistic education. WCT was a residential school. Every student lived on campus and was required to attend the 7:30 AM morning chapel every day. The relationship and character enhancement among the students due to the residential requirement were significant.

Reflecting on the residential-education model, the president of the college commented:

I tell people that Williamson will not work if it was a commuter school. In other colleges, you show up if you want to. If you don’t, nobody cares. But our guys are in a community; they live there. So, from morning when they get up, they are with each other in the dorms, in the classrooms. I believe the secret to why we graduate with such a high percentage is because they are immersed in the quality and community. They are leaning on each other; they are encouraging each other. It is not like you are checking in and checking out. You know, we call it “a thousand-day journey.” In three years, a thousand days, they journey together. These guys, when they graduate, are so close to each other. They are in each other’s weddings. They have a reunion of classes, fifty-year reunion. They are like brothers, more than just classmates, because of the time they spend together in this environment (Interview B).

He continued, “The more important thing is the character they developed while on campus. That when they are hired, they do well in their job. The reputation of Williamson is that our graduates are trusted, they are accountable, and they are reliable” (Interview B). Thus, faith and spiritual foundation through Judeo-Christian principles; training of the whole person; integration of academic, technical, and moral education; and residential community constitute the undergirding educational philosophy of WCT.

Pedagogical approaches. How did WCT deliver the kind of education it envisioned? What were the educational methodologies and instructional tools it employed to achieve the students' learning objectives? With the college's reputation of more than 125 years, the president of the college answered these questions in one paragraph:

Our students learn their trade in the classroom and shop, as well as through practical, hands-on projects on and off campus. Academic classes provide students with a fundamental understanding of mathematics, communications, and business, among other subjects. Technical instruction related to each student's major is designed to provide the knowledge essential to perform and succeed in industry. And all of the formal education is complemented by a lifestyle education—enforced through the college's rules and procedures—designed to teach the importance of professional behavior, including being punctual, dressing properly, working hard, and maintaining a positive attitude. All of this takes place in community, where friendships that last a lifetime are formed.²²

The method described above could be summarized as a combination of academic classes and technical instruction, accompanied by a lifestyle education strengthened through structured community. The respondent reiterated that “the combination of excellent trade skills combined with character, work ethic, and leadership, is what sets Williamson apart. . . . This combination of technical, academic, and values education is what makes Williamson's approach so successful.”²³ It was the integration of faith, academic, and trades in the pedagogy of training.

Learning objectives for WCT students included mastery of the trades, craftsmanship, character building, and leadership skills. When they graduate, they not simply have acquired excellent skills in the trades in which they major, but they are equally reliable, dependable, and trustworthy in their job and life. The key terms that fostered these objectives were residential community, chapel, Bible study, role modeling, servant-leader, spiritual foundation, trades skills, and career fair.

²² “Letter from the President,” Williamson College of the Trades, accessed April 3, 2020, <https://www.williamson.edu/about/president/>.

²³ Williamson College of the Trades, “Letter from the President.”

The requirement for every student to live on campus contributed significantly in implementing the pedagogical approaches. It was a subtle, yet powerful, tool that leveraged the holistic training of the entire person. Chapel was one of the primary activities toward achieving that end. “Opportunity begins at chapel in the morning. I mean, that’s weird. Even in Christian colleges, I am not sure, but I guess not many of them start their schools with chapel every day. But, we do, and it is part of our culture that kind of sinks in, and sinks into their life” (Interview B). “Chapel services emphasize ethical and spiritual values presented from a Judeo-Christian perspective,” and are a vital part of the college’s program.²⁴ Furthermore, students could participate in evening Bible studies and campus ministries. The respondent emphasized:

It is usually two years for associate programs in the U.S. The reason that we made three years for our associate programs is because half the time is spent in the workshop and chapel working on skills development and character building; the other half is spent on the academic requirements of associate degrees. And the residency requirement made it possible to achieve this (Interview B).

All the leaders and faculty were committed to this concerted effort. They did it not merely as a rule of thumb, but passionately as it was their calling. “People who come here understand, and are passionate about, the mission we have. Some of them never had such a thing in the past. So, whether you’re a math teacher, a machine instructor, or a kitchen cook, they all feel that their number-one job is to be a role model, to be a good example” (Interview B). The people’s spiritual maturity made it possible. The leaders realized what a person believes influences how one leads—faith influences work. That was true for the students, as well. About leadership, the respondent confessed, “There is no leadership example better than Jesus Christ—the guy who shepherds, the guy who washed the feet of the disciples, a servant-leader” (Interview B). “Imitate me, as I imitate Christ” was the role-modeling pattern at WCT (1 Cor 11:1).

²⁴ Williamson College of the Trades, *Student Handbook 2019-20*, 16.

For the competency and skill-development aspects, Williamson utilized “Career Fair” as a tool to reach its goal of producing faithful workers with skills and character. In the process, industry-related people were brought in and asked what should be taught for students to be able to perform well. The curriculum contents and focus were determined based on the industry leaders’ responses to that request. One of the replies was that “specific skills are less important than the character assets that I really want to see when I hire somebody” (Interview B). WCT was sensitive to the actual needs of the industry, and they knew what the employers were seeking. The president proudly mentioned,

We have two Career Fairs per year, where companies will hire our guys. Last year, we had close to two hundred companies from twenty different states. We only had seventy-five seats, and so most of our graduates had the job opportunities to choose. This allows all our graduates to start their career debt-free. What I love about it is that these young men not only have the competence the companies are looking for, but they have the confidence in their character and other qualities (Interview B).

He went on to say, “Career Fair is a great opportunity to connect with companies, and we have established good rapport with them” (Interview B). It probably took some time to establish such a relationship. It was, however, not impossible with competency-based training directed toward industry needs and demands.

Practical application—transferability. Residential, chapel, Bible-based lessons, character building, role modeling, competency-based, industry-sensitive, and career fair were the key terms and phrases that governed the pedagogical approaches of WCT. Are they all transferable? Residential schools normally required much larger investments than do commuter schools. WCT offered 100 percent free tuition, room, and board for every student.²⁵ This ability might not be feasible everywhere all the time. Because of the vitality of the residential community in achieving the unique vision, though, WCT stressed the school being residential. The respondent explained the

²⁵ Williamson College of the Trades, *2019–2020 Catalog*, 3.

viability of a residential school.

I think to start something like Williamson and put together things on something like it is now will cost at least 500 million dollars. And that's a lot of money to invest in a small school. So, I think, not necessarily, the school needs to be tuition-free, but you can charge some tuition and do a lot better in the financial matters. Nevertheless, the residency requirement is critical to make it happen (Interview B).

Regular chapel, Bible-study, and ministry activities that enhanced character building were made possible in a dynamic residential community. The conducive environment of the residential community fostered intentional discipling and mentoring. Staff and faculty spent maximum time with the students. That was crucial because “working at Williamson is not just checking the boxes, but to help these kids in learning by example” (Interview B). Role modeling, or leading by example, was a vital part of Christ-centered, competency-based education that could be adopted everywhere.

Organizing a career fair might not be as effective, or even as feasible everywhere, as it was for WCT, depending on the industrial presence and employment market in the region. Nonetheless, institutions should attempt to identify opportunities and prepare students to meet the needs and demands of the context. For instance,

God has given us rich natural resources in our region. We have huge forest land where raw materials like timber, wood, cane, and bamboos are readily available for carpentry, woodwork, and handicrafts. We also have fertile land for farming and horticulture, and animal husbandry. We can appreciate those advantages and recognize the opportunities for entrepreneurship. There is certainly great possibility of replicating the model into such context (Interview B).

Concerning the possibility of replicating the WCT model, the president claimed that “we've already seen people who came to imitate our model. Here are the things they thought were important—faith-based, all-male, residential, small, and personal. And the values that they think are more important are the residential community and character of the students than the skills that they're going to learn” (Interview B). Most of the WCT features were practically applicable to any given context.

Master's Ranch and Christian Academy (MRCA)

Relevant data collected through the mining of documents during May and June 2020, from the institution's website, were filtered based on the research objectives and research questions. Additionally, a video interview was conducted on Zoom with the founder and director of the academy on June 27, 2020 (Saturday), at 2:00 PM (Central Daylight Time), for 55:28 minutes. The recording was transcribed for a nineteen-page document (Interview C). This transcript was assembled with the twenty-page text prepared from data mining and run through the HyperRESEARCH for analysis.

The application scanned for key words or phrases from the source materials, which designated significant ideas and concepts with respect to the research questions, and they were assigned as codes. Important codes included advantage of trade programs, Bible study, chapel, character building, Christian-based, competency-based, discipleship, family, gospel-centered, industry-standard, poor and hurting people, residential community, spiritual foundation, sustainability, and whole person. Although they often appeared overlap, these codes were categorized exclusively according to the research questions, which were analyzed as relating to educational philosophy, pedagogical approaches, and practical application for transferability.

Educational philosophy. Several codes described the educational philosophy of the institution, which was obviously based on the biblical worldview, with its basis on faith in Jesus Christ. In its educational enterprise, MRCA believes that:

Every child has a faith journey he or she must make. They have a spiritual nature and need a moral foundation for a successful life. The emphasis here will be to encourage your child to develop their own personal relationship with Jesus Christ, through His Word and prayer, and then to begin to allow God to mold his or her character into the person He wants him to be. We will attempt to model this in front of your child by living as honest and exemplary lives as we can. Then, through Bible study, church attendance, and devotions that are real and exciting, provide the information and inspiration your child can connect with on their own.²⁶

²⁶ "Life on the Boys' Ranch," Master's Ranch, accessed May 24, 2020,

Using vocational education, the academy built its foundation on the hope that was found in God through Christian-based home and trade programs. According to the website, “We work under the simple philosophy of giving the kids something they don’t want to lose. Whether that be the hope for an exciting future, a trade that they love, or a fresh new start in life, boys leave here with a new purpose and desire to be responsible men of God.”²⁷ As MRCA concentrated on the poor and hurting people—“homeless children, or children with behavioral difficulties, or kids from broken families that just had nowhere to go” (Interview C)—a new purpose and hope in life were critical for them. MRCA offered a new beginning in their life through skills and activities, and a new hope for the future through faith in Christ and discipleship.

