"SO WHAT IF I PRAY LIKE A GIRL": GENDERED

RELIGIOUS SOCIALIZATION AT

A CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

By

STACEY L. ELSASSER

Bachelor of Science

North Central University

Minneapolis, Minnesota

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Thesis Approved:

Natalie S. Adams
Thesis Advisor

Pamela Jan Bettis

Pamela Che Brown

Wayne B. Powell
Dean of the Graduate College

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

*We are responsible to enable each of our students to know
that she or he is a full partner in the learning community,
a partner made worthy by God. We need to understand how
we are socialized to fit molds. And we need to acknowledge
how those molds can misshape the lives God asks us
to live in praise and service to Him.*
- Lorna Van Gilst (1993)

Whether by society, schools, or religion, girls are inherently punished for being born female. Inequality persists for girls in both perceptions and expectations. A girl born today will still have to fight to receive equal treatment, equal respect, and equal opportunity (Mann, 1994). Myra and David Sadker (1994) describe it more succinctly. They call girls, particularly in school, second-class citizens.

According to the American Association of University Women (AAUW), in a report from 1992, girls have been shortchanged by the schools. The AAUW reports that girls continue to be left out of discussions over educational reform, despite more than two decades

of research identifying gender bias as a major problem at all levels of schooling. The AAUW suggests that by "studying what happens to girls in school, we can gain valuable insights about what has to change in order for each student, every girl and every boy, to do as well as she or he can" (p. 1). Research proves that boys and girls in the same classroom receive a different education (Eitzen & Zinn, 1992; Sadker & Sadker, 1992; AAUW, 1992; Campbell, 1986). Male students are given more attention from teachers and are given more feedback (Sadker & Sadker, 1992). Textbooks commonly used in the US are overtly, and covertly, sexist (Eitzen and Zinn, 1992). Textbooks researched for words used revealed that *he* occurred three times as often as *she,* and *boy* occurred twice as often as *girl.* (Sadker & Sadker, 1994). A 1992 survey found that when adults were asked to picture an intelligent child, 57% of women and 71% of men pictured a male child (Sadker & Sadker, 1994).

Another factor influencing the education of girls is gender [1] socialization, which is defined as prescribed behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes for girls, women, boys, and men (Doyle & Paludi, 1998). While children use gender as an organizing principle for dealing with

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[1] I am using the now prevalent distinction between *sex*: physical attributes and *gender* : the social construction of what is properly feminine and masculine.

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the world around them, they also learn from the world around them what it means to be female and male (Mann, 1994). Thus, as children are developing their sense of male and female they are also assimilating information from society, media, family, and school about what the desirable attributes of their gender are and incorporating that information into their own behavior. This later translates into notions of girls being more nurturing and caring, and less physical while boys are more tough and less emotional.

The AAUW (1992, p.8) report states: "Girls and women must play a central role in education reform. The experiences, strengths, and needs of girls from every race and social class must be considered in order to provide excellence and equity for all our nation's schools". However, the report omits one very significant component to identity formation: religious affiliation.

Gender is socialized while religion socializes. Emile Durkheim (1915) defines *religion* as "a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, uniting into a single moral community all those who adhere to those beliefs and practices" (p. 47). Alvin Bertrand (1967) would add to that definition the phrase, "and who interact according to well-defined roles" (p. 324).

Religious socialization, attributed to Harold Himmelfarb (1979), refers to the way religion shapes both a person's world view and how he or she determines attitudes and actions according to those religions' values (Cornwall, 1987; Greely & Rossi, 1966; Greely, McGready, & McCourt, 1976;). Research on religious socialization focuses on three agents: the family, the church, and peers (Cornwall 1989). Conclusions from such research are generally consistent with traditional conceptions of socialization: the family is the principal agent of religious socialization (e.g. Erikson & Freud), while peers and the religious institutions are secondary agents.

The differences between men and women in their religious behaviors and beliefs are considerable. Females are proven to have a more positive attitude toward Christianity than males. Females are more likely to express interest in religion, have a stronger personal commitment, and attend church more frequently (Cornwall, 1989). This appears to hold true over the life course and regardless of the religion type or belief system (Miller & Hoffman, 1995). Many scholars (Miller & Hoffman, 1995; Francis & Wilcox, 1998; Wright, Frost and Wisecarver, 1993) have theorized the reasons for this as

being: *first*, females are taught to be more submissive, passive, obedient, and nurturing than males and these traits are associated with higher levels of religiosity; *second*, theorists argue that females are more religious than males because of their structural location in society; that lower participation in the labor force and greater responsibility for the upbringing of children lead women toward greater involvement in religion; *third*, risk preference: women are less likely to take risks and eternal damnation is a big risk.

Religion has played a primary role in the socialization of girls. Furthermore, the Judeo-Christian tradition has been a dominant force in suppressing women's equality by suggesting that women's subordination is divinely inspired (Gallagher & Smith, 1999). Women were often seen as possessions of their husbands (Jacobs, 1998). This may come from the passage in Ephesians 5:23 that states "the husband is the head of the wife" (Holy Bible, 1983). This same idea has recently developed into an issue due to a conservative Christian men's movement called Promise Keepers that promotes men taking back their "proper role as head of the family" (Messner, 1997). Messner also asserts that this movement is on the forefront of an

antifeminist reassertion of essentialist views of men and women as biologically different, and therefore each should be assigned different social positions; a belief known as Essentialism.

Although women have been oppressed in many ways within the institution of the church (e.g. women rarely given ordination), women account for the majority of church members (Miller & Hoffman, 1995) and are increasingly gaining access to the higher levels of leadership, including ordination and religious academics (Jacobs 1998). However, according to Sheila Briggs (1987), "an increasing number of Christian women question (and in many cases reject) the moral tutelage of the churches in these areas [home and family]; the church no longer appears an effective agent for the social control of women" (p. 409). This backing away from the socializing influences of the church may be due to the recent far-reaching feminist critique of the church as a patriarchal model (Suchocki, 1994). Mary Daly (1973) would have us question this model of Christianity in her now famous comment, "If God is male, then the male is God" (p.19).

It has been theorized by Francis and Wilcox (1998) that because religion and the churches appeal more to the psychologically

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feminine side of human personality, religion and churches have themselves become gender typed. Briggs (1987) states that religion itself has acquired a "feminine" character; that it cares for and nurtures those too tired, abused, or weak to grapple with the harsh realities of the world, and much of the church's work was, and still is, provided by the unpaid work of women in the "voluntary welfare organizations of church and synagogue" (p. 408).

Religious forms of gender discrimination have been explored exhaustively (Gallagher & Smith, 1999; Davidman, 1991; Johnson, 1993; Pohli, 1983; Stacey & Gerard, 1990). However, very little research has been conducted about religious forms of gender discrimination in schools. If the route to transformation of social inequality lies in education (e.g.: Dewey, Friere, & Giroux) than it would be well served to explore issues of gender in what has become the crusade of many conservative Christians, the Christian school. If education transforms and transmits (deMarrais & LeCompte, 1995), then religious education would provide a microcosmic example of either transmission or transformation.

Christian schools are the major venue for religious education in the country today (Zylstra, 1997). According to Henry Zylstra (1997), Christian schools are loosely defined as schools that blend academics with evangelical Christian beliefs. They must be both a school and an agent of evangelical Christianity. Christian schools represent more than 40% of non-Catholic private schools and one-fifth of all private schools in the nation (NCES). Christian schools are the fastest-growing sector of American education over the last thirty years. Today some 1.5 million students, representing at least 25% of all children in private schools, attend some 11,000 Christian schools (Wagner, 1997).

The philosophy of a Christian school can be as simplistic as academics plus Christianity or as complex as knowledge is God-inspired and therefore all academics should have Christian overtones (Cram, 1998). All Christian schools have the same fundamental beliefs: inerrancy of scripture, God as three in one, the deity, virgin birth, death, and resurrection of Christ, sinfulness of humanity and their need for salvation, resurrection of the saved into Heaven and the lost into Hell,

spiritual unity of believers, and the Holy Spirit's work in the believers' lives (ACSI, 1998). Wagner (1997) conducted a study of schools sponsored by fundamentalist, evangelical, pentecostal, and charismatic churches and found that doctrinal differences among the churches did not predict the modes of operation in the schools they supported. She concludes that within conservative Christian schools, denominational loyalties are being stretched and blunted.

Rapoport, Garb, & Penso (1995), argue that religion plays a "pivotal role in shaping girlhood-womanhood by means of its educational institutions and socialization practices" (p.48). Furthermore, they argue that Christian schools operate as both an educational institution and as agents of religious socialization. Examining how gendered socialization and religious socialization intersect in the lives of girls who attend Christian schools would not only inform religious educators but also public school educators who will have girls from similar backgrounds in their classes.

Research Question

If gender is a sociological construction and religion has socializing influences, how does gender and religion intersect to shape the lives of girls at a Christian school? While the church still struggles to deal with the fact that "there is neither male nor female in Christ" (cf. Galatians 3:28, Holy Bible), do Christian schools also act as agents for transmission of the same conflict over gender found in the church or as agents of transformation? How would Christian schools influence girls' construction of identity both as females and as female Christians?

All the above questions have led to an inquiry into the lived experiences of girls at a Christian school. Without too much comparison to girls in public school, it is of benefit to both the church and the educational system in general to understand the frame of reference in which these girls operate and the context in which they develop their gendered Christian identity. What my research discovers will enable us to give a definition and scope to the "gendered religious socialization" of girls at a Christian school.

Significance Of Study

The topic of gender in the Christian schools has had little or no research or even academic dialogue. Much of the research done on Christian schools is done "in-house" and reflects the needs and issues important to the organization itself but not to the educational community at large. If, as Alan Peshkin implies in God's Choice (1986), a Christian school is a "total institution" where all aspects of life are regulated, it would be extremely valuable to see what kind of people these schools produce; people who will have entered or will be entering our universities and workforce. Of even more interest is how they are produced.

Wagner (1990) recommends using Christian schools as a "guidepost" to understanding the culture of conservative Christianity. In our public schools today are children from many different religious backgrounds, including a large population of evangelical Christians. Understanding the way they've been socialized through church and family will provide

a better means to understanding how best to teach and interact with them.

In the face of so much evidence pointing to failure in the public schools and failure in the churches to adequately reduce gender inequalities, it would inform us as educators and researchers to look at gender issues at the intersection of education and religion, the Christian schools.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Christian Schools: For the purposes of the study, a Christian school will be one that adheres to evangelical doctrine (Zylstra, 1997). The designation will be added, if needed, if it is fundamental or conservative. Charity is a conservative Evangelical, not fundamental, Christian school.

Conservative Christianity: Conservative Christians believe in the act of salvation, "being born again", as the only way to reach Heaven. One imperative that separates them from fundamentalism, is that while fundamentalists are to be separate from the world,

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conservatives try to be "in the world, but not of the world"
(Marsden, 1991). Conservatives are more open to revise beliefs than
fundamentalists. The conservative marker is the accepted title, not
as an indication of their theological leanings, but rather as an
indication of their political beliefs.

