

## L.I.F.E Conference 2022 - Research Pitch Competition

**Purpose:** A main purpose of the L.I.F.E. (Leading the Integration of Faith & Entrepreneurship) Research Lab at Miami University (Oxford, Ohio) is to create world-class knowledge at the intersection of faith and entrepreneurship. Excellent academic research is key to achieving this goal and to do so requires a network of scholars passionate about this space. Therefore, we are sponsoring a competition for research grants totalling \$10,000 for academically rigorous and novel scholarship in the field of faith and entrepreneurship. Papers can be qualitative or quantitative in nature, across or within any faith perspective, and can be rooted in any relevant theoretical grounding. The L.I.F.E. Grant will provide funding for scholars to engage in research to further our understanding of how and why religion influences entrepreneurship. Resulting studies will be foundational to the growth of the field and offer footing for further study at the intersection of faith and entrepreneurship.

**Background:** A 2021 study by the [World Population Review](#) estimates 85% of the global population ascribes to some religious belief system. Popular press outlets including the *New York Times* and *Harvard Business Review* have noted the rise of religious awareness and influence in the workplace (Worthen, 2019; Gümüşay, 2020). Companies are ramping up their diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts to allow employees to freely express themselves in the workplace. A growing movement encouraging faith and work integration has infiltrated major entrepreneurial hubs including San Francisco/Palo Alto, Austin, and Cincinnati in the United States, as well as burgeoning movements in Kenya, South Africa, England, and parts of Southeast Asia. Practitioner networks like Faith Driven Entrepreneur, startup accelerators like Praxis and OCEAN, and faith-driven funds like Impact Foundation and Lion's Den DFW continue to see significant growth year over year. IFIs connected to Islamic banking dominate entrepreneurial ecosystems in the Middle East and tenets of Shari'a law provide clear guidelines for business practice in the Muslim community.

Yet, in academic study—especially in entrepreneurship and management literature—religion is often set aside in favor of other constructs to understand human behavior or is simply relegated to a context for study. While studies of racial diversity and identity factors like gender and ethnicity have steadily increased (and deservedly so), many scholars have been reticent to broach the subject of religion and religious diversity in business. Emerging studies have begun to encourage scholarship in the field of entrepreneurship that explores the influence of religious beliefs on entrepreneurial action (Smith et al., 2019; Smith, McMullen, & Cardon, 2021, Tracey, 2012). While the number of religious adherents in the United States and Western Europe may appear stagnant or in decline, religion in other parts of the world continues to increase. If our pursuit is to understand entrepreneurial action and motivation, to do so without considering the influence of religious belief would be to fall far short of the goal.

**Abstract, proposed methodology, potential findings, and proposed use of funds due March 11, 2022.** Proposals will undergo a blind review by the editorial team and the top 3 will be given the opportunity to pitch live at the conference on April 7, 2022. Finalists will be announced April 1 and given further instructions on preparing their pitch. Pitches will be judged by a panel of senior scholars during the conference and the winner will be announced at the close of the event.

Possible subjects include, but are not limited to:

- What does the intersection of faith and entrepreneurship look like in different parts of the world? How do different contexts influence the practice of integration?
- How do different denominational beliefs and practices within a belief system affect the actions of faith-driven entrepreneurs?
- How does faith help entrepreneurs navigate the challenges of entrepreneurship? Where may integration of faith and work complicate entrepreneurial action?
- Where can the study of faith and entrepreneurship be enhanced by interdisciplinary considerations from fields such as sociology, history, psychology, and economics?
- What geopolitical factors inhibit or encourage faith driven entrepreneurship?

**Eligibility:** The research pitch proposals are open to all doctoral students or assistant professors.

**Due date:** Proposals should be no longer than 5 pages (double-spaced) including abstract, methodology, potential findings, and allocation of funds. Submit your proposal to Amanda Lawson, LawsonA8@MiamiOH.edu, by March 11, 2022 in order to be considered for the pitch competition.