

BEARING WITNESS? A LEGACY OF FAITH IN FAMILY ENTREPRENEURING

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Short biographical sketches

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ABSTRACT

In this study we examine the intriguing concept of a legacy of faith in the context of family businesses, providing a new perspective on family entrepreneuring across generations. Recent studies herald the influence of religious faith on entrepreneuring but are limited in providing clarity as to how and why a legacy influenced by religious faith may be created and sustained and with what impact. Relying on a qualitative approach, we examine empirical data from multiple generations in seven families. We find that families in business generate co-constructed stories that build, and sustain, a legacy of faith. In doing so, we contribute to the understanding of a collective identity influenced by religious faith and enhance the theoretical perspective of cultural entrepreneurship. The study shows how and why co-constructed stories contribute to legacies that influence family entrepreneuring and impact business policy. We interpret these co-constructed stories using the metaphors of a compass, an anchor, and a lighthouse and propose a model that illustrates a legacy of faith. We further introduce a model capturing a legacy of faith as a manifestation of cultural entrepreneurship and family entrepreneuring over time.

Keywords: Legacy; Religion; Family Business; Legacy of Faith; Entrepreneuring; Cultural Entrepreneurship; Collective identity

INTRODUCTION

This Special Issue calls for us to contribute to understanding legacy, identified as one of the most important constructs in management research and practice. Legacies are traces of the past transferred between individuals, firms and families which shape the future. Without insights into how and why a legacy is transferred, and with what impact we cannot fully understand the interplay between the past, the present and the future. In this study we contribute to theorizing legacy in the context of family business where it has been suggested that “motivated legacy senders and receivers build, interpret, and use values, norms, knowledge, and beliefs from the past by either acting on them directly or through the mediation of verbal, symbolic, physical, and visual artifacts” (Radu-Lefebvre, Davis & Gartner, 2024: 20). We discovered that religious faith could lie at the heart of building a legacy in family business, what we call a legacy of faith.

The celebrated stories of successful family businesses such as Wegmans, Hobby Lobby, C. Hoare Bank, Cardone Industries, In-N-Out, The Entertainer, Herman Miller, Mary Kay Cosmetics and many others showcase that family business founders have often articulated their experience of how religion can influence entrepreneurship (Ash & Pendleton, 2008; Balch, 2022; Cafferky, 2012; Cardone, 2009; Green & Merrill, 2010; Higginson, 2015; Higginson & Robertshaw, 2017; Zigarelli, 2019). Scholarly attention to this phenomenon is sparse. Prior studies have found that, when told and retold over generations, stories may communicate a legacy (Barbera, Stamm, & DeWitt, 2018; Jaskiewicz, Combs, & Rau, 2015). Our understanding of how such stories may be crafted (Gehman & Soublière, 2017; Glaser & Lounsbury, 2021) via the participation of family members (Hamilton, Discua Cruz, & Jack, 2017) and the role they serve, particularly when religious faith is involved, is currently under-investigated (Radu-Lefebvre et al., 2024).

It is estimated that more than 80% of the world's population claim a religious affiliation (Pew Research Centre, 2017). It seems scholars have been somewhat indifferent to the influence of religious faith on entrepreneurship until recently when a theological turn in entrepreneurship research emerged (Block, Fisch, & Rehan, 2020; Smith, McMullen, & Cardon, 2021; Wiklund, Nikolaev, Shir, Foo, & Bradley, 2019). There is growing evidence that religious faith has a profound influence on entrepreneurship for an individual (Smith, Lawson, Dubard Barbosa, & Jones, 2023), and there have been calls for more exploration of stories as a key cultural identity mechanism for entrepreneurs (Lounsbury & Glynn, 2001). Studies of faith from religious traditions have also been called for to enrich entrepreneurship and legacy theories, and to enhance practice (Busenitz & Lichtenstein, 2019; Neubert, 2019; Radu-Lefebvre et al., 2024).

Understanding how religious faith might influence the legacy of families in business across generations remains something of a puzzle. A promising path to solve this enigma lies in theorizing the link between legacy, religion and entrepreneuring. Family entrepreneuring, as a perspective, focuses our attention on how family members practice and experience the doing of entrepreneurship (Al-Dajani et al., 2024). Our research question is: *how and why is a legacy of faith created and sustained in a family in business and with what impact on entrepreneuring?*

To address our research question, we relied on a qualitative approach (van Burg, Cornelissen, Stam, & Jack, 2022) to examine empirical material from three generations of seven families in business in Honduras, Latin America, who adhere to the Christian faith (Kim & Kim, 2016) and have created or acquired several businesses (Ramírez-Pasillas, Lundberg, & Nordqvist, 2021). In Latin America, the business landscape is primarily composed of family businesses, with religious beliefs having a significant influence in people's lives (Aguinis et al., 2020).

In our findings we introduce and elaborate on a legacy of faith, contributing to theorizing that legacy building in family business affects entrepreneuring over time. Second, we discover that co-constructed stories are a fundamental element in a legacy of faith. In doing so, we contribute to understanding how a collective identity and co-constructed stories across generations advance the theoretical perspective of cultural entrepreneurship. To understand the impact of a legacy of faith we interpret these co-constructed stories using the metaphors of a compass (guidance), anchor (stability) and lighthouse (protection and hope). The study shows how these impact the way families do entrepreneurship over time and how they shape business policies. Finally, we offer two models to illustrate how a legacy of faith, through co-constructed stories, affects family entrepreneuring over time.

THEORETICAL GROUNDING

Religion and legacy

Religion remains a vital and prevalent feature of human life, existing in a variety of forms (Prothero, 2020). It broadly relates to “systems of meaning embodied in a pattern of life, a community of faith, and a worldview of the sacred and what ultimately matters” (Schmidt et al., 1999: 10). Religion can have a transformative effect on individuals (Gümüşay, 2020). It offers concepts and symbols by which we interpret ourselves, the circumstances and purposes of our actions and hence is not incompatible with the changing demands of the business world (Singh, Vu, Chu, & Burton, 2023; Williams & Houck, 1982). Religion involves doctrines, narratives (e.g. myths, legends, stories), ethics, rituals and social institutions (e.g. synagogues, churches, shrines, mosques), that affect both individual and collective experiences (Smart, 1971, 1998). It embodies faith and beliefs. Whereas religious faith relates to “the relationship or sense of interconnectedness people experience with the sacred/others/nature” religious beliefs focus on “articulated religious tenets, theologies, or teachings” (Dyck & Purser, 2019: 266). Religious

faith has been understood as a lived human experience (Ammerman, 2021) grounded upon developing a relationship with the divine (Dyck & Purser, 2019). Faith is one of the fundamental modes of being religious – a sui generis mode of human experience (Di Giovanni, 2003; Smart, 1971).

Religious faith has been found to play a significant role in shaping personal values, decisions, behavior and actions of individual entrepreneurs (Henley, 2017; Mulford, Cabanda, Root, & Gross, 2024). The authority of religious faith for entrepreneurs stems from its capacity to provide a sense of purpose, making sense of circumstances and extracting meaning in the journey to create or acquire a business (Smith et al., 2023). Individual entrepreneurs have been found to rely on faith to inform entrepreneuring, such as the nature of business activity, financial sources, exchange networks and marketing (Cavalcanti Junqueira, Discua Cruz, & Gratton, 2023; Dodd & Gotsis, 2007). Despite often being perceived as a hindrance in the doing of entrepreneurship (Audretsch, Bönte, & Tamvada, 2013), religious faith has helped tackle ethical dilemmas (Walker, Smither, & DeBode, 2012) and to imagine future possibilities (Ganzin, Islam, & Suddaby, 2020).

The influence of religious faith in our understanding of legacy has been acknowledged in some academic conversations. Whilst a precise definition is elusive, a legacy of faith in disciplines such as family studies and organizational leadership broadly relates to the influence religious faith can have in actions and decisions of individuals. It is not uncommon to find historical accounts portraying entrepreneurs leaving behind a legacy of faith, in the way they acted in society and business, yet such accounts fail to elucidate how such legacy was transmitted or shaped (Flores, 2022). Prior studies of the Black church in the USA found that its development was influenced by oral traditions, or recollections from the past commonly known

in a given culture or a particular group (Cohen, 1989). Mitchell (1986) argued that oral traditions allowed family members across generations to reflect on religious beliefs when facing everyday hardships in life.

In organizations, a legacy of faith has been related to how leaders, as legacy senders, may influence followers, as legacy receivers. Based on the character of the apostle Paul in the Bible, Whittington, Pitts, Kageler, & Goodwin (2005) identified qualities of leaders, scrutinized by followers who then ultimately determine whether they are worthy of imitation. This resonates with recent studies on the leadership of US family firms, suggesting that integrating religious beliefs in business decisions can influence the actions of successors in the future (Cater III & Alderson, 2022).

Recent studies argue that religious faith can have a profound and enduring influence on families in business (Lawson & Smith, 2024) despite often receiving strong criticism for integrating their religious beliefs in business policies (Phillips, 2021). In long established family businesses, religious faith has been found to harmonize conflicting goals and align objectives through a shared purpose (Carradus, Zozimo, & Discua Cruz, 2020; Sorenson & Milbrandt, 2023). Whilst studies also suggest that religious families in business may be adventurous in business creation and development (Sabah, Carsrud, & Kocak, 2014) there is limited understanding as to what motivate family members to create and transmit a legacy influenced by religious faith. An important motivation behind a legacy of faith being accepted or rejected by members of a family business may relate to the desire to preserve an entrepreneurial identity (Radu-Lefebvre et al., 2024).

Legacy and identity construction

Identity perspectives explain how family members benefit from knowing and agreeing about where they come from, why they do what they do and the way forward in business (Fitz-

Koch, Cooper, & Discua Cruz, 2019; Radu-Lefebvre, Lefebvre, Crosina, & Hytti, 2021). In the intersection between religion and entrepreneurship, Smith et al. (2023) argue that religion shapes an individual's entrepreneurial identity by providing a sense of stability, unique purpose, and meaning. Religious practices (such as prayer or meditation) may inform decisions, allowing individual entrepreneurs to experience a personal relationship with the divine (Morris & Santos, 2023).

A growing body of research offers some promise in explaining the creation of entrepreneurial identities through cultural entrepreneurship (Gehman & Soublière, 2017; Lounsbury & Glynn, 2001, 2019; Wry, Lounsbury, & Glynn, 2011). Cultural entrepreneurship relates to “processes by which actors draw upon cultural resources (e.g., discourse, language, categories, logics, and other symbolic elements) to advance entrepreneurship or to facilitate organization or institutional innovation” (Lounsbury & Glynn, 2019: 3). Lounsbury & Glynn (2001: 549) relate culture to “a flexible set of tools that can be actively and strategically created and deployed as actors struggle to make sense of the world”. At the core of cultural entrepreneurship is the construction of collective entrepreneurial identities, defined as stories that provide meaning to the questions of “who we are” and “what we do” (Navis & Glynn, 2011: 480).

To date, cultural entrepreneurship studies have suggested that identity stories can connect cultural elements into a narrative that influences the credibility of a new venture as judged by external audiences (e.g., investors, government bodies, other organizations) (Garud, Schildt, & Lant, 2014). There are increasing questions about “cultural making” or the notion of cultural entrepreneurship as a distributed and intertemporal process influenced by multiple cultural meanings (Gehman & Soublière, 2017: 66–67). From this perspective, stories could be

constructed through reinterpretations of the past in the light of present situations and activities (Navis & Glynn, 2011) and may not reflect a “one-time accomplishment”, but an ongoing process affected by multiple actors, artifacts, and events over time (Gehman & Soublière, 2017: 66). This perspective calls for us to examine the construction and maintenance of identity stories and how past, present and future activities are contextualized as part of ongoing entrepreneurial processes (Gehman & Soublière, 2017; Glaser & Lounsbury, 2021).

Legacy and stories

Within families, stories serve a crucial function in making sense of day-to-day events, relying on shared experiences and social interaction (Amason, 2020). Stories are presented, examined, and reinterpreted to develop “theories” or explanations of what happened, is happening or may happen (Ochs, Taylor, Rudolph, & Smith, 1992: 38). Stories, alongside practices, are core elements of religious traditions (Prothero, 2020; Smart, 1971) and are helpful to explain and communicate beliefs and practices (Schwab, 2013).

Stories are crucial as legacy artifacts for families in businesses as they help transmit knowledge, values, and identity (Radu-Lefebvre et al., 2024: 16). Recent studies have highlighted their relevance for family businesses across generations (Short & Payne, 2020). In family business, Jaskiewicz et al. (2015) developed a theory that entrepreneurial families have what they called an entrepreneurial legacy, nurturing entrepreneurship across generations, partly based on stories told and retold over generations. They argue that stories help reconstruct the past entrepreneurial achievements or resilience of the family, giving meaning to current and future entrepreneuring. A further study by Barbera et al. (2018) revealed the existence of legacy stories, consistently told by generations. These stories may convey multiple meanings to various stakeholder groups, depending on the “degree of emotional and spatial separation between individuals who experienced the actual events and those who retell or hear them” (Barbera et al.,

2018: 367). Although the insight around entrepreneurial legacy and legacy stories recognizes the importance of the interaction between generations to tell and retell stories, and thus to transmit a legacy that impacts entrepreneuring, we believe that there is more to understand beyond that dyad when stories are constructed, between and across generations.