MRCA believed in the development of the whole being as spirit, soul, and body. Quoting Paul’s prayer in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 “May your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again,” the respondent stated:

We work on their body with physical fitness just like a military boot camp would. We work on their soul with a lot of counseling, anger management, and all that. But for those who would allow us, their spiritual health just encapsulates the whole thing. They’re very eager to let me work with the first two. But they have to let me get involved with the spiritual side. When I get a kid to focus on a triunity of health—spirit, soul, and body— that is when we get the most success (Interview C).

The respondent claimed that about 95 percent of the children embraced all three of those within a year or two. When they did that, they had a healthy physical life; they had skills and expertise in one or several trades that would give them a career; and they know and love the Lord. When one of the elements was absent, the respondent lamented, “Some boys have to graduate from here, never accepting the gospel. Very few, but occasionally. And I love them, and we try to give them as many skills for manhood as we can. But I am not embarrassed to tell them—look, you’re running a three-cylinder

<https://mastersranch.org/boys-ranch>.

²⁷ Master’s Ranch, “About Us.”

motor on two cylinders right now” (Interview C). MRCA worked essentially from a trichotomous perspective, which contended that the physical aspect connects individuals with the physical world around them; the soul is the essence of their being; and the spirit connects them with the Lord. With this understanding, it adopted a holistic approach to vocational education that addressed all aspects of human personhood.

Pedagogical approaches. To ensure holistic development of the entire person through vocational education, MRCA organized numerous physical activities; focused on mastery of the trades; and emphasized spiritual knowledge and growth. The ranch is located at a natural setting for healthy physical activities, and “the boys frequently go off-site for camping, fishing, and hunting. Some of the boys participate in football, track, and basketball.”²⁸ The students additionally experience a number of interactions with both the creation and creatures. About working with animals, the website reads, “We have seen the value of connecting kids to animals. Children not only learn responsibility as they care for something that needs them, but they also make emotional connections. We will do this through horses, cows, pigs, chicken, and dogs.”²⁹ The academy organized various activities and programs intentionally to help the kids develop physically and emotionally.

Stress on the physical and spiritual growth did not undermine concentration on the intellectual and academic development—in this case, a competency-based training for skills in varied trades. Mentioning the different aspects, the respondent observed that “we have learned that vocational trades are the way to build the manhood and character side of the boy, while the gospel, of course, secures the spiritual nature of the boy” (Interview C). Dwelling on the significance of trade skills for the success of the kids, he added:

To me, as a pastor, I wish I could simply say—he is saved; he went to Bible college; he married a Christian girl; he became a deacon in the church; he taught Sunday

²⁸ Master’s Ranch, “About Us.”

²⁹ Master’s Ranch, “Life on the Boys’ Ranch.”

school; and he is living for Jesus the rest of his life. But he had to also provide for his family, raise children, and face life challenges—for which he had to find a job, work, and earn. And I realized how limited we are sometimes in our approach. You know, because of the approach, sometimes the gospel is limited and confined within the four walls of the church, and we cannot go beyond that. But if we come from this vocational approach, physical and economic approach along with the gospel, there are huge opportunities for evangelism and great prospects for effective Christian education. And honestly, brother, that is exactly what Jesus did; that's what Paul did; that is what the disciples did (Interview C).

So, what did the vocational programs seek to accomplish? What were the qualities or competencies that the institution wanted to identify in those kids at the end of their program, when they graduate and go out into the world? Several goals were noted:

The first one is what we call the industry standard—the big-three industry standard: (1) that the boy is healthily united with his family—the family has lost their loved one, and their last resort is to let somebody else raise their boy for a year or two to reclaim them as part of their family. (2) that they are positively moving forward in the right direction, whether that is in their education or in their vocation. In other words, they have caught up in their credits and are now doing well in the school or job and moving forward with great plans in their life. (3) that they are no longer involved in negative, criminal, or self-destructive behavior—they have quit smoking, drinking, and drugs, and walked away from all those criminal behaviors. The second goal is that of spiritual life—that they come to know Jesus Christ as their savior and Lord; they will be baptized; and that they are plugged in to a local church, wherever they're gonna move back (Interview C).

To achieve these objectives, MRCA made every student attend chapel services and Bible study while Sunday worship and prayer meetings were encouraged, but not required. Besides providing specific trade-skill programs based on each boy's interest, nonformal training was offered as well through mentoring, modeling, and counseling. Learning happened in a relational context, and vocational training is the platform to make it happen. MRCA possesses a unique approach to these training aspects:

I am a counselor. But I never counsel in a couch or chair in an office. I do it in my sawmill, at the construction site, out in a fishing boat, or somewhere in a vocational setting, where the boys are begging to be on my crew. And then they listen to anything and everything that I eventually have to say. Then I start sharing the gospel of Christ when they're ready (Interview C).

A residential context made all these activities and encounters possible. The

boys lived at the ranch during their program for an average of about eighteen months; some boys lived there for six years. “Imagine the kind of a captive audience—seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day. We got a lot of opportunities to be with them, and that is the key to mentorship and training” (Interview C). Residential community was a vital component of the MRCA that strategically contributed to its pedagogy.

Practical application—transferability. Codes pertaining to applicability and transferability of the MRCA model included chapel, Bible study, discipleship, family, focus on poor children, residential, and sustainability. Theological and philosophical foundations—such as Christian-based, competency-based, gospel-centered, and holistic development of the entire person—should essentially be practical at all times and places.

Concentrating on poor and hurting children, with fractured-family backgrounds was one of the distinctions that set apart MRCA. Single parents either adopted or raised most of the boys if they were not in an orphanage. The director affirmed,

They come from dysfunctional families; and oftentimes they have a skewed view of family; and they don’t have attachment. My boys don’t volunteer to come here; their parents do. So, it’s not like a young man paid to go to trade school because he wants to learn. He is aimless, rebellious, and hopeless. And he’s chosen drugs, alcohol or something else (Interview C).

This context was most likely found in Majority World countries, as well. The goal of the vocational-education ministry was not solely about the boy’s career, but the restoration of the broken family. How did MRCA work toward this objective? Master’s Ranch comprehended that it was impossible without the gospel; thus gospel-centered education. A master was required for that purpose. “And the Master is Jesus. Jesus sat on the wild-ass colt. And it was calmed instantly because the Master sat on him. These boys are all the wild asses that I get. And I am trying to help them see the Master tame them” (Interview C). The respondent remarked about the parents, “Half of our parents are not Christians. They want their boy better. But they don’t want him coming home converted, and going to church and start talking about Jesus. What they need to see is the power of

the gospel that transformed their boy” (Interview C). Applying this approach to other places, he asserted,

What I see in Myanmar, and this could be true to India, as well, is that the vocational side is the bait on the hook that’s gonna get a lot of people to come. You’re gonna do a lot of good in your community. But, more than that, you’re gonna get long-term access to these people and open the door for the gospel that very few other things could do. The traditional evangelism could not do. I think you also will allow government officials to turn a blind eye to the gospel mission and not be offended by that because you are doing so much good for the community. But your goal is the gospel (Interview C).

MRCA implemented this approach, recognizing the advantage of trade programs for Christian education and missions—gaining access for the gospel, employing vocational education as the platform. The biggest challenge here, though, “is finding the human resources. Men and women with not only the skill set, but the heart to serve with the kind of patience and sacrifice needed to work within the budget that a guy like me could provide” (Interview C). So, a transferable approach is the strategy for sustainability. The respondent declared, “Eventually, the kids will be trained and, if they’re locals, they can then start giving back by you starting a business there. And now, you got a furniture business, and welding business, an IT business. Whatever God gives you for training people, if you find a way to turn that into a local business, you not only find employment for your students, but also bring sustainable support to your ministry” (Interview C). MRCA utilized the sustainable-ministry model for vocational training to reach poor and hurting people with the gospel. This approach is crucial to overseas missions just as he lamented:

I am really disillusioned after forty years in the ministry. I am disillusioned by what I call “British colonial missionary model,” where we train a guy to preach, and he knows nothing but the gospel. He doesn’t know the language; he doesn’t know the people; he doesn’t have a vocation, besides being a missionary. We put him on deputation and, five years later he got five thousand a month coming in. We’ve got half a million invested in this missionary. He shows up, but he can’t do anything once he gets there. And then he sets up a compound, and he stays different from the nationals the entire time he’s there. I’ve had enough of that (Interview C).

Summary of the Findings

Following the researcher's presentation of the within-case analysis for each of the three institutions, this section summarizes the findings, by way of cross-case analysis, offering an integrated framework covering the three cases.

Table 3: Codes (key words and phrases) occurrences

<i>Code (key word and phrase)</i>	<i>Number of occurrences in the text</i>			
	<i>CSTT</i>	<i>WCT</i>	<i>MRCA</i>	<i>Total</i>
Character building	5	6	7	18
Spiritual foundation	7	5	5	17
Residential community	3	6	4	13
Bible study	4	5	3	12
Competency-based education	5	4	2	11
Gospel-centered	5	2	4	11
Chapel	4	3	3	10
Advantage of trade programs for the gospel	2	2	6	10
Employability	3	4	2	9
Focus on poor and hurting children	1	3	5	9
Committed leadership	3	3	2	8
Holistic development of the entire person	2	3	3	8
Industry standard	2	4	2	8
Role modeling	1	3	4	8
Skills plus character	2	4	2	8
Family-oriented	1	1	5	7
Ministry-focused	4	3	0	7
Sustainability	1	2	4	7
Career Fair	1	4	0	5
Discipleship	2	0	2	4
Excellence	0	3	1	4
Integrity	1	3	0	4
Free education	0	3	0	3

Codes were the primary indicators of the text analyses. A code is a word or phrase that designates an idea presenting vital themes and patterns in the source texts.

