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Leadership Views on Corporate Chaplains: Business, Socio-Cultural, and Spiritual Justifications

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CONFERENCE DRAFT
Date: January 15, 2013

This paper was prepared for the 2013 Academy of Management Annual Meeting, August 9-13, Lake Buena Vista (Orlando), FL and should not be cited or duplicated without express permission of the authors.
ABSTRACT

The arena of spirituality in the workplace continues to garner growing scholarly and popular attention as evidenced by increased interdisciplinary scholarship, media reports, and corporate interest. However, workplace chaplaincy, an expression and a growing subset of the faith at work movement, has received very little scholarly attention. This paper fills that gap by explicating the business reasoning, socio-cultural explanations and spiritual imperatives behind organizational leaders' decisions to incorporate workplace chaplains into their employee benefit programs. Unlike hospital or military chaplains, workplace chaplains work in corporate settings, including offices, factory floors, and manufacturing plants, helping to provide holistic employee care. Through interviews with senior organizational leaders, this study found that chaplains care for employees needs thus contributing to organizational commitment, employee wellbeing, reduced operational costs, reduced turnover/increased retention, and an overall positive, welcoming organizational culture. The paper ends with implications for future studies to unpack the potential risks and challenges associated with corporate chaplaincy, discover perceptions of employees and other constituents, and provide measures and metrics for evaluating chaplaincy programs.

Keywords:
workplace chaplain; corporate chaplain; industrial chaplain; workplace spirituality; faith at work; spiritual leadership; holistic employee benefits
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INTRODUCTION

The study of spirituality in the workplace has been garnering increasing scholarly study and popular interest as demonstrated by a growing number of empirical and conceptual studies, and popular publications including books and media reports on the phenomena (Fairholm, 1997; Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003, 2010). However, scholars agree that it is still an emerging area of study, as there is still disagreement on certain definitions, conceptualizations and measurements of the phenomena (Benefiel, 2003; Fornaciari & Lund Dean, 2009; Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2010; Lund Dean, Forniciari, & Mcgee, 2003). This paper offers an in depth study of spirituality in the workplace by explicating one specific articulation, known as workplace or corporate chaplaincy. Workplace chaplaincy, the hiring of clergy to serve the social, emotional, and spiritual needs of employees in the workplace, is a growing trend in the marketplace today. For us who have been studying this trend since 2003, we have seen tremendous growth in the numbers of organizations of all sizes, from small family businesses to multinational corporations, who are hiring chaplains to serve the needs of their employees.

In this paper, we investigate and analyze the rationale behind the decision to hire workplace chaplains from the perspectives of those who hire them – CEOs, presidents and other senior organizational leaders. We focus on three areas of justification: the business, spiritual/theological, and socio-cultural rationale for this decision. Further, based on our quantitative and qualitative research, we argue that for these senior organizational leaders, providing chaplaincy services is both an extension of their personal spirituality and good business practice. Many of these leaders do not seek to
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quantify the financial business case or bottom line benefit. These senior leaders assert they know ‘in their gut,’ and rely on anecdotal evidence and first-hand observations, that having onsite chaplains supports both employee well-being and makes their organizations a better place to work.

While our research suggests this is a prevailing view, and perhaps a legitimate one, scholarly critique requires us to consider further questions. For instance, what comes first: a positive organizational culture that prompts leaders to hire chaplains, or having chaplains creates the positive organizational culture? Secondly, while the overall theme is that workplace chaplains are beneficial to organizational leaders, managers, and rank-and-file employees, is there a ‘dark side’ to the phenomena (e.g. proselytizing, discrimination, or harassment)? Our mixed methods qualitative and quantitative study provides provisional answers to these and other related questions, drawing on our research into multiple companies, their management, and employees. We begin this paper by providing the theoretical framework undergirding our study, a succinct literature review, and methodological considerations, before analyzing the results of the study and concluding with implications for theory building and praxis regarding chaplains in the workplace.

This paper offers a theoretical framework, a literature review of workplace chaplaincy, framing options for faith/spirituality at work, a review of our methodology and research questions, a summary of research results, discussion, and implications for research and praxis.
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The workplace chaplaincy movement fits within a larger social movement, often called faith at work (Miller, 2007) or spirituality in the workplace (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Benefiel, 2003). Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2003) define the concept thus: “Workplace spirituality is a framework of organizational values evidenced in the culture that promotes employees’ transcendence through work process, facilitating their sense of being connected to others in a way that provides feelings of completeness and joy” (p. 13). Key to this definition are the terms: values, culture, connectedness, and fulfillment/joy. Further, Ashmos and Duchon (2000) conceptualized spirituality in the workplace in reference to three ideas: a) a recognition that employees have an inner life; b) an assumption that employees desire to find work meaningful, and; c) a commitment by the company to serve as a context or community for spiritual growth. This and most definitions of spirituality in the workplace include the idea of finding meaning through work.

A third and often quoted definition that is germane to our conceptualization and study of corporate chaplains is by Fry (2003), who notes:

Spiritual leadership taps into the fundamental needs of both leader and follower for spiritual survival so they become more organizationally committed and productive…I define spiritual leadership as comprising the values, attitudes and behaviors that are necessary to intrinsically motivate one’s self and other so that they have a sense of spiritual survival through calling and membership.

This entails:
1. creating a vision wherein organizational members experience a sense of calling in that their life has meaning and makes a difference
2. establishing a social/organizational culture based on altruistic love whereby leaders and followers have genuine care, concern and appreciation for both self and others, thereby producing a sense of membership and feel understood and appreciated.

(p. 694-695)
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These three definitions and conceptualizations all highlight the idea that spirituality in the workplace involves leaders creating a spiritually welcoming organizational culture, wherein people experience care, concern, love, and community, which contribute to organizational productivity as mediated through organizational commitment and feelings of wellbeing. Workplace chaplaincy offers leaders an avenue through which to create that spiritually welcoming (or faith-friendly per Miller, 2007) organizational culture, enabling them to communicate care and concern to their workforce, potentially resulting in more satisfied, engaged, productive, and healthier employees.