A cultural entrepreneurship perspective suggests that the early stages of venture formation are critical for the construction of stories because they are “highly uncertain and emotionally charged” (Lounsbury & Glynn, 2001: 550). Prior studies suggest that story co-construction is a collective and relational process (Gabriel & Connell, 2010). Lounsbury and Glynn (2001) argue that during these initial stages entrepreneurs may begin to construct stories that address questions about who they are, their purpose, a rationale around why they will succeed and how to go about it.

Exploring how such stories are constructed may enhance our understanding of stories in cultural entrepreneurship (Glaser & Lounsbury, 2021). Cultural entrepreneurship is a perspective that speaks to family entrepreneuring. Family entrepreneuring explains how family members practice and experience the doing of entrepreneurship (Al-Dajani et al., 2024). It relates to a practice-based and relational process (Champenois, Lefebvre, & Ronteau, 2020; Johannisson, 2011; Radu-Lefebvre, Ronteau, Lefebvre, & McAdam, 2022). As a practice-based phenomenon, it encourages family members to make sense of a chaotic and uncertain entrepreneurial journey (Discua Cruz & Hamilton, 2022; Johannisson, 2011). As a relational phenomenon, it connects ideas, people and actions focusing on what entrepreneurs decide to do and why (Dodd, Anderson, & Jack, 2023). We argue that stories of family entrepreneuring may help us to explore how and why a legacy of faith is created and sustained and with what impact.

METHODOLOGY

In addressing our research question we adopted a qualitative approach because: (1) it provides the opportunity to produce a richer picture of what families in business do and how business policy may be developed (Hamilton et al., 2017; van Burg et al., 2022); (2) it enhances the potential interaction between researchers and practitioners (Dodd et al., 2021); and (3) it advances knowledge about legacy and entrepreneuring (Al-Dajani et al., 2024; Radu-Lefebvre et al., 2024). Capturing the intangible, often contested aspect of religion and its influence in entrepreneuring is not straightforward. It may be difficult to “see” or understand and it is often not openly discussed (Cavalcanti Junqueira et al., 2023), particularly in the context of family businesses (Cater III & Alderson, 2022).

Guided by recent studies examining new phenomena and underexplored contexts (Lamine, Anderson, Jack, & Fayolle, 2021), we engaged in method plurality (van Burg et al., 2022). We aligned our method with recent discussions by Gioia et al. (2022) around the notion that the world we study can be socially constructed. We can assume then that members of a family in business engage in actions that create structures, which enable and constrain further action. Family members may therefore decide to treat the structures they create as if they were real, and act accordingly. Their actions may then relate to “rules” that they themselves have consensually fashioned. The people who inhabit these socially constructed worlds are knowledgeable; that means that families in business have a good sense of what they are doing, how, and why. Perhaps most importantly, they can *explain* what, how, and why they are doing what they do.

Our approach was then based on Gioia et al. (2022; 2013) to show accounts of experience via a systematically derived data structure that accounts for first-order (informant-based) and second-order (researcher-based) understandings in tandem. This structure enables reporting from

multiple perspectives and allows a way of demonstrating evidence in support of conclusions. Our aim was not to focus on a “correct” answer to our research question but to generate a plausible, defensible explanation of how and/or why a phenomenon occurs.

Case selection

We chose a recognized approach to investigating our research question using case studies (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). We relied on purposive sampling seeking empirical sites where the focal phenomenon is likely to occur, based on cases which offered insights regarding our research question (Pratt, 2009). We sought cases of families in business which (1) had openly expressed the influence of religious faith in entrepreneuring, (2) were experiencing a collective engagement in entrepreneuring (for example the creation or acquisition of a venture) and (3) had members of several generations involved. By using these criteria, we aimed to elicit in-depth data based on participant stories around legacy, religion and family entrepreneuring.

Seven families in business were contacted. These families had created several ventures in different industries and were in the process of starting or acquiring other businesses, offering a rich context to examine the intersection between religious faith and family entrepreneuring. Access to empirical material, acknowledged as challenging with family businesses in Latin America (Vazquez, Botero, Arzubiaga, & Memili, 2024), was facilitated by the personal relationships of the lead author. Details of the selected cases are provided in Table 1. At the request of participants, all names (interviewees, businesses) have been anonymized.

Insert Table 1 about here

Data Collection

Data was collected through 41 in-depth interviews with decision-makers in families in business, first, second and third generation (see Table 1). We employed probing questions, such

as “Tell us about how this business emerged? Why? Who was involved?” and “Was religion important in the process to set up this business? How? Why?”. Initial explications were further probed with requests that allowed the respondents to share stories referring to critical events (Cope, 2003). Participants drew upon metaphors, which helped move our analysis from the narrated events to representations and meanings (Anderson, 2005). This helped us contextualize language, expression and conversation (Gartner, 2007) allowing us to connect experiences and influences of religious faith to entrepreneuring (Byrd, 2011). Given the nature of our study, we focused on aspects of consent, confidentiality, and rapport, to ensure interviewees could share their views openly (Ryen, 2016). Interviews were recorded verbatim, in the language of the participants (Spanish), lasted for approximately one hour and were conducted either in person, in business offices, outdoor venues, family homes or via online tools (King, Horrocks, & Brooks, 2018).

Guided by Lamine et al. (2021) steps were taken to ensure data trustworthiness such as data organization, case database protocols, thick description, revision of transcripts by respondents, professional bilingual translation (Spanish to English) and peer debriefing (Creswell & Miller, 2000). To gain outsider perspectives peer debriefing consisted of engaging with religious leaders (vicars, ministers) and scholars. To gather further insight in the relationship between legacy, religion and entrepreneurship we participated in conferences and special interest groups (e.g. Lab for the Integration of Faith in Entrepreneurship Conference (L.I.F.E), Academy of Management (Entrepreneurship and Management, Spirituality and Religion Divisions), and the European Group for Organizational Studies (EGOS) Conference 2023). This served as a sounding board to enhance our analysis. Other sources of data (e.g. collection of material related to the expression of religious faith in mission statements or press

media releases), were used to corroborate information, triangulate sources and ensure the strength of emerging interpretations. This approach offered methodological plurality, supporting the analytical process and the validity of our work (van Burg et al., 2022).

Data Analysis

We aimed for the data analysis process to be informed by, but not constrained by, prior theoretical understandings (Finch, 2002). To make sense of our data we engaged in an active process where we were able to show how we move from data to theorization (Grodal, Anteby, & Holm, 2021). First, open coding analyzed transcripts sentence by sentence, leading to first-order concepts adhering to participant terms. The coding process included isolating key phrases, words, and expressions by participants to organize and refine themes and interpretations. After coding, all the data was reviewed multiple times and brief summaries of the participant narratives were produced. Initially we used the constant comparative technique (Anderson & Jack, 2015), looking for similarities and differences in the narratives of our respondents and among emerging categories (Gehman et al., 2018). This allowed us to identify patterns, commonalities and differences across the respondents' experiences (Boeije, 2002).

Second, we used axial coding to group first-order concepts into fewer (second-order) categories by iterating between first-order concepts, second order categories, and relevant literature, asking "What is going on here?". The second-order codes represented the categories of themes that emerged from analysis by the researchers. Iterations continued until we agreed that the data were theoretically saturated to establish convincing explanations that answered the research question, and it was improbable that any further iteration would offer additional understanding (Micelotta, Glaser, & Dorian, 2020). When all the first-order codes and second-order themes and dimensions were assembled we had the basis for building a data structure – the most crucial step in the entire research approach as it shows the "progression from raw data to

first-order codes to second-order theoretical themes and dimensions thus demonstrating rigor in qualitative research” (Gehman et al., 2018: 286). Whilst the data structure provided a static depiction of concepts and their interrelationships, tables and figures were also created to capture the dynamics analyzed, and to add a temporal dimension to the analysis (Gioia et al., 2022).

Finally, selective coding distilled second-order categories into a few “aggregate dimensions” to frame findings theoretically, via a comparison between codes, categories, and literature (Gioia et al., 2013). These aggregate dimensions form the basis of our data structure. To determine how the themes fit together, we went back to the data and first-order codes and revisited the literature. This iterative process, often called the “dance” of theory and data, underpinned the emergent theoretical concepts (Anderson, Dodd, & Jack, 2010). As a result, credible categories and meaningful connections emerged. In Figure 1 we illustrate the outcome of the data analysis process, framing our understanding of how and why a legacy of faith is created and sustained in a family in business and with what impact.

Insert Figure 1 about here

FINDINGS

In this section, we present empirical material that shows how and why a legacy of faith is created and sustained and with what impact on family entrepreneuring. Our findings are more complex than we anticipated. We uncovered that a legacy of faith is created and sustained through a complex intergenerational dynamic of a collective identity and co-constructed stories. A legacy of faith was not unproblematically sent and received, with the telling and retelling stories as a narrative mechanism for transmission from one generation to another, as we might have expected.

Our analysis revealed that family members within and across generations participated in the co-construction of stories based upon theological ideas, shared religious practices and social interactions that impacted on entrepreneurship. The significance of religious faith for entrepreneuring became apparent when critical decisions and actions were required, such as, selecting an industry or business sector, evaluating information and marshalling resources, facing and addressing setbacks or challenges and shaping business policy. Theological ideas related to the authority of sacred texts, the transformative effect of religious practices and the adherence to religious beliefs. Shared religious practices included praying, religious scripture discussion and religious rituals, among others. Social interactions that shaped story co-construction occurred not only within the family sphere (e.g. over meals, family trips, games or family activities) but also in business premises, meetings or gatherings, and in religious institutions (e.g. church).

Co-constructing stories featured family members committing themselves in religious faith and acting upon it in family entrepreneuring. Data analysis revealed that co-construction produced enduring narrative features, powerful metaphors, which family members used to describe the role and relevance of religious faith as guidance, stability, protection and hope for entrepreneuring across time.

Stories co-constructed for guidance

Our analysis uncovered co-constructed stories influenced by religious faith that served as guidance for entrepreneuring. Co-constructing such stories involved witnessing the importance of religious faith for entrepreneuring, the authority of religious text and the co-existence of religious and secular approaches for entrepreneuring. In such stories, family entrepreneuring is influenced by the theological idea of developing a covenant relationship with the divine through sacred texts and the experience of being guided.

First, co-constructing such stories involved the participation of family members, who had already started or acquired a business, sharing the importance of religious faith for entrepreneuring, revealing how God may be known in the experiences of being guided, with inexperienced members of the family:

“...we created this firm [radio station] with a conviction in the existence of God, what the Bible means to each one of us and that we cannot separate what we believe from what we do every day... it is never easy because you can't just say it, you have to rely on it when you think about what new business you want to be in.” (Fabio, 1st Gen, LOGISTICS).

“...I have always mentioned that God made us to be creative and to take risks with the confidence that we will be guided even if the business never comes to life... yet it is difficult to feel guided like that. It requires feeling that God has got your back regardless of what happens. God will not get our back if we get into businesses that will not bring him honor...”, (Gertrudis, 1st Gen, MANUFACTURERS).

“...it is that relationship you develop with God as a creator that gives us the courage to take risks in creating a new firm even when it makes no sense at all, and many times it does not... you just have to go back to the Bible and read how God operates...” (Noe, 2nd Gen, LUMBERS).

Additional data in Table 2 shows that stories co-constructed for guidance were shaped by family members sharing collective entrepreneurial experiences and reflecting on the experience of being guided. This encouraged other family members to participate and add to the stories they heard by expressing the difficulty of relating faith to being guided in a collective experience of entrepreneuring.

“...when we decided to start this new business [generic pharmaceuticals] and be guided by faith it was not about feeling the opportunity will fall from the sky. From talking to my father and my experience it is about ‘rolling up your sleeves’, believing that God will be with us and has called us to do something useful with what we have...you can read it in the Bible too”. (Tomas, 3rd Gen, CHEMISTS).

“...The more we talked about how to start a business it became clear that you need something meaningful to hold on to. If we believe we are made in God’s image and that the Bible can guide you then we can aspire to be visionary, creative and take risks to an unusual degree in business” (Victoria, 3rd Gen, TRADERS).

“...When I listened to the stories of how these other businesses were started, I had the feeling that God had to appear to you in a dream or a ‘burning bush’ and call any of us to be in business ... But in doing it together I learnt that if we trust God to lead us, we can then pursue a dream through a business that allows you to learn from His word in the Bible” (Astrid, 2nd Gen, MANUFACTURERS).

Insert Table 2 about here

Moreover, data analysis revealed that the purpose of co-constructing stories that served as guidance was to generate confidence in the divine through insight found in sacred texts. For the families in this study, the Bible was the authoritative standard of conduct in both the religious and entrepreneurial aspects of life. Story co-construction was based on family members sharing and reflecting on Bible passages (see Table 3). The individual and collective practice of Bible reading provided insights which they valued for guidance, making them a durable feature in their

stories, for example in guiding information gathering, counting the costs, planning and procuring resources.