The Autocoding feature of HyperRESEARCH automatically searched for specific words or phrases that expressed the same idea or concept and assigned the codes to each occurrence. Important codes that appeared significantly in the source materials were listed in Table 3 above in an ascending order of number of occurrences. While the researcher recognized some unique, essential codes with lower scores, codes with a high number of occurrences suggested important ideas and concepts for the institutions. A number of occurrences in every individual case illustrated the significant pattern and theme that run through all the schools. Themes and patterns occurred in the source data were presented with the categories pertaining to the research questions in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Themes and patterns identified in the three institutions

<i>Categories</i>	<i>Themes and patterns</i>	<i>CSTT</i>	<i>WCT</i>	<i>MRC</i>
Educational philosophy	Education based on biblical worldview	x	x	x
	Skills plus character	x	x	x
	Gospel-centered	x	x	x
	Advantage of trade programs for evangelism	x	x	x
	Competency-based education	x	x	x
	Holistic development of the entire person	x	x	x
Pedagogical approaches	Residential community	x	x	x
	Chapel and Bible study	x	x	x
	Nontrade-related lessons	x	x	x
	Ministry involvement	x		x
	Hands-on mentoring		x	x
	Career Fair	x	x	
	Role modeling, leading by example	x	x	x
	Classroom plus workshop	x	x	x
Practical application – transferability	Residential	x	x	x
	Focus on poor and needy people	x	x	x
	Committed leadership, skilled Christians	x	x	x
	Only Christian	x		
	Free tuition, room, and board		x	
	All-male		x	x

Several themes and patterns that emerged in all three cases defined the educational philosophy in which these schools believed. They were discovered to be the undergirding foundations on which the Christian trade schools operate. Moreover, several other themes and patterns were identified that described the pedagogical approaches the institutions utilized to accomplish their objectives within that philosophy. Some of the significant themes were not actually patterns that were present in all the cases; yet, they were identified as uniquely important because they contributed greatly to accomplishing either the institution's philosophy or pedagogy. Furthermore, similar themes and patterns were perceived in the practical-application category, which the researcher observed to be vital for transferability. Themes and patterns were clearly suggestive of the educational framework of the institutions being studied in this research.

Based on the above tables and textual analyses displayed in this chapter, a framework model for a competency-based, gospel-centered vocational institution is hereby proposed with the following categories. Following are the key elements that characterize a Christian trade school one needs to consider for the establishment and the effective implementation of a competency-based, gospel-centered vocational institution.

1. Provide vocational education based on a biblical worldview, which essentially believes—that God is the author of wisdom and knowledge, the ultimate goal of education is Christlikeness, and the Holy Spirit enables achievement of that goal.
2. Concentrate on the holistic development of the entire person—spirit, soul, and body—recognizing the pupils and the staff as human beings created in God's image.
3. Emphasize skills and character equally by equipping students for both mastery of their trade and confidence in their Christian walk with Jesus.
4. Train students to ensure competency in the tasks they undertake at their job or home after graduation and perform well with a Christian work ethic and attitude.
5. Recognize the advantage of vocational training for Christian missions and evangelism, and empower students for gospel-centered vocational discipleship.
6. Design and deliver Bible-saturated curriculum, which meets industry-standard contents with subtly crafted scriptural verses and principles.

7. Offer maximum avenues for spiritual encounters and growth through chapel, Bible study, prayer meeting, counseling, role modeling, and other discipleship activities by creating a conducive environment with a residential requirement.
8. Serve such an identified, focused audience as the poor and needy students, being sensitive to their needs for guidance, care, and hope.
9. Create opportunities for students to utilize their skills and passions by connecting what they do with what they believe through ministry involvement.
10. Establish a continued relationship with and among students through a sustainable career-enhancement plan, spiritual mentoring, and accountability.

Encapsulating all these characteristics, a framework model for a competency-based, gospel-centered vocational education is presented in graphic form below.

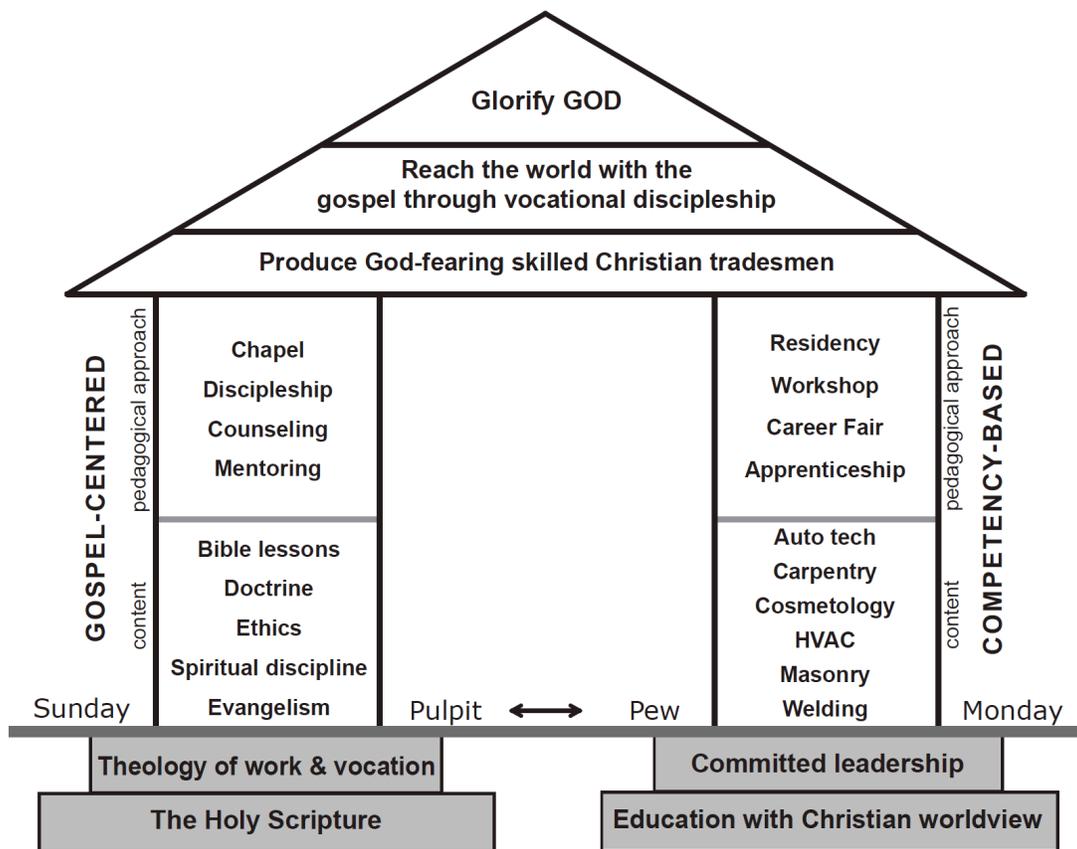


Figure 2. Framework model for a competency-based, gospel-centered vocational institution

Evaluation of the Research Design

This research was a qualitative, multicase study of three Christian trade schools to determine what comprises a competency-based, gospel-centered vocational institution in terms of its philosophy, pedagogy, and practice by analyzing the data gathered through mining of documents and interviews of the institutions' key leaders. This section presents an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of this research design.

The use of multiple cases allowed the researcher “to make comparisons, build theory or propose generalizations”³⁰ that were particularly suitable for constructing a framework model of a gospel-centered vocational institution. Moreover, the multicase-study method was appropriate because it helped to answer research questions that were descriptive in nature, which was describing the key features characterizing a competency-based, gospel-centered vocational institution. The design aptly fit into gaining an in-depth understanding of the phenomena being investigated—ascribed by the institutions and their leaders to the educational issues—thereby provided important themes as markers and strategies for replication.

Another strength of the research design was its focused population, which was Christian-based trades and technology schools in the United States. Within this description, the sample represented a 132-year-old established college, an eight-year-old thriving trade school, and a twenty-three-year-old home-based academy with track records in training difficult boys. This range of experience within the focused population created a viable triangulation of data and its findings. Additionally, the two components of data collection—mining of documents and interviewing of key leaders—helped test the validity through the data convergence from different sources and checked the consistency of the findings.

³⁰ Paul D. Leedy and Jeanne Ellis Ormrod, *Practical Research: Planning and Design*, 11th ed. (New York: Pearson, 2016), 253.

The data sources were highly authentic since they were collected through (1) officially published documents of the institutions, including school catalogs, student handbooks, syllabi, official reports, and website contents, and (2) key leaders of the institution—president, vice president, and founder-director—who best represented the schools with their first-hand knowledge and experiences. This was also a great strength of the research design.

Some of the weaknesses of this design lay in the fact that case studies provided a great amount of text-rich data that needed to be categorized and organized before analysis. Data collection—especially mining of documents—involved huge amount of text from website contents, student handbooks, catalogs, syllabi, and other institutional documents. It was hard to accurately filter the text related to the research questions to ensure precise representation of the data for the purpose of the research. Adequately described delimitations of the research assisted in overcoming these difficulties. Furthermore, some limitation existed in using the HyperTRANSCRIBE® for transcribing the interviews as the software did not have an auto-transcribe feature. The researcher had to employ multiple means to quickly and accurately transcribe the interview recordings. Although HyperRESEARCH® was a powerful tool for text analysis, especially with its “autocoding” function, it was daunting to learn to proficiently utilize all the tools that accompanied 176 pages of tutorial information.

Because of its focused population and the specificity of the selected participants, who were key leaders of the institutions—president, vice president, founder, director, or dean of the school—it was extremely difficult to receive responses and set up appointments for interviews. It took an average of three months from the first invitation letters to the completion of the interviews. With the number of the sample population, a lack of response from even one institution would be a 33.3 percent failure of data collection. After the initial communication breakthrough, however, participants were exceedingly kind and supportive, which resulted to a hundred percent response.

Another weakness of this design was the gap between the contexts of the institution being studied—United States, and the contexts perceived for replication of the model— Majority World countries. Many of the educational contexts were not relevant. For instance, trade programs—such as cosmetology, HVAC, or organizing career fair— might not do well in a rural context. Areas existed in which respondents were not able to bridge the gap for transferability. Conducting a similar study in the same contexts would probably overcome this weakness.

The extraordinary circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 crisis greatly hindered the research process. This research was conducted during the global pandemic of 2020 due to the coronavirus, and solely the grace of God overcame the aggravated challenges. Overall, the researcher was pleased with the research design, the research-collection methods, and the data-analysis process, with a few caveats for future adaptation of the study.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

This research study aimed to construct a framework model for a competency-based, gospel-centered vocational education that addresses the vocational-training and discipleship issues presented in the first chapter. The literature review in the second chapter provided a theoretical backdrop for research to build the anticipated model. The review revealed that—despite the efforts given so far to integrate faith, work, and mission in Christian education—an apparent gap still exists in identifying a prescriptive model for vocational training and discipleship based on the descriptive framework of work and mission. This vacuum necessitated an empirical study, using the methodology described in the third chapter to determine what constitutes an institutional model for bridging the observed gap. The analyses and findings of the qualitative study were presented in the fourth chapter with a proposed framework model ultimately proposed for a competency-based, gospel-centered vocational institution. According to the specific findings of the study pertaining to the three research questions, the conclusion was drawn with implications to apply the recommended model in the Majority World context.