Most manifestations of the spirituality/faith at work movement are organic, independent, and employee-led, with little corporate or clergy involvement. Employees are increasingly organizing activities such as scripture studies and prayer groups on company premises, and requesting religious accommodations for meditation rooms, prayer needs, special clothing, dietary, and other considerations (Miller, 2007). Implementing a corporate chaplaincy program is a partial response by some employers to meet the spiritual, social, and emotional needs of employees.

Many are aware of the established role and purpose of having military and prison chaplains, which dates back for centuries. Even so, the concept of having clergy who serve as chaplains outside of congregational and ecclesial settings is still jarring to some, particularly if they minister in the secular (business) workplace. And yet this form of chaplaincy - workplace chaplaincy - is not new, and was called 'industrial chaplains' while being practiced in various modalities during the industrial revolution in many countries, including the United Kingdom, France, and the United States of America.
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(Seales, 2012). Moreover, workplace chaplaincy also has antecedents dating back to early English and Dutch trading companies. The present day iteration of workplace chaplains is not about preaching to the masses of workers on industrial floors, nor is it about representing the employees needs and organized labor (as were the two typical extremes often observed during the industrial revolution). Rather, today it often appears as ecumenical spiritual counseling and a social services referral system for workers at any level who may not be members of a worship community, or who experience personal and work-related crises that require immediate attention. As Seales (2012) notes, “corporate chaplains rebranded the pastoral care of their industrial antecedents, translating its confessional particularities of protestant religiosity into noncommittal generalities of secular spirituality” (p. 196), which is more suited to the secular and religiously diverse workplace of present-day US marketplace.

As a part of spirituality at work, corporate chaplaincy can be considered an extension or articulation of organizational leaders’ perspectives on the integration of faith and work (Miller, 2007), where they might see part of their leadership role as that of caring for their employees above and beyond basic wages, benefits, and work conditions. Further, it fits with Fry’s (2003) conceptualization of spiritual leaders creating a vision that engenders meaning through work and establishing an organizational culture based on altruistic love, aspects clearly demonstrated through our qualitative interviews with senior organizational leaders in this study.

The growing literature on workplace spirituality indicates that, whereas it is still very difficult to articulate a direct correlation between a spiritual workplace and business benefits, such benefits have been postulated and articulated in various studies including
reduced turnover, reduced absenteeism, (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Duchon & Ploman, 2005; Kolodinsky, Giacalone, & Jurkiewicz, 2008). Fry and Slocum (2008) model of spiritual leadership links hope/faith, altruistic love, and vision to organizational commitment, organizational productivity, profit and sales growth, employee wellbeing and corporate social responsibility, mediated through follower needs for spiritual wellbeing (calling and membership). The scholarly challenge to reflect critically on these variables and possible causalities lies in the difficulty of conceptualization and measurement of workplace spirituality (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2006; Lund Dean, Forniciari, & Mcgee, 2003). However, beginning with the publication of Mitroff and Denton’s book in 1999 (Mitroff & Denton, 1999), there have been many attempts to conceptualize and measure spirituality and its effects at work, including various attempts at constructing appropriate instruments and psychometric scales (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Fry, 2003; Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2006; Miller & Ewest, 2012). There are also a growing number of academic case studies of spirituality at work as enacted in organizations such as Southwest Airlines (Milliman, Ferguson, Tricket, & Condemi, 1999) and several organizations around the US profiled by Margaret Benefiel ( Benefiel, 2005), among others. While these studies have focused on workplace spirituality in general, this research focuses in particular on the possibilities and problems associated with workplace chaplaincy as a growing and concrete manifestation of spirituality at work.

Specifically, our research project and the study from which this paper is derived is a large scale multi-method research project involving quantitative and qualitative approaches, including data collected via online and paper surveys with employees and
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chaplains, and personal interviews with employees, chaplains, and organizational leaders (e.g. CEOs and chief HR officers). This particular paper focuses on the perspectives and experiences of organizational leaders, primarily because there is a paucity of scholarly research on workplace chaplaincy in general, let alone on the attitudes and rationale of corporate leaders making the decision to implement such programs. As the below literature review concludes, the little scholarly research that does exist and other literature relies heavily on media reports on workplace chaplaincy, and tends to focus on the perspectives of the chaplains themselves, lacking access to these corporate executives and their employees, and the scholarly tools to analyze the data.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

In the larger area of spirituality/faith in the workplace, chaplaincy forms a miniscule proportion of the published scholarly studies. In contrast, workplace chaplaincy has gained greater notoriety in the popular media, often serving as the face of workplace spirituality. Focusing on the United States of America marketplace, we located 108 media articles and reports on workplace chaplaincy. Most of these tended to simply describe workplace chaplaincy, tell stories of how chaplains have helped employees (particularly in crises), focus on the perspectives of the chaplains, and report that workplace chaplaincy is a growing corporate benefit being offered to employees. Further, the media reports tend to focus on the two major providers of workplace chaplaincy services and personnel: Marketplace Chaplains based out of Texas, but serving over 525 businesses throughout the United States and abroad; and Corporate Chaplains of America (CCA) based out of North Carolina, also serving companies throughout the United States. There are also many articles focused on Tyson Foods, who do not outsource the provision of
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workplace chaplains; they internally manage their workplace chaplains program. Further, Tyson Foods is notable in that it is: a publicly-traded Fortune 100 company (in contrast to privately held companies, who account for the majority of companies that hire workplace chaplains); and is the largest known private sector corporate chaplaincy program with over 125 chaplains serving in over 70 of its plants and locations in America, and increasingly internationally.

In addition to media attention, we found six doctoral dissertations, most of which were written from a sympathetic standpoint, often lacking critical reflection or rigorous social science methodology, by Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) students who were either practicing chaplains or chaplaincy candidates. For example, one focused on articulating a training model for chaplains (Rector, 1991). Another focused on the personal journey of one chaplain from parish ministry to corporate settings (Barnes, 1992). Still another doctor of ministry dissertation focused on promoting the field of workplace chaplaincy, providing a theological justification, and explaining the legal ramifications, and was written to an audience of church leaders to challenge them to consider chaplaincy as a viable ministry outlet (Gendron, 2010). The remaining three D.Min. dissertations are similar in nature; that is, they provide a theological rationale for chaplaincy in the workplace, challenge church leaders to take chaplaincy seriously, or describe the role within organizations. The one notable exception to the lack of empirical research methods is Leche (1994), a now dated study that explored job satisfaction and role congruity amongst chaplains. While not denying the value of primarily theological studies (Ashley, 2003; Carver, 2007; Mullis, 1999), their applicability and viability to a
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Wider scholarly and practitioner audience is limited, as they fail to utilize social science or contemporary management research methodologies.