“...This book [The Bible] serves as a compass for any activity we want to start. It may not be precise on how to do it in a specific business, but it gives you a starting point. For example, look at Luke 14, it highlights the importance of planning and counting the cost of things” (Fabia, 3rd Gen, LOGISTICS).

“... this Bible [*points to Bible on top of the business desk*] has provided us with wisdom in business because we feel God is guiding us through it. It gives us good judgement when deciding which business to go for” (Reynaldo, 2nd Gen, LOGISTICS).

“...For this new business [commercial cleaning] we started discussing Proverbs for guidance. Each one of those verses has a lot of wisdom which you don't really grasp until you apply them. We can relate the same set of proverbs my father and grandfather used as a compass for business” (Francisco, 3rd Gen, LOGISTICS).

“... We realize that the Bible is really a blueprint. We can rely on it to sort out any issues in the way to start a firm. So why not let God guide us even about which sector to go into?” (Octavio, 1st Gen, BUILDERS).

“...look in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. They are packed with so much common sense and wisdom to start a business and even who to associate with. That is difficult to ignore. Those messages have not changed over time for us...” (Federico, 2nd Gen, BUILDERS).

“...we can take Proverbs at face value when searching for biblical guidance... Some proverbs have been used so many times by my grandfather and dad, to tell us about how to think about new businesses, that they are always in the back of your mind. It is difficult not to think about them when we recall how businesses are started” (Isabel, 3rd Gen, BUILDERS).

“...This [Bible] is a book that has been translated into so many versions, yet the messages [for business creation] remain the same for us... we compare that insight with what we hear from other people about opportunities we should go for” (Lucila, 1st Gen, TRADERS).

“...Most of the principles I liked as a child are in Proverbs 31. They are always mentioned by grandma and mom. We read them together and refer to them when people ask us how we start a business. How can I forget them?” (Victoria, 3rd Gen, TRADERS).

Table 2 shows that the authority of sacred text across generations was not challenged or disregarded. What we did find was the importance of the frequency that family members engaged in social interactions and shared interpretation of sacred texts. For example, how a particular proverb or Bible passage (Table 3) was linked to the guidance of pursuing an opportunity depended on the frequency of interactions and on the engagement with family members to discuss its application. Family members who had previously created a firm recalled explaining the significance of the Bible through stories related to past entrepreneurial pursuits. As a new opportunity was being analyzed, inexperienced family members were invited to reflect on Bible verses to guide the next family entrepreneuring experience. It was only when the next generation began to be responsible for decision making that reflection on sacred texts allowed them to add their perspective, co-constructing a story for guidance.

“...My dad asked us to analyze this new opportunity [imported goods]. We could use techniques and business strategies learnt at university, yet something was missing. We read the Bible and found several verses that called for a prudent approach, so we decided to be guided by such verses as well” (Janet, 3rd Gen, LUMBERS),

“...my grandmother and father always said to seek godly counsel, not just any counsel, when starting a firm. Grandma asked me to look for other Bible verses that could guide us when

we sought information about this business [private school]. Luckily, I had a discussion last Sunday at church about Proverbs 11:14. It suggests that there is safety in the number of counsellors because people may be very knowledgeable in the legalese of business but may lack that biblical perspective... we applied that for this new business and felt more confident in the information we gathered” (Martina, 2nd Gen, EDUCATORS).

Analysis revealed that while entrepreneurial activities would be discussed based on sacred texts, this did not mean that all family members relied on the same texts or same interpretation. For instance, interpreting Bible texts to draw conclusions regarding careful planning were articulated, the verses varied based on previous experience in entrepreneuring. Enhanced interpretations of the authority of sacred text to provide guidance was facilitated by family shared practices such as Bible reading and interpretation not only at home but also through religious institutions (e.g. Church). A common complaint was expressed by experienced members about issues faced when this advice was neglected.

“...The biggest mistakes I made when trying to start a new business was not asking for guidance in this book [Bible]. I always remind everyone of those experiences. It is not easy to recognize that at times we may forget to just look into the Bible...” (Noe, 2nd Gen, LUMBERS).

Finally, stories co-constructed for guidance featured a shared understanding across generations that religious faith would not be incompatible with the use of secular tried-and-tested business tools for entrepreneuring. In all cases information was evaluated through tools that aided in decision-making (for example SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analysis), PESTEL (Political, economic, sociological, technological, legal and environmental analysis)), forecasting tools, and business models. See additional data in Table 2) alongside guidance found in sacred texts (Table 3). This allowed the different skills and capabilities of

family members across generations to shape a co-constructed story.

“...I heard the other day that the Titanic was built by experts, and thought unsinkable because of the tools and techniques they used back then, but then the Ark was built by novices through the oldest techniques known and divine guidance... Noah had to act in faith until the moment the first raindrop fell and then ever more... he did not neglect divine guidance on how to build something from scratch, why should we?” (Carmen, 1st Gen, CHEMISTS).

“...Computers and new analysis tools help us now to make decisions. For this new business [real estate] we used forecasting tools and guidance in the book of Proverbs. The faith ingredient has never changed in our formula...” (Samanta, 2nd Gen, CHEMISTS).

“Dad and grandad always talked about planning coming from the Bible as a blueprint. As we started this business [commercial painting] the first thing we talked about was a business model analysis and asking God to guide us.... It all relates back to that principle in the Bible [Luke 14] predicated by grandpa. It is the same story for any of our businesses, I just never experienced how it applied to starting a firm until now” (Isabel, 3rd Gen, BUILDERS).

“...my dad learnt about [Henry] Ford and [Thomas] Edison, and I learnt about [Steve] Jobs... But there is the approach [in the Bible] that Joseph, Solomon and Moses had as they faced decisions... their stories do not change. There was no SWOT back then, yet look at what they also accomplished through their faith, so why not do the same?” (Fabia, 3rd Gen, LOGISTICS).

“...you cannot ignore the world we live in, and you cannot say that you do not need Godly guidance even if you know how to use tools like the business model canvas” (Karen, 3rd Gen, MANUFACTURERS).

Data analysis suggests that for families in this study co-constructing stories for guidance challenged a distorted theological idea of a sacred-secular divide. Rather than dividing their

reality in two spheres, where on the one hand religious faith will be relevant to religious institutions, family, personal and private matters, and on the other hand be irrelevant to other areas such as the complex demands of family entrepreneuring, these families were able to combine both approaches. Table 2 shows that a recurring theme in co-constructed stories providing guidance was that whilst secular business tools and techniques may change over time, due to advances in technology and managerial thought, there is an enduring benefit of guidance grounded on shared religious assumptions and the authority placed on immutable sacred texts. Such stories featured the intergenerational experience, that religious instruction can go in parallel with business training.

In co-constructing stories for guidance, family members generated narrative elements that elucidated their role. For example, the metaphors of a compass (LOGISTICS), a formula (CHEMISTS), an outline (EDUCATORS), a blueprint (BUILDERS) and a worksheet (TRADERS) were used to describe the influence of religious faith as guidance for entrepreneuring across generations.

Insert Table 3 about here

Stories co-constructed for stability

Data analysis revealed the co-construction of stories that helped process uncertainty through developing a sense of stability across generations. Stories co-constructed for stability related to witnessing responses to setbacks, encouraging prayer as a collective religious practice and reframing the way setbacks are interpreted. In such stories, family entrepreneuring was influenced by the theological idea of strengthening a relationship with the divine through experiencing difficult moments and shaping a collective response to setbacks supported by

shared religious practices. Families in business engaged in story co-construction through witnessing past experiences in facing setbacks and encouraging discussion by other family members.

“... the bank stalled our financing, and government offices were not supportive. I felt it would be best to quit. But then my father reminded us of the stories of how he and my grandfather made it through because of their faith...” (Fabia, 3rd Gen, LOGISTICS).

“...there was a market for the product. But then we could not reach reliable suppliers, get government permits and then the construction of the premises suffered delays. There was nothing we could do ... I was furious and very anxious. Then my mom reminded us of similar stories with grandma and how we were looking at it all wrong...” (Victoria, 3rd Gen, TRADERS)

“...we had already procured painting supplies from overseas. But then we faced increasing setbacks from the customs officers and people that agreed to work for us went somewhere else. Everything was against us! It was difficult to remain calm. Then mom said... ‘we faced the same things, have you forgotten what we did?’” (Isabel, 3rd Gen, BUILDERS).

Additional data in Table 4 shows that across cases interviewees detailed experiencing setbacks related to financial (LUMBERS, BUILDERS), operational (MANUFACTURERS, TRADERS), and ethical issues (EDUCATORS, LOGISTICS).

Data analysis revealed that story co-construction for stability fostered a collective engagement on religious practices. In this study, prayer was the shared faith practice that provided stability across cases. Prayers shaped the way families communicated with, and had faith in, a higher power that would be involved in how entrepreneuring might unfold when setbacks were experienced. For family members who had previously started a business, it was an opportunity to pass on the importance of prayer with the understanding that not every family

member would acknowledge its relevance for entrepreneuring.

“...every story about our businesses involved going down on our knees and praying. There are things you will not control, so why not let your worries be known to God. A solution may come but not in the way you expect, but you have to believe it” (Luisa, 1st Gen, EDUCATORS).

“...from experience you must see challenges in business as a test of your faith in God. I have that Psalm [91] in my desk as a reminder when we meet and talk about business problems. It is a fortress. In this new business [retail store] we agreed to meet here, to read it quietly, pray, and then talk about the problems again” (Lucila, 1st Gen, TRADERS).

Data analysis suggested a tension with the theological notion of prayer being an individual and private experience rather than a communal practice for entrepreneuring. Inexperienced family members were initially skeptical as to the relevance of prayer. They prayed more about discomfort and circumstances, compared to experienced members who focused on how to respond to setbacks based on previous experiences.

“... what do we pray for? To remove the circumstance or the people that have made it a burden for us? We learn that praying is part of the process because we cannot control everything, but God can” (Carlota, 3rd Gen, EDUCATORS).

“There is one story we never forget... we asked grandma to pray for a miracle for this business [restaurant]. She said ‘God does not have grandchildren. You must do it too’. That has stuck with us as we pray on our own but also as a family” (Victoria, 3rd gen, TRADERS)

“I saw my dad and grandfather praying standing up in the land where this business started [radio station]. They were just quiet, but I knew they were praying. Once they finished, we started talking about the issues again, but you could sense a different approach to it...they now

ask me to lead prayer for all difficult decisions” (Fabia, 3rd Gen, LOGISTICS).

“...when we faced those problems [plant hire], my dad asked us to join him in prayer. He was brief and his prayer was simple and yet sincere with a deep confidence, like my grandfather’s. I then asked him to tell us why he prayed the way he did, as it was different to what I was praying for...” (Isabel, 3rd Gen, BUILDERS)

For inexperienced family members prayer was believed to be an intimate, personal matter, asking for a quick divine solution to the problem experienced. When a communal experience of prayer around setbacks in entrepreneuring was engaged several family members participated in co-constructing a story for stability:

“...praying did not come easily. I felt it was the last resort in a storm rather than the starting point of the journey...I prayed for a quick solution, a miracle. But nothing happened... I asked my grandmother why there was no result. She said, ‘I recall praying like you when your grandfather and I started a firm. How about you and I pray together? Maybe God is asking you to share your burden’... prayer is a catalyst for us” (Tomas, 3rd Gen, CHEMISTS).

“...I expected a quick solution with a quick prayer. I was a bit arrogant thinking that God was my personal assistant... but then I started to listen to the prayers of my family. They were not asking for a miraculous deliverance but for me to see the issues as an opportunity to learn more about the way God works. It changed my mind about issues ever since. The business plan was then revised. ... it felt like if a veil was lifted” (Victoria, 3rd Gen, TRADERS).

“...the issue was my attitude to thinking that a simple prayer would immediately pour out God’s blessings like a drizzle. No extra effort required. I wanted to avoid difficulty and asked God to change the circumstance. I then started to address the issues, one by one, in prayer with my family, using the word God gave us as an anchor” (Samuel, 3rd Gen, MANUFACTURERS).

Stories co-constructed for stability positioned prayer as a way to unite family members when facing a challenge or setback in entrepreneuring. In such stories, collective engagement helped create a family engagement to prayer. Such stories featured family members finding pointers in such interactions on how to manage and how to cope. Prayer, as a shared religious practice, was featured in such stories as a practice to minimize discouragement. As additional data in Table 4 shows, social interactions provided the opportunity for family members to understand what prayers could do as a communal practice, helping to re-frame setbacks and provide stability in entrepreneuring.

“...it honestly made no sense, only a miracle would make bank officials reconsider the loan interest rates. Praying contradicted my experience in banking. But then the prayers I heard my parents pray about those issues did not disregard my feelings, experience or training but asked for me to see the issue through God eyes, to me find a story in Bible about how to address the issue...” (Carlota, 3rd Gen, EDUCATORS).

“...after praying my brother said, ‘Look I was just reading this [in the Bible] in the morning. It relates to getting people involved in the legal process when you buy that property [for hotel].’ I then began to read more scripture in my free time. It gradually changed my perception of the problem itself. We then felt more confident in going back and dealing with the issue...” (Karen, 3rd Gen, MANUFACTURERS).