This chapter concludes with the research implications, research application, research limitations, and recommendation for further research. To present these concluding remarks, it is helpful to restate the research purpose and research questions.

Purpose Statement

The primary purpose of this study was exploring resources for modeling a competency-based, gospel-centered vocational institution with the following objectives:

1. To construct a basic framework for organization and administration of a gospel-centered vocational institution.

2. To describe an approach to a faith-based and competency-based instructional model and curriculum design.
3. To apply the description to a real-world context of the researcher's country.

Research Questions

The main research question was: What are the key features characterizing a competency-based, gospel-centered vocational institution? This question generated a series of sub-questions, three of which were connected to the research purpose and were the focus of this study:

1. How can vocational education provide opportunities and prepare students for gospel-centered work and vocation?
2. What learning objectives and competencies need to be addressed in the curriculum to equip students for workplace evangelism and discipleship?
3. How can such an institutional model be transferred to, and effectively implemented in, Manipur, Northeast India?

Research Implications

Research implications were drawn to indicate how the findings of this study may be important for policy, theory, practice, and further studies. Based on the findings from the analysis of the research, the following implications are listed.

1. There is a viable *institutional framework* for competency-based, gospel-centered vocational education, which could be utilized to bridge the existing gap between Christian education and vocational discipleship.
2. *Educational philosophy* based on a Christian worldview with a competency-based concept is most suitable for gospel-centered vocational training and discipleship.
3. Bible courses and spiritual disciplines are deeply embedded and subtly crafted, in the *curriculum contents* besides the trade-related courses of the vocational schools.
4. The requirement for residency greatly enhances the *pedagogical approach*, which ensures the delivery of the curriculum contents within the educational philosophy.

5. The institutional model proposed through this study could be *transferred to and implemented in* Christian trade schools in other contexts with minimal adaptations.

Institutional Framework

Implication 1: There is a viable institutional framework for competency-based, gospel-centered vocational education, which could be utilized to bridge the existing gap between Christian education and vocational discipleship. The introductory chapter and the literature review of this thesis detected the need for a well-expressed institutional and pedagogical model that concentrates on both the gospel and competency. The model was intended to effect a meaningful intersection of faith and vocation as biblical missions, and to bridge what has been noticed as the “Sunday-Monday gap” or “pulpit-pew gap,” which is essentially the gap between Christian education and vocational discipleship.¹

The qualitative multicase study of the three sample-population indeed provided a viable framework for a competency-based, gospel-centered vocational institution. This framework focused on the essential components of a higher educational institution—educational philosophy, pedagogical approach, and practical application. The findings of this study advocated a philosophy of education based on the biblical worldview and competency-based concept for vocational training. This philosophy is appropriated in the pedagogical approach by incorporating Bible studies and spiritual disciplines besides the trade-related courses delivered within a conducive environment of residential community. This study offered a prospect for application of the philosophy and pedagogy to vocational trade schools both in the United States and abroad.

Historically, with the resurgent awareness of the significance of work and vocation in Christian life and missions, vital efforts had been made recently in solidifying the theology of work and developing missional approach through vocation. However, no

¹ This issue is thoroughly discussed as the research problem pertaining to secular vocational education, the seminary education loophole, the Sunday-Monday gap, and helping without hurting in the first chapter.

empirical research had been conducted to establish what comprises Christian vocational training in terms of its philosophy, pedagogy, and practice. This study resulted in new insights to ascertaining just that, thereby providing key elements for building an institutional framework for a competency-based, gospel-centered vocational education. The suggested model could be employed for bridging the existing gap between Christian education and vocational discipleship.

Educational Philosophy

Implication 2: Educational philosophy based on a Christian worldview with a competency-based concept is most suitable for gospel-centered vocational training and discipleship. Philosophy is “a basic constituent in the foundation of educational practice,” and “philosophic beliefs determine the basic goals of education.”² The study revealed that each of the three sample institutions possesses an undergirding educational philosophy rooted in a biblical worldview, which is the basis of their success. All three respondents emphasized the vitality of that philosophy for continued propagation and achievement of the institutions’ objectives. The institutions set up their foundations on the scriptural worldview, which essentially contends that God is the author of wisdom and knowledge; the Word of God is the primary reference of truth and knowledge; the ultimate goal of education is Christlikeness; the Holy Spirit enables the accomplishment of that goal; students are created in God’s image; and the call for every Christian is glorifying God.

The institutions also stressed the competency-based approach to vocational training. They focused on the mastery of the trade being learned, so that the students would be confident and efficient in the given tasks on the job or at home after their graduation. Competency-based education was evident in the trade schools’ emphasis on apprenticeship, hands-on mentoring, industry standard, employability, career fair, and

² George R. Knight, *Philosophy and Education* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2006), 33 and 36.

classroom plus workshop. The school's commitment to its students was that on successful completion of the program, "they are actually competent and they are able to perform" at their workplace (Interview A). Equipping students for their industry-specific skills for a given task or field is the distinctiveness of vocational training.

The study discovered the institutions' undergirding philosophy founded on both a Christian worldview and a competency-based concept. Both views were not simply present, but the balance of the two was underscored. Their programs equally emphasized skills and character by equipping students for both mastery in the trades and confidence in their Christian walk with Jesus Christ. The findings of the study inferred that educational philosophy based on a biblical worldview and competency is most suitable for gospel-centered vocational training and discipleship.

Curriculum Contents

Implication 3: Bible courses and spiritual disciplines are deeply embedded and subtly crafted, in the curriculum contents besides the trade-related courses of the vocational schools. Curriculum contents followed the prescribed industry standard and were structured as the accrediting agency directed. Each program possessed specific course contents and components carefully listed in the course syllabi, which were made available for access. Besides these syllabi, the institutions had nontrade-related sections, which the study revealed as indispensable for the success of the program.

These components included Bible courses and nonacademic activities that enhanced spiritual disciplines. Surveys of both the Old and New Testaments, basic Christian doctrines, scriptural mandate for missions and evangelism, and spiritual-disciplines courses were taught in formal classrooms as part of the programs. These credited courses were required for graduation with assigned letter grades. Other activities—such as chapel, prayer meeting, Sunday worship, group Bible study, mentoring, counseling, and ministry involvement—were organized within the residential campus

throughout the school year. Moreover, biblical lessons and spiritual principles were subtly intertwined and carefully crafted throughout the curriculum contents and syllabi of all the courses. These intentionally presented scriptural elements were crucial to the achievement of the objectives of the gospel-centered vocational institution.

Pedagogical Approach

Implication 4: The requirement for residency greatly enhances the pedagogical approach, which ensures the delivery of the curriculum contents within the educational philosophy. One might possess sound educational philosophy and comprehensive curriculum content, but the method by which the program is delivered might be difficult. The challenge is creating a conducive environment for learning and growth within the limit of the available resources and infrastructure. The findings of the study suggested various pedagogical approaches, which were unique and effective for providing gospel-centered skill training programs.

The study implied the residential requirement of the students as a critical factor that decided the success of the gospel-centered vocational institution. The residential community offered maximum avenues for spiritual encounters and growth through chapel, group Bible study, prayer meeting, counseling, role modeling, and other discipleship activities that were otherwise impossible. A trade school with character development as one of its goals “will not work if it was a commuter school” (Interview B). Imagine the “kind of a captive audience” the school experienced in the residential environment: “seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day, we got a lot of opportunities to be with the students” (Interview C). Residency was one of the strategic methods in creating the environment for gospel-centered vocational training.

Other unique pedagogical approaches included hands-on learning at the workshop; apprenticeship; employment plan through the career fair; and counseling and mentoring in vocational settings; which were essentially competency-based model.

Transferability and Implementation

Implication 5: The institutional model proposed through this study could be transferred to and implemented in Christian trade schools in other contexts with minimal adaptations. The study confirmed the research assumption that an identifiable and describable model exists of what a competency-based, gospel-centered vocational institution should resemble. The research additionally affirmed that such institution is already in existence in the United States. “I wish there are more schools like this in the country” (Interview B). The findings of the current study provided a well-expressed institutional and pedagogical model of a competency-based, gospel-centered vocational institution, which has not been previously available for replication. This suggested model could be transferred to and implemented in Christian trade schools in both the United States and other countries around the world with minimal adaptations.

While the educational philosophy could be applied to every institution, regardless of culture and location, adaptations would largely be involved with the contents and with a few of the pedagogical approaches. The changes would depend on the socio-economic and cultural settings with reference to the prevailing industrial market in a particular location. Since this study concentrated on the prospect of transferring and implementing the model in the Majority World—particularly to a vocational institute in Manipur, India—few adaptations are made. The modification could involve selection of trades, the appropriation of facilities and infrastructure, deciding on ways the nontrade-related contents and activities could be delivered, and working toward the merit of the culture and available resources. The next section expounds on these practical applications.

Research Application

The application of the research findings occurs at two levels. The initial application level is the opportunity to consider the current findings for a better understanding of the factors and process that influence vocational teaching and

discipleship to be applied to educational practices. The findings of the study produced new insights into Christian education and mission from pedagogical perspectives to establish a framework for vocational education and discipleship. These insights will aid Christian educators, pastors, and missionaries, or those practitioners seeking to develop a teaching and discipleship model for working professionals. They will certainly assist Christian educators and ministers in aligning their instruction to bridge the noticed gap between Christian education and vocational discipleship. They provide a paradigm that helps equip students to build their careers as faithful disciples of Christ by connecting their faith with their work. Additionally, the application is significant to those who are seeking effective ways to reach the world with the gospel through vocational training.

The second application level of the research findings is the opportunity to transfer the framework model to a vocational institution in the Majority World. The following adaptations are made to the proposed model for replication.