Empirically-based studies on workplace chaplaincy using qualitative or quantitative methods are very few. A recent article by Seales (2012), a religious studies scholar, provides a succinct history of the corporate chaplaincy movement in the United States, beginning with evangelical revivalism of the 19th century, tracing industrial chaplaincy in the 20th century to the present day movement, which began in its current iteration in the early 1980s. Another recent article by Nimon and his colleagues (Nimon, Philibert, & Allen, 2008) compared workplace chaplaincy with secular Employee Assistance Programs (EAP). Typically, companies contract with EAP service providers who offer employees access to an 800 number service that provides a series of free counseling sessions by trained counselors and therapists to assist with substance abuse, psychological, relational, or other personal problems. Their descriptive study compared chaplaincy with EAP, focusing on psychological and relational issues, but did not include site research, using only activity reports provided by one chaplaincy service provider.

There were some articles discussing workplace chaplaincy in the UK, New Zealand and Australia (Bell, 2006; Johnston & McFarland, 2010; Michelson, 2006), which provide the history of chaplaincy/industrial mission in those contexts along with relating it to relevant variables. Since our focus is on the US context, the non-US articles are here only a reminder that chaplaincy does exist in other countries.

**Framing Faith/Spirituality at Work**

Miller (2007) discusses several ways in which organizations can think about and approach faith/spirituality at work. One is to be framed in terms of being faith-friendly,
and the other is in being faith-based. Of course, Miller and others (Fairholm, 1997) also describe other frames, including faith-indifferent, faith-neutral, and faith-averse. But in the case of faith-friendly and faith-based approaches, these are organizations that articulate a generally positive stance towards faith/spirituality. Faith-friendly organizations essentially regard faith/spirituality as one of the central identity markers and human characteristics that employees have and bring to work. As such, it includes creating a holistic and welcoming atmosphere so that people can be their whole selves at work – including their faith identity, of whatever nature or worldview, from various forms of theism to atheism. In contrast, a faith-based organization is one that articulates and endorses a specific faith tradition, often privileging it over others, such that it might regard itself as a Christian company (or Jewish, or any other religion as the case may be). Miller advises caution in framing a business as being faith-based, because it risks issues of discrimination, harassment, and disengagement by employees who are not of the specified faith, and may create a culture that could give rise to EEOC complaints. Such organizations might fall under one emerging strand of workplace spirituality within evangelical Christianity referred to as BAM (Business as Mission), where the primary purpose of business is a conduit for evangelization, or a way to ‘reach people for Christ.’ That said, many of the business leaders/owners of the privately held companies we interviewed frequently referred to their businesses as faith-based. Yet in dialogue, they espoused the values of a faith-friendly framework, including creating a welcoming and non-discriminatory environment for people of all, any or no faith. Whether employees would agree, is the subject of further aspects of our research project. Below we discuss the three major themes relating to how business leaders justified implementing workplace
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chaplaincy services in their organizations, but first, a word about the methodology employed in this study.

METHODS

Data Collection

This paper is derived from a large mixed-methods study of workplace chaplaincy that involved data collection paper and pencil and online surveys of employees and chaplains, as well as interviews with chaplains, business leaders (owners, C-suite managers), and employees at all levels of organizations that have corporate chaplains. This paper focuses on data from semi-structured interviews with the senior leaders (owners, vice presidents, chief executive officers/presidents, chairmen of the board, etc) from seven organizations. Six of the organizations are business entities, while one is the operations arm of a Christian non-profit ministry organization. The interviews were conducted on-site at each organization, and also included observations of the operations of the companies where possible (e.g. offices, shop floor, plants). Access to each organization was negotiated through a referral system with senior leaders with whom we have interacted through work and conferences on workplace chaplaincy and other spirituality in the workplace issues. Such leaders included the CEOs of some of the companies in the study, and/or presidents of the chaplaincy service provider organizations that serve the companies in the sample. All of the interviews were recorded with permission using digital recorders.

Data Analysis

A third party transcribed the audio-recorded interviews verbatim. The research team reviewed the transcripts and engaged in several iterations of data analysis. The first
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level of analysis consisted of descriptive and structural coding (Saldaña, 2009) by reading each transcript line-by-line, paragraph by paragraph and highlighting the pieces of text that referred to context/location, as well as initial codes using simple track changes features in MSWord. Two members of the research team engaged in this process independently. In addition to initial codes, the researchers also wrote analytic memos on the margins of the word documents.

In the second iteration, the researchers read the transcripts again line by line and paragraph by paragraph, theming the data (Saldaña, 2009) involving putting codes next to pieces of text that referred to business, socio-cultural or spiritual/theological explanations for workplace chaplaincy. This process provided many disparate pieces of text that referred to the three elements of the primary research questions, as well as a 4th ‘other explanations.’ The pieces of texts (quotes) that referred to each big theme area were then put in one document, and further analyzed to arrive at the sub-categories within each theme.

As a way to test the hermeneutical process and the quality of the analysis using MSWord, the data for one participant was entered into CAT (Coding Analysis Toolkit), an online QDA software hosted by the University of Pittsburgh. The research team used this software to code the transcript independently, then created code books which they then compared and merged into one code book. This code book was then used to test our earlier analysis process, the result being that using MSWord was effective in helping us come up with appropriate themes to fit the data.