“...I said to my dad, why is God not answering my prayer? We need those supplies out of customs. He reminded me that prayer is not a one-time response but has a response in wait. It did not mean to do nothing but to seek a solution motivated by learning more about how God thinks and works. I then read a passage on scripture... it was the same my dad had always referred to

yet it did not that much sense until then... I then mediated on it, pray by it and lived by it until God guided me to find a solution” (Janet, 3rd Gen, LUMBERS).

Finally, stories co-constructed for stability featured both family and non-family members. Family members in this study sought counsel on how to face setbacks based on the notion that God can speak through prayer (Table 3) and the godly counsel of others. Such stories highlighted that in light of contextual changes experienced by members of the different generations it was wise to seek appropriate counsel outside the family before making entrepreneuring decisions under pressure. Family members had formed networks of friends (many of them other business owners or aspiring entrepreneurs) who supported each other and prayed for each other. Both family and non-family actors sharing the same faith played a mediating role between understanding setbacks and their re-interpretation through religious faith, which influenced the co-construction of stories for stability.

“..., I asked others in a Christian group to pray for a quick solution. One of our closest friends said, ‘I will not pray for that. I will pray that God places the right people in your path, to advise you on what to do, even if it takes longer than expected and that the next time you open the Bible you will find peace as you wait’. We were reminded who we were praying to... it was a humbling experience... that is part of our story” (Samantha, 2nd Gen, CHEMISTS).

“...praying with others makes you rethink any issues. It leads us to seek God’s view on them. In the Bible we found that God answered prayer in the life of those who prayed together. The responses and the timing were always different. It was either a yes, a no or a wait. But it did not mean to wait and do nothing. For us praying together meant preparing around the issue, expecting God will give us wisdom on how to act ...” (Martina, 2nd Gen, EDUCATORS).

“...when we faced those issues, we witnessed my mother praying the same prayer as my

grandmother. It was the prayer of Jabez [1 Chronicles 4]. The explanation the minister gave that Sunday changed my whole perception of that prayer when you are in business with your family. We then decided to have it as the way to end our family prayers” (Juan, 3rd Gen, TRADERS).

Rather than changing the feasibility or desirability of opportunities, praying reframed the way setbacks were understood. As additional data in Table 4 shows, family members co-constructed stories featuring prayers as experiences and exhortations to see God’s involvement in entrepreneuring. Additional data in Table 4 shows that most families used metaphorical language for stories co-constructed for stability as an anchor (MANUFACTURERS), a solid foundation (BUILDERS), a fortress (TRADERS), a catalyst (CHEMISTS) or a direct connection (LOGISTICS).

Insert Table 4 about here

Stories co-constructed for protection and hope

Data analysis revealed stories co-constructed for protection and hope in entrepreneuring. These stories involved the witnessing of family members who warned others of the consequences of compromising their convictions as ventures materialize, an approach to revise business policy and the development of a culture influenced by religious faith. Such stories highlighted the theological idea of integrating religious tenets for business. The participation of family members in co-constructing such stories highlighted that God’s involvement can be experienced when making critical choices as business ventures materialize. In doing so they aimed to nurture a relationship with the divine through formalizing their faith commitment in business.

First, family members who had previously started or acquired businesses, shared experiences where overlooking religious faith principles led to temporarily compromising their beliefs, the consequences of those decisions, and their approach to rectify the situation based on religious faith. This served as a starting point to explore warnings grounded in religious beliefs and the consequences of neglecting religious principles for the future. The stories included the influence of external parties such as suppliers, customers and government, either close to the start of operations or soon after ventures were started.

“...when this business [commercial painting] started, the demand was very high. Our children were involved, and we discussed what happened every day at dinner. A competitor appeared soon after we started, copying exactly what we did but also opened on the Sabbath. So, I decided that it would not hurt if we opened for just a few hours on the Sabbath. I tried it for a couple of weeks, but it felt we were just placing the business above beliefs. That policy lasted one month. Honoring the sabbath as a business policy was then added. Not only did our business survive but we ended up acquiring that competitor...” (Federico, 2nd Gen, BUILDERS),

“...My husband and I failed in business once because we did not consider the damage to families who were in similar businesses. We were arrogant. God taught us a lesson. Despite our efforts that business closed within 2 years. Sharing that was not easy but then we then explained what happened when we came back to our faith” (Luisa, 1st Gen, EDUCATORS).

Potential consequences of compromising religious beliefs as a venture materialized allowed family members to co-construct a story where protection and hope was sought in terms of making critical choices based on shared religious beliefs:

“...it is a domino effect. If you have kept your faith all the way until you start a firm but then you compromise your beliefs as you begin to trade, then there is nothing to stop you doing it

in other areas as it grows. So, we talked about how to avoid getting into that trap. I found Bible verses that talked about steering away on time that we are not immune to temptation. We needed to make sure we have that failsafe in our policies” (Eloisa, 2nd Gen, TRADERS).

“...we have this story about faith under fire when you are just about to start operating. My parents went over what happened to them when they just thought their faith was only good until you started operations. As they asked us what we would do differently, we suggested that if a business does not do well financially at the start and you compromise your beliefs then it is better to rethink what you do. They asked us to find stories of the Bible about that. It was a challenge, but we did... We could then change our policies” (Francisco, 3rd Gen, LOGISTICS).

“...mom said ‘and you call yourselves Christians? Have you forgotten how the Bible commands to look after our enemies? I will not support a business that ruins what this family has been known for in this community.’.... It was only when we acknowledged the consequences that the warning was grasped.... We learnt that acting unwisely, and then expect God to excuse the wrongdoing is not faith, it’s just pride” (Santiago, 2nd Gen, EDUCATORS).

Second, data analysis revealed that co-constructing stories that serve as protection and hope revolve around encouraging family members to contrast changing business practices against immutable religious faith principles (See Table 3). For example, business practices linked to misleading marketing (TRADERS), competition tactics (LOGISTICS), recruitment techniques (EDUCATORS) and ethical challenges (MANUFACTURERS) were experienced across generations. Discussing how to avoid them in the future encouraged family members to examine alternative scenarios where their religious faith could be integrated into business policy. Such discussions produced a moral lesson about how to deal with questionable business practices and how to avoid drifting towards harmful consequences over time that could be co-constructed into

stories for protection and hope. An enduring feature of such stories emerged, acknowledging that the diverse and mounting pressures of a business environment provide an opportunity to reevaluate business policies in new firms.

“...when we talked about how we could have approached those issues we recall that invitation in the Bible to be ‘wise as serpents but docile as doves’. Keeping your faith does not mean you will be a doormat, but that you will respond wisely. Take taxes for example, there is a clear mandate that applies across time, give the government what is the government’ and God’s what is God’s. We have studied at university so many cases of tax evasion that we must see warnings before we write a single business policy” (Astrid, 2nd Gen, MANUFACTURERS).

“...I remember suggesting that we study the parable of the Sower as a family. If we were not careful, our faith would be drowned by practices of the business world. We could see the temptations in terms of trying to get every penny out of our customers through misleading marketing as other competitors were successfully doing...” (Janet, 3rd Gen, LUMBERS).

“... do you know the parable of the shrewd manager? Somehow a conniving, corrupt man was able to understand how the business dynamics could be used for his favor. For us, that story made us understand that God does not condone dishonesty, and thus we must seek God’s wisdom in setting policies that will prevent that, as well as using present opportunities for blessings in the future...” (Victoria, 3rd Gen, TRADERS).

“...we were asked by mom to talk about how to avoid being tempted by dodgy deals. So, we agreed to discuss every offer, meet regularly and to be accountable for our decisions so we could act quickly. The Bible and the teachings of Jesus in parables have been our watchtower. Those stories become part of our story as well. Many stories of great people in the Bible make you realize that it is very easy to slip...” (Martina, 2nd Gen, EDUCATORS).

Moreover, co-constructed stories involved social interactions where family members engaged in reevaluating intended business policies to validate the significance of shared religious principles, to provide a sense of protection for entrepreneuring:

“...You need to outsmart the competition, which is what I learnt at business school.... I was about six months from graduating and engaged in the setting up the [private school] administrative system. I was called into that meeting because grandma wanted me to learn something. She was terribly upset about what dad [Santiago] had done contacting those teachers. If you read Philippians 2 [3-4] you will understand how to revise any business policy based on what business founders in this family experienced” (Carlota, 3rd Gen, EDUCATORS).

“...the ten commandments are a mirror to evaluate our policies. Over time we learnt that the society where my grandfather operated is different from mine. Even the legal framework has changed. Anyone can propose dodgy deals and mask the consequences. Corruption may come in many forms and not just about people asking for bribes. Yet, the commandments have never changed. When we examine policies against some of the commandments you know God has created a beacon that warns you” (Samanta, 2nd Gen, CHEMISTS).

“We can still make a decent profit without giving in to tax evasion. Besides we will avoid the government coming after us in the future when, not if, they find out. The Bible warns that being part of a corrupt scheme, as little as it may seem, will destroy any trust people have on us, destroy any witnessing and put us in jail. We have seen that happen to many businesses, from the time of my grandfather to mine. It is like when you are in choppy waters and a compass cannot help you. You seek for the lighthouse that tells you ‘do not come near this area here or you will crash’. That is why we audit our business policies” (Fabia, 3rd Gen, LOGISTICS).

Co-constructed stories that provide protection and hope feature a collective approach to revising intended policies based on shared religious faith, going beyond what was legally or socially expected. Table 4 shows that revised policies included, among others: improving worker remuneration and well-being; reducing the impact of any potential harmful by-product or process in business operations (MANUFACTURERS); supporting formal engagement in socially responsible activities such as volunteering for community work (TRADERS); and supporting social causes or contributing to projects that improve local community infrastructure (BUILDERS). These stories revolve around engaging in a different way of doing business, which for junior family members seemed somewhat countercultural:

“...faith without action is worthless. It is easier to think about how to add support to charities that deal with orphaned children or homeless people when you as a family have visited an orphanage or organized a meal for those less privileged. Afterwards you can rise up to the challenges of the Bible through your business” (Isabel, 3rd Gen, BUILDERS).

“I preferred to play video games with my friends than helping out in the community. When we started this business [chemical products] a meal for the homeless was organized. I thought it would be a great promotion for the business. But it was just us, as a family! I felt moved that day. Afterwards dad asked me to think about how we continue to be involved in such projects... that Sunday at church I asked about stories related to the poor. In our next family meeting, I was able to share those stories that warned us to act on our faith and how we could add a new policy” (Tomas, 3rd Gen, CHEMISTS)

Finally, co-constructed stories for protection and hope featured several family members discussing and integrating religious principles in policies prior to business operation. For example, co-constructed stories featured tithing, a voluntary contribution equal to 10 percent of

income for religious purposes (Dahl & Ransom, 1999). Co-constructing stories that included these practices, involved the participation of family members across generations to discern the importance of such practices for business policy.

“I was always sent by my grandmother to deposit the tithe in the Christian radio station. I always questioned this [practice] as that money could be reinvested into the firm. She told me the stories of how much she felt blessed by listening to songs that uplifted her as she spent time in the business. When we decided to start this new business [consulting], we asked her for financing. She agreed to give us all the funds needed and a generous repayment period, but she asked to look at the financial forecasting draft. She then returned it with 30% less for working capital! I asked why? She said, ‘You already know the 20% savings rule in the Bible. I want you to set aside the 10% for God in your forecast. You have watched over the years as to how God has prospered us – I did it by thinking how to reinvest 70% of what I originally had. I will teach you how to do it’ ... That is our story, we all lived it and cannot wait to teach it to my kids” (Victoria, 3rd Gen, TRADERS).

“... I understood the principle of savings from the story of Joseph. It is not easy to see the importance of a tithe when your financial projections suggest it will be a big commitment as the business grows. Yet my granddad asked me to try tithing for a year. It all started by taking 1 cent out of 10 cents. We then set two locked fields in our financial spreadsheet, one for savings and one for tithing. We are reminded in every meeting that tithes are for God, but savings will be used at some point for new opportunities...” (Janet, 3rd Gen, LUMBERS).

“Our businesses have a verse hanging on the entrance wall ... they remind you of why and for whom we do it. For the restaurant we decided that no work would be done on the

sabbath, so that employees spend time with their families, even when all other restaurants open seven days a week” (Astrid, 2nd Gen, MANUFACTURERS).

Stories co-constructed for protection featured family members encouraging the inclusion of personal tithing from members’ earnings through their business and a clear mandate on savings based on religious principles into future business policy. Data analysis revealed that aligning the purpose of tithing or savings for future investments was a practice intended to be passed down from generation to generation (see Table 5). Family members were encouraged to contribute by shaping business policy through integrating such principles. As some members disagreed on the importance of tithing, tensions arose between the theological idea of tithing and personal financial preferences, which helped co-construct a story.

“...it all goes back to knowing how to look after money wisely, why waste it? First, we respect the principle in the Bible to give to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s. It is all in Mark 12 [12-17]. That is the first principle in our financial management and second, always save 20% of your income because problems may come unexpectedly, as the story of Joseph in Egypt teaches us [Genesis 41]” (Lucila, 1st Gen, TRADERS).

“...my grandmother asked, “did you tithe and save?” I was so embarrassed because I did not. My mother confronted me by saying ‘I also forgot the first time but then the next month I doubled my tithe. I grew as a businessperson thinking what to do with less money, and then I had money saved to reinvest, that is how God teaches you”. Since then, an automatic direct debit from the bank account is linked to a couple of charities and a separate savings account for the business. We can then think about new business ideas” (Samuel, 3rd Gen, MANUFACTURERS).

“...I was not sure about tithing because they never teach to tithe at university. I knew about the importance of savings for contingencies. I grew up seeing my parents save and tithe

regardless of how the business performed. They always had savings that allowed them to expand the business. I wondered if I could ever do the same... I was then asked to do the financial statements. I wanted to include tithing and savings as formal policy based on such stories. It has allowed us to expand and pursue new ideas” (Carlota, 3rd Gen, EDUCATORS)

Additional data in Table 5 shows that co-constructed stories featured several family members creating and revising business policies related to financial management (e.g. savings, tithing) and social responsibility (e.g. environmental or social causes, helping the community), as well as policies that dealt with aspects such as strategic thinking for the future (e.g. mission, vision). For example, it was not uncommon to find mission statements that included phrases such as “to honor God” or Bible verses (Table 3) in websites, business pamphlets, quotes and invoices. Such practices allowed several family members to co-construct stories that feature the continuous realignment of business policies, aiming to develop a business culture influenced by religious faith. Powerful metaphors were used in stories co-constructed for protection and hope such as a lighthouse (TRADERS), a watchtower (EDUCATORS), a foolproof mechanism (LOGISTICS), a beacon (MANUFACTURERS), or a warning light (CHEMISTS).

Insert Table 5 about here

DISCUSSION

This study explored *how and why a legacy of faith is created and sustained in a family in business and with what impact on entrepreneuring?* Our findings reveal a family legacy influenced by religious faith that impacts entrepreneuring across generations. We discovered that members of a family in business participate, through shared practices and social interaction, in co-constructing meaningful intergenerational entrepreneuring narratives, imbued by religious

faith. These stories reveal the development of a collective intergenerational identity and sense of interconnectedness with the sacred (Dyck & Purser, 2019).

Our study expands the concept of an individual entrepreneurial identity based on religious beliefs (Smith et al., 2021) contributing to a new understanding of a collective relational identity for entrepreneuring. Prior work suggests that a collective identity may emerge from different sources, such as family, ethnicity, nationality and religious affiliation (Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004). Collective identity may be developed by creating shared narratives which family members can use to reinforce what they do, how they do it and why (Mankowski & Thomas, 2000). Our study shows that co-constructed stories nurture a collective identity in families in business by drawing on shared religious practices and interactions.

This collective identity, influenced by religious faith, contributes to understanding “cultural making” in cultural entrepreneurship as a distributed and intertemporal process (Gehman & Soublière, 2017: 65). We provide much needed evidence that co-constructing stories, influenced by religious faith, contributes to this making of cultural entrepreneurship (Glaser & Lounsbury, 2021). A legacy of faith, we argue, becomes an enduring cultural resource for a family in business. Co-constructing stories creates a thread of meaning, supported by past events, that gives a rationale to entrepreneuring across generations. Over time these stories are woven into a tapestry of entrepreneurial decisions, influenced by religious faith, that ultimately influence business policy in the present and future, thus sustaining a cultural legacy.

A legacy of faith

Based on our findings and building upon the literature on legacy and family business (Radu-Lefebvre et al., 2024) we elaborate on the concept of a legacy of faith in the context of family entrepreneuring. We define a legacy of faith as an intergenerational social process in

which co-constructed stories, imbued with religious faith and beliefs, are a fundamental element of family entrepreneuring.

The study reveals the interplay between what might be seen as a set of competing logics: entrepreneurship and religious beliefs; individual and a collective identity; and the sacred and the secular. Family members discover that, as they engage in family entrepreneuring, they can draw on shared religious practices (e.g. sacred texts reading, praying) and social interaction to navigate complex processes. For the incoming generation, these ideas can remain abstract until they participate in, and are responsible for, leading the entrepreneuring process (Al-Dajani et al., 2024; Ramírez-Pasillas et al., 2021). It appears they then add their own interpretation and meaning to co-construct stories based on their experience. Family members can then appreciate the divine, in this instance God, as someone with whom they can connect and that may provide guidance, stability and protection.

Based on our findings, we offer a model (Figure 2) that shows how a legacy of faith and family entrepreneuring, through co-constructed stories, shape each other. The model draws upon a mechanical system principle to illustrate the dynamic nature of the co-constructed stories and the legacy of faith. It provides a representation of the interconnected nature of the functions of co-constructed stories (guidance, stability, and protection) as mechanisms and their relationship to religious faith and family which lie at the center of the model. We then elaborate on co-constructing stories as a manifestation of cultural entrepreneurship which allows reaffirming, reframing and realigning a collective approach to entrepreneuring over time, sustaining a legacy of faith.

Insert Figure 2 about here

Stories: from listening to co-constructing

Our findings reveal that a legacy of faith allows family members to move beyond listening (Jaskiewicz et al., 2015) to co-constructing a story, influenced and supported by enduring and transcendent religious beliefs. These stories allow families to create an ongoing way of organizing episodes, actions, and accounts of actions linked to timeless religious principles. Whilst prior scholarship established that story co-construction is a collective and relational process (Gabriel & Connell, 2010), it was less clear about how story co-construction unfolded or the function co-constructed stories had in legacy building. Our findings advance such understanding as follows:

Through story co-construction family members are able to participate, share experiences, understand and validate family members' values and beliefs creating a sense of identity, who they are as a family (Fivush, 1998; Fivush, Bohanek, & Marin, 2010).

Our findings suggest that co-constructed stories emerge because families collectively respond to ongoing entrepreneuring challenges. Through this dynamic, religious principles integrated into co-constructed stories become deeply ingrained regardless of a turbulent business environment. As religious principles for business are interpreted through social interaction and enacted by family members then they are likely to endure as shared memories (Congleton & Rajaram, 2014), making a legacy of faith deep-rooted.

The metaphors used by families in business in co-constructed stories capture salient features of how families interpret the influence of religious faith in entrepreneuring over time. Metaphors help advance the theorization of a legacy of faith as they have both explicatory and generative features (Cornelissen, Oswick, Christensen, & Phillips, 2008). Understanding co-constructed stories through their metaphorical elaborations helps to shed light on how a legacy of

faith is shaped and how it impacts entrepreneurship (Figure 2). They function as transcendental verbal cultural artifacts that, in the words of participants, can guide as a “compass”, provide stability as an “anchor” and protection and hope as a “lighthouse”.

A Compass – Guidance. A compass is a navigational tool that uses the earth’s magnetic field to provide accurate guidance. It is one of the most important instruments for navigation (National Geographic Society, 2024). In this study, family members articulated how they are guided by a legacy of faith in their initial approach to entrepreneuring. Starting in the process can be daunting for junior members, who may have listened to both entrepreneuring successes and failures and witnessed how senior generations integrate religious faith in entrepreneurial activities. In deciding to apply the same principles, family members exercise a choice to reaffirm a shared religious faith and be guided by a legacy of faith. Deeply held religious beliefs guide entrepreneurial decisions and actions, in the words of one participant (Table 2), like a “compass”.

The reliance on the authority of sacred texts suggests that family members across generations can establish a standard of conduct through which they are invited to appraise their approach to entrepreneuring. Religious understanding of the world acts as a magnetic field in a compass, continuously relying on, but also shaping, a legacy of faith through interpretation and agreement by family members. Whilst secular techniques and tools offer a degree of certainty in the process (Jarzabkowski & Kaplan, 2015) their co-existence with religious beliefs equips family members to make decisions and set a course of action.

An Anchor - Stability. An anchor is broadly defined as a heavy metal object attached to a boat by a rope or chain that, when dropped into the water and resting on the bottom, relies on its weight and the force of gravity to keep the boat from moving (Cambridge Dictionary, 2024). A

more abstract definition expands its function as a constraint on movement, security from storms or remaining in a particular place (Ritchie, 2004: 278). Family members co-construct a source of collective stability and support in entrepreneuring that, in the words of one of the participants (Table 4), can be compared to an “anchor”.

Our findings that religious faith provides stability through co-constructed stories during family entrepreneuring clearly parallel the findings of Smith et al. (2023) on the role of religion in stabilizing entrepreneurial identities and helping individual entrepreneurs navigate the complexity of entrepreneuring. Prior studies identified that when individuals face difficulties, they are more likely to draw on their faith, to help restore order and a sense of control and stability (Laurin, Kay, & Moscovitch, 2008).

In co-constructing stories that serve as an anchor, participants articulated how the religious practice of prayer moved from an individual (Vasconcelos, 2009, 2010) to a collective resource (Rumble, 2011), providing a source of collective identity. We uncover how this occurs and how it helps co-construct stories for family entrepreneuring. Religious faith then provides a family in business with a sense of stability in an otherwise complex and chaotic process (Champenois et al., 2020).

A Lighthouse – Protection and hope. Lighthouses are an icon of maritime navigation that depict a beacon that relies on light, to either attract ships to a safe passage or warn them from danger (United States Lighthouse Society, n.d.). A lighthouse metaphor depicts how members of a family reexamine and reevaluate decisions and actions in entrepreneuring based on their religious faith. Co-constructing stories that serve as a lighthouse shine light on consequences of following a path that may not be consistent with shared religious faith,

providing the way to safe passage. Family members may realign objectives with tenets of religious faith acting, as one of the participants expressed, as a “lighthouse” (Table 5).

Family members also align objectives to reflect a balancing of interests of responsibility to God and to fellow man (Rossouw, 1994). This balance means being accountable for decisions and actions in the long term. Compared to a compass, which may be ineffective during a storm, a lighthouse is a fixed and immovable point symbolizing a warning for protection and ultimately hope - a future looking element of religious faith (Neubert, 2019). As a lighthouse, co-constructed stories illuminate being accountable for the appropriate use of financial assets, physical facilities, products and services (McCuddy & Pirie, 2007). Without such accountability future generations may be in constant tension with emerging moral dilemmas, squander scarce resources or harm relationships with future stakeholders, all of which may damage business operations.

Religious faith acts as a continuous light in co-constructing stories where families can judge the impact of their decisions and actions and respond accordingly. Whilst co-constructed stories have been found to be especially useful in establishing moral boundaries, aligning appropriate behaviors and elucidating differences between right and wrong behavior over time (Gabriel & Connell, 2010) there was little understanding as to how such stories were created. Co-constructing stories that serve as a lighthouse provides warnings in the context where families operate and help steer them away from objectives that may be self-serving, short-sighted, and incompatible with shared religious beliefs. The result may then be the formal introduction of practices and policies (e.g. mission, values, financial management) that reflect an alignment of family and business objectives. Thus, co-constructed stories that act as a lighthouse

can translate religious principles into ethical behavior that inform future business policy. These stories can also provide a beacon of hope in shaping business policy.

Our study suggests that by co-constructing stories influenced by religious faith families in business aim to safeguard what is important to them for entrepreneuring and, if necessary, take corrective action to sustain a legacy of faith. Taken together, the metaphors of a compass, an anchor and a lighthouse allow us to understand the way co-constructed stories shape a collective identity and become embedded as a legacy that impacts family entrepreneuring.

A legacy of faith as a manifestation of cultural entrepreneurship

Our study brings evidence that co-constructed stories, when imbued by religious faith, are not fleeting narrative constructions but crucial foundations of a legacy of faith. Story co-construction involves enduring and transcendental narrative features constantly contrasted with emergent and fluid cultural meanings. As such, a legacy of faith, shaped by co-constructed stories, speaks to the “cultural making” perspective of cultural entrepreneurship (Gehman & Soublière, 2017: 65). In that regard, our study shows that members of a family in business can forge a collective identity through stories that are influenced by past events, which are reinterpreted in collective experiences. Whilst some circumstances may change, others remain timeless and immutable, allowing families to plot a trajectory for future practices (Barbera et al., 2018; Gehman & Soublière, 2017; Konopaski, Jack, & Hamilton, 2015). We draw on the mechanism of a pendulum (Figure 3) to understand the three elements of the experience of human time (Ricoeur, 1991: 31): memory (the present of the past), attention (the present of the present) and expectation (the present of the future), and explain the nature of a legacy of faith as a manifestation of cultural entrepreneurship.

Insert Figure 3 about here

A pendulum is a mechanical system that moves in an oscillatory motion, involving a mass suspended by a cord (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2024). A pendulum has been used in the past to measure time and regulate movement. We draw on the metaphor of a pendulum to explain that a legacy of faith is shaped by the oscillation that occurs between the past, the present, and the future. This study shows that social interactions and shared practices allow family members to be influenced by past entrepreneurial experiences. Co-constructed stories are nurtured by the past, informing entrepreneuring in the present and the future. Family members witness, discuss, interpret, and rely on religious faith to guide entrepreneuring without neglecting tried-and-tested secular scientific tools. In a collective experience, difficult decisions and challenges are addressed through shared religious practices. As family members persevere, they heed warnings, align objectives and steer their actions towards a transcendent purpose in business, reinforcing a sense of collective identity.