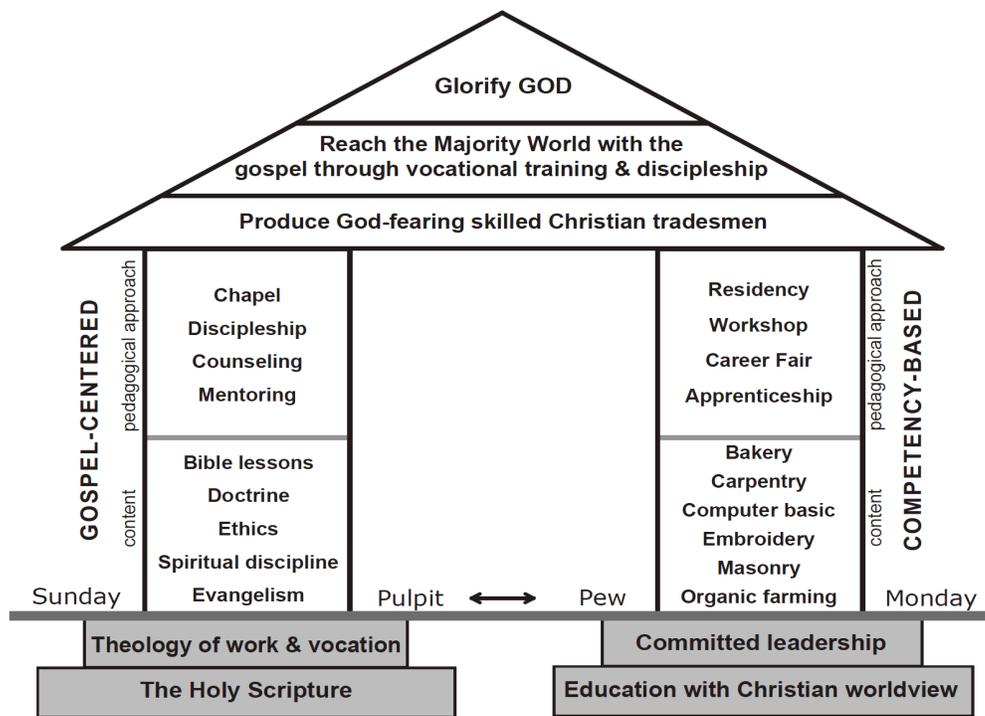


Figure 3. Institutional model for competency-based, gospel-centered vocational education in the Majority World

The findings of the study could be generalized to a Christian-based vocational institution in any part of the world. While the basic framework expressed in Figure 2, especially the educational philosophy rooted in a Christian worldview and competency-based concept, is applicable—and it should be applied—to any given context, this model is subjected to a few adaptations for effective imitation in Manipur, Northeast India.

Cognizant of the socioeconomic, political, and cultural context, these adaptations are considered for actual application. (1) Hi-tech, urban-industry-oriented trades are replaced by trades favorable to rural indigenous needs and demands. Trade programs—like HVAC, auto-mechanic, and power-plant technology that require hi-tech sophisticated machine tools and power—could be replaced with such trades that are more relevant to the rural context as bakery, embroidery, and organic farming. (2) Utilize locally available resources and materials. Locally available natural resources—such as timber, cane, bamboo, fertile soil, crops, and vegetable products—may be used, instead of metal, glasses, and processed materials imported from other places. The goal is recognizing the God-given resources in that context and utilizing them for the advantage of the gospel. (3) Employ a subtle, rather than an overt and direct, approach to teaching biblical contents and evangelism. The institution serves as a platform, first of all, to bring people, and then to prepare those who come. Becoming sensitive to the political and religious atmosphere is crucial to establish these intents. Strong commitment to the Scripture, coupled with a discerning approach is necessary. (4) Train and raise next-generation leadership for the institution. Skilled teachers, who are committed to serve in rural settings, are difficult to find. Moreover, no local leaders are equipped and readily available for the job. The institution must train, mentor, and raise its own leadership for the future. (5) Finally, emphasize sustainability, entrepreneurship, and employment generation for the graduates. In the absence of corporate industries, creation of both employment and market through entrepreneurship is the option.

Research Limitation

In addition to the limitations of generalization noted in the third chapter, the following specific limitations are included in this study.

1. The data collection had only two components—mining of documents and interviewing key leaders—because the third component (i.e., “direct observation” through campus visits) was removed due to travel restrictions consequent to the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Based on the objectives of this study, the research was limited to three principal focused aspects: educational philosophy, pedagogy, and practice. This means that other essential institutional aspects—such as infrastructure, human resources, or finance—were not deliberately dealt with.
3. The interviews included just one respondent—president, vice president, and founder and director—representing each school as the expert for the study. The views of other leaders, which may be similar to or different from the key leaders’ perspectives were not incorporated.

Further Research

This final section offers recommendations for further research that could be conducted in the field of competency-based, gospel-centered vocational training and discipleship. This descriptive study furnished a framework for future researchers to explore and examine the characteristics of Christian trade schools in terms of their philosophy, pedagogy, and practice. Following are a few additional suggestions that could deepen, extend, or augment the findings of this study.

1. Using a similar design and method, study Christian trade schools in the Majority World countries to discover a more relevant model for replication in a similar or closer context.
2. Using a similar design and method, examine Christian high schools, Christian liberal arts colleges, or seminaries to identify an institutional model pertaining to their educational philosophy, pedagogy, and practice for the purpose of replication to other contexts.
3. Using a similar design and method, conduct a comparative study of Christian trade schools and non-Christian trade schools in the United States with respect to their educational philosophy, pedagogy, and practice.

4. Using a similar design and method, perform a comparative study of Christian trade schools and non-Christian trade schools in the United States pertaining to their retention rate, graduation rate, and postgraduation-employment ratio.
5. Utilizing a qualitative-research method, study the development of vocational stewardship among the graduates of the three trade schools that participated in this study.
6. Utilizing a qualitative-research method, study the development of vocational stewardship among the working professionals who are members of a local church.
7. Using a mixed-method research, study the development of vocational stewardship among the working professionals who attend some kind of training in the theology of work and vocation.
8. A study may be designed to explore and analyze the impact of seminary education on equipping pastors and ministry leaders for vocational training and discipleship.
9. A study may be formulated to survey and evaluate the effectiveness of pastors and ministry leaders in empowering working members in the church for vocational discipleship.

The results of this study demonstrated a prospective understanding of the characteristics of competency-based, gospel-centered vocational education, and consequently proposed a framework for an institutional model. This framework will positively serve as a model and guideline for establishing or transforming similar institutions in the Majority World. Nevertheless, much work remains in solidifying the application of the results and gaining a fuller perspective of Christian missions through vocational training and discipleship. While the findings of the study and the subsequent framework model contribute a solid foundation of philosophy, pedagogy, and practice to vocational training and discipleship, they do not provide specific guidelines for organization and management of such institutions. Institutions and churches should seek to incorporate the findings and implications of the study into the functionality of competency-based, gospel-centered vocational education in their context.

APPENDIX 1

STEPS OF STUDY/ RESEARCH PLAN

Table A1. Tentative dates for each research activity

<i>Steps</i>	<i>Research Activity</i>	<i>Action Date</i>
1.	Defend thesis prospectus in a close hearing with faculty supervisor, reader, and the research team.	Jan 2020
2.	Identify three expert panelists, obtain approval from the faculty supervisor, and get the “Interview Questions” reviewed by the expert panel.	Jan 2020
3.	Obtain approval of the prospectus and research instrumentation from the Research Doctoral Office, the faculty, and the Research Ethics Committee.	Feb 2020
4.	Send initial contact e-mail with “Letter of Invitation” to the identified leaders.	Feb 2020
5.	Upon receiving their willingness to participate in the study, share the Google survey forms that includes “Informed Consent Form” and “Institutional Demographic Form” to the participants.	Late Feb 2020
6.	Send a reminder e-mail if the completed forms are not received in 14 days.	Mar 2020
7.	Mining documents from the websites and any published official documents.	Mar 2020
8.	Set up an interview time for each institution through phone/e-mail.	Mar 2020
9.	E-mail the “Interview Questions” along with interview protocol to the participants 7 days prior to the interview date.	Mid Mar 2020
10.	Conduct interviews and record the interviews on Zoom.	
11.	Transcribe the audio-recorded interviews using HyperTRANSCRIBE™ 1.6.1.	Apr 2020
12.	Send a thank you note through email in seven days after the interview.	Apr 2020
13.	Compile and validate all the data—documents and transcripts.	May 2020
14.	Organize and prepare the raw data for analysis.	May 2020
15.	Read and look at all the data one more time.	May 2020
16.	Start coding all the data using HyperRESEARCH™ 4.5.0.	Jun 2020
17.	Generate codes and themes using HyperRESEARCH™ 4.5.0.	Jun 2020
18.	Engage in detailed discussion of themes and patterns in connection to the research questions, analyze results to form a theory or construct a framework.	Jul-Aug 2020
19.	Submit the final draft of the thesis to Research Doctoral Office for approval.	Sep 2020
20.	Send a “Letter of Appreciation” with a brief report to the participants.	Sep 2020
21.	Place findings and conclusion in the thesis.	Sep 2020

APPENDIX 2

EXPERT PANEL

The three expert panel members are selected based on their background and expertise in the field of Christian education, research, and leadership.

Coding of expert panel qualification

Education/Academy

- Professor or teacher in higher educational institutions.
- Holds a PhD or EdD degree from an accredited institution.

Research

- Supervises doctoral students in academic research projects.
- Author of academic article(s) or published book(s) and doctoral dissertation/thesis.

Leadership

- Holds key leadership position in an educational institution.
- Matured Christian leader in the church.

Expert Panel Members

1. Rick Griffith, PhD, is professor of Biblical Studies and director of DMin program, Singapore Bible College. Being a missionary-teacher, he also travels around Asia as Bible teacher and adjunct faculty to a number of seminaries. Dr. Griffith is also a pastor of Crossroads International Church, Singapore.
2. Kevin Jones, EdD, is the chair of the School of Education and Human Development, Kentucky State University. He previously served as the associate dean of Academic Innovation and professor of Teacher Education, Boyce College, Louisville. He is a curriculum writer and author of several academic publications.
3. Douglas White, EdD, serves as professor at University of Charleston, Charleston, West Virginia. He is also a board member of the Society of Professors in Christian Education (SPCE).

[EXPERT PANEL E-MAIL]

[Date]

[Name]

Expert Panel Member

[Institution/School]

[Address]

Greetings Dr. _____.