In the final stage of organizational leader interview analysis, the research team engaged in further theoretical coding, specifically looking to further consolidate the sub-
categories, and reassemble smaller units into larger themes (business, socio-cultural, and
spiritual/theological) that could be linked to existing theories/literature. This stage helped
the research team to provide the themes and sub-categories in the research results and
discussion sections, and provide support for the overall findings gleaned from the data.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The primary research question guiding this descriptive and explanatory study is:
why do senior organizational leaders choose to hire clergy as chaplains to serve in their
business organizations? To investigate and answer this overarching research question,
we asked four supporting sub-questions:

Research Question 1. How do business leaders explain the business rationale for
corporate chaplaincy?

Research Question 2. How do business leaders explain the socio-cultural
justification for corporate chaplaincy? That is, what is happening in society and
the modern business context that makes it necessary to hire chaplains for the
workplace?

Research Question 3. How do business leaders explain their spiritual/theological
justification for corporate chaplaincy, and how does that fit into today's diverse,
multi-faith corporate context?

Research Question 4. What other explanations do business leaders provide for
hiring chaplains to serve in their organizations?

Research Results

In each of the seven companies we studied (six for-profit and one non-profit), the
CEO or senior most leaders played a pivotal if not singular role in the decision to hire
chaplains. As such, understanding the CEO's rationale, thought process, and reasons for
this decision is central to analyzing the phenomena of workplace chaplains. We observed
that their decisions to hire chaplains generally fell into three categories: business, socio-
cultural; and spiritual/theological. The majority of the decision-makers’ rationales were of a business nature, although many of those reasons also had socio-cultural and spiritual/theological dimensions and overlapped. Even in the case of the Christian ministry non-profit that we visited, the decision to hire the chaplains was made by a senior vice president responsible for the ‘business’ side of the organization. Table 1 below provides demographic information for our sample, with identifying details removed to protect the confidentiality of participating leaders and organizations.

In the case of the largest organization, a Fortune 100 company, here, too, the initial decision to hire chaplains was made by the Chairman and CEO. Once this strategic decision was made and a director of chaplain services was recruited, they decided that each location or plant should be responsible for the cost of their chaplains, thus, ensuring that plant managers were not coerced into supporting the program, but would instead hire chaplains based on solid business rationale. Once a location committed to having a site chaplain, hiring assistance, training, and managing of the chaplains was conducted from the corporate head office, as a part of Human Resources Management.

What follows are a series of verbatim quotes taken from interview transcripts with the CEOs and senior leaders, letting them speak for themselves as they reveal their thought process and justifications for starting a chaplaincy program. Six of the seven organizations elected to retain the services of external chaplaincy providers to outsource and manage their chaplains, with the Fortune 100 company as the sole in-house managed
program. Advantages and disadvantages of these two approaches is the subject of a subsequent publication.

We start below with business leaders’ comments about the business rationale. Notably, we found that the justifications, while distinguishable, were not necessarily separate in the minds of the senior leaders – for many, a good business decision also took into account socio-cultural variables and spiritual convictions. The organizing principle for all was a commitment to provide holistic care for their employees.

1) The Business Justification: Cared for Employees are Productive Employees

One of central research questions was: how do business leaders explain the business rationale for corporate chaplaincy? Further, do they typically calculate and justify the expense in terms of return on investment, profit and loss, or other empirical measurements of financial value? We found that most often, the initial motivation was instinctive not empirical, and was related to providing an employee benefit that communicated that the leaders care about their employees. While most believed intuitively that if you took care of your people that would eventually translate into a healthier, more engaged, more productive, and more profitable workforce, that was never the motivation or ultimate objective. These organizational leaders viewed the chaplain service as a vehicle to express care for their employees. This model of care is tied to Fry's idea of altruistic love, which we will explicate in the discussion section (Fry 2003; Fry and Slocum 2008).

Caring about employees. That employees are cared for, or rather the perception that they are cared for is important for work outcomes. If they do not feel cared for, they
respond negatively and deal with issues negatively. This perception was a common theme in our interviews as shown by some of the excerpts below:

President C:
I think that a chaplains program reflects a company culture. We are a family business and we care about our employees. So we think that when you place a value on people, that creates an environment for productivity. You know, like people want to know that you care before they care how much you know. So you place a value on people it produces an environment of productivity. And a chaplains program comes alongside that culture and reinforces it and says, you know, yeah, we tell you that we care about you but now we’re showing you that we care about you.

HR Executive G1:
And seriously, it’s not the work. It’s not the money. It’s how I feel you feel about me. And if I start believing you don’t care about me, I’m going to do something. I may just quit, I may quit coming to work, I maybe try to form a union, I may call, instead of telling you about an issue I’ll call the Environmental Health and Safety line or all these things.

Director D1:
I think [chaplaincy] has communicated one thing in particular, we care enough about you that we are willing to absorb the cost to have Chaplains [Susie] and [Sam] here. We care about you. We care not just about what you do, and how you perform, we care about how you are and what’s happening. So whether an employee feels like they want to talk to somebody about a work related struggle, or whether it’s a family or personal thing, doesn’t matter. We care about you. And we’re actually willing to let you take time away from your desk in the middle of your morning, or part of your afternoon, to spend some time with the chaplain, and we’re okay with that. I think that communicates some very important values and it communicates something very important about how we feel about our employees.

HR Executive G1:
We in business get so focused on the business that we sometimes forget the people side.

All of these quotes affirm the leaders’ belief that, if they demonstrate care and concern for their employees, it will result in positive organizational outcomes and communicate important values, fitting with Fry’s model of spiritual leadership (Fry & Slocum, 2008). Further, the leaders understand that employees need help dealing with
personal problems, because problems in their home life will result in problems at work, including lost productivity, as demonstrated below.

Problems at home result in lost productivity at work. These business leaders were convinced that if employees were facing problems in their home life such as teenage truancy, drug and alcohol abuse, spousal abuse, lack of childcare, and marital distress, those problems would impact their productivity at work. As such, they felt chaplaincy was an avenue to help employees deal with those home problems. For example:

President F:
I had seen employees from day one, how their personal problems affected their job. I mean I can, I know I’ve had employees that, going through, uh, divorce or marital problems. They go from a very good employee to someone that you can’t keep employed because we’re in a high-risk business.

HR Executive C:
Employees come to work and the chaplain is another person to talk to. So a place to go when you have issues, or you just want a friendship, somebody that cares about you and asks about your family. So many big companies you hear this, “Well, I’m number 684745.”