Figure 3 reveals the power of social interactions and shared practices in story co-construction in sustaining the momentum of the pendulum. Our study also shows that family members wrestle with several challenges in creating and sustaining a legacy of faith. Friction may be caused by setbacks experienced in family entrepreneuring. The pendulum captures how a legacy of faith, as a manifestation of cultural entrepreneurship, is sustained over time.

Our study shows that creating and sustaining a legacy of faith facilitates the development of an intergenerational narrative that connects generations over time (Hamilton, 2013). Religious faith is not arbitrary, its importance for entrepreneuring may be shaped over generations (Astrachan, Binz Astrachan, Campopiano, & Baù, 2020; Cater III & Alderson, 2022). Multiple generations rely on a situated past, present and future (Konopaski et al., 2015). A legacy of faith facilitates identity construction and maintenance through cultural development, meaning that the

way things are done by a family in business over time becomes both a medium for, and an outcome of, entrepreneurial action (Gehman & Soublière, 2017).

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND POLICY

A legacy of faith, in the context of family businesses, is based on a family relationship with the divine and its impact on entrepreneuring over time. By co-constructing stories, families in business share how to approach entrepreneuring drawing on religious beliefs, strengthen the bonds between generations and bring some order to what can sometimes seem a complex and chaotic experience. As many businesses around the world are run by families with a religious faith (Cafferky, 2012; Mulford et al., 2024) then understanding how and why a legacy of faith emerges and affects entrepreneuring is important for business practitioners. Based on our findings and discussion we offer implications of a legacy of faith for practice and policy.

First, family members who profess a religious faith have an opportunity to enact the trust in the relationship they have with the sacred in family entrepreneuring. Whatever affects the family in business does not finish at the end of a workday. It continues into homes, dinner tables, family trips and even during family games (Discua Cruz, Hamilton, & Jack, 2021). Co-constructed stories emerge from the integration of religious faith into practices, processes and policy when creating or acquiring a business. They can provide a source of guidance, stability and protection – the founding blocks of a legacy of faith.

Second, co-constructed stories imbued with religious faith can communicate and reframe how to respond to entrepreneuring challenges and setbacks. Co-construction plays a vital role both in telling stories about what has happened in a specific crisis (Cope, 2003), and in making sense of how to address similar challenges in the future. It is important that past experiences, where faith has influenced entrepreneuring are shared, to help the co-construction process and help shape business policy in the long term. Family business practitioners should not

underestimate the impact that demonstrating their faith will have in shaping a legacy of faith. Their approach may be considered worthy of imitation (Whittington et al., 2005), serving as role models, where family members witness what influences their decisions and actions (Zozimo, Jack, & Hamilton, 2017). Families that aim to influence future generations should communicate their faith via family social interactions and shared religious practices including praying, sacred text reading and discussions around the applicability of religious principles in business.

Third, for families in business, this study suggests that social interactions and shared practices can encourage greater fellowship and a reliance on their religious faith as a source of guidance, stability and protection and hope. For example, encouraging collective prayer or Bible reading and interpretation may reveal its relevance for entrepreneuring. Continuous interactions and shared practices are important because they affect the stories that family members may create and share.

It would be misleading, however, to suggest that the process of story co-construction is free from tensions as it demands producing coherent stories that incorporate diverse perspectives (Gabriel & Connell, 2010; Glaser & Lounsbury, 2021). Co-constructing knowledge that can be interpreted and later used will depend on the level of social interaction and cohesion between family members. Family business leaders who aspire to leave a legacy of faith should encourage discussions where family members reflect on their decisions and actions around shared experiences (e.g. facing setbacks, discouragement, struggles) and their responses based on religious faith.

Finally, this study contributes a more agentic view of entrepreneuring in developing economies, where families may not be able to exert influence over many contextual issues (Fernández Pérez & Lluch, 2016). A legacy of faith can provide mechanisms to navigate difficult

and challenging environments. Difficult institutional issues (e.g. corruption, institutional voids) may suggest that families aiming to start a business are powerless (Vassolo, De Castro, & Gomez-Mejia, 2011). A legacy of faith offers a perspective that families in business have some agency, offering alternative courses of action, in a challenging context.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study uncovered how and why a legacy of faith is created and sustained and with what impact on family entrepreneuring. Yet there is also the need for caution. First, different religions are associated with varying configurations of entrepreneuring due to diverse values, culture and focus (Dana, 2009; Henley, 2017). As a result, the impact of religion on a legacy of faith may also vary (Dodd & Gotsis, 2007). More quantitative and qualitative studies are still needed to better understand how religious faith in a particular setting affects entrepreneuring (Audretsch et al., 2013). Whilst recent studies provide a plethora of methods to continue exploring the relationship of religion, entrepreneuring and legacy (Gehman et al., 2018), we believe using our approach provides a robust way of exploring processes and events, without generating a “straitjacket” (Gioia et al., 2022: 235).

Moreover, whilst the chosen sample is not proportionate to the population of families in business in the selected setting, it does reflect heterogeneity in the number of generations involved, the size of businesses and nature of opportunities pursued. Since we conducted our study in one country and focused on one religious tradition, we are limited in its generalizability to other countries and religious traditions.

FUTURE RESEARCH PATHS

Further studies can consider complementary perspectives. For instance, the theoretical perspective of stewardship (Davis, 2024; Davis, Schoorman, & Donaldson, 1997) may shed light on a legacy of faith. Stewardship is a concept with strong religious foundations (Jeavons, 1994).

It could be argued that family members participate as stewards by co-constructing stories serving the best interests of the family and seeking to be entrepreneurial managers of resources entrusted for a better, albeit uncertain, future (Davis, Allen, & Hayes, 2010).

Second, further studies could provide additional insights, particularly where religious beliefs do not enter stories despite family members engaging in faith related practices (Nash & McLennan, 2001). Also, as religion can have a transformative nature (Gümüşay, 2020) differences between those who have been influenced by a legacy of faith may be different from new religious faith converts. New converts may shape a legacy of faith distinct from that of their parents (Litz, 2013). Further focus on how our models advance a theory of theological understandings and its influence in business policy is warranted.

Finally, we believe that further examination of co-constructed stories can help us understand how family members reflect upon and interpret religious beliefs generation after generation. We defined a legacy of faith as an intergenerational social process in which co-constructed stories imbued with religious faith are a fundamental element. Clearly, further research on a legacy of faith in multiple faiths and contexts would deepen our understanding of its impact on entrepreneuring and business policy across the world.

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TABLE 1
Case details

Case name	Sector / Industry	Number of employees	Members interviewed	Gender	Generation in business	# of interviews	Interview time
LOGISTICS	Transportation	45	Fabio	Male	1 st	1	55 min
	Radio station	10	Reynaldo	Male	2 nd	2	55 min
	Agroforestry	7	Fabia	Female	3 rd	2	60 min
	Commercial cleaning *	5	Francisco	Male	3 rd	1	55 min
MANUFACTURERS	Processed food	40	Gertrudis	Female	1 st	1	50 min
	Food retail	27	Astrid	Female	2 nd	2	55 min
	Restaurants	20	Karen	Female	3 rd	2	55 min
	Hotel *	30	Samuel	Male	3 rd	1	60 min
BUILDERS	Construction	35	Octavio	Male	1 st	1	52 min
	Technology*	15	Jazmin	Female	2 nd	2	50 min
	Commercial painting	8	Federico	Male	2 nd	2	60 min
	Plant hire	10	Isabel	Female	3 rd	2	55 min
TRADERS	Retail	50	Lucila	Female	1 st	1	50 min
	Consulting	5	Eloisa	Female	2 nd	2	55 min
	Real estate	8	Juan	Male	3 rd	1	60 min
	Restaurant *	23	Victoria	Female	3 rd	2	50 min
LUMBERS	Wood processing	55	Roberto**	Male	1 st	-	-
	Transportation	28	Noe	Male	2 nd	2	50 min
	Automotive services*	15	Janet	Female	3 rd	2	60 min
	Imported goods	10	Sofia	Female	3 rd	2	55 min
EDUCATORS	Education	25	Luisa	Female	1 st	1	50 min
	Retail	32	Santiago	Male	2 nd	2	60 min
	Hotel *	21	Martina	Female	2 nd	1	55 min
	Restaurant	5	Carlota	Female	3 rd	1	55 min
CHEMISTS	Footwear	7	Carmen	Female	1 st	1	60 min
	Chemical products	11	Brenda	Female	2 nd	2	55 min
	Generic pharmaceuticals	29	Samanta	Female	2 nd	1	55 min
	Real estate *	5	Tomas	Male	3 rd	1	55 min

* acquired business, ** died before interviews were conducted

TABLE 2

Stories co-constructed for guidance

Empirical data	Description
<p>“...you simply start by thanking God for the [business] idea, as then ask for guidance. That is all there is to it for us. If you do that early on it is easier to see that all that will come in the process, either good or bad, is because God allows it. That is why we say “we place it in your hands” when a new business starts. It is a key ingredient in our formula...”. (<i>Carmen, 1st Gen, CHEMISTS</i>).</p> <p>“...My father taught us, from his good and bad experiences in business, that you must have a reliable compass not to get lost. I witnessed that in the agroforestry business. Even if the plan you have does not turn out the way you visualised it, or circumstances change, and they will, having that compass points always towards what you value the most. This Bible has provided us with that compass” (<i>Reynaldo, 2nd Gen, LOGISTICS</i>).</p> <p>“...When Isabel came asking for advice [commercial painting], she was reminded of our family business story connected to Luke 14 [28-32] - it is all about a blueprint and careful planning. I told her how I lost money when building one of our first houses because I forgot that principle. Ever since she could read and understand, she has asked me about how it applies to how we do business” (<i>Octavio, 1st Gen, BUILDERS</i>).</p> <p>“...trusting in God for business is not easy. To start a new business, you must have faith in what you don’t see and allow yourself to be guided. That has been our experience in business” (<i>Lucila, 1st Gen, TRADERS</i>).</p> <p>“...if you don’t show the importance of God in your life, how do you expect it to affect your future business? you need to trust in your faith when take the first step. That is our story, we must walk step by step in faith first before we run in business... it is like an outline” (<i>Luisa, 1st Gen, EDUCATORS</i>).</p>	<p>Prominence of religious faith for entrepreneuring</p>
<p>“...we are guided by the principle of “three strands in a cord are hard to break”, it is in Ecclesiastes [4: 9-12]. My father showed me how that principle worked when securing lumber with rope in his first business [lumber transportation]. That principle is part of our story. I shared it with my kids as we were going to start the automotive business. Since the girls [Janet, Sofia] took over and led that business we agreed to meet, make decisions together and be guided by what that verse from Proverbs [27:17] says “iron sharpens iron”. Just as my father and I learnt from each other we started the import business doing the same” (<i>Noe, 2nd Gen, LUMBERS</i>).</p> <p>“...let me show you a verse that guide us: Proverbs 3:5-6. Read it, it will demand that you trust. It is never easy when what you see happening around can lead you to rely only on yourself and what you</p>	<p>Authority grounded in religious text or artifacts for direction</p>

know... we meet and talk about it and bring many examples from everyday events” (*Lucila, 1st Gen, TRADERS*).

“...Dad and grandad always told us [Fabia, Francisco] how they started other businesses being guided by God as if it were a compass. It was difficult to understand what they meant until we started out this new business together [with dad] in agroforestry.... We all contributed something to it, we all shared that “compass” that guided the initial steps, it is all based in the Bible...we all have one. We have circled the verses that mean a lot to us as a family as they have become part of our stories in business” (*Francisco, 3rd Gen, LOGISTICS*).

“...this new business started with the family formula. We see that Bible verse on the wall before we start talking about a business idea. It just allows us to know we have the same ingredients within us. We can then bring any idea knowing that we have started from the same baseline” (*Brenda, 2nd Gen, CHEMISTS*).

“... We thought about this opportunity as being guided through the Bible to build a house; hence we agreed we needed a blueprint provided by God” (*Octavio, 1st Gen, BUILDERS*).

“.. We are guided by that Bible verse that says, ‘lean not on your own understanding’ [Proverbs 3]. Then it is easier to avoid being over-confident ... it’s our outline” (*Martina, 2nd Gen, EDUCATORS*).

...using your faith as a blueprint does not mean to stop thinking. We trust God with our decisions, but we also must engage in careful due diligence. Read Luke 14:28-32, it says it clearly. That is what we did for the painting business. Isabel would be responsible for financial analysis with the latest tools she learnt at university but also lead the family prayers for this business. We [Octavio, Federico] would help with our experience to ensure the business would have a healthy start” (*Federico, 2nd Gen, BUILDERS*).

“... starting this new business [automotive services] was about working together under principles in Ecclesiastes and Proverbs that dad and grandpa had. We have tried on our own, but it is hard if you don’t have others who share the same view with you along the way” (*Sofia, 3rd Gen, LUMBERS*).

“... ok, so we all share a meal, and before we start taking about business, one of us has to say... ‘please God guide us, we do not want to be guided by our own understanding’ it is a ritual followed by reading one Bible verse, discussing hard numbers and the information we bring to the table... it is like an outline” (*Santiago, 2nd Gen, EDUCATORS*).

“...of course, we rely on what we know as accountants and engineers. We know that [legal] laws and standards change. But then we also know that from the Bible. We meet to discuss stories in this book [Bible] that guided so many great businesspeople for centuries.” (*Eloisa, 2nd Gen, TRADERS*). “...we learn a lot from books about how great businesses started.... starting this new firm [real estate] meant

Co-existence of
religious and
secular tools
for
entrepreneuring

combining PESTEL with reflection on the books of Ecclesiastes...it never hurts to add faith as a required field in a worksheet” (*Victoria, 3rd Gen, TRADERS*).

“...if God has blessed you to have brains to figure things out and graduate from university then we feel God wants us to use those tools we learn to make better decisions...that is part of our formula” (*Tomas, 3rd Gen, CHEMISTS*).

“You want to teach your children and grandchildren why you have done it this way; it is never easy to believe on something and not practice it. They have seen how I do business. We use tools any businessman would but also, I do not need to say that the Bible influences me, they know it is my compass” (*Fabio, 1st Gen, LOGISTICS*).

“...we all share stories about a compass, because when the different businesses were created, the first thing that we all remember was getting together, praying for guidance, and knowing that decision making will point towards the Bible. We will, however, rely on techniques from textbooks that have proven useful but the starting point in all our stories is guidance from the word of God” (*Fabia, 3rd Gen, LOGISTICS*).

“...We have always had tools to help us, yet some have faded away. My grandfather used a notebook to make calculations. I have now access to electronic data that can be used with software... we rely on the insights from the Bible that have not changed their essence and use several tools to devise our plans” (*Federico, 2nd Gen, BUILDERS*).

TABLE 3
Biblical passages referred to by participants**

Guidance	Stability	Protection and hope
1 John 5:14	1 Corinthians 15:58	1 Chronicles 4:9-10
1 Peter 4:10	1 Kings 3:5-14; 18:41-46	1 Corinthians 16:2
1 Thessalonians 4:11	1 Peter 4:12; 5:7	1 Timothy 6:10
2 Corinthians 5:7	2 Timothy 1:7; 3:12-13	Colossians 1:10; 3:5; 4:1
2 Timothy 3: 16-17	Daniel 6	Deuteronomy 5:6–21; 25:13-16
Colossians 3:23	Ecclesiastes 7:7, 11-14	Ephesians 5:5
Deuteronomy 8:18; 28:1-6	Esther 5, 7	Exodus 20; 34:11–26
Ecclesiastes 11:6; 4: 9-12	Exodus 23:8	Genesis 41:34-36; 47: 23-24
Ephesians 2:10	Hebrews 13:5-9	James 2:26
Exodus 20:2–17	Isaiah 40:31; 41:10; 43:2	Job 36:18
Galatians 6:10	James 1:2-4, 5, 12; 4:3; 5:16	Joshua 1:9
Isaiah 58:11	Jeremiah 17:7-8	Leviticus 25:14
James 4:8	Job 15:34; 31:24-28	Luke 6:10, 35; 12:15; 16:10-12
Leviticus 19:11	John 6: 1-24; 16:33	Malachi 3:9-12
Luke 14: 28-32	Joshua 1: 1-9	Mark 8:36; 12: 12-17
Matthew 7:7	Luke 6: 1-13; 18: 1-8	Matthew 6:24; 13; 16:26
Proverbs 1:7; 3:5-6; 6; 10:4-5; 16:3; 20:7; 21:5; 22: 29; 23: 4-12; 27:17; 31	Matthew 6:30-33; 10:16; 11:28-29; 18: 19-20, 26: 36-46	Philippians 2:3-4
Psalms 23:5; 27; 37:5-6; 73:24; 139	Philippians 1:6; 4:6-7, 13	Proverbs 3:9-10; 6: 16-19; 11:1; 13:7,11,16; 14:21, 31; 16:8; 17:13; 21:5, 20; 22:1; 23:4; 26:10; 29:18; 30: 8-9
Romans 8:34; 12:2	Proverbs 2:11; 24:16; 28:26; 29:25	Psalms 15:1-5; 24: 3-4; 31: 8-9; 32:7; 78:72; 82:3; 112:5; 118:24
Ruth 2: 9-12; 3: 10, 11	Psalms 18:32; 19:14; 27:14; 31: 24; 56:3-4; 91; 112:3, 7; 145:18	Romans 12:2
	Romans 8:28; 12:12	Revelation 3:20

**Santa Biblia, Reina-Valera Antigua Version

TABLE 4
Stories co-constructed for stability

Empirical data	Description
<p>“...when we started that business [restaurant] with Victoria we faced a lot of obstacles. But from experience you must see challenges in business as a test of your faith in God. I have that Psalm [91] in my desk as a reminder when we meet and talk about business problems. It is a fortress. In this new business [retail store] we agreed to meet here [office], to read it quietly, pray, and then talk about the problems again” (<i>Lucila, 1st Gen, TRADERS</i>).</p> <p>“... then I asked them [2nd, 3rd Gen], ‘what have you seen me do when hard decisions have to be made?’ they said – ‘you always pray’. Why? because from experience you do not know if the idea will progress or not, ...in our stories we need to keep a direct connection with God when those hard times come, because they will” (<i>Fabio, 1st Gen, LOGISTICS</i>).</p> <p>“...Having faith does not mean we will be free from trouble when we want to start a business, but that we know where to turn to when it happens.... It is easy to give in to tempting proposals that are just unethical. Yet, if you follow your faith and read the Bible, it calls you to be wisely shrewd in business without losing your soul. There is nothing better than having an anchor in your faith from the start. What would my kids and grandkids witness if I gave in to bribes and then ask them to pray with me? Have you read the stories in Exodus and the advice in Proverbs and Matthew about being as wise as serpents but docile as doves?” (<i>Gertrudis, 1st Gen, MANUFACTURERS</i>).</p> <p>“.. if you ever work with our dad, you will hear all the good and bad things that can happen in business. When we built this new business [plant hire], it was the same. We relied on how our parents built their business even when it was not doing well. You learn a lot by observing but when it is your turn you really want to know how they did it. I then recalled how they remained calm based on faith...it was not about singing hymns or praying out loud but seeking God’s peace. That is our foundation” (<i>Jazmin, 2nd Gen, BUILDERS</i>).</p> <p>“...so many things will come at you that can destabilize you. Yet, in those times when things appear they are going to explode then you have your faith as an infallible catalyst to remind you God is in control...” (<i>Carmen, 1st Gen, CHEMISTS</i>).</p>	<p>Religious faith influence in responding to setbacks</p>

“...I saw my mom pray before she opened the doors of her first business [retail] every day. She faced a lot of competition over the years and was not selling what she forecasted, so things were tight. I panicked but I always saw her very calmed. I proposed to start introducing new products. She told us ‘Before we do that lets pray for wisdom as to what products will be best’. We then prayed with her every day. A few weeks after, a man came into the store and said he was directed to us by suppliers who told of my mom’s reputation. He was manufacturing new products and wanted exclusive retail stores to distribute them. My mom looked at us and asked - what do you think? God prompted me to say ‘yes’. My kids said the same. Mom nodded. She let me lead this new business with the condition to use my faith to guide the process. I did and it was an enormous success... When we all meet and talk about it my mom says, ‘never forget Psalm 91’. Since then, it made so much sense to me why we call it our fortress” (*Eloisa, 2nd Gen, TRADERS*).

“...We have added a new rule - making decisions as a family guided by prayer every morning. It is in Matthew [18:19-20] it is inviting God to guide us every day. It has not been easy at times because we are so busy, but it allows us to spend time as a family and decide based on those principles” (*Sofia, 3rd Gen, LUMBERS*).

“...we pray together and what we say together is... 'we place this in your hands God, if this will bring you glory then guide us, if not then remove it'... it is like a catalyst...it is funny all our business stories go back to that prayer when we face obstacles” (*Brenda, 2nd Gen, CHEMISTS*).

“...the process [food retail] was advancing well. But then government officials wanted us to pay a bribe to expedite approval of the operation permit. Mom reminded us how this had occurred in the past. We [Karen / Samuel] recalled seeing how she depended on her faith as an anchor in such tough times. But we were facing a delay of almost six months! We [family] talked about it. We discussed how much not paying would delay us. We ended up discussing it every day, with mom asking us, what do you believe God is telling you to do? Because of our shared convictions we all agreed bribing will not pay at the end. We preferred to wait. Months later we finally got the permit. That story is an anchor for us that we relive when we face similar issues...” (*Karen, 3rd Gen, MANUFACTURERS*).

“..., I have learned to wait and watch the deliverance of God when starting a firm. It was not easy at times. My husband and I failed in a business before because we wanted to sprint. That verse on the office wall [Philippians 4: 6-7] serves as a reminder of not getting ahead of God’s strength and timing” (*Carmen, 1st Gen, CHEMISTS*).

Collective
engagement on
religious practices
(prayer)

“... as we were pushing towards the new pharmaceutical business, issues would come unexpectedly every day. People wanting us to cut corners, potential suppliers offering us discounts in certain chemicals if we would overlook some harmful effects, etc. We often thought that it would be best to quit. Yet Mom said, ‘be patient, don’t forget the Bible verse in our main office. You want to do this the way God would be proud’. The more issues we faced the more we ended up reading that verse that we all knew. It is a rock for us to make prudent decisions. It really helped us to halt and be cautious before making costly mistakes just to get ahead. Even if our choices turned out not to be the best ones, we shared a sense of peace with our decision. We decided to step in faith based on what we felt God was asking us to do through that verse... it serves as a catalyst” (*Brenda, 2nd Gen, CHEMISTS*).

“... we often see doors being closed when we thought they would open, but rather than getting upset, we see it as God preventing us from making a mistake. We pray as a family about them and then we go back, discuss all the information we have and try a new way” (*Martina, 2nd Gen, EDUCATORS*).

“...we were asked to consider selling this faulty product by this supplier for the new business. It was obvious that their purpose was different from ours. We knew we could not continue dealing with them. We needed to stay true to what mattered to us, and their proposal went against our religious beliefs to deal fairly and honestly. We met as a family and prayed together. I was then entrusted to call the supplier and cancel our contract. Being involved in that decision helped me see what that direct connection our grandfather and father talked about is important when making difficult decisions” (*Fabia, 3rd Gen, LOGISTICS*).

“.. My kids came from Sunday school one day and said, ‘mom, do you remember those stories Grandma told us from the Bible that we must avoid dodgy deals and not give in. Well, she explains it better than the preacher’, I laughed because that is the same way I felt when we faced government officials asking for a bribe to start the Hotel. Every time we face issues, we have a choice to either compromise our [religious] beliefs or be clever on how to work around it. It goes back to Proverbs, Matthew, and the stories in Exodus... until you apply them, that anchor during a storm does not make much sense” (*Astrid, 2nd Gen, MANUFACTURERS*).

“...don’t be dismayed when the rain comes, it will show your true foundation. What better way to resist a storm than being grounded on your faith? I mean, see the story of Jesus in the sea of Galilee during the storm. That shows us that we need to keep your faith as we start a business, or we may drown. We all lived that experience when we created this new firm [plant hire]. Praying together became a solid foundation...we were all part of that story and know what to do” (*Octavio, 1st Gen, BUILDERS*).

Framing and
approach to setbacks
in entrepreneuring

“...I did not know the trials in business my parents faced. Grandma shared them with me one day. I always saw them so calm that I became curious as to why faith mattered so much. I experienced it when the pharmaceutical business was being set up. I had the knowledge in chemical engineering, but you can only have so much information to start a business. That verse on the wall is how the in-between steps happened. We went around so many detours and closed doors to ensure we were making quality products, doing things right and even beyond what was being asked. At the same time, we were praying, seeking wisdom in the Bible. I then understood what grandma and mom talked about [faith being a catalyst. Why would I not rely on it to avoid making costly decisions?” (*Tomas, 3rd Gen, CHEMISTS*).

TABLE 5
Stories co-created for protection and hope

Empirical data	Description
<p>“... For us, God gives very clear warnings, like a lighthouse. The problem is that we need to be searching for that light constantly because many storms will come” (<i>Lucila, 1st Gen, TRADERS</i>).</p> <p>“...we believe that God will not bless you if you go into a business that exploits people or neglects principles in the Bible. It is easy to forget that unless you commit to honor it in the way a business works” (<i>Noe, 1st Gen, LUMBERS</i>).</p> <p>“...there are so many ways that God gives you a warning light. It is all in the Bible and it hits you when we mediate on it. When we have neglected reading the Bible or discussing about problems as a family is like that light becomes dimmed.” (<i>Samanta, 2nd Gen, CHEMISTS</i>).</p> <p>“... the week we opened people were asking for beverages that were popular... Local suppliers would give us a good deal if we would sell more of them. They used a good scheme to show how our business would make good profits. So, we decided to give it a try. The items were selling well yet I was not feeling good about i... we knew they were harmful for public health [alcohol]. One day over dinner my wife said ‘We are just being hooked by the supplier, for what? Those products are great for profit but not good for people. Is this what we want to teach our children?’. We found admonitions in the Bible too. The next day I called the supplier and requested them to recall those products. They thought I was crazy. When we face similar issues, we know what to do... there is nothing wrong with upholding our beliefs in business...that experience has served as a watchtower in our policies” (<i>Santiago, 2nd Gen, EDUCATORS</i>).</p> <p>“Grandma always told us the importance of being vigilant about where we wanted to go with a business. She shared her stories about how difficult it was to have no real vision or purpose until she became a Christian. Mom experienced the same...they talk about how faith has been a beacon for them when they feel tempted to do something against what they believe. Then they revised the business policy. Yet until we experienced it ourselves it really made no sense” (<i>Samuel, 3rd Gen, MANUFACTURERS</i>).</p>	<p>Focuses attention on warnings and consequences</p>
<p>“...I just asked, for whom are you doing this? If only for your benefit, you will not really succeed. I asked them to instill the sabbath as a business rule and add God in their [official] values. It would benefit employees and themselves to keep in mind what the stakes are. They also had to choose a [Bible] verse that would give them hope. It is a rule in all our businesses. It serves as a beacon” (<i>Gertrudis, 1st Gen, MANUFACTURERS</i>).</p> <p>“... savings for the difficult times. That is part of what we do in every business, why? because we can then reinvest in a new business, or a new product line and we don’t have to think whether we have that extra bit. We can all tell you a story when we agreed to follow that rule in every business. It is now part of our policies. We have all done it so we can all talk about how hard it was but also how it helps us to think differently in business” (<i>Tomas, 3rd Gen, CHEMISTS</i>).</p> <p>“...the closer you get to start a business you can then apply a "heavenly father" check about what is important and what is not for us. It is a foolproof mechanism really. It has been used by my grandfather and father every time. We all tell this anecdote of looking at this business [commercial cleaning] and sharing what could go</p>	<p>Revise business policy based on religious faith</p>

wrong if we were guided by what everyone else was doing and then what the consequences would be if we neglected our faith. That helped us when we did the recruitment policy” (*Francisco, 3rd Gen, LOGISTICS*).
“... we almost made a deal with a company that was asking us to sell harmful chemical products that lacked appropriate handling instructions. The prices they offered were good for the new business. But then we met, and I asked all of them [2nd, 3rd Gen] ‘can we get away with this? who is watching?’ they all replied, ‘God up there!’ Then we decided to say no and reevaluate how to procure other products. Samanta and Tomas were then in charge of evaluating them based on what we believe. We were then able to use this approach to devise a procurement policy” (*Carmen, 1st Gen, CHEMISTS*).

“...you trust a watchtower because it gives warnings from such a high position of things we cannot see. It would be easy to start and feel the buzz of the trade when business doors open. It is in that moment that you can let go or forget what you believe, but having faith is not for a moment. If you write the rules of your business, based on those warnings we have identified in the Bible, then it is easier to avoid problems down the road” (*Martina, 2nd Gen, EDUCATORS*).

“... You make choices based on your [religious] beliefs, and of course you trust that the outcome will be the best. Yet that does not mean what we planned will be successful. We have made decisions not knowing if it was the best or the worst. We have included aspects of savings in the financial forecast to help us think better with less than what we have. It really makes you think harder every time you have to make a decision. Those rules are there [in the Bible] for centuries, why would we not use them in how we do things in business?” (*Carlota, 3rd Gen, EDUCATORS*).

“...now people recognize that our radio station will not play certain music or get into topics that go against good manners...shaping that way of doing things has not been easy within this industry. It requires living your faith, but when we did so over the years each one of us involved and our employees can tell you it proved to be foolproof for who we hired and who we worked with” (*Reynaldo, 2nd Gen, LOGISTICS*).

“...at the end of the day you want your business to grow and transform into something you will be proud of. Since we started operating, we agreed to meet and talk about how to live our faith in each one [of the businesses]. It is not easy, but we must hold each other responsible and call on each other if we feel we are shutting down that warning light” (*Brenda, 2nd Gen, CHEMISTS*).

“Tithing and savings are sacred for mom [Lucila], she has always done it. She cites Matthew and Genesis every time someone asks about it. I understood to have savings for any eventuality or if a business opportunity came along. We have no choice but to pay taxes, although many other people we know say they avoid it. Tithing was not easy for me because I thought God does not need our money. But then mom explained her experiences and why in doing so as a family we would become wiser in business. When I apply those principles, I realize we [family in business] are pressured to think better with less money, but also feel confident in making decisions based on your beliefs” (*Eloisa, 2nd Gen, TRADERS*).

“... Will you not alert the builders of your home if you spot a shaky foundation? well, the same happens if we see something not right based on our faith. I will not sugar coat it. Our story in this acquired business

Business culture
influenced by religious
faith

[technology] will tell you that there were times we revised entire policies, like rebuilding a wall again, until it was right” (*Federico, 2nd Gen, BUILDERS*).

“...When we started talking about acquiring this business [restaurant], it seemed impossible. It was in ruins! The people who had it before did not care about their community, their employees, or even the environment. We had no experience in it. But we [Karen, Samuel] were reminded by our mom and grandma– who are you doing this for? for people, for your ego or to show what happens when you acquire a business and run it by the Bible? We never forgot that. As we all went to clean the premises, we discussed ideas as to how we would manage it - starting prudently and growing slowly, how to treat employees right, and how to get involved in the community. To remind us of our promise, we prayed at the end and agreed to place a Bible verse on a visible place. It would remind us of who we were doing this for. This story has been like a beacon to us to guide every business we have acquired or started since” (*Samuel, 3rd Gen, MANUFACTURERS*).

FIGURE 1
Data structure

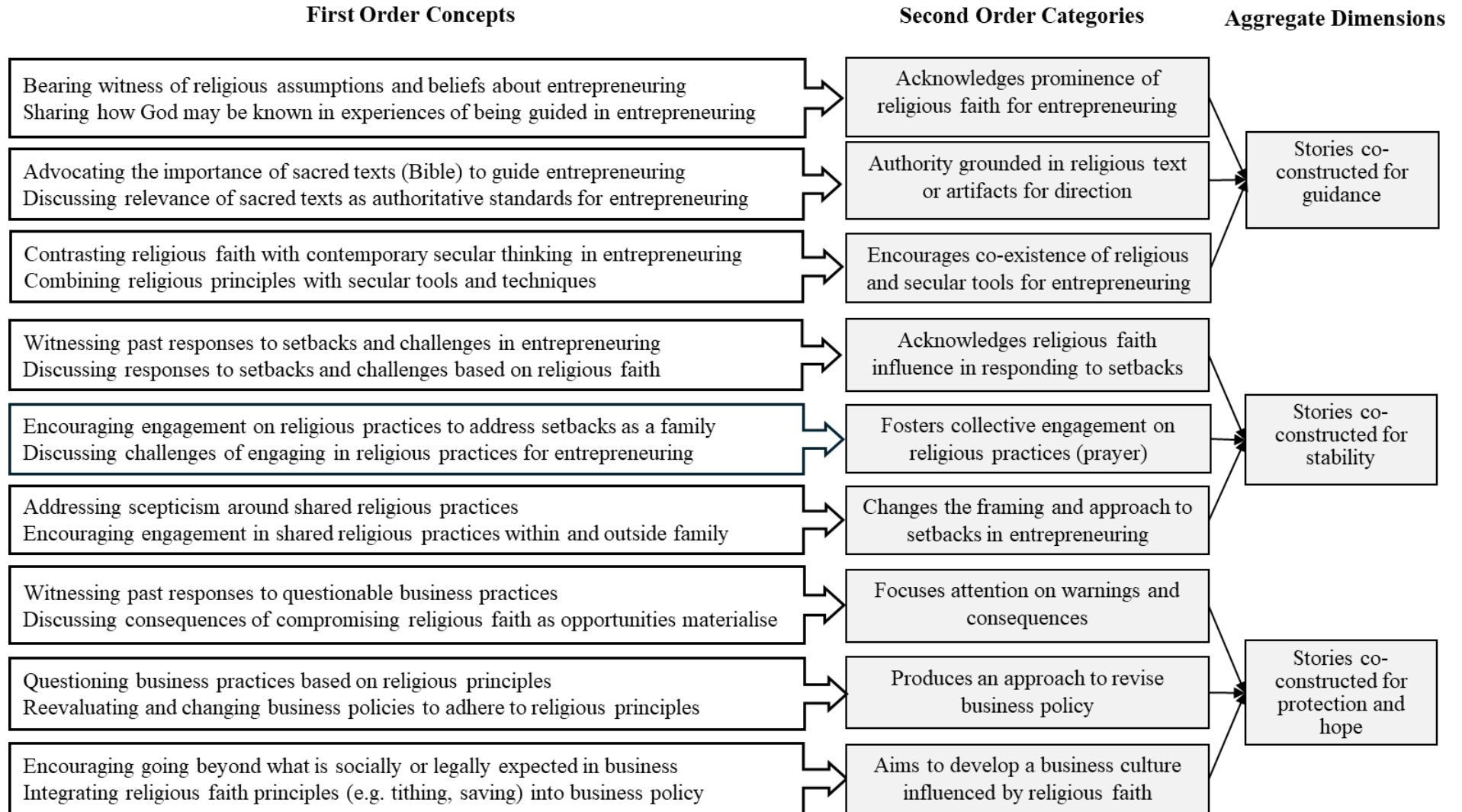


FIGURE 2

A model of the legacy of faith for family entrepreneuring

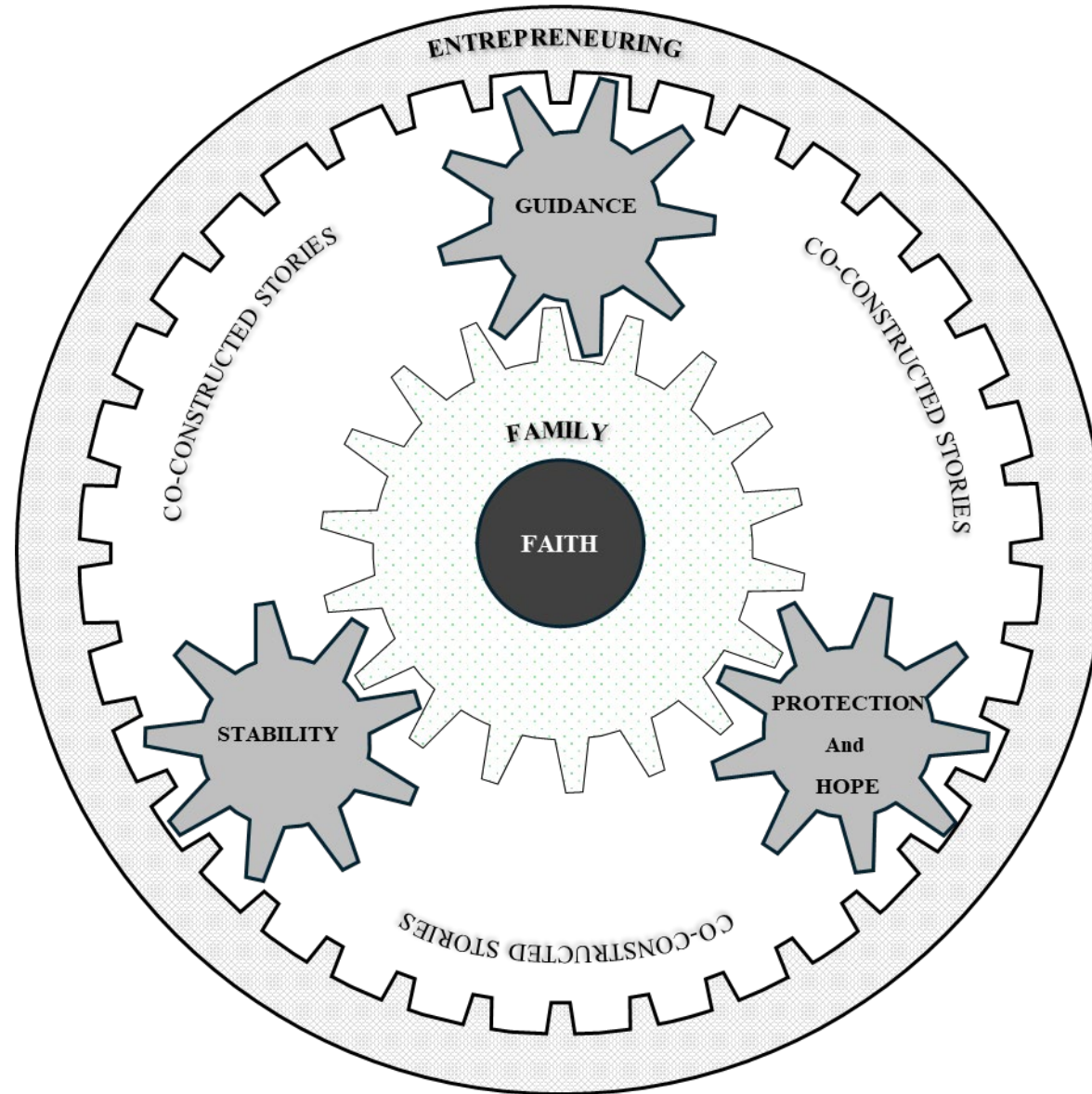


FIGURE 3

A legacy of faith as a manifestation of cultural entrepreneurship