My name is Wungramthan T. Shongzan (Athan), and I am the director of Professional Training Institute, a vocational (trades-technology) training center in the Indo-Myanmar border state of Manipur, India, as well as a doctoral candidate at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY. I am conducting a multicase-study research that seeks to describe a “competency-based model for gospel-centered vocational education” with the objective to replicate the model in my country. The research seeks insights from US Christian schools that provide trades and technology programs to determine what constitutes a gospel-centered vocational education.

I am writing to request you to kindly contribute in this research as an expert panel member. Three *trades and technology schools* have been identified as sample population for this qualitative study where I will conduct: (1) an interview with a leader from each school, and (2) site visit to each school for direct observation. Your contribution as an expert panel member, which I request, is to review the “Interview Questions” and the “Field Note Instrument” to help ensure the validity of these data collection instruments and that, the research protocol accurately reflects the sought results.

With your background and expertise in Christian education and research, I believe your input will greatly help in ensuring the quality of this research which will benefit many institutions and students around the globe in the long run.

Please allow 14 days for you to review the two instruments attached here (along with the Research Profile) and reply back with comments. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at wshongzan249@students.sbts.edu or 502-345-6775.

Looking forward to partnering with you in God’s kingdom work.

Sincerely,
Athan Shongzan

NB: Kindly reply to this e-mail immediately to confirm your consent to participate in this research project. I will then wait for your reviewed documents to be submitted in 14 days time. Thank you.

APPENDIX 3

INITIAL CONTACT E-MAIL/ LETTER OF INVITATION

[Date]

[Name]

President/Director/Founder

[Institution/School]

[Address]

Greetings Dr./Mr./Ms. _____.

My name is Wungramthan T. Shongzan (Athan), and I am the director of Professional Training Institute, a vocational (trades-technology) training center in the Indo-Myanmar border state of Manipur, India, as well as a doctoral candidate at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY. I am conducting a multicase-study research that seeks to describe a “competency-based model for gospel-centered vocational education” with the objective to replicate the model in my country. The research seeks insights from Christian trades and technology schools in the US to determine the best practices in providing gospel-centered vocational education.

I am writing to invite you to participate in this research through an interview. The commitment for participation includes completing one Google Form Survey titled “Institutional Demographic Form,” one “Informed Consent Form,” and a 60 minutes personal interview in your office. The total time required to complete all activities spanning about two month will be less than one and a half hours.

Your input and responses during the brief time committed to this study will greatly help in building a model for competency-based gospel-centered vocational education that other institutions can emulate. It will ultimately benefit many students of vocational institutions around the globe.

Please confirm your willingness to participate in this study within 14 days by replying to this e-mail. On receiving your confirmation, I will send the Forms along with my Research Profile. If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at wshongzan249@students.sbts.edu or 502-345-6775.

Looking forward to your reply.

Sincerely,
Athan Shongzan

APPENDIX 4

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed in a multicase-study approach to describe a “competency-based model for gospel-centered vocational education” with the objective to replicate the model in the Majority World countries. It seeks to construct a basic framework for organization and administration of a gospel-centered vocational institution by describing an approach to faith-based and competency-based instructional model and curriculum design. The case study anticipates gaining insights from Christian trades and technology schools in the US to determine the best practices in providing gospel-centered vocational education.

This research is being conducted by Wungramthan T. Shongzan for purposes of completion of a capstone thesis for the Doctor of Education at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky.

In this research, you will: (1) complete the “Institutional Demographic Form” through Google Form Survey which is a set of questionnaire about your institution, and (2) participate in a 45-60 minutes long Zoom interview that will be recorded to assist the researcher understand your responses accurately. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

By your completion of this interview and the said form, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

Participant Name: _____ Sign: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX 5
INSTITUTIONAL DEMOGRAPHIC FORM
(Google Form—Survey)

This set of questions informs basic institutional demography of the school you represent. Please complete all questions and submit the Google Form within 14 days.

Question 1 - What is the name of your institution?

Question 2 - What is your position/role in the institution?

Question 3 - For how long have you been in this current position/role?

Question 4 - When did you join the current institution?

Question 5 - When was this institution established?

Question 6 - How many full-time staff do you have?

Teaching staff - _____

Non-teaching staff - _____

Total - _____

Question 7 - How many part-time staff do you have?

Teaching staff - _____

Non-teaching staff - _____

Volunteer - _____

Total - _____

Question 8 - How many students are currently enrolled?

On campus - _____
Online - _____
Total - _____

Question 9 - What are the trades/programs you offer and how many students in each trade/program?

<u>Trade/Program</u>	<u>No. of students</u>
Auto/Diesel	- _____
Carpentry	- _____
Cosmetology	- _____
Electricals	- _____
Farming	- _____
HVAC	- _____
Information Technology	- _____
Plumbing	- _____
Welding	- _____
_____	- _____
_____	- _____
Total numbers of programs: _____	- _____

Question 10 - What are the ages of your current students?

Below 15 years - _____ percent
15 – 18 years - _____ percent
19 – 21 years - _____ percent
22 – 25 years - _____ percent
26 and above - _____ percent
Total - _____ percent

Question 11 - What are the sex ratio of your current students?

Male - _____ percent
Female - _____ percent
Others - _____ percent

Question 12 - What is the average program fee (includes admission, tuition, exam, and any academic related fee; not housing and food) per month?

Question 13 - What is the approved 2019–2020 budget for the institution?

Question 14 - What is the success rate of the institution in the last five years in terms of:

Dropout rate - _____ percent

Retention rate - _____ percent

Post graduation employment rate - _____ percent

APPENDIX 6
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

RQ-1. How can vocational education provide opportunities and prepare students for gospel-centered work and vocation?

1. Could you give a brief introduction of your institution? And describe your responsibilities.
2. What is the distinctiveness of your institution? What salient features do you think give your institution a competitive edge?
3. Please describe how your faith (what you believe) has influenced your work (what you do), especially in the way you lead the institution.
4. Why do you think it is important to equip students in their faith as much as to master in their skills?
5. How do you describe the efforts put by your school into preparing your students to connect their faith and work in their career?

RQ-2. What learning objectives and competencies need to be addressed in the curriculum to equip students for workplace evangelism and discipleship?

6. What are the top 3–5 learning objectives set for every class and student in your institution?
7. What are the top 3–5 competencies that your school expect every student to develop?
8. What non-trade-related lessons (e.g. Ethics, Communication Skills, Sexual Abuse Awareness, or Bible Study) are incorporated in the curriculum of your course programs?
9. In what ways you can best prepare your students for both workplace competency and integrity?

RQ-3. How can such an institutional model be transferred and effectively implemented in Manipur, Northeast India?

10. Do you think the education model of your institution could be transferred and effectively implemented in the Majority World countries?
11. What area you are working on to improve the way you train your students in order to better prepare them and send out into marketplaces, so that they are not only efficient in their jobs, but also more influential to the people around them?
12. If you were asked to help establish a competency based, gospel-centered vocational school, what are the key elements you would focus on?

APPENDIX 7
LETTER OF APPRECIATION

[Date]

[Name]

President/Director/Founder

[Institution/School]

[Address]

Dear Dr./Mr./Ms. _____.

Thank you for your participation in the study titled “A Competency-Based Model for Gospel-Centered Vocational Education.” Your involvement in this study was critical in establishing potential findings that help construct a framework for gospel-centered vocational institution. This framework will positively serve as a model and guideline for establishing or transforming similar institutions in the Majority World.

The findings of this study are submitted as a doctoral thesis to the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. The thesis will be published in ProQuest and will be available through UMI dissertation databases.

Again, thank you for your time and engagement in the study.

Sincerely,

Athan Shongzan

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

Louisville, Kentucky 40280 USA

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Allen, Robert C. *The Industrial Revolution: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2017.
- Ashford, Bruce Riley, ed. *Theology and Practice of Mission: God, the Church, and the Nations*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2011.
- Association of Theological Schools. “2019–2020 Annual Data Tables.” <https://www.ats.edu/uploads/resources/institutional-data/annual-data-tables/2019-2020%20Annual%20Data%20Tables.pdf>.
- Bakke, Dennis. *Joy at Work: A Revolutionary Approach to Fun on the Job*. Seattle: PVG, 2005.
- Banks, Robert. *God the Worker: Journeys into the Mind, Heart, and Imagination of God*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1994.
- Barlow, Melvin L., ed. *Vocational Education*. The Sixty-fourth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education. Chicago: NSSE, 1965.
- Bartholomew, Craig G., and Michael W. Goheen. *The Drama of Scripture*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004.
- Bolt, John. *Economic Shalom: A Reformed Primer on Faith, Work, and Human Flourishing*. Grand Rapids: Christian’s Library Press, 2013.
- Bosch, David Jacobus. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991.
- Brand, Chad. *Flourishing Faith: A Baptist Primer on Work, Economics, and Civic Stewardship*. Grand Rapids: Christian’s Library Press, 2013.
- Browne, LaVonne A. “On Faith and Work: The Relationship between Religiosity and Work Values.” PhD diss., University of Missouri-Columbia, 2001.
- Buechner, Frederick. *Wishful Thinking: A Seeker’s ABC*. New York: HarperOne, 1993.
- Bureau of Labor Statistics. “Employment-population Ratio and Labor Force Participation Rate by Age.” United States Department of Labor. Last modified August 9, 2017. <https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2017/employment-population-ratio-and-labor-force-participation-rate-by-age.htm>.

- Burke, Julie V. "Theology of Work: A Working Life Retreat." PhD diss., Catholic University of America, 2011.
- Bushway, Deborah J., Laurie Dodge, and Charla S. Long. *A Leader's Guide to Competency-Based Education: From Inception to Implementation*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, 2018.
- Calvin, John. *Institutes of the Christian Religion* 3.11.6. Edited by John T. McNeill and translated by Ford Lewis Battles. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960.
- Carey, William. *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*. 1792. Reprint, London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1961. <https://www.wmcarey.edu/carey/enquiry/anenquiry.pdf>.
- Choi, Stanley. "The Christian School as a Means of Effective Evangelism in India: A History and Evaluation of the Saint Paul Mission School in Bangalore, India." PhD diss., Liberty University, 2009.
- Clinton, Melanie. "Ten Ways Missions Has Influenced Africa." International Mission Board. September 7, 2018. <https://www.imb.org/2018/09/07/ten-ways-missions-influenced-africa/>.
- Colby, Rose L. *Competency-Based Education: A New Architecture for K-12 Schooling*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press, 2017.
- Conner, Benjamin T. "Practicing Witness: A Contribution to the Theology of Christian Practices Issuing from a Conversation Between Missional Theology and Craig Dykstra's Theology of Christian Practices." PhD diss., Princeton Theological Seminary, 2009.
- Corbett, Steve, and Brian Fikkert. *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty without Hurting the Poor—and Yourself*. Chicago: Moody, 2012.
- Cosden, Darrell. *The Heavenly Good of Earthly Work*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006.
- _____. *A Theology of Work: Work and the New Creation*. Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2004.
- Creswell, John W. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2013.
- Creswell, John W., and J. David Creswell. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 5th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2018.
- Crown School of Trades and Technology. *Student Handbook/Catalog 2019–2020*. Powell, TN: Crown School of Trades and Technology, 2019.