Owner A1:
You know, what made it even easier is, I’m not, we aren’t capable of helping people going through their personal things... their challenges. If they came and said they’re having trouble with their marriage, I’m like, I can listen but that’s about as far as I can go, you know. It’s great to have [chaplains], to have that resource.

Owner B:
So [an employee’s personal problems affect] their ability to work, their ability to focus, and their ability to be productive. …as particularly young people get very stressed out when they have crisis in their lives. And they tend to do less work and less quality of work as well.

Chaplaincy as a bridge to increased use of other employee benefits. Another finding from our interviews was how workplace chaplains did not necessarily replace but instead enhanced, and complemented the use of other company-provided services, such as Employee Assistance Programs (EAP). For instance:
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CEO C:
Well, I think the chaplains are the first to say that there’s things that they don’t do, you know. If you have an addiction problem or even an anger management problem or something that really requires intervention by a professional, a psychiatrist, or psychologist, that they don’t do that. They point you in the right direction. They encourage you. And they can help talk through some relational things. But if you say, “I’m addicted to heroin,” they’re gonna say, “Call EAP.” So in that sense I think they enhance the EAP program. That would actually be an interesting thing to study is whether or not people in companies that have chaplaincy programs use the EAP system more than otherwise. I would guess they may, but I don’t know.

Director D2:
So I want to get somebody who is a professional, knows what they’re doing, and can take action. So the chaplains are a bridge to that service. I know a couple of counselors but I don’t keep a list of hospitals and counselors and, you know, I don’t keep that list.

Owner A2:
[The chaplain] doesn’t force the, the, his belief side of it. He’s just there if you want to talk, you know, or if you need to be connected. Like, I’m going through this, do you have a referral?

HR Executive C:
We also have an employee assistance program, EAP. And people say, “Well, why do you have both of them? Aren’t they the same?” They aren’t the same. If you have, you know, a drug problem or an alcohol problem, financial problem, you can call the EAP and they have lots of—they have counselors, you can have five coaching sessions free before they refer you to somebody else. But it’s usually telephonic as opposed to the chaplain face to face. And there’s no—you have no relationship when you call the EAP number. It’s a stranger you’re gonna be talking to as opposed to somebody you see at least every week. So I think that the chaplain service provides a good value there.

Reduced turnover and associated costs: One of the financial benefits of having chaplains, as reported by the interviewees, is the positive impact on a company’s bottom-line. Some claimed that the marginal cost of adding chaplains was more than offset by increases in productivity. Many felt the presence of chaplains helped reduce turnover, thus contributing to the reduction of costs associated with turnover (e.g. lost productivity, rehiring, and retraining costs) and increasing productivity. For example:
Director 2:
And I think what’s difficult is you don’t see the costs that you are paying if you
don’t have a chaplaincy program, but you are paying for it. You’re paying for it in
lost productivity. You’re paying for it that people are trying to provide a service
that they’re not equipped or skilled to do. And they’re not doing the thing that
they are equipped and skilled to do. [Without chaplains] people would go to HR
and talk to them. So actually my HR team is a little more productive now because
they’re not fielding every complaint.

President F:
It gives me certainly a peace about that, knowing that they’re being taken care of.
I mean, we definitely see problems with people who are going through problems
at home. We see their productivity decrease and more mistakes in their work.

Chairman G:
You hear those kind of stories all the time, but one that sticks out to me is where
one of our folks in chaplaincy program has said the right word at the right time to
help somebody [find] their positive frame of mind... and they...say, “You know,
that time [the chaplain] said the right thing, it helped me have a better attitude at
home with my wife, or a better attitude with my kids and my friends. And when I
have a better attitude at home or with my kids, I have a much better attitude at
work with my fellow [employees].” Those are the ones that make a difference.
The right comment, the right soft word, the right encouragement.

CEO G:
You know, if you looked at it even in more of a mathematical stance and you
started calculating the impact of turnover in your business, you know, it’s
staggering. You know, we’ve found that in the last few years we’ve really spent a
lot of time focusing on our [employees] and our retention (inaudible) fairly lousy
economy has something to do with that. I don’t know how much or how little or
not, but it’s got something to do with our retention.

Director D1
Here’s a bottom line: if you were to count up the number of dollars it takes to
recruit a solid employee, and you compare that to the cost of a chaplain who helps
you retain a solid employee, I think you’re going to find a price differential there,
significant. So would I rather keep a good employee here and not lose them?
Yeah. Because replacing them is a very expensive, time consuming, very hard—
so why not provide services that help me retain quality employees? And
chaplaincy can be one of those things that helps me retain a quality employee.

President F:
When you’ve got a good employee who can’t handle the work because of what’s
going in their lives, and it comes to the point of having to terminate them, you
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know, you are, you lost value, you’ve lost a valuable asset. I mean business people would understand that.

Costs associated with turnover and lost productivity can be reduced, according to these leaders, by providing chaplaincy services. Furthermore, leaders talked about other costs including healthcare and safety that are reduced when employees are able to work through their problems with the help of a spiritual counselor.

**Reduced healthcare and safety costs:** In addition to the abovementioned reduction of operational costs linked to having chaplains, there is the potential reduction of healthcare costs, which was also mentioned by the executives. This reduction could occur through preventative mental health care, or through improving safety. For instance:

President F:
I had seen employees from day one, how their personal problems affected their job. For example, employees going through divorce or marital problems, they go from a very good employee to someone that you can’t keep employed because we’re in a high risk business. People drive big trucks. And if their mind isn’t on the job or whatever, they could be a real risk to the company. And they do, when they have problems at home they had more accidents... they’re not as conscientious.

Director 2
[When confronted with a suicidal employee] we took that really, really seriously... we called the chaplains, we had them come in. They took this person and they immediately got them seen by a counselor and they were hospitalized immediately. So in that sense we could be very proactive on the front end trying to keep anything from happening like we experienced otherwise [previous suicide of employee that precipitated hiring of chaplains]. So that’s really important. And everybody else went back to their work.