Evangelicals: Essential evangelical beliefs include (1) the
Reformation doctrine of the final authority of the Bible, (2) the real
historical character of God's saving work recorded in Scripture, (3)
salvation to eternal life based on the redemptive work of Christ, (4)
the importance of evangelism and missions, and (5) the importance
of a spiritually transformed life (Livingstone, 1977). George
Marsden (1991) states, "Central to the evangelical gospel was the
proclamation of Christ's saving work though his death on the cross
and the necessity of personally trusting him for eternal salvation"
(p. 2). In slang this act is referred to as "being born again".

Evangelicalism acts as an umbrella term for such diverse
churches and beliefs as: holiness churches, pentecostal /
charismatic, traditionalist Methodists, all the diverse Baptists,
black churches in all these traditions, fundamentalists, pietist

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groups, Reformed and Lutheran confessionalists, Anabaptists such as Mennonite, Churches of Christ, Christians, and some Episcopalians. Approximately 50 million Americans fit this definition (Marsden, 1991). Billy Graham is the prevalent example.

Fundamentals: Marsden (1991, p. 4) states: "Though outsiders to the movement sometimes use the term broadly to designate any militant conservative, those who call themselves fundamentalists are predominately separatist Baptist dispensationalists." Gallagher and Smith (1999, p.213) state that "separation from the world remains a central idea" to fundamentalists. Jerry Falwell provides a good example.

Mainline denominations: Mainline churches are those that are considered to be more liberal politically (i.e.: more humanitarian) and more conservative theologically (i.e.: less dogmatic). Considered more liturgical, they also are called "Liberal Protestants" (Livingstone, 1977). Examples include Episcopalians, Lutherans, Presbyterians, and the Greek and Russian Orthodoxy.

Non-denominationalism: Churches that don't adhere to any one denomination, but follow general practices associated with certain movements, such as Pentecostalism, conservative or fundamental evangelicalism, and even Baptist theology, although the bulk of the churches that are non-denominational are charismatic (Marsden, 1991). Sometimes churches fall within an *interdenominational* marker as a church that sprang up within the theology of a few different denominations.

Pentecostals / Charismatics: Twenty-eight percent of evangelicals identify themselves as Pentecostal or non-denominational charismatic (Gallagher & Smith, 1999). Pentecostal and charismatics place more emphasis on the experience of the " Holy Spirit" as a source of authority and they participate in a worship style that is more free from conventional styles. Jimmy Swaggert is/was an example of Pentecostalism.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

At church in silks and satins new,
With hoops of monstrous size,
She never slumber'd in her pew,
But when she shut her eyes.
-Oliver Goldsmith (1995)

Introduction

Females in the world face an uncertain future, but less so

today then in previous generations. So many institutions work for

and against women, usually at the same time. Institutions are

economic, political, religious, familial, educational, or other basic

agencies that operate as a distinctive form for organizing society

(Hansot & Tyack, 1988). Examination of these institutions and their

effect on women is important to understanding and changing them,

and will continue to influence the world in which we live.

Focusing on one specific "institution within an institution,"

Christian schools, one can see a microcosmic example of the

socializing force of the larger social institution, specifically the

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evangelical church. Starting with the larger role of women in society and school, then continuing into the institution of religion and evangelical Christianity, this review will conclude by looking into the institution of the Christian school.

Gender

Sex versus *Gender*

Simone De Beauvoir, in her now seminal work The Second Sex (1949), states that women are created, not born. Many years ago, psychologist Rhoda Unger (1979) began urging social scientists to use the term sex when referring to specific biological mechanisms and to use the term gender when discussing the social, cultural, and psychological aspects that pertain to the traits, norms, stereotypes, and roles of women and men. While being born of the female *sex*, women are created and socialized into acting as a *gendered* female.

The disciplines of sociology and social psychology had an androcentric, or genderless, focus until the reemergent women's movement of the late 1960's and early 1970's. This movement contributed to many feminist-oriented researchers focusing their

attention on the stratification of, and discrimination against, women (Doyle & Paludi, 1998). Areas of interest included the socialization process and the important socializing agents (e.g., people and institutions) who taught what was expected of that individual in terms of gender role related behavior. Within the past decade, social scientists have intensified their study of how society, through its powerful institutions, reinforces and supports a basic inequality between women and men (Doyle & Paludi, 1998).

Gender and Education

The social institution to gain the most attention in this regard is the educational system. Starting with the Title IX Amendment of 1972, attention began to focus on girls and gender equity. Title IX states that:

> No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving federal financial assistance (Newman, 1998, p.276).

Title IX has opened up courses, activities, and jobs once officially closed to one sex or another.

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The American Association of University Women (1992) report,
How Schools Shortchange Girls, brought new life and light to the
issue of girls and schooling. The AAUW report challenged the
common assumption that boys and girls are treated equally in our
public schools. This report gave clear evidence that the educational
system was not meeting girls' needs. The report concluded that
while boys and girls start school roughly equal in measured ability,
twelve years later girls have fallen behind their male classmates in
areas such as math and self-esteem.

How Schools Shortchange Girls catalyzed local, state, and
national action, and research in this area grew exponentially (AAUW,
1999). Gender issues now occupy a central place in most of the
educational reform literature as well as prompting numerous efforts
to improve educational opportunities for all students.

A new report from the American Association of University
Women (1999), Gender Gaps: Where Schools Still Fail Our Children,
confirms that while public schools are making progress toward
equitable treatment of boys and girls, some concerns, such as
academic tracking and the impact of standards-based teaching, still
remain. Gender Gaps is a progress report of what has happened since

the 1992 report and gives a look at what still needs to be done in the area of gender equity.

The original AAUW report was not without its critics. The 1992 report used research mainly conducted by Myra and David Sadker who later turned their findings into another landmark book, Failing at Fairness: How Our Schools Cheat Girls (1994). According to reports by Christina Hoff Sommers (1994) and Judith Kleinfeld (1998), the original material from the Sadkers' research is not available for review; not even David Sadker has a copy.

Kleinfeld's main criticism about the Sadkers' research is that while they assert that girls receive significantly less attention from classroom teachers then boys, no other study has ever concluded that teacher attention is important to academic success. Kleinfeld concludes that since girls get better grades, go to college and graduate from college more often, and score higher on standardized tests of writing skills and reading comprehension, they are only really shortchanged in mathematics and science, areas that are quickly becoming more equitable.

Gender Gaps (AAUW, 1999) has this recommendation for continuing study into the issue of girls and schooling,

As girls as a whole move toward parity with boys in enrollment, performance, and educational opportunities, it will be crucial to monitor subgroups of girls for significant discrepancies in their opportunities and performance. Gaps among girls based on racial, ethnic, economic, and regional differences may become more pronounced, even as the gaps between boys and girls in the aggregate diminish. These differences in educational outcomes must be monitored closely, particularly as demographics trends reconfigure the public school population. (p. 124)

The missing discourse in both the 1992 report and the 1999 follow-up report is the influence of religious institutions on girls in both public and private schools.

Religion

Religion and Public Schooling

Very few studies have been conducted concerning the effect of religious institutions on public schooling, yet calls have gone out for the schools to better address the issue of religion in the schools (Zirkel, 1999; Halford, 1999; Baer & Carper, 1998). The calls address not the issue of the teaching of religion, rather they address the need to know more about the students and their religious backgrounds. Halford (1999) criticizes the public school

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systems who have not made a priority of finding common ground over religious matters as a reason why two different evangelical groups, Exodus 1000 and Rescue 2010, are calling for the mass exodus of traditionalist Christians from the public schools.

Halford (1999) thinks this marks a radical shift from earlier efforts to find common ground concerning what is and is not appropriate religious expression in public schools. Religious expression is thriving in public schools, from WWJD? (What would Jesus do?) bracelets to wiccan-symbol necklaces (which recently caused a court battle in Michigan). According to Perry Zirkel (1999), students' right to religious expression within the classroom should be met with *active neutrality*, although he fails to define it. Any definition of active neutrality would have to start with understanding what the expression means within the context of the religion.

Christian Denominationalism

To understand Christianity, one needs to understand the continuum on which it sits (Marsden, 1991). Center to all Christianity is the doctrine that Jesus, the son of God, came to

earth to teach the way to become closer to God. Through Jesus' resurrection from the dead He would become the savior, the one who would save the people from the sin which separates them from God (Nord, 1995). The logistics of that salvation and the believer's duty in it varies, but the core belief of Jesus as the resurrected son of God remains.

Marsden (1991) describes the continuum this way: Catholics and the orthodox religions (e.g., Greek, Russian) sit on one side with characteristics that include: liturgical practices, remoteness from a personal relationship with God, and the belief that what a person does earns him/her salvation. In the middle of the continuum are the mainline denominations which believe in a more personal relationship with God, validity in working toward salvation, and less liturgical practices, while on the other end are those churches that believe that only through a personal relationship with God and Jesus will one attain salvation, not through works, and their practices contain few, if any liturgical qualities. This end of the continuum, known as evangelicals, is where this study is situated.

Evangelicals and Gender

Evangelical treatment of women has been studied at length, especially in the last two decades (Griffith, 1997; Brusco, 1995; Johnson, 1993; Stacey & Gerard, 1990; Klatch, 1987; Rose, 1987; Pohli, 1983). The most recent study, conducted by Sally Gallagher and Christian Smith (1999), concerns the evangelical church's focus on the headship of man, or the submission of women. Gallagher and Smith (1999) state that:

> evangelical family values and what evangelicals actually do in families provide a unique and focused lens through which to examine broader sociological questions regarding the relationships between ideology, personal agency, and social-structural change (p. 212).

Gallagher and Smith believe that evangelicals provide this lens because they hold a set of ideological tools with which they might articulate their ideals, situate their family choices, and critique the articulation of private ideology and public life. The theme of submission and headship needs to be explored more for the purposes of this study.

Submission theology, the idea that the wife has less authority than her husband, comes from a passage in Ephesians 5:23 that states "the husband is the head of the wife" (Holy Bible, 1983). Other verses that support this theology include Genesis 3:16 which

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says the man shall rule over his wife, and I Corinthians 11:3 which restates Genesis 3:16. There are also verses concerning women teaching and having authority over men, but those will be discussed later.

Submission theology runs the gamut from ultra-traditionalists who believe that women should not teach adult men or hold governmental positions, to egalitarians who believe that there is neither male nor female in function, both in the church or home (Jacobs, 1998). Most evangelicals hold a neo-traditionalist view in which women are seen as subordinate, but not unequal to men (Gallagher & Smith, 1999).

Gallagher and Smith explain that the evangelicals' gender ideology focuses on gender differences in family responsibilities and bases this on the ideal of separate spheres for women and men that emerged during the late nineteenth century. Evangelicals argue that men and women have natural, even God-given essences such as masculine aggression, worldly wisdom, and rationality and its complement, feminine submission, purity, piety, and domesticity. Gallagher and Smith conclude that due to the family's increasing reliance on women's income and because the impact of feminism on

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evangelical discourse has been "profound and diffuse" (p. 214-215),

evangelicals are beginning to see in their lived experiences what

Gallagher and Smith call *pragmatic egalitarianism*. Gallagher and

Smith call submission theology a rarely used "trump card" that is

mostly symbolic and not a practical reality in the lives of modern

evangelicals who face the commitments of a postindustrial

economy.