- Curry, Marthe Downing. "The Women's Vocational Training Center, Abundi: A Case Study of the Development of a Rural Vocational Training School in Uganda." PhD diss., University of the Incarnate Word, 2007.
- DeYoung, Kevin and Greg Gilbert. *What is the Mission of the Church?* Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011.
- Doriani, Daniel M. *Work: Its Purpose, Dignity, and Transformation*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2019.
- Estes, Daniel J. *Hear, My Son: Teaching and Learning in Proverbs 1–9*. New Studies in Biblical Theology. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997.
- Fletcher, C. M. "Restoring the Sense of Divine Vocation to Work: A Study of Sayers, MacIntyre, and Catholic Social Teaching." PhD diss., Anglia Polytechnic, UK, 2006.
- France, R. T. *Divine Government: God's Kingship in the Gospel of Mark*. London: SCM Press, 1990.
- Gall, M. D., Joyce P. Gall, and Walter R. Borg. *Applying Educational Research*. 6th ed. Boston: Pearson, 2010.
- Garber, Steven. *Visions of Vocation: Common Grace for Common Good*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014.
- Gordon Preece, "The Three-Fold Call: The Trinitarian Character of Our Daily Vocation." In *Faith Goes to Work: Reflections from the Marketplace*. Edited by Robert J. Banks, 160–71. Washington, DC: Alban Institute, 1993.
- Grudem, Wayne. *Business for the Glory of God: The Bible's Teaching and the Moral Goodness of Business*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2003.
- _____. *Systematic Theology: an Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000.
- Guinness, Os. *The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2003.
- Hamilton, James M., Jr. *Work and Our Labor in the Lord*. Short Studies in Biblical Theology. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017.
- Hamilton, Joan. "An Effective Contextualized Model for Redemptive Vocational Calling to Empower Christians for Workplace Ministry in Long Island, New York." DMin diss., Regent University, 2015.

- Hammond, Pete, R. Paul Stevens, and Todd Svanoe. *The Marketplace Annotated Bibliography: A Christian Guide to Books on Work, Business & Vocation*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002.
- Hardy, Lee. *The Fabric of This World: Inquiries to Calling, Career Choice, and the Design of Human Work*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990.
- Harjanto, Sutrisna. *The Development of Vocational Stewardship among Indonesian Christian Professionals*. Carlisle, UK: Langham Monographs, 2018.
- Hart, D. G., and R. Albert Mohler Jr., eds. *Theological Education in the Evangelical Tradition*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996.
- Haughey, John C. *Converting Nine to Five: A Spirituality of Daily Work*. New York: Crossroad, 1989.
- Holland, Joe. *Creative Communion: Toward a Spirituality of Work*. New York: Paulist Press, 1989.
- Hughes, J. M. D. "Theologies of Work: The Contribution of a Theological Aesthetic to Critiques of Capitalism." PhD diss., University of Cambridge, UK, 2005.
- International Labor Organization. "Employment-to-Population Ratios." Employment Statistics. Accessed January 21, 2020. <https://ilostat.ilo.org/topics/employment/>.
- Jackson, Bill. *The Biblical Metanarrative: One God, One Plan, One Story*. Corona, CA: Radical Middle Press, 2013.
- Jensen, David H. *Responsive Labor: A Theology of Work*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006.
- Johnson, Neal C. *Business as Mission: A Comprehensive Guide to Theory and Practice*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009.
- Johnson, Neal, and Steve Rundle. *Business as Mission: From Impoverished to Empowered*. Evangelical Missiological Society 14. Edited by Tom A. Steffen and Mike Barnett. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2009.
- Jolley, A. J. "Bridging the Gap: How Christians Can Relate Their Faith and Their Work." PhD diss., The University of Nottingham, UK, 2006.
- Keller, Timothy. *Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God's Work*. New York: Penguin, 2012.
- Knight, George R. *Philosophy and Education*. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2006.

- Kleinhans, Kathryn. "The Work of a Christian: Vocation in Lutheran Perspective." *Word & World* 25, no. 4 (2005): 394-402.
- Kolden, Marc. "Luther on Vocation." *Word & World* 3, no. 4 (1983): 382-390.
- Kotter, David. "Milkmaids No More: Revisiting Luther's Doctrine of Vocation from the Perspective of a 'Gig' Economy." *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 22, no. 1 (Spring 2018): 85-95.
- Larive, Armand. *After Sunday: A Theology of Work*. New York: Continuum, 2004.
- Larry, Peabody. *Job-Shadowing Daniel: Walking the Talk at Work*. Denver: Outskirts Press, 2010.
- Lausanne Movement. "The Cape Town Commitment." Accessed September 19, 2019. <https://www.lausanne.org/content/ctc/ctcommitment#capetown>.
- Lausanne Movement. "The Lausanne Covenant." Accessed February 12, 2019. <https://www.lausanne.org/content/covenant/lausanne-covenant>.
- Lawless, Chuck. "A Theology of Missions: Why We Must Send Missionaries." In *Whom Shall We Send? Understanding the Essentials of Sending Missionaries*. Edited by Joel Sutton, 10-22. Scotts Valley, CA: CreateSpace, 2016.
- Leedy, Paul D., and Jeanne Ellis Ormrod. *Practical Research: Planning and Design*. 11th ed. New York: Pearson, 2016.
- Litfin, Duane. *Conceiving the Christian College*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004.
- Liu, Timothy, Gordon Preece, and Siew Li Wong. "Marketplace Ministry." Lausanne Occasional Paper no. 40. Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization. October 5, 2004. <https://www.lausanne.org/content/lop/marketplace-ministry-lop-40>.
- Long, Charla. "Innovation to Improve Equity: Exploring High-Quality Pathways to a College Degree." Written testimony before the Committee on Education and Labor, United States House of Representatives. June 19, 2019.
- Long, Michaela O'Donnell. "Adopting an Entrepreneurial Posture: Vocational Formation Amidst a Changing Landscape of Work." PhD diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 2018.
- Ludlow, Morwenna, Charlotte Methuen, and Andrew Spicer, eds. *Churches and Education*. Studies in Church History, vol. 55. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019.
- Lupton, Robert D. *Toxic Charity: How Churches and Charities Hurt Those They Help (and How to Reverse It)*. New York: HarperOne, 2011.

- Luther, Martin. *Commentaries on 1 Corinthians 7. Luther's Works*, vol. 28. Edited by Hilton C. Oswald. Saint Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1973.
- Mangalwadi, Vishal, and Ruth Mangalwadi. *The Legacy of William Carey: A Model for the Transformation of a Culture*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1999.
- Marglin, Stephen A., and Juliet Schor. *The Golden Age of Capitalism: Reinterpreting the Postwar Experience*. Studies in Development Economics. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- Maier, Paul L. *Eusebius: The Church History*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007.
- Marshall, Paul A. "Calling, Work, and Rest." In *The Best Theology*. Edited by J. I. Packer, 193–211. Carol Stream, IL: Christianity Today, 1989.
- _____. "Work and Vocation: Some Historical Reflections." *Reformed Journal* 30, no. 9 (September 1980): 16–20.
- Marshall, Rich. *God @ Work: Discovering the Anointing of Business*. Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, 2000.
- Meilaender, Gilbert C., ed. *Working: Its Meaning and Its Limits*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000.
- Merriam, Sharan B. *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998.
- _____. *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009.
- Messenger, William, ed. *Theology of Work Bible Commentary Series*. Theology of Work Project. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2015.
- Miller, David W. "The Faith at Work Movement." *Theology Today* 60 (2003): 301-10.
- _____. *God at Work: The History and Promise of the Faith at Work Movement*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Minear, Paul S. "Work and Vocation in Scripture." In *Work and Vocation*. Edited by J. O. Nelson, 32–115. New York: Harper, 1954.
- Moberg, David. *The Great Reversal: Evangelism versus Social Concern*. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1972.
- Mohler, R. Albert, Jr. "Thinking of the Future: Evangelical Theological Education in a New Age." In *Theological Education in the Evangelical Tradition*. Edited by D. G.

- Hart and R. Albert Mohler Jr., 278–83. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996.
- Moore, Russell, and Andrew T. Walker, eds. *The Gospel and Work*. The Gospel for Life. Nashville: B&H, 2017.
- Nash, Laura L., and Scotty McLennan. *Church on Sunday, Work on Monday: The Challenge of Fusing Christian Values with Business Life*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001.
- National Center for Education Statistics, US Department of Education. “Number of Educational Institutions, by Level and Control of Institution: Selected Years, 1980-81 through 2015-16.” *Digest of Education Statistics, 2016*.
https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/tables/dt17_105.50.asp?current=yes.
- Nelson, Tom. *Work Matters: Connecting Sunday Worship to Monday Work*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011.
- Ortlund, Dane. “What’s All This ‘Gospel-Centered’ Talk About.” *The Gospel Coalition Blog*. September 16, 2014. <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/whats-all-this-gospel-centered-talk-about/>.
- Ott, Craig, Stephen J. Strauss, and Timothy C. Tennent. *Encountering Theology of Mission: Biblical Foundations, Historical Developments, and Contemporary Issues*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010.
- Patton, Michael Quinn. *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2002.
- Perkins, William. *A Treatise of the Vocations*. London: John Havilland. 1631.
 Reproduced in William C. Placher, ed. *Callings*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005
- Perry, William G. Jr. *How to Develop Competency-Based Vocational Education*. Ann Arbor, MI: Prakken Publications, 1982.
- Piper, John. “The Great Story and the Single Verse.” *Desiring God Blog*, October 24, 2012. <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-great-story-and-the-single-verse>.
- _____. *Let the Nations Be Glad: The Supremacy of God in Missions*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010.
- _____. “What Does It Mean to Be Gospel-Centered?” *Desiring God Blog*. November 19, 2014. <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/what-does-it-mean-to-be-gospel-centered>.
- Placher, William C., ed. *Callings: Twenty Centuries of Christian Wisdom on Vocation*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005.