Director D1:
[“John”] has spent time with the chaplain. And that’s a fairly low cost benefit to the company. It’s not a whole lot. As opposed to ["John"] going to see a therapist for six sessions, which could be fairly high cost, and gets the same benefit. So you know what I’m trying to say. You see insurance costs, basically claims, because of that... I don’t know how you get at that one, or if that’s even a true scenario but you know that, there’s a potential there.
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As the leaders explained, having a chaplain helping employees manage stress and personal issues can help reduce associated costs, as such employees receive care promptly before the problems escalate and become more costly. As the leaders discussed how employees bring their home/life problems to work, it became apparent that there had to be a socio-cultural explanation contributing to this. Perhaps something was missing within their homes, churches and communities, whereby the support network in their personal lives was no longer sufficient to help them through life's challenges.

2) The Socio-Cultural Justification: Providing Community at Work

In addition to the business justification, the establishment of workplace chaplaincy programs is also a response to perceived socio-cultural shifts. In his book, *Bowling Alone*, Robert Putnam has noted the disintegration of traditional sources of community in America and how that has disconnected people from each other. Among the organizational leaders interviewed, there was this same sense that somehow employees were increasingly isolated, alienated, and less active in social support groups. The reasons given for this breakdown are varied, but the interviewees unanimously agree that the workplace has become the primary, and in some cases only, community for these employees. As a result, it becomes necessary for employers to provide resources to cover the gap of missing social support networks that would have traditionally been provided by outside organizations, such as the church, the family, or other civic communities. For example:

CEO C:
So I liked the idea from the beginning that this would be especially for people who don’t have a church family, and maybe people that don’t have good relationships at home or whatever.
Director D2:
And at times we have been the primary community, not because we chose to be the primary community but because the person chose us as their primary community. They were actually feeling more cared for and helped by the community here, and they were maybe not really plugged in, in their church, or were just an unknown in their church.

Owner B:
I see a need for this, you know, is it missing in society? Maybe not in everyone’s situation, but I do see it missing in some people’s lives, that they could use more support. There’s a lot of people who are alienated. And I’m not just talking about, you know, like the homeless. I’m talking about people who work for me here and don’t have support. And this can be support... I think people have been lonely for a long time and not had people that they could rely on. So I can’t say that it’s, you know, specific to this time period but I do see that there is a need, I’m looking for people that, you know, will stand up and help. So I think that’s kind of something that if you’re able to do it, you ought to try.

President C
And the other phenomenon we have going on is that the church has historically played a key role in the lives of families, of people. And the phenomenon that we’re experiencing is that people don’t go to church anymore. …The other thing is people have busy schedules and sometimes church doesn’t fit their schedule. Maybe they have to work on a Sunday, they have to work on Wednesday night or something like that so it just doesn’t work for them. So part of what our chaplain’s program is you know what, people are busy. You know, maybe we can take part of what they would experience in a church or part of what they would experience with God and bring it to the workplace. And so, you know, maybe we can come alongside you and, be there for you. Maybe because you’re not plugged into a church you don’t have anybody to do your wedding. Maybe because you’re not plugged into a church you don’t know who to call to do a funeral for you. So we can come alongside you in that way.

CEO C:
Well, my perception is that church attendance is falling and this is a way of sort of taking the church to the workplace. It’s a substitute in a way for people going to church. Not a real good one maybe, but it’s something where instead of people going and hearing from a pastor, here is a pastor who’s coming to talk to them, coming into their space. So I think you could say that the more that that trend continues, the more important it is to try to sort of fill that void or that gap.

HR Executive C:
[Chaplains are] people that they can talk to and I think in this day in age, particularly young people have become sort of isolated. You know, especially with all these electronic devices that you all have here. You know, young people, teenagers, they don’t get out of their bedroom, you know. They rush home and
then they start texting their buddies, you know. Their mother calls them for dinner, they text their mother and say, “Okay, I’ll be down.” There’s not that relationship. There’s not the physical relationship. And I think that’s what a chaplain can provide.

The leaders interviewed noted that, due to people not having sufficient social support networks, whether at church, in the family, or community, it has become necessary for the work organization to become the new community. However, we recognize the potential risks of this strategy, including a further blurring of personal and professional boundaries and responsibilities, a distraction from the core purpose of the business enterprise, and forcing a new (spiritual) community on someone who does not want that as part of their work experience. Moreover, despite the good intentions of the leaders we interviewed, organizations must consider and manage other risks potentially associated workplace chaplaincy (e.g. spiritual manipulation, discrimination, and harassment).

3) The Spiritual/Theological Justification: Loving Employees

The final category of justification, which emerged from discussions with the interviewees, was their spiritual/theological basis for hiring workplace chaplains. All of the executives were Christian, and so their answers were grounded in that tradition, although they came from a wide diversity of Christian denominations. A prominent theme was the New Testament commandment to love one's neighbors, which these leaders took to mean their employees, regardless of the employees' faith tradition. Other theological reasons given were use of "spiritual gifts" at work, evangelism, stewardship, and sacrificial love to help others. In a sense, these leaders understood that God is a stakeholder in their business (Schwartz, 2006), and therefore they apply Biblical
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principles of loving God and/through loving others, which includes employees as internal stakeholders. For example:

President E:
And care for others just simply can’t be denied, right. I mean, people don’t walk away from someone that says, “I’m here to love you.” And I’m not couching it as religion, I’m couching it as love. And that’s all it is. And I just want you to know that that’s where our chaplains lead. And that’s what we keep our eye on. Are you leading with love or are you leading with theology, right? And we don’t need you to go in with theology. Keep your theology out of this for right now, right, because that’s not what people hear.

President C:
I probably have more of a love for God than I have ever have, but more importantly to me, more of a love for people that don’t believe the way I do. And that makes me the happiest. I don’t share that everywhere, but that’s kind of where I am, you know. I grew up in a very narrow view. I thought that everybody outside of my church was going straight to hell, Presbyterians and Catholics, heaven forbid if you were Jewish or Muslim or anything else. Now I have, you know, Hindu people that work for me, Muslim people that work for me, and I love them like crazy just the way they are... that’s kind of my faith journey.

Director D2:
I think we’re called to love our neighbor right?

President F:
Well, [we] ... think of other’s needs more than ourselves.... my Christian beliefs, indicate to me that, um, you know, we’re not to think of ourselves as much as we think of other people, and [we should be] helping them. So through [Sam] and the chaplaincy, he can provide that help.

Director D1:
My best understanding is that God equips men and women with a variety of skills, natural talents, passions, and what we call, spiritual gifts. To think that those should only be exercised and used within the context of the local church ministry would be limiting. So, and I think biblically, you can find plenty of examples of people exercising their giftedness outside of the formal context of the way that community gathers and worships and identifies itself. So both biblically and theologically it makes sense to me that the expression of God’s gifts happens in many aspects of life, not just through the formal programming of a local church.

CEO C:
Well, I think I’ve always had an interest in evangelism, although not as strong now as it was at one time probably. But I think particularly then, and that wasn’t that long ago, but I liked—I mean, one of the things that appealed to me about the
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chaplaincy program is that if a person was searching, this would make it easier for them to become a Christian and to have a conversion experience if there was somebody there that was engaging them… But, you know, I don’t think we’ve had one complaint in 12 years or whatever it is, of somebody feeling like they were pressured or harassed or that they were affronted by, you know, a pastor who was, you know, coming on too strong. But yeah, it makes me feel good that there are people who would say, “Hey, I became a Christian through the chaplaincy program at the company.” That makes me feel good.

The spiritual convictions and theological justifications that leaders describe here include love for people as a spiritual imperative, and a desire among a few of them, to create the opportunity for employees to become Christians. Those who explained a desire for employees to become Christians also tended to operate consciously as a faith-based or so-called ‘Christian business.’ This raises scholarly and practical questions about how that works in practice and what risks exist in doing so. Since those expressing these views were all private businesses, they can legally function as Christian/faith-based businesses. Though they explained that they had not had any complaints about the chaplains program, it is also possible that employees are self-selecting out by choosing not to work for overtly faith-based businesses. What we found with this sample of organizational leaders is that overall, their spiritual convictions did involve viewing employees from a holistic perspective, as people with spiritual as well as other needs that ought to be met in the organizational context (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000).

4) Holistic Care, and Theistic Anthropology

The theme of treating employees holistically emerged in several interviews. While this is related to the business, socio-cultural, and spiritual/theological justifications, we felt the leaders' emphasis on it merited it becoming its own category.

We present it as a synthesizing construct that recognizes the employee as a human being
with multiple facets to their identity, whereby people (including employers) feel compelled to treat other humans humanely, regardless of their belief set (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000; Fry and Slocum, 2008; Mitroff and Denton, 1999; Sheep, 2006). And progressive employers, through affinity networks, diversity and inclusion, health and physical well-being, and work/life balance programs have demonstrated that attention to a variety of human needs, including spiritual ones, could benefit both employee and company.

CEOs:
1. CEO G: And 100 percent of [our employees] have personal problems that they bring to work at least one day a year. It’s not 65 or 280 or however many [days] they work. I mean, you know, [some] percent of them may believe in God, but a 100 percent of them have problems.
2. HR Executive C: Companies that are in this area were considering hiring Marketplace Chaplains. And what I tell them is that I think it’s a way that the company can care for its employees... and it benefits both the company and I think it benefits the employee... So I think that when you bring in a group like the chaplains you can help people. We have a good medical plan and wellness plan, and this is sort of a spiritual wellness. They’re just good support people
3. Owner A1: As much as we want to believe that, you know, that our personal life and our business lives are two different things, that’s a myth. And they’re not. You know, if your mom just died yesterday and you’re at work today, it affects it, period. I don’t care who you are. So to have somebody that you can talk through something that, you know, as much as you have to. You know, my cat broke his toe yesterday, you know, it’s something that’s important to them. It’s someplace that they can go and talk to. It says a lot about who you are as a business owner and about who you care about, the people who work for you.
4. President E: We got a Hindu that’s on our senior management team, our VP of Quality. And one of our guys has made it his mission to talk to this guy about Christ every week. Sits with him, goes to Scripture, this guy goes to Christian church every week, but because he’s Hindu he’s pluralistic, right. So he’s polytheistic. He gets multiple gods, multiple things. And he really, he’ll say it to you all the time, “I listen to all truths. And Christianity has an amazing truth, but there’s others.” You know, so he can’t embrace Christ. He just can’t. He won’t go there because it
somehow just doesn’t seem to finish with him right, you know. But we don’t push him away. We don’t say we love you less. You know, we hug him and kiss him and we pray for him and we talk to him and we care for him just like we do everybody else. So I think that’s what Paul was talking about in Corinthians when he was saying love is, and he lists, what was it, fifteen attributes of love. And he’s like, you know, this is what you’re supposed to do, love God, love your neighbor, and this is how, and it has all those descriptions of it. That’s what we’re supposed to do in our company and that’s what we try to lead with.

President E:
They may not agree with it but at the end of the day I think they feel like, “You know what, they’re not trying to preach at me. They’re not trying to shove this on me. They really mean it. They really do care about me.” And I think they see it in terms of how we care for people who aren’t, you know, believers in Christ.

This synthesizing theme of holistic care and theistic anthropology is illustrated well by the quotes above, as they recognized that people are comprised of mind, body, and spirit. These leaders expressed a responsibility to be attentive to all these human needs and sought to treat their employees holistically, as subjects of work and not objects. The interviews show how these leaders viewed their employees as needing love, care, concern and help, irrespective of religious backgrounds or faith traditions. While some of the quotes indicate an environment where people talk openly about religion and about Christianity, the leaders indicate that these discussions are only held with those who are open to them, and are not aimed at coercing acceptance of any particular faith. Of course, discussions with and surveys of employees, another part of our larger research project into workplace chaplaincy, will help us better gauge whether employees discern the same atmosphere and tone as the leaders expressed, i.e. that they do not have to be/become Christians to be welcome, cared for and helped in their organizational community.

Further, interviews with chaplains help us find out how they feel about some of the leaders expectations regarding proselytizing, also the subject of a future manuscript.
DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2003; 2010) argue that for the scientific study of workplace chaplaincy to continue to grow and develop as a legitimate area of study, there is a need to identify the practical implications of workplace chaplaincy, as this helps to demonstrate practical utility. Our study has so far contributed to that endeavor, with at least five overall themes emerging from the results of the business, socio-cultural and spiritual/theological justifications for implementing workplace chaplaincy.

1) Caring for employees

This study indicates that organizational leaders viewed caring for employees as a business and spiritual imperative that is also prompted by current socio-cultural conditions of alienation and insufficient social support systems. Further, caring about employees holistic needs links with Fry’s conceptualization of spiritual leadership which includes the elements of hope/faith and altruistic love, that contribute to employees feeling understood and appreciated, and in turn contribute to positive individual and organizational outcomes (Fry, 2003; Fry & Slocum 2008). Caring for employees resulting in them feeling understood and appreciated contributes to creating a positive, spiritually centered organizational culture and a sense of community. While outside the scope of this study, this may also have strong correlation to and resonance with attributes often associated with generational research into younger employees ('Millennials') entering the workforce.

2) A new sense of community in the workplace
As the findings illustrate, when values such as care, concern, love, help, and meeting the needs of employees are practiced, they contribute to creating a sense of community in the workplace (Duchon and Ploman, 2005; Fry & Slocum, 2008; Giacalone and Jurkiewicz 2003, 2010). This sense of community may contribute to employee engagement (Saks, 2011), which in turn contributes to organizational commitment. Further, a sense of community at work may contribute to an overall positive organizational climate.

3) Improved productivity by reducing costs

Leaders in this study recognized that having chaplains helped with productivity by reducing the costs associated with turnover, training of replacement employees, and increased retention, fitting with previous studies of workplace spirituality (e.g. Duchon & Ploman 2005; Fry 2008). Workplace spirituality is associated with conscientiousness (Hardesty and Westerman, 2009), fitting with leaders' perception that employees would be able to pay more attention to their jobs if/when they had avenues for dealing with life issues. In jobs requiring manual labor, this could also reduce costs and lost productivity due to workplace injuries and accidents. Further, productivity can be improved by reducing the costs associated with stress-related illnesses, mental health, and physical health.

4) Improved productivity by increasing employee wellbeing

Leaders interviewed indicated that problems at home resulted in problems at work, and employees who were stressed out were more likely to be unproductive, or even a safety risk to themselves and others. In one scenario, an employee committed suicide,
triggering the hiring of the chaplains; in another case, an employee became violent at work, also triggering the hiring of the chaplains. As these leaders discussed the ways that chaplains are able to provide the resources and referrals that employees need to deal with life crises and challenges, they saw that proactive stance as helping to improve employee wellbeing, which then contributed to the organization’s bottom-line (Fry, 2005). Improved wellbeing is also associated with higher levels of job satisfaction (Robert, Young, & Kelly, 2006).

5) Improved productivity through organizational commitment and employee engagement

The spiritually centered or welcoming organizational culture that includes the values of care, concern, community, calling, joy, fulfillment through work, and altruistic love, all contribute to employees who are more engaged and committed to their organizations. As leaders described their perception that having chaplains had an impact on these values/variables, it was with the understanding that eventually they contribute to organizational productivity; the literature agrees (Benefiel 2005; Duchon and Ploman 2005; Fry and Slocum 2008; Poole, 2009; Saks 2011).

However, even as we make these associations between workplace chaplaincy as an articulation of spirituality in the workplace with these five positive individual and organizational outcomes, we recognize that some of the stories these organizational leaders told us also raise scholarly and practical concerns. Will their passion for and commitment to their own religious tradition and how it manifests itself at work create certain risks? Specifically, we raise questions concerning religious harassment,
discrimination, and *quid pro quo*, typical EEOC complaints brought forward by employees who feel uncomfortable in such religiously infused organizations. On the one hand, we recognize that the same leaders who discussed hoping that employees would ‘find Christ’ through the chaplains, also talked about loving their employees and wanting to provide holistic benefits. On the other hand, we recognize that the proselytizing motivation could place the chaplains in an awkward situation as they are trained to ‘share the gospel only when invited to do so,’ rather than at the urging of organizational leaders, and also place employees who are not of the particular faith tradition in the situation where they may feel coerced to adopt certain religious views or risk losing their jobs. To be clear, according to the leaders interviewed, none of these situations had occurred. However, we recognize that organizational leaders may not always know the minute details of how employees experience the chaplaincy. Therefore, we look forward to analyzing the data on employee perspectives for a future manuscript, where we will further unpack the potential dark side of chaplaincy as experienced on the ground.

One of the clear implications of this study is the need for further studies of workplace spirituality and specifically, workplace chaplaincy. For example, the above point regarding the dark side of workplace chaplaincy requires further interrogation, and if and how employers might mitigate the risks in light of the benefits. Additionally, there is need to explicate the perceptions of various levels of employees – from middle managers to supervisors and line workers, from headquarters office staff to employees on factory floors, in order to understand the breadth and experience of the phenomenon. Such studies should employ both qualitative in-depth methods and quantitative
generalizable approaches, in order to feed the knowledge gap that continuous to be touted as existing in the field of spirituality in the workplace (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2010).

In terms of bridging theory and practice, one of the issues that these leaders made clear is that what they know about the benefits of chaplaincy and the contribution to the bottom line is more a ‘gut feeling’ and anecdotal observations, as opposed knowledge from systematic evaluation of their programs. Thus, a further implication of this study is that scholars need to develop and test new metrics and measures that can be applied to evaluate chaplaincy programs in order to assess just how well they are meeting the needs of organizational members and contributing to individual and organizational outcomes, while minimizing or mitigating any attendant risks.

Overall, we find the results of this study to offer promise for this emerging area of study of workplace chaplaincy as a sub-set of spirituality in the workplace, promise that can be fulfilled through further studies and working with organizational leaders both to evaluate existing programs and offer empirically sound advice on the potential benefits of incorporating spirituality into their organizational cultures and contexts.
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### TABLE 1
Organizational and Leadership Interviewee Profiles

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