Cindy Jacobs (1998), an evangelical minister, states that no

issue is more controversial in the church than the roles of women in

the ministry. This is due in part to verses from I Corinthians 14:

34-35 which states that women should keep silent in the church and

are not permitted to speak. The other verse similarly used is I

Timothy 2: 11-15 which states that women should learn in silence

and submission, and that women are not allowed to teach or have

authority over a man. Both of these passages can be explained

within the historical context of both the Jewish and Greek cultures

of the time as verses meant for that time (Jacobs, 1998).

While women ministers are allowed in almost all

denominations, evangelical or otherwise, they are rarely given (only

3%) the coveted position of head pastor, which would mean that

they hold the final authority in a church. Surprisingly, the church with the most women ministers is the Assemblies of God, an evangelical pentecostal church. Only 28% of students in seminaries, ministerial training institutions, are women (Jacobs, 1998).

Women in evangelical churches remain locked in a patriarchal system where women still live in fear of asserting themselves (Shelly, 1996). Mardi Keyes (1993) believes the patriarchy began in the third chapter of Genesis when "human rebellion (sin) against the creator resulted in many tragic alienations: sexual hierarchy, rivalry, and exploitation" (p. 13). She goes on to say that Jesus gave the opportunity for reconciliation not only between humans and God, but also between women and men. The patriarchal system that tries to define women, especially in the church, goes against Biblical notions that God is the author of humankind (Storkey, 1985). Christian feminists argue that God's plan for humankind involves male-female equality, complementarity, interdependence, mutual respect and enjoyment (Van Leeuwen, 1993).

Religious Socialization

Religion's socializing effect can take two forms: the influence of the religion on a particular person's life, and the influence of the religion on society as a whole (Rappapot & Garb, 1998). The influence of religion on society is demonstrated in the example that prior to the 1840's, religious schools were the only source of a formal education (Randall, 1994). Common schools started within the churches of colonial America and the line between them did not develop until after the civil war (Rippa, 1997).

Religion's influence on the individual is well documented and well understood. Personal belief is only part of the issue. When a person takes the mantle of a religion, they take not only its god, but its institution as well (Noll, 1994). The history of the religious socialization of women can be condensed and illustrated with the following passage from Rousseau's Emile (1979):

> Every girl ought to have her mother's religion, and
> every woman her husband's. If this religion is
> false, the docility which subjects mother and
> daughter to the order of nature erases from God's
> sight the sin of this error. Since women are not in a
> position to be judges themselves, they ought to
> receive the decision of fathers and husbands like
> that of the church (p. 377).

Mary Daigler (1996) explains the progress of women's role in the church this way: almost all denominations initially limited women's

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religious involvement to home, then to modeling fidelity to the group and its moral code, then to faith-related charitable work and home missions, then to foreign missions, followed by membership on church committees, then boards, then finally to preaching and ordination.

Today, women are attending church in increasing numbers. According to a survey by Princeton Survey Research Associates for the Center for Gender Equality (Witt, 1999), women in America are becoming more religious, praying more often, and say religion is more important in their lives. Eighty-six percent identify with some religious denomination. Seventy-five percent say religion is important to them, up from sixty-nine percent in 1996. An even bigger shift has occurred in women's prayer life. In 1996, sixty-three percent of women said they prayed everyday, but in 1999 seventy-four percent say they pray each day.

Surprisingly, sixty-four percent of women say that being involved in church makes them feel their rights are the same as a man's. The increased importance of religion does not mean that women are retreating from the basic demands of equal treatment. Equally surprising from the Princeton research is that women are

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nearly unanimous in their demand for the same treatment as men in terms of employment (94%), pay raises and promotions (98%), education (99%), and health care (95%) (Witt, 1999). However, from the same survey, only sixty-two percent of women disagree with the Southern Baptists Convention's statement that "wives should submit graciously to the leadership of their husbands."

Women and the church in general have had a rocky road to travel. There is an old saying that churches are usually 25 years behind the times (Jacobs, 1998). Maybe time can speed up if change begins with the young.

Christian Schools

History

The modern-day connotation of a Christian school, one where academics and evangelical Christianity combine in an educational setting, began in the 1960's as a response to perceived growing social concerns, such as race relations, sexual promiscuity, secular humanism, and declining moral values (Wagner, 1990). Worry over these concerns and their impact on public schooling led to the

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growth of the private school market. Nine out of ten current

Christian schools began since the mid-1960's (NCES, 1993/94).

Fred Wilson (1988) describes the growth of Christian schools.

Prior to the 1960's most evangelical Christians thought that

sending one's children to public schools was the "American" thing

to do. Wilson goes on to say,

> According to their theology, they were to be the
> salt in the public schools as well as to be
> missionaries of their faith. To send one's child to a
> Christian school was to abandon one's mission to
> the world by isolating him in a hothouse where he
> would be ill-prepared to deal with the real world
> (p. 12).

Between 1945 and 1985 a growing number of issues and

events combined to persuade parents to enroll their children in

Christian schools. First, through a series of Supreme Court

decisions - 1948's McCollum v. Board of Education which forbade

religious classes during school hours, 1954's K-12 desegregation

decision for the South, and 1962 & 1963's decisions to stop prayer

and Bible reading in schools - parents began to believe that the

United States was not a Christian country; in fact, many parents

began to feel as though public schools had become non-religious or

even anti-religious (Wilson, 1988).

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Second, many parents began to grow concerned about the "deadly duo" of evolution and secular humanism. Their concern over secular humanism reached its peak with the re-publication of the Humanist Manifesto in 1973. According to Christian education scholars of that time, John Dewey is credited with introducing secular humanism into public schooling since his philosophy of education has been used in education colleges since the early 20th century. The "hothouse" philosophy of nurturing a child in a Christian setting that originally drew heavy criticism, began to make sense to some parents (Wilson, 1988).

Third, declining enthusiasm for public schools began to be noticed in the early 1970's. A national poll in 1972 found that only 31% of the American people thought well of the public schools as compared with 61% in 1966. A 1973 Gallup poll listed the following problems as a reason for the growing displeasure: lack of discipline, integration/segregation, financial problems, bad teachers, drug use, school and class size, and poor curriculum (Wagner, 1990).

The two principal organizational structures for Christian schools, the American Association of Christian Schools (AACS) and

the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) started

from the same organization, the National Association of Christian

Schools (NACS). When NACS wanted to separate from the National

Association of Evangelicals (NAE) in 1973 due to theological

disputes, the NAE refused and the NACS eventually dissolved in

1979. The failure of the NACS is attributed to its inability to serve

the wide spectrum of evangelical groups. After this the two other

organizations were formed, the AACS to service more fundamental

schools while the ACSI serves the conservative, less traditional

schools. (See Chapter one for definitions of conservative and

fundamental.) According to the NCES (1993/94) statistics, AACS

services only about 350 schools, while the ACSI services about

2,500, although the ACSI themselves claim about 3,770.

Statistical Information

Current estimates on the number of evangelical Christian

schools in America today range from 5000 (NCES, 1993/94)) to

9,000 - 11,000 (Wagner, 1990) to 20,000 - 25,000 (Smith, Gangel &

Harris, 1988). Wagner says that exact numbers are hard to pinpoint

since many Christian schools do not have to register with the

government. These large discrepancies might be also accounted for somewhat by the fact that there are many different agencies and denominations who support and accredidate Christian schools, the largest of which is the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI), as mentioned previously, with an enrollment of 796,867 students in 3,770 schools. Wagner (1990) claims, as do most of the Christian school communications that a total of 1.5 million students are in Christian schools. There are also 4000 religious schools unaffiliated with any denomination or agency which might be considered conservative and evangelical (NCES, 1993/94).

According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES, 1993/94), the average tuition for a Christian school ranges from $2000 - $3000 per year; the average student to teacher ratio is 14:1; and the graduation rate is at 98%.

Philosophies of Christian Schooling

Frank Gaebelein, the foremost authority in Christian school circles, states in an oft-quoted book, Christian Education in a Democracy (1995), that

Our culture has lost its way because God and the Bible, as well as general religious or character instruction, have been removed from influence in our schools. The authority of the transcendent God of the universe has been replaced by a society who worships at the feet of man and his accomplishments (p. 1)

Dr. Gaebelein (1995) goes on to say the tension between "man-centered secularism and Christian education" (p.1) is a natural outcome for a society that is approaching total secularism. He believes the only way to go forward is to go back. This may account for the "back-to-basics" movement of parents either seeking out those private institutions which reflect a basic philosophy, such as the Christian schools, or the general push in public schooling for more fundamental forms of instruction (Zylstra, 1997).

Besides the primary doctrinal beliefs of a Christian school mentioned in chapter one, there are common philosophies or principles that influence Christian schooling. The following list is from Schooling Choices (Smith, Gangel & Harris, 1988), a representative example of a Christian book designed to help parents make an informed decision regarding their child's education. The principles listed, while not exhaustive, serve as good indicators of a Christian philosophy of education. They include:

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1. All of a child's education should be Bible-centered and God-centered.
2. Education should be positive and truthful.
3. Peer influence should be positive and Christ-like.
4. Every teacher's pattern of life should be worthy of imitation.
5. Only God-centered education gives true wisdom.
6. Christian schooling is the best hope for transforming society. (p. 90-92)

The authors conclude with this statement:

> The purpose of Christian schools is to present to our children, as clearly as possible, the truth about God, about life, about our world and everything in it, and to present the Word of God as the authoritative source upon which to build a life that has purpose and meaning (p. 93).

Guenter Salter (1988) advocates that a clearly defined Christian philosophy, a determining system of a person's values and beliefs drawn from the Bible, should be consciously and conscientiously applied to all facets of the educational process of a Christian school. In other words, the Bible should remain central to all that is done in a Christian school.

Curriculum and Christian Schools

The most significant influence on the production of textbooks

and curriculum for Christian schools came during their rapid growth

from the mid 1960's to the early 1980's. The market increased to

such an extent that several groups and publishers surfaced to

develop materials. These groups and publishers include Abeka Books,

Bob Jones University Press, Accelerated Christian Education (ACE),

Mott Media Publications and several Sunday school curriculum

publishers (Wilson, 1988).

Abeka estimates that more than 10,000 Christian schools use

their materials, while both Abeka and Bob Jones are the only ones to

produce full-color hard cover textbooks. ACE had the most explosive

impact on Christian curriculum. ACE produced individualized

programmed learning materials that allowed students to work at

their own pace at whatever grade level they tested to be on. ACE has

been heavily criticized for its lack of teacher involvement and

isolationist approach (Newsweek, 1981; Wagner, 1990).

A review of curriculum by *Newsweek* (April 20, 1981), pointed

out that materials are based on solid academic material, but

invariably "add some pointed commentary and tend to take an

unliberated view of women and an unsophisticated view of other

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cultures" (p. 71). Since 1981 some new materials have been introduced, especially those geared toward the booming home schooling market, but Abeka and Bob Jones remain the most popular (Smith, Gangel & Harris, 1988; Wagner, 1990).

Gender and Christian Schools

A recent informal survey of Christian school / Christian education (schooling during church times) literature of the past decade found only a few articles dealing with gender. Two articles dealt with women as Christian School teachers and female church staff members (Chapman, 1988; Van Halsema, 1992). Another article dealt with the issue of all-girls schools and if they were needed in the Christian school setting (Nannings, 1996). Two other articles asked teachers to be more aware of both their sexist actions, presuppositions, and their sexist language (Olthoff, 1991; Vanzanten, 1997).

While each article, with the exception of one editorial, was in its own way a glimpse at the problem of gender inequity / inequality, each one failed to achieve a cohesive argument for the need to consider gender issues and failed to propose more than a

stop-gap solution to the perceived gender difficulties. The articles were Band-Aids for a much deeper wound.

One article of curious interest described ways that teachers could control problems between boys and girls that the author labels as "interest" (Hoover, 1997). Hoover never explains these "interests", but it can be deduced that he means common adolescent opposite-sex attraction. Some of Hoover's suggestions included teachers avoiding the saying or doing of things that would stimulate interest; abolishing cliques, huddles of whispering children, unsupervised children and idle talking; and keeping students busy with wholesome activities. Hoover (1997, p. 33) concludes by saying that "when students' speech and activities are carefully guarded, many problems will be avoided." This article is all the more surprising since it was written only two years ago.

With so little research or written material, academic or otherwise, concerning gender and Christian schools, the need should be obvious. Yet even a review of the formal and informal publications of ACSI are silent on this topic. Research and writing that addresses this issue is needed for both the academic and the Christian school communities.

Conclusion

Gender inequality in school and society is well-established through various sources and research. Understanding of the domination and suppression of women in religion's, particularly Christianity's, patriarchal system is being acted upon, albeit 25 years too late. Gendered and religious socialization can be understood and combined into one form of socialization. The sleeping giant in the wholesale religious socialization of women could very well be the quiet, inoffensive Christian school impacting 1.5 million children each year.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research is concerned with meanings as they appear
to, or are achieved by, persons in lived social situations.
Maxine Greene, (1994)

Introduction

In this chapter I will demonstrate the need for both qualitative

research and for ethnographic study. I will also explain the

theoretical framework from which I designed and implemented my

study, and describe the methods employed to complete it. I will end

with a discussion of the relevant issues of rigor associated with

this study.

Rationale for a Qualitative Study

Qualitative research has allowed this study to define itself. In

the introduction to <u>Handbook of Qualitative Research,</u> Denzin and

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Lincoln (1994) define qualitative research as "multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter" (p. 2). Due to its many theoretical foci, it can mean different things to different people. For this study, I broadly adhered to the definition found in Gay's Educational Research (1996) that it is narrative and contextual in form and concerned with gaining insights in how things got to be the way they are, how people feel about the way things are, what they believe, and what meanings they attach to various activities.

Using an interpretivist approach, with the ontological belief that social realities are constructed by the participants in their social settings, qualitative research allowed me to "make sense of personal stories and the ways in which they intersect" (Glesne, 1999; p. 1). It became the most appropriate paradigm for looking at the "lived experiences" of girls at the intersection of religion and education.

Rationale for Case Study

This study is conducted as a case study, as defined in Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry (Stake, 1998). Stake defines a

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case study as research where "qualitative inquiry dominates, with strong naturalistic, holistic, cultural, phenomenological interests" (p. 86). Stake goes on to say that while the epistemological question of what exactly a "case" and a "study" means remains ambiguous, the important thing is to look at what can be learned from a single case. He emphasizes designing the study to optimize understanding of the case rather than any generalization beyond.

By using a case study design, I seek to achieve *instrumental* results (Stake, 1998). *Instrumental* refers to a particular case examined to provide insight into an issue of external interest. This case may or may not be determined as typical of other cases, but I believe it does shed some light into the nature of gender at a Christian school. According to Stake, this study is best served by the researcher seeking out what is "common and what is particular about the case" so that the end result was something unique (1998, p. 90).

Methods

Since a case study approach is my guiding design, I use multiple methods. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), it is not

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possible to do good qualitative research without being at least a

participant/observer. Through observation of classrooms, extra-

curricular activities, and common times such as lunch, study hall,

etc., I seek to achieve the "thick description" that defines

ethnography (Shimahara, 1988). Through this description of life at

Charity Christian School, the nature of the lived experiences for the

girls should be explained. Dewey (1938) believed that to study

experience is to study life.

Another research method I use is interviews. I blended

"structured interviews" (Fontana & Frey, 1994) with a more

phenomenological interview approach. Structured interviews take

on the form of an "interview schedule" with a fixed set of questions

(Glesne, 1999), while Renata Tesch (1984) states that a principle of

phenomenological research is to treat the person, who has the

experience one is interested in, as the expert in that experience.

She defines this interviewing process not as "question-and-answer,

rather as the experience of immersion", or "dialogic introspection".

It was with a set of questions in hand that I began the interview, but

by the end I became immersed in their world and the reality of

Charity Christian so that my interviews began to take a more

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phenomenological form. The context of their lives began to take shape in my research the more we talked.

The third research method I employ in this study is a look at the pertinent documents, records, and artifacts of Charity Christian School. Ian Hodder (1994) asserts that the study of "material culture is important for qualitative researchers who wish to explore multiple and conflicting voices, differing and interacting interpretations" (p. 195). While I was not able to collect much in the way of official documents, I was able, through the ready assistance of both students and teachers, to collect papers and artifacts from the students themselves, such as writing assignments, reflections on readings about gender, and some personal reflections. I also collected some written material from publications found in the teachers' lounge.

Theoretical Framework

Harry Wolcott (1995) states that theory is essential to the pursuit of qualitative research and a precursor to any purposeful human activity. Wolcott also says that the question of theory poses a dual challenge not only to find a theoretically adequate approach to

an original problem, but also to demonstrate how a unique case is embedded in some larger concern related to a significant body of theory. Wolcott does warn us though not to become too theoretically driven because then "theory is more apt to get in the way than to point the way, to tell rather than ask what we have seen (p. 186). LeCompte, Preissle, and Tesch (1993) assert that theory and method are inextricably linked. I would assert that to know *what* you are doing, you need to know *why*.

Using LeCompte's (1993) assertion that there are two different theoretical foundations that should be discussed, I employed both formal and informal theory to my study. Informal theory is that which we use to guide our daily life and make sense of our personal experiences, while formal theory begins in the academic disciplines and represents divergent perspectives of the world. LeCompte et.al. believe both theories should be grounded in experiences.

Using formal theory, my research was shaped by both critical and feminist theoretical frameworks. Critical theory draws from the Marxist imperative to change the world but interprets its task as the identification and clarification of the "necessary conditions"

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for emancipated living (Fleming, 1997). Critical ethnography aims to generate insights, explain events, and to seek understanding of "the other"; it also seeks to understand the participants' powerlessness (Anderson, 1989). Critical theory informs this study in that I seek to understand "the other's" powerlessness, in this case the religious and gendered socialization of adolescent girls at a Christian school.

Both critical and feminist researchers are concerned with understanding the ways social class, race, and patriarchy intersect to reproduce current social relations. Elizabeth Grosz (1988) describes feminist theory as being "neither subjective nor objective, neither relativist, nor absolutist: it occupies the middle ground excluded by oppositional categories" (p. 100). The most distinctive feature of feminist research is the emphasis on subjective experience and its deviation from the more objective nature of critical theory (Anderson, 1989). Both critical and feminist theory work together in this study not only to identify and explain a phenomena (critical), but also to act on this understanding and empower the participants involved in the phenomena (feminist).

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LeCompte (1993) states that "any inquiry process, scientific or otherwise, is affected not only by ascriptive characteristics, but also by a researcher's personal history and the general sociocultural frameworks and philosophical traditions in which he or she lives" (p. 121-122). Using informal theory, I am relying on "tacit" knowledge from the many identities I occupy: woman, student, researcher, Christian, educator, etc (Heshusius, 1994). Heshusius takes tacit knowledge a step further, calling this new step somatic knowledge and defining it as the most vital and essential aspect of coming to know, and that tacit and somatic modes of knowledge describe a nondescribable, nonaccountable form of knowing that is crucial and vital (to research). Using this somatic knowledge, I can assume an "allocentric" knowledge which is "a way of knowing that is concerned with both the totality of the interest and with the participation of the total person (the knower)" (Heshusius, 1994, p. 16).

Issues of Rigor

Subjectivity

Aware of the emic/etic nature of research, the insider/outsider debate, I would like to explore this question. With participation (or without) will come subjectivity, which Peshkin (1988) defines as an "amalgam of the persuasions that stem from the circumstances of one's class, statuses, and values interact with the particulars of one's object of investigation" (p. 17). Peshkin (1988) goes on to say that subjectivity is like a garment that cannot be removed. Peshkin argues that it is beyond ourselves. Heshusius (1994) would take this concept further by saying that we cannot construct our subjectivity as something beyond ourselves, that it can't be "restrained" or "accounted for".

Feminist research theory argues that the researcher her/himself be placed in the same critical plane as the overt subject matter (Harding, 1987). Heshusius (1994) would agree, saying that the researcher's subjectivity must be embraced and made part of the research project.

As a conservative Christian, I am aware that I am not an objective bystander. However, as a feminist and critical thinker,

and a member of the gender being researched, I would hope that rather than existing on a level where sides would be taken, I can exist between the us and them mentality to promote better understanding between academic knowledge and the practical, something Friere (1970) promotes as "praxis". While this study should inform the academic and educational audiences for which it was intended, it has also served to inform my own issues of Christianity and gender, and will influence not only my religious being, but my educational being as well.

Heshusius (1994) concludes that any notions of rigor, which she defines as management of subjectivity and describes as external, distanced, and objectified, must not override the recognition of kinship and the centrality of tacit and somatic knowledge. She instead redefines rigor as incorporating the need not to be in charge, since one "cannot fully attend to something in its own right, and try to be in charge of it, or of the self at the same time." (p.20) This new notion of rigor infuses the conceptualization, implementation, and analysis of my study.

Ethical Dilemmas

According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), ethics is an important consideration in qualitative research but should be intrinsic to the inquiry process itself. The researcher must be revelatory to her subjects and aware of participant values. Guba and Lincoln warn though that this may provide for "sticky" problems of confidentiality and anonymity.

I would hope that my status as an insider allowed for greater contextual understanding. Unlike Peshkin in God's Choice (1986), an ethnography where the researcher maintained a casual distance since he was Jewish in a Christian environment, I found I did not have to keep myself distant and found the participants more open and trusting in a shorter period of time. I participated most of the time in events such as worship, prayer, and class discussions and my beliefs were never part of the dialogue, as they were for Peshkin. I was most definitely an insider in this situation and I found it almost impossible at times to make the "familiar strange". While I struggled, I also found ease in being aware of vocabulary, aware of common experiences and what they mean, and aware of the common set of morals and values that exist in this setting. Conservative

Christianity is easy to understand when you are a member, but much harder to understand if you are not. My job as the researcher then is to make this perspective comprehensible to outsiders. By being part of the study - a living and breathing part - I am working toward a more feminist understanding on all parts, academic, practical, and personal.

Ethical dilemmas during my research revealed themselves in many small ways, such as stopping my observations to talk with the class, pray with a student, or being asked to substitute teach on days I wanted to do research. As mentioned previously, while my role as researcher was welcomed and never questioned, at times I had to also adopt the Christian or teacher roles I also assume there.

This became an enormous issue when I gathered my participants together to discuss some of my findings and get their feedback. While I assumed my researcher / academic role, the students and one teacher plus the principal saw me as the Christian teacher. So while I was trying to enable discussion on the topics I felt were debatable, the students, and even the adults, took my stance as one of opposition to their core beliefs and attitudes. To the boys it turned into male bashing, and to the girls, most felt that

they still were not being heard, one of the main purposes of this meeting. Afterward, the principal came to me with reservations about what had happened and wondering if I truly had beliefs so contradictory to his own. The ethical dilemma of being true to my researcher self and being true to my Christian-teacher self played out unbelievably in those moments. I must add that I was also at that time being considered (and still am) for a teaching job with the high school. The saving grace (no pun intended) was that Mr. Lincoln, the principal, had also recently finished his master's degree and saw the discrepancy between academics and Christianity within his own experiences.

Trustworthiness

According to critical theory, the appropriate criteria for investigating a study is its historical situatedness, the extent to which this study acts to erode ignorance and misapprehensions, and the extent to which it provides a stimulus to action or the transformation of the existing structure (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In the critical sense, my study is very reliable and meets the above criteria due to its awareness of Charity's historical situation, and

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my presence at the school and its effect upon members of the Charity community as they have begun to grapple with issues of gender. The transformative nature of my research, while evident even now, will grow with more opportunities to share both my findings and my perceptions.

The issue of validity or "trustworthiness", as coined by Lincoln and Guba (1985), is best served in this study by triangulation (Anderson, 1989). Denzin and Lincoln (1994) contend that qualitative researchers should use a wide range of interconnected methods so that a clearer perspective on the subject matter will be attained. I have collected observations and interviews over four months. With seventeen days in the field and 10 interviews, as well as an assortment of collected documents, I feel I have provided triangulation, not for the sake of congruency, but for the attainment of a "cleared perspective" and the discovery of inconsistencies and negative cases.

Pragmatics of the Study

Issues of Access

I substitute taught often for Charity Christian School during the 97-98 school year and found it to be an interesting mix of both a "laid-back" attitude and the more expected, structured academic environment of a Christian school. It was an environment where rules were not always the issue and what was in the best interest of the students was considered above the school's interest. During the final few weeks of that school year, I covered a class for a teacher on maternity leave and ended up on a field trip to play laser tag (rather unconventional for a Christian School) with the principal, Mr. Lincoln, and 16 high school students. Over lunch, while the students invested hundreds of dollars into video games (not literally), Mr. Lincoln and I discussed some of the interesting characteristics of the school. I found the multi-grade classrooms interesting as well as issues of school choice and the various levels of academics present within grade levels at the school.

Mr. Lincoln was, at the time, also in graduate school pursuing a master's degree in technology education. During this discussion he repeatedly emphasized that he would love to have research done at

his school. I was both then, and later in the fall, given "carte blanche " to study any topic I wanted and when I later knew it would be on gender, Mr. Lincoln admitted to having thought about doing his own thesis on the same topic.

After this conversation, I began to seek advice from my advisors and researched the literature on Christian schools. During my initial literature review, I discovered a dearth of scholarly work on Christian schools which led me to believe that my research in a Christian school would be worthwhile and would add to the limited body of work. I framed my inquiry within the notion of religious socialization and gender socialization.

I was never at any time denied access to students or classes and was reassured by Mr. Lincoln that no one had any problems with my being there. I asked if I would need to explain my study to the board at any time, but Mr. Lincoln has been given relative "carte blanche" at the school and knew his decision would be enough. I explained my study to the students and faculty as "looking at gender roles at a Christian school and specifically what it is like to be a girl here." The students were always welcoming and very interested in what I was doing and parental permission was always granted.

Setting

Charity Christian School is located in Riverside, a small Southwestern US town. It is housed within Mountain View Baptist Church, part of the Southern Baptist Convention. (Mountain View is very unusual for a Southern Baptist church in that activities related to the pentecostal movement, [i.e.: emotional worship/song services, and using the gifts of the spirit] are allowed and practiced in their services.) The principal and approximately two-thirds of the teachers attend Mountain View. Charity describes itself as non-denominational, and was founded to fulfill "a God-given vision to provide a Christian school for all those in the community who desired a Christ-centered education for their families" (Chamley, 1999, p. F3).

Doctrinally, the school adheres to the basic beliefs attributed to evangelicals (Wagner, 1990), but there are no written guidelines regarding this. Most students and faculty, especially in the secondary school, have conservative Christian beliefs that include more Pentecostal/Charismatic tendencies, but do not adhere to the more fundamental beliefs (see Definition of Terms, Chapter One) usually associated with the Southern Baptist, much like Mountain

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View. Charity is seeking accreditation with the Association of Christian Schools International and will have to publish and adhere to their fundamental beliefs: inerrancy of scripture, God as three in one, the deity, virgin birth, death, and resurrection of Christ, sinfulness of humanity and their need for salvation, resurrection of the saved into Heaven and the lost into Hell, spiritual unity of believers, and the Holy Spirit's work in the believer's lives (ACSI).

Financially, Charity is heavily supported by Mountain View, mostly through the use of its buildings, but is also financially supported by at least three other churches in Riverside. Mountain View is the second largest church in Riverside, but the largest church, as well as the third largest, support it to the point that the third largest church is now in the process of building a multi-purpose structure to house the secondary school next year. Mountain View is also building a multi-purpose structure for the elementary school. These buildings will serve the churches for various programs as well. Most of the evangelical churches in Riverside support the school in spirit, and most, approximately 60 - 75% of the churches in or near to Riverside have child members that attend there.

Charity has 140 students in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. This breaks down into 100 students in elementary (PK-6th) and 40 students in the secondary (7th-12th). There are 17 faculty members and 5 support personnel. One office houses the principal (in a separate room with a door) and a secretary's desk and teacher's lounge / supply room. The fellowship hall doubles as the cafeteria where hot food is catered in by the local university's food services department. The sanctuary, which holds about 600 people, is often used for large classes, chapels, music and Bible classes, and study halls. There is a library containing approximately 1000 books and an attached computer lab with 8 computers.

Classes meet in Sunday school rooms throughout the church with one elementary class meeting in an out-building across a parking lot. The classes are set up permanently throughout the school year and are used for church programs frequently, so most contain lockable cabinets and desks. In each room, student workspace consists of long skinny tables that hold two people. The secondary students have lockers in two areas of the school and have three minute passing periods. Virtually every inch of the church,

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except for the church offices, from a choir room to the prayer chapel is used regularly for the school.

In the school, there is little decoration in the halls except for a banner with Charity's name and a Bible verse about studying. There are two small (24"X18") bulletin boards that the Juniors and Seniors are allowed to decorate. These contain a Bible verse, (Galatians 1:10; "For do I now persuade men or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a servant of Christ.") a movie stub from Ever After (a girl favorite), a bubble letter sign proclaiming the Juniors as the class of 2000, a poem by Isaac Watts about seeking after the Holy Spirit, and a hand-written sheet with 4 sayings about gossips.

Charity is a noisy environment and there are students moving from place to place regularly. The teachers rarely patrol the halls; there is little need. Since the passing periods are so short, students are allowed to leave during class to go to the bathroom or attend to business if needed. This is, of course, taken advantage of and the length of passing periods is a point of controversy for both teachers and students alike. Each teacher is allowed to set up their own rules, so while some teachers will allow for more freedom to come

and go, others refuse to let them leave at any time except for emergencies. The students seem to read the teachers well and know how to get around them fairly easily.

Participants

I focused my study on the secondary population, specifically the 9th - 12th grades (High School) which consisted of 21 students. The secondary has two main teachers, Mrs. Hunter who teaches all secondary English and social studies classes, and Mr. Webster who teaches all the science and some math, computer, and physical education. There are 7 other teachers who come in to teach a class or two in a specialized area such as art, sign language, Spanish, and math.

There are twelve girls and nine boys in the High School. All are white except for one African-American male. The social class varies, although it is predominately middle-class. One boy works at McDonalds to help supplement his parents' tuition payments. All students in 9th through 12th grades participated in one way or another.

I formally interviewed, one time each, six girls: Melany, Becky, Carla, Nancy, Louise, and Barbara; two boys: Tom and Bob; and one

teacher, Mrs. Hunter because she was the only teacher that had been there more then this immediate school year. I informally interviewed just about everyone else at one time or another, including follow-up questions to some interview data. Especially helpful were one senior boy, Stan and one junior girl, Susan, neither of which were recorded, though I later wished I had. Conversations with many students at one time regarding my topic took place routinely in my presence and I often learned the most during these times. Overall participation was never a problem.

Observations were conducted at all times of the day, usually one day per week. Classes with Mrs. Hunter (English and Social Studies), Mr. Webster (Science and History), Mrs. White (Math), and Mr. Lincoln (Bible) were observed as well as formal assemblies such as Chapel, Spiritual Emphasis Week, and field trips. I also came often to eat lunch with the students, even on days I wasn't there to "formally" research. There were also a few instances of my substitute teaching that would combine with research. I sampled a wide variety of their activities both in class and out, including "hanging out" during passing period.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Her dreams were so outrageous they could fill the sky.
-from a short story by Nancy,
used with permission

Background

Charity Christian School, in Riverside, Southwestern US, uses

the motto, "Building Christian Character... Developing Strong Minds".

Charity describes itself as "A non-denominational college prep

oriented school founded on God's word covering grades K4-12." In

fourteen years, Charity has grown to seven times the size of its

original class of 20 students (Chamley, 1999).

Mr. Lincoln, the principal, describes the environment of Charity

as a "warmer, more personal, family atmosphere." Unlike most

Christian schools that are run with strict rules and structured

curriculum (e.g.: Peshkin, 1986; Wagner, 1990), Charity is relaxed

from the top down. Mr. Lincoln would rather see the students

enjoying school than making sure the schedule is adhered to.

According to Mrs. Hunter, the high school English and social studies

teacher, Mr. Lincoln allows for greater teacher autonomy than most public or even some private schools, and the small class size allows for greater flexibility both academically and otherwise. The only people who seem to be worried about structure are one or two elementary teachers. Academics are still central, but not to the point that the needs of the total child are not met.

According to Mr. Lincoln, the purpose of a Christian school for the students is not much different from the administration who feel they prepare the future leaders of the church. When asked what the school does that the church cannot, Mr. Lincoln feels that the school can invest more time and attention to the students in both their academics and their Christian experience.

Tom, a sophmore, states his opinion of the role of a Christian school this way:

> Researcher: What's the role of the school instead of the church?
>
> Tom: The school should provide an environment where we can come first. A lot of churches reach out to the lost. The school should reach out to us; it should be a breeding ground for Christians. Kinda like a shelter for Christians.
>
> Researcher: To make better Christian leaders?
>
> Tom: I see everyone at this school is going to be a leader for Christ. They're not going to be followers. You know that God's called ... It's

like the Navy seals, a training ground for the
best of the best. That's what this school is.

This passage brings in the concept of a training ground, but ignores

the more widely held view of a Christian school as a bubble designed

to protect the students from the outside world.   This is consistent

with Charity's more conservative evangelical beliefs of being "in

the world, but not of it."

Tom goes on to say what the school has done for him, within

the context of its purpose:

> Researcher: What's the purpose of a Christian
>   school?
> Tom: To build Christ-like character; and then by
>   doing that, everything else will fall into
>   place.
> Researcher: Including academics?
> Tom: It has for me. My grades have improved
>   tremendously.

Tom, like most evangelical Christians, embraces the idea that if

"your heart is right with God, the rest of your life will fall into

place."

School size plays the most important factor, both positive and

negative, in the overall personality of the school.   Small class sizes,

ranging from 5 - 15, provide ample opportunity for increased

academics as well as stronger relationships between the students and between the students and faculty.

In terms of relationships, students at Charity cite the family feeling and strong relationships as the characteristics that are most important to them. Barbara, a junior, says, "There are close relationships, really close, more like brother and sisters... a real family." Susan, a junior, thinks "the relationships are strong and you can depend on people here. It's more homey here and you can talk more and it seems like your teachers care more." Nancy, a sophomore, states, "There's a lot more love in this school. It's displayed by the girls." Nancy goes on to say that she feels "rewarded by being here" since so many other students do not have the chance to go to a Christian school.

Stan, a sixteen year old senior, brought out the spiritual aspect of going to school at Charity. "It's a Christian environment to worship God and not worry about what others think. Since it's non-denominational, its no big deal to worship any way you want." Nancy also credits the spiritual atmosphere as being one of the reasons the relationships are so strong. "I think a lot of it [intimacy]

has to do with God. Before I came to this school that never

happened. No one was ever that intimate with me."

In terms of academics, many students are beyond their grade

level and/or attend courses outside the school: Stan is sixteen and a

senior and attends a nearby university for one class each semester,

while Susan is 15 and in the eleventh grade. Louise, a senior, has

been allowed to attend vocational school part-time during the school

year to study drafting.

Mrs. Hunter describes the academics of her teaching this way:

> You have a lot of room. There's the freedom that I
> can develop my own curriculum based on the needs
> of the children. Stan and Susan, the goals that they
> feel like God has called them to, is to be lawyers. I
> teach them pre-law. Stan was in college taking the
> same class as he was taking under me. Boy, was
> that pressure! He's in college taking civics, I'm
> teaching civics. He's coming from civics at the
> university to my class and I'm going, 'Are you
> prepared, are you prepared? Tell me what you need.
> Am I doing...' And he's like 'Mrs. Hunter, you're
> actually harder than my college civics class.' I can
> adapt. I have that freedom.
>
> My other students come in and say, I didn't have
> enough of this, I had too much of this, I didn't have
> enough of this. And I have that freedom to adapt to
> every child. It's kinda like I have IEP's for every
> child. Harriet's gonna be a writer. I have literature
> crammed down her throat. I'm not sure you can do
> that one-on-one in other ways. I get a one-on-one
> knowledge of my children that I didn't have in

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public school because I had too much paperwork to
fill out.

Mrs. Hunter is the only secondary teacher that has been there longer

than this school year, so her perspective, while only one person's, is

over a longer period of time. Mrs. Hunter's comments also display

the prevailing philosophy behind Christian schooling. Not only is she

helping each individual student academically, she is also aware of

their need to fulfill their "divine destiny", what God has called them

to do with their lives.

However, academics are not the most important happening at

Charity according to the students. Every student questioned,

whether informally or formally, cites the small size of the school as

its biggest asset, while paradoxically citing the small size as its

biggest weakness too. Most students are frustrated at the large

amount of personal information they know about each other. Tom

addresses it this way:

> Tom: The worst thing. It really bugs me how
> everyone gets into everyone else's business. I
> understand why people want to help and
> everything, but if something happens to
> somebody, you've got a lot of people passing
> judgment.
> Researcher: What lends itself to that happening?
> Tom: The size. I know people care, but the size is
> one factor, which is good because it keeps

you honest. People kinda get tied into other
people's lives.

Tom's comments illustrate the contradictory feelings regarding the
size. He thinks the size allows for accountability, which is good,
but hates the size for its lack of privacy.

A few students mentioned the small size as being a factor in
not getting your opinion heard, a factor important to silencing of the
girls. However, gossip is cited numerous times as the number one
problem the students face in their personal relationships at the
school. Field notes from the study contain numerous references to
gossip in every aspect of the school, most notably the "extra-
curricular" times that permeate, in and out of class, the daily
routine of Charity.

Bob, a sophomore, thinks the gossip and talking about each
other is more than just gossip, it is something that "goes against
God." Mrs. Hunter also mentions the gossip.

> The difference between gossip and informed
> Christian gossip. It's like oh, we need to be in prayer for
> Louise, blah, blah, blah and they don't' realize that that's
> just like pretty gossip, but it's still gossip. And so they
> hurt each other so much by being godly, and uh, that's
> where it's really hard.

Some of the students must have been more aware of the gossip than

Mrs. Hunter gives them credit for since a student's hand-written

note, hanging on a hallway bulletin board, had these four statements

regarding gossips:

> 1) More people are run down by gossips than by
> automobiles,
> 2) A gossip is a person who will never tell a lie if the
> truth will do as much damage,
> 3) Isn't it amazing how a gossip's tongue 3 inches long
> can kill a person 6 feet tall,
> 4) People who gossip usually end up in their own mouth
> trap.

Gossip, which will be discussed later, is important to understanding

the ways in which the girls are treated less than the boys at Charity.

Charity's positive environment of caring concern, relaxed

atmosphere, and individualized academics battles with the negative

issues of size, gossip, and who has authority in the school, but these

issues get played out forcefully and effectively in the arena of the

education of its girls. Three themes operate to socialize the needs

and desires of the girls as secondary to the needs of the group -

submission, silencing, and self-policing policies.

Understanding of recent events is important to understanding

the present climate. This study is situated during the 1998-1999

school year, the year when "the boys took over." Prior to this

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academic year, the girls outnumbered the boys more dramatically

and were considered the leaders, academically and spiritually, of the

school. The principal himself has four daughters aged 8-17

attending the school, while a 5th, recently graduated.

Evangelical Christian tradition dictates that men should be in

leadership unless there is not a man spiritually strong enough, then

it is permissible for a woman to take over. Starting with the 1997-

1998 school year, the girls and the faculty "agreed in prayer" to ask

God for spiritually stronger males. Mrs. Hunter describes it this

way:

> We have prayed and prayed and prayed and prayed and the
> girls have done it too, so they deserve it. They prayed so
> hard that the boys at the school would take spiritual
> leadership and be the leaders because they got sick of
> being the police. They got sick of "Now, boys, you're not
> supposed to spit and cuss at the lockers and you're
> supposed to be nice to us cause we're girls. You're
> supposed to not say things like "oo, oo, look at your
> boobs"; literally. It was so bad about 3 years ago because
> our boys had no Christian leadership at all. No Christian
> respect. They did not... You see the girls wanted to have
> that respect that you're supposed to treat women with in
> the church, but they didn't want to have that, the other.
> They didn't like the domineering. And actually, when it
> first happened, they were so happy that they boys stood
> up and said, "We are the spiritual leaders of this school.
> We're never going to be blessed until we take our male
> authority; until we volunteer to pray." I never had a guy
> pray the first whole year for lunch because we take
> volunteers to do lunch. Then the boys had this little

mini-revival. Then, they took over and they got swelled heads this year.

Reminiscent of the old adage, "Be careful what you wish for, you just may get it", the girls got what they prayed for, strong males. Maybe too strong.

<div align="center">Submission</div>

A female Christian, a lot of people think that they don't have as much authority and power as male Christians, like preachers, but God has given them the same authority as he's given men. If you have Jesus in your heart, you have the same power as a male. God's the same. God doesn't change. Even in the Bible there were women apostles and leaders everywhere.
- Louise, senior

Reviewing the issue of submission from a theological perspective, the main controversy regards a verse found in Ephesians 5:23 that states "the husband is the head of the wife" (Holy Bible, 1983). This verse is considered a "gray area" in the Bible. A gray area is any biblical passage or social-religious tradition that either loses significance outside its socio-historical context, or in the case of Bible passages, may have multiple exegetical

interpretations. Other examples would be the admonition by St. Paul for women to leave their hair long, which is no longer considered valid by most evangelicals; or three examples which still have controversy attached to them due to the silence of the Bible: dancing, drinking, and cigarette smoking. Due to the fact that Charity hasn't written a doctrinal statement beyond that given by the ACSI, "gray area" issues have no concrete foundation to prove or disprove their use. Louise mentions this in her interview. She states:

> They [the school faculty] don't teach Christian principles.
> They may enforce them, but most of the kids that go here
> haven't been raised in Christian families, so they don't
> really know. Even in Bible class they talk about the Bible,
> but we're not "taught" the Bible, we just read the Bible.
> You have to be taught how to live a good life. They do, but
> they should show it more. A lot of kids here don't go to
> church, so this is their only example.

This also alludes to Mr. Lincoln's idea that a Christian school is more than just academics plus Christianity, that it strives to serve "the whole person."

Mr. Lincoln, who also teaches the Bible classes, mentions that while almost the entire secondary school embraces some form of Pentecostalism, he still has to be careful not to step on anyone's denominational beliefs. This lack of clear absolutes becomes an

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issue when, without a clear distinction being made of the school's belief regarding the submission of women, the students are left to decide this important issue for themselves based on the views of each other and the example of the faculty.

Teasing

Teasing is an everyday occurrence on any school campus. Adolescent males use teasing to innocently show interest in a girl and/or to less innocently regulate her behavior by assigning the "bad girl" status (Taylor, Gilligan & Sullivan, 1995). This is especially troublesome in a Christian school where chastity of the girls is expected and rewarded.

Charity uses teasing in a more personal and deliberate way. While it was observed that the girls sometimes participated in teasing, usually over matters such as appearance and academics, the boys used teasing more frequently and more personally. Their personal teasings took on dimensions of sexual harassment, and eventually turned into outright use of teasing for submission.

Beginning with an examination of personal teasing, both boys and girls were aware of its intimidating nature. Stan, the sixteen

year old senior, has been the only boy in the 11/12 grade section for the past two years. He feels like he knows the girls well and addresses the personal dynamic of teasing.

> Researcher: Is there negative treatment at the
> school that puts the girls down?
> Stan: There isn't any from the teachers or Mr.
> Lincoln, but some guys tease too much. They
> take it too far and it tears the girls up.
> Researcher: Give me an example
> Stan: Once a guy called a girl a slut, but used
> different words and the girl was really hurt.
> The boy got in trouble and went to the girl
> and they made up, but to me it shows that the
> boys are way too personal in their teasing.
> Researcher: How serious a problem is it?
> Stan: People usually don't take it too seriously, but
> it can get out of hand. I think it's good though
> that it's usually resolved and isn't a huge
> problem.

Barbara describes the personal teasing directed at her as revolving around appearance issues as well being sheltered, while Louise and Carla have felt their self-esteem lowered due to the teasing. Maria, a foreign exchange student from Argentina, says a few boys can be nasty and tease her, sometimes using words and phrases she can't understand, even though her English is fluent. She defends them also as not being rude, and says that the boys in Argentina are similar. Nellie left half-way through the semester, but casually related that she was teased constantly because she had

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Attention Deficit Disorder and did not act "properly", which to her was the way that was the most acceptable to the others. Susan also shared a similar experience to Nellie's in reference to teasing.

Although sexual harassment is not prevalent at Charity, teasing that results in sexual harassment is evident in an incident involving Barbara, the principal's daughter, and Reggie. Reggie had been infatuated with Barbara for about a year and a half prior to this incident. Even though Barbara had told him that she wasn't interested in him, except as a friend, Reggie continued his attentions, manifesting them through teasing. The teasing was stepped up at the beginning of this school year, with Reggie's frustrations growing. Finally, after being goaded by James, the resident rebel, Reggie teased Barbara, "You're like a door, everyone gets a turn." This was especially hurtful to Barbara since she prides herself on being chaste and still does not date. According to Mrs. Hunter, who heard the exchange, Barbara did not want to turn him in, fearing her father's anger, but Mrs. Hunter felt she had to. While Reggie was not kicked out over this incident, the resulting furor from the students ended with him voluntarily leaving. His parents claimed he had been "stoned by words."

Teasing that becomes too personal added to teasing that uses the Bible would be, and is, a lethal combination for those on the receiving end. Besides the personal use of teasing, the more serious form involves what this author has labeled *submission teasings*, or use of the Bible to "put women in their place." Louise, Susan, and Becky all brought this up in interviews. Becky says, "You hear a guy say 'Well, I'm a guy and you need to listen to me'" while Susan says, "they'll come right up to a girl and say, 'You must submit to me because I'm a man.'"

Mrs. Hunter relates that the boys will even tease her about submission although she does not go into details. She does mention though that her mood will set the tone for the day, and if her mood is bad, she has on occasion been teased by the boys as follows:

> Mrs. Hunter: And they've also learned that it's okay to say; "You know, Mrs. Hunter's having a hormone time. She's in a bad mood today because she's having her time.
> Researcher: And the boys are saying this?
> Hunter: Yeah.
> Researcher: Some of the girls I have interviewed have said that it's a constant, that the boys constantly use that submission thing, that "I'm the boy, you have to listen to me"
> Hunter: even to me (meaning they have said that she needs to submit to them.)

Personal and submissive teasing directed toward those in authority is an interesting case of reverse sexual harassment.

Most of the teasing, including *submissive teasings*, are defended by both boys and girls as not being meant. Barbara thinks the teasing is still better than it would be in the public schools, even though she has never attended them. Other students, and even Mrs. Hunter and Mrs. Lincoln, think the teasing is harmless and part of their everyday life, especially because they are adolescents.

Tom and Bob are the recognized leaders of the school and are the main culprits for both *submissive teasings*, and some of the more personal teasing. When asked about this during an interview, Tom admits he does this while Bob defends himself and Tom, saying the girls do it too.

> Researcher: A number of girls have said that they have been teased 'you must submit to me because you're a girl.' It isn't just one or two, it's been across the board.
> Bob: Yeah, I know what you're talking about. On the other hand, the girls tease us as well. What's that verse Leslie brought up about how men and women will lead in discipleship...
> Tom: It goes both ways.
> Bob: It's not like we do it hardly at all,
> Tom: I have done it before, in the past.
> Researcher: Does it teach you anything that almost every girl has brought it up as something they don't like?

Tom: I wish they would tell us. When we joke with them, they joke back and they throw things right back at us and so we joke back and than they joke back. It's kinda like a battle of the sexes thing. We don't really think anything about it, but then we hear this and its like okay if you have a problem with it, you need to come to us and we would stop. It wouldn't bother me if they said something.

Researcher: Yeah, but do you see where in the bigger picture that they are thinking that, first off, when you tease somebody, words have life. And then there's that sense of, well maybe I shouldn't say anything because he is the guy. You see where it's like a double-edged sword and it adds to that feeling of powerlessness that the girls have to even tell you to stop teasing them because that adds to their powerlessness.

Bob: Well, I promise you that I won't...

Researcher: Well, I shouldn't be preaching at you, it's an interview, but it's something that has come up and it's taking a life of it's own a little bit.

Bob: Well, I never do anything like that.

Researcher: Where did it get started?

Bob: Ms. Hatter's room.

Researcher: How?

Tom: Who knows. The weirdest things come out of these classes.

Tom and Bob's obvious defensiveness is good evidence that they are aware of their actions. It was brought out later in the study that this area had been dealt with at length earlier in the year and in the words of the principal, it was "dead and buried." When the researcher indicated that while Mr. Lincoln just thought it was

buried, it was obviously still present and in need of being addressed, Mr. Lincoln still believed it was better left alone.

Theology

Stan puts the theology of submission that the students and faculty believe into three categories: 1) People who think that women should totally submit and should follow the Bible's rules on the role of women entirely; (He thinks this is a twisting of the Bible, but that it does occur some at Charity.) 2) Women should be equal and in charge as equally as men; 3) Women should not be made to submit, but are not equals; that men control the relationship; and while submission is only for her husband and only if no one can make a compromise, women can make decisions on her own. (This adheres to some Christian feminist teachings on the breadth of submission theology as well; e.g.: Keyes, Jacobs, Storkey, Van Leeuwen.)

Stan doesn't believe Ephesians 5:22 applies only to husbands and wives, but also to men and women in certain specific situations. This idea, confusing as it is, is typical of the belief of most girls at Charity and most conservative evangelicals as well.

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Among the girls at Charity, submission theology, and the nature of being a female Christian, runs the ideological gamut from Becky's "trying your best to get along with people and trying to not make mistakes" to Louise's "God has given women the same authority as he's given men." Susan thinks being a female Christian means you don't have as much obligation as the men.

> If something goes wrong, they are the ones to blame. We have to go and help them. We're there to help them and we have to understand that we are below them, but not less than them. So we go along them and we support them to do what's right as they lift us up for what we are doing.

The idea of reciprocity in the relationship, even though it involves issues of power, is still evident. The students seem to be unable to draw the dividing line between the authority relationship of men and women and the authority relationship between husband and wife.

Harriet defines submission this way, "Submission means to me to come alongside, or to agree with and support. It is a mixture of respect, humility, equality, and love." Surprisingly, Darren, a tenth grader who is considered the "nicest guy at Charity", thinks both "males and females need to submit to authority, but not to each other. Respecting each other doesn't mean obeying everything the

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guy says to the girls, or vice-versa." Infused throughout the

student's dialogue concerning submission is the idea of authority

and who is entitled to it.

Submission is not only believed but enacted. Female students

exhibit it in obvious ways, such as not voicing opinions, to more

specific and unassuming ways, such as giving up prime real estate

(preferred seating) in the classroom seating pattern to the boys.

One example of "putting them in their place" is that they give the

girls their prime real estate on chapel day when the girls have to

wear dresses.

Mrs. Hunter is aware that she also enacts submission and is

frustrated that at times she feels it is expected of her by Mr.

Lincoln. This long passage from her interview shows not only the

faculty role in submission, but the students' attitudes as well.

> Hunter: And I also know that if I butt heads with Scott, and
> even once in a while Mr. Webster, [science teacher] it's
> hard for me, because I do automatically submit to them. I
> was not raised as a Christian. I was raised by an
> Atheist and a Mormon. This has all come within the last 4
> years of me being at this school. Now, I automatically...
> it's like if Mr. Webster is talking, I should be quiet, cause
> he's a guy. And I see how I've been re-programmed into
> it. And you know, I might know more about it than he
> does. But I also see...
> Researcher: Do you think that's feeding into the kids then?
> Hunter: Yes. And it feels good that whenever there's a big

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problem at this school, I can turn and say, Mr. Webster you deal with it, even though I should, at most schools I'd have seniority. Mr. Webster you deal with it, because I can't make the kids mind. It's kinda like, "when you're Daddy gets home." I don't have to be the bad guy. I get to kiss their boo-boos. And we play good cop, bad cop, so bad. It's even orchestrated. "I'm going to go up (whispering). It's like...we were trying to figure out if James was smoking and the first thing out one of our mouths was, you go give him a hug and say "you smell funny" and then I'll come and say, Ms. Hunter said you smell funny...blah, blah, blah....and then we'll yell at him, OK. We actually orchestrated it.

Researcher: And it worked?

Hunter: It worked. But they have to... It's kinda like, you need to be strong and you need to be compassionate, and that's...

Researcher: It's roles. But do you think women need to submit to men outside of marriage?

Hunter: No. Well, your authority (needs to be submitted to)

Researcher: Authority in general.

Hunter: I never looked at submitting as a joyful thing. I always looked at it as a pull my teeth out and I will if I have to.

Researcher: But it's funny that these girls, that's really a big deal for them, this submission thing.

Hunter: Really?

Researcher: Yeah, it's come up.

Hunter: See, I see them automatically submit. They might not realize it, but it's ingrained in them. In their little psyche, I see them do it automatically. And they also do the enjoying part of it. Like Louise will come down and say, 'My battery's dead.' And automatically she knows that one of the guys in the class is going to rescue her. And Becky stood up and, "Ooh, I can fix it" and Louise says, "No, no, no let Darren do it.'

They enjoy knowing that those boys are going to take care of them, no matter what. And I enjoy knowing that I can go into the teacher's lounge and knowing that I can scream and bawl and Mr. Webster will pat me on the

head and I can submit to him and I can lay it, it sounds really bad, but I can lay it at the foot of the cross and put it on his shoulders. I can put it on Mr. Webster's shoulders, and at the foot of the cross, and I can walk away and not worry about it. Now, they [the men] don't have that luxury. And I look at it as a big luxury.

Submission theology is engrained into the everyday experiences of the students, especially the girls. From the submissive teasing to their submission theology to the submissive examples set by the faculty. The other issue tied into the issue of submission is the nature of who has authority, who the leaders are. Since the girls had more authority and lost it, albeit voluntarily, there remains a sense of "being cheated," and the unfairness of the situation still hurts.

Leadership

Tom and Bob both came to Charity within the last year and came to "know Christ" within that same year as well. Now they are designated by Mr. Lincoln, as well as the students, as the spiritual leaders of the school. They hold Mr. Lincoln's ear in frequent meetings in his office, which the girls are rarely included in on. They are the first to be called on to help. Becky says that if Mr.

Lincoln wants something done, he always calls on a guy. Harriet takes the lead to write down a list of songs for worship, and when I comment on her taking charge, she says that she is uncomfortable with being a leader. She does not like the attention or the stress. When asked why, she relates that it usually leads to teasing.

Tom and Bob had this to say in response to their positions as leaders:

> Tom: I think it's easier [at this school] to be a boy.
> People look to guys a lot more for leadership.
> Researcher: Why?
> Tom: Because that's the way it's supposed to be.
> They try to follow the Biblical standards.
> Researcher: What in the Bible tells you that?
> Tom: The man is supposed to be the head. They [the girls] look more toward us.
> Researcher: Where do you learn that men are supposed to be the head of the household.
> Tom: Mr. Lincoln. He's really pushed for guys. I know myself and Bob, he's really pushed for guys to take leadership.
> Researcher: I called you in because everyone, boys and girls, when I asked who were the leaders, they would always say you two. Because you are more spiritual and more outgoing. What do you think when you hear that?
> Bob: That it's God. I don't want people to see me, I want them to see Jesus.

Mr. Lincoln has been the central influence in putting Tom and Bob in leadership positions. Mr. Lincoln's favoritism is obvious in everything he does that involves a wide body of students. His

favoritism is keenly felt among the girls, but also some guys. Every student asked regarding where Tom and Bob's get their leadership authority knew that it came from Mr. Lincoln. This has caused jealousy from those that do not have it and protectiveness and defensiveness from those that do. Even Mr. Lincoln became defensive regarding his relationship with Bob, who "hangs out" at his house often. While Mr. Lincoln feels that his relationship with Bob is more like father - son, he fails to see that many of the other students would like the same relationship with him. Many are frustrated that Bob, who is new and antagonistic toward them, receives the "good" attention from Mr. Lincoln.

Some of the girls accuse Tom and Bob of playing a game with Mr. Lincoln, of being the way he wants them to be in front of him, but then changing into less "godly" men when away from him. This was observed indirectly through their conversations and out of class activities. Mr. Lincoln may be less aware of the true nature of his school than he might think.

The problem of Mr. Lincoln's favoritism came to a boil when Mr. Lincoln left Tom in charge one day while Mr. Lincoln was gone, over older female students who had been there longer. Harriet, a girl who

has been at the school the longest and is considered by most to be the school's most stable person, academically and spiritually, says that some people resent the fact that Tom and Bob are the spiritual leaders. She says that at times they "push the boundaries and team up and almost attack people. I think this is why some people jump to find things that they've said or done that are wrong."

I asked Barbara, who is also Tom's best friend, what it would be like without Tom and Bob:

> Researcher: What would it be like without Tom and Bob?
> Barbara: The girls would be more of the leaders. The guys
>   would not be as persuaded to follow Jesus. They
>   would follow the example of James and Stewart
>   [the school's party-hearty rebels] more.
> Researcher: Why are Tom and Bob so powerful?
> Barbara: Their past involvements. They were very popular
>   in their own areas before they came here. They're
>   used to taking charge. They are just more
>   aggressive, even though they are new to knowing
>   God.

Barbara also made this comment concerning the girls and leadership:

> The girls are scared. They've always been the leaders, but
> they weren't the leaders the right way. Now there's a
> push to grow toward God, but they don't know how. The
> girls were leading us toward the world, not God.

During an informal discussion concerning leadership in the school, the girls agreed that it was better to have boys in leadership positions who could only do a half-way job than for girls to be in leadership an do it one hundred percent. To them, God wants men in leadership regardless of who has more skill. Women are only allowed to take over when there is no man available or willing. In their theology, this is the best way for God to bless them spiritually.

The interesting "catch-22" in all this is that while the girls have not benefited much from this shift in power, the boys have benefited in more acceptable ways, more than just obtaining power. A change among the boys in both spiritual and academic areas is evident, even from the last school year.

Beyond the problem of submission, two other factors help to explain the socialization of the girls at Charity. The strong, overbearing nature of the few boys in power has a silencing effect on the girls, which in turn acts to keep their true feelings regarding their role hidden. The central component allowing this "silent submission" to occur is the lack of absolutes in both doctrine and rules that the school currently allows.

Silencing

As I played I heard more of me than I heard of you
As I played I heard a voice that did not sound like you
- from a poem by Darren
used with permission

Letting their voice be heard is the hardest thing for the girls to accomplish, according to Harriet. Angela says, "If you voice your opinion too strongly, no one listens to what you actually say. They just hear the strongness of the words." Barbara has perhaps the most telling report. She says, "Some girls are silenced toward God by the guys." Being "silenced toward God", not having the fullest possible relationship with Him, is the exact opposite purpose of a Christian school.

When the girls lost their roles of leadership, they seem to also have lost their voice. Barbara has this take on the problem of the girls turning the leadership over to the boys and the resulting loss of voice:

> Barbara: The girls had prayer for the guys to be leaders. The guys wanted to start standing up, telling the girls to calm down and let them stand up. The teachers also did this. The problem came that the girls who were praying were not outgoing. The girls got scared of Tom and Bob and their viewpoint.

You think, "They're the spiritual leaders," so I don't
want to stand up and disagree. The guys will stop
and ask what you think, but expect us to agree
with them.
Researcher: Are there ever any compliments from the guys?
Barbara: Sometimes laughingly so that you're not sure if it's
real and they mean it.

Barbara, along with most of the girls, reported that the boys, usually

Tom and Bob, would quote Bible verses at the girls and the girls

would often stop talking because it was easier than trying to fight

with the boys over verses they felt they might not know well enough.

Tom and Bob receive the brunt of the criticism because they

are outgoing and forceful. They are so sure of themselves and their

Christianity that they have a hard time understanding why anyone

else would feel that way. This has created an environment where

only the strongest opinion is heard and learning the other's position

is not necessary since "I'm so sure of my own opinion."

Harriet supports this and says, "If you don't agree [with the

popular opinion], you are bashed for your beliefs. Others say things

like 'You're wrong, you need to believe this way.' They [Tom and Bob]

want agreement and when you don't, they say that you don't believe

in God." Considering the insecurity of adolescents regarding the way

they are perceived among their peers, especially in an environment

that makes judgments based on Christian conduct, this type of silencing is very effective.

When asked how they let their voice be heard at Charity, students responded in diverse ways. Becky states plainly that "only a few share their opinions while everyone else is too intimidated to share." Angela tries to "word mine to where they will not take it as an offense," while Nancy doesn't voice her opinion sometimes because "I'm afraid of being proved wrong or screaming at someone." (Nancy worries a lot about losing her temper.)

Harriet says that she usually agrees [with the popular opinion], so everyone listens to her. Harriet does make this observation, "I've noticed that people who don't spend all their time spouting off opinions are more likely to be listened to." This contradicts the idea that those with the most forceful personalities are the ones listened to, but since Harriet is listened to, she may not understand those that are not.

Louise sheds a more positive, even more Christian, light on the subject of letting your opinions be heard. She states, "I don't feel like my voice is heard, but I know that my actions and attitudes are being seen by everyone."

Most of the students cite little favoritism toward either boys or girls by the teachers, although a few girls felt that Mrs. Hunter tended to call on the boys first. Classroom silencing of the girls takes the form of overly disruptive boys rather than any real action by the teachers. The more relaxed environment found throughout the school and the classrooms, combined with the aggressive behavior of the boys, creates a setting where silencing of both boys and girls with lower self-esteem and/or less power can occur.

Self-Policing

*Moreover, if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained you brother. But if he will not hear you, take with you two or more...
And if her refuses to hear them, tell it to the church.*
Matthew 18:15-17 (Holy Bible, 1983)

Charity uses these verses found in Matthew to justify its lack of rules beyond those concerning the dress code. While the general feeling is that these verses help in self-policing, it is obvious that the lack of behavior absolutes also helps to create an environment where anything might be permissible if one is smart enough.

Mrs. Hunter alludes to this in her interview:

Hunter: You're not allowed to tattle, period. Because if you have a problem, if that person hits you, don't come tell me, according to Matthew, you have to go tell him, "I don't think this is right" and then you bring that person and come to me with you and that's the way everything at the school is handled. Big adjustment, coming from a public school. Because if a child comes and confides in me, I'm supposed to keep that confidential. In this school that's out the window. I immediately go and get the parent, get the this, get the that and have a meeting and sometimes it's too much trouble. They use it to a point of getting out of class.

Researcher: Give me an example

Hunter: A student will say, " I have a problem and I have to deal with it now, because it's Biblical." And come to find out, someone has somebody's shoes, and in the public schools, it would mean, shut up, sit down, and do the work. But here, its the whole world stops while we solve this problem. So, I don't know. In a way that's good, but in a way I can see how it would be so backward.

Researcher: So there's a chain of authority, or...

Hunter: They are the authority

Researcher: So, what are the basic, general rules of the school?

Hunter: There are no general rules. It's really frustrating to the kids. It's really frustrating to the kids, especially... The kids that grew up here, it's fine. They adapt. It's the rules of the Bible. Well, gee, some of them have never read that. Most adults haven't, you're not an expert on it. And Mr. Lincoln, says, "rules of the Bible.". That's OK for kids who are used to the way this is, but like, Becky. If you transfer in like this year, there's no black and white, and here comes Becky. She doesn't know exactly what to do. One minute you're getting in trouble for something and there's a lot of

inconsistencies. But I also see how that's positive, cause the world's like that. And when you get out in the world, everything's gray. And you need to self-govern yourself. There's a lot of self-governing that's expected and alot of self-policing that's expected.

Researcher: I've noticed that. I actually picked that up in my observations too.

Observations regarding the students' ability to self-police were evident from the beginning. In one interesting incident, Darren brings down Nellie's arm which is blocking his view, and she yells out an exclamation. Mrs. Hunter tells Darren, "You want to do that differently?" and Nellie interjects, "That's okay, It's my fault." Another time, James brought a cup of water to a sick girl in the sanctuary, which is an area forbidden by Mountain View to have food or drink. Mrs. Hunter sees the water and asks the girl why she has it, and upon hearing that James got it for her and after acknowledging it was okay, she reminds the girl to tell Mr. Lincoln what she had done. Often students would apologize without any encouragement, and many cases of policing each other was also observed.

Student opinions of the self-policing all agree that while the Bible should be our rule book for life and Charity helps them to practice that, they also enjoy the benefit of being able to bend the

rules and get by with things they might not otherwise be able to do. Everyone also admits that at times it is frustrating to know what is right and what is wrong. Contradicting punishments, where one student gets punished for something another student did not, is common. The boys are quick to point out that they get in trouble more