- Plummer, Robert L. "A New Testament Professor's Rediscovery of the Doctrine of Vocation." *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 22, no. 1 (Spring 2018): 9–20.
- Powlison, David. "Cure of Souls (and the Modern Psychotherapies)." *The Journal of Biblical Counseling* 25, no. 2 (2007): 5-20.
- Preece, Gordon. *Changing Work Values: A Christian Response*. Melbourne: Acorn Press, 1995.
- Quinn, Benjamin T., and Walter R. Strickland II. *Every Waking Hour: An Introduction to Work and Vocation for Christians*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016.
- Rifkin, Jeremy. *The End of Work: The Decline of the Global Labor-Force and the Dawn of the Post-Market Era*. London: Penguin, 2000.
- Roels, Shirley J. "Educating for Vocation: Weaving Educational Ideas with Institutional Practices." *Christian Higher Education* 16, nos. 1–2 (2017): 92–106.
- Rundle, Steve. "Restoring the Role of Business in Mission." In *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*. Edited by Winter and Hawthorne, 760-63. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2009.
- Ryken, Leland. *Work and Leisure in Christian Perspective*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1987.
- Schumacher, Christian. *God at Work: Discovering the Divine Pattern for Work in the New Millennium*. Oxford, UK: Lion Publishing, 1998.
- Schuurman, Douglas J. *Vocation: Discerning Our Callings in Life*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004.
- Self, Charlie. *Flourishing Churches and Communities: A Pentecostal Primer on Faith, Work, and Economics for Spirit-Empowered Discipleship*. Grand Rapids: Christian's Library Press, 2012.
- Sherman, Amy L. *Kingdom Calling: Vocational Stewardship for the Common Good*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011.
- Sherman, Doug, and William Hendricks. *Your Work Matters to God*. Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 1987.
- Shishak, Tuisem Awungshi. "Higher Education for Nagaland: A Proposal for Curriculum, Organization, and Coordination." PhD diss., University of New York at Buffalo, 1973.

- Shongzan, Mayaso. *A Portrait of the Tangkhul Nagas*. Ukhrul, India: Exodus, 2013.
- Shongzan, Wungramthan. "Gospel-Centered Vocational Education for Effective Evangelism and Discipleship in the Majority World." Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Society of Professors in Christian Education (SPCE), Minneapolis, Minnesota. October 17–19, 2019.
- Siemens, Ruth E. "Tentmakers: Integrating Work and Witness." In *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*. Edited by Winter and Hawthorne, 760-1. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2009.
- Sills, M. David. *Changing World, Unchanging Mission: Responding to Global Challenges*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015.
- Smith, James K. A. *On the Road with Saint Augustine: A Real-World Spirituality for Restless Hearts*. Grand Rapids: BrazosPress, 2019.
- _____. *You Are What You Love: the Spiritual Power of Habit*. Grand Rapids: BrazosPress, 2016.
- Smith, John. *The Life of William Carey: Missionary to India, the Father of Modern Missions*. The Worldwide Missionary Library 6. Cincinnati, OH: Revivalist Press, 1915.
- Society of Professors in Christian Education. *2019 Annual Conference*. Minneapolis, MN: October 17-19, 2020.
- Stevens, R. Paul. *Doing God's Business: Meaning and Motivation for the Marketplace*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016.
- _____. *The Other Six Days: Vocation, Work, and Ministry in Biblical Perspective*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.
- _____. *Work Matters: Lessons from Scripture*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012.
- Stott, John. *Issues Facing Christians Today*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006.
- Sweedeen, Joshua R. "The Church and Work: A Study of the Ecclesiological Grounding of Good Work." PhD diss., Boston University School of Theology, 2011.
- Tennent, Timothy C. *Invitation to World Missions: A Trinitarian Missiology for the Twenty-first Century*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2010.
- Terkel, Studs. *Working: People Talk about What They Do All Day and How They Feel about What They Do*. New York: New Press, 1974.
- Therriault, Reg. *How to Tell When You're Tired: A Brief Examination of Work*. New

- York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1995.
- Ting, John. *Living Biblically at Work*. Singapore: Landmark Books, 1995.
- Tizon, Al. "Precursors and Tensions in Holistic Mission: An Historical Overview." In *Holistic Mission: God's Plan for God's People*. Edited by Brian E. Woolnough and Wonsuk Ma, 61–75. Oxford, UK: Regnum, 2010.
- Traeger, Sebastian, and Greg D. Gilbert. *The Gospel at Work: How Working for King Jesus Gives Purpose and Meaning to Our Job*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013.
- Vanhoozer, Kevin. *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical Linguistic Approach to Christian Doctrine*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005.
- Veith, Gene Edward, Jr. *God at Work: Your Christian Vocation in All of Life*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2002.
- _____. "Vocation: The Theology of the Christian Life." *Journal of Markets & Morality* 14, no. 1 (2011): 119-31.
- Volf, Miroslav. *Work in the Spirit: Toward a Theology of Work*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Washington, Anthony E. "Never Redundant: Toward a Christian Response to Problem of Unemployment, and a New Theology of Work." PhD diss., King's College, University of London, UK, 2011.
- Weber, Max. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Translated by Talcott Parsons. New York: Routledge, 1930.
- Wellum, Stephen J., ed. "Reflections on Vocation." *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 22, no. 4 (Winter 2018).
- _____. ed. "Vocation," *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 22, no. 1 (Spring, 2018).
- Whelchel, Hugh. *How Then Should We Work? Rediscovering the Biblical Doctrine of Work*. McLean, VA: Institute for Faith, Work & Economics, 2012.
- Williamson College of the Trades. *Student Handbook 2019–20*. Media, PA: Williamson College of the Trades, 2019.
- Wingren, Gustaf. *Luther on Vocation*. Translated by Carl C. Rasmussen. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2004.
- Winter, Ralph D., and Steven C. Hawthorne, eds. *Perspectives on the World Christian*

- Movement*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2009.
- Witherington, Ben, III. *Work: A Kingdom Perspective on Labor*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011.
- Wolters, Albert M. *Creation Regained*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005.
- Wright, Christopher J. H. *The Mission of God's People: A Biblical Theology of the Church's Mission*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010.
- _____. *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006.
- Wright, David. *How God Makes the World a Better Place: A Wesleyan Primer on Faith, Work, and Economic Transformation*. Grand Rapids: Christian's Library Press, 2012.
- Wright, N. T. *The New Testament and People of God*. London: SPCK, 1992.
- Wyszynski, Stefan Cardinal. *All You Who Labor: Work and the Sanctification of Daily Life*. Manchester, NH: Sophia Institute Press, 1995.
- Xu, Guoqing. "Philosophy and Methods for China's Vocational Education Curriculum Reforms in the Early Twenty-First Century." *Chinese Education and Society* 47, no. 5 (September-October 2014): 57–64.
- Yin, Robert K. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2014.

ABSTRACT

A COMPETENCY-BASED MODEL FOR GOSPEL-CENTERED VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Wungramthan Tangkhul Shongzan, EdD
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Anthony W. Foster

This qualitative multicase study explored the key features characterizing competency-based, gospel-centered vocational education with the intent to construct a framework for an institutional model replicable to a Majority World context. Three trade schools in the United States were purposively selected from the populations of Christian-based trade and technology institutions that provide skill-oriented training. The researcher gathered data through the mining of institutional documents and a semi-structured interview of key leaders from the three sample institutions. The source materials thus collected were analyzed based on three research questions pertaining to educational philosophy, pedagogical approach, and practical application. Theology of work and vocation; holistic mission; and integration of faith, work, and mission for Christian education were the theoretical underpinnings that frame the discussion of the research findings.

The findings of the study suggest that there is a viable institutional framework for competency-based, gospel-centered vocational education, which could be used to bridge the observed gap between Christian education and vocational discipleship. Three components support this framework: (1) *Educational philosophy* based on a biblical worldview, coupled with a competency-based concept; (2) *Curriculum contents* deeply

embedded and subtly crafted with Bible lessons and spiritual disciplines; and (3) *Pedagogical approaches* appropriately implemented within a conducive environment of a residential community. Several themes and patterns that emerged in the research establish these vital components that result in building a framework model. The findings also indicate that the proposed institutional model could be transferred to and implemented in Christian trade schools in other contexts with minimal adaptations. The framework will positively serve as a model and a guideline for establishing or transforming similar institutions in the Majority World. Institutions and churches may seek to incorporate the model into the functionality of competency-based, gospel-centered vocational training and discipleship in their context.

KEYWORDS: Christian education, competency-based, curriculum content, educational philosophy, faith at work, gospel-centered, holistic missions, integration of faith-work-mission, Majority World, Northeast India, pedagogy, Sunday-Monday gap, theology of work, trade school, vocational discipleship, vocational education, and work and worship.

VITA

Wungramthan Tangkhul Shongzan

EDUCATION

BE, Institution of Engineers (India), 1998
MDiv, Singapore Bible College, 2015
ThM, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018

PUBLICATIONS

Choosing the Right Bowl. New Delhi: CAP Publication, 2000
Things They Didn't Teach Me in School. Ukhrul, India: Exodus, 2003
God's Mission Among His People. Ukhrul, India: Tangkhul Baptist Churches Association (TBCA), 2018
“Gospel-Centered Vocational Education for Effective Evangelism and Discipleship in the Majority World.” Society of Professors in Christian Education (SPCE), Minneapolis, MN, October 17–19, 2019

ORGANIZATIONS

Society of Professors in Christian Education (SPCE)

ACADEMIC

Director, Exodus - Professional Training Institute, Ukhrul, India, 2007–
Instructor, Professional Training Institute, Ukhrul, India, 2005–2012

MINISTERIAL

Pastoral Intern, Crossroads International Church, Singapore, 2014–2015
Youth Minister, Crossroads International Church, Singapore, 2013–2015
Deacon, Bethany Baptist Church, Louisville, Kentucky, 2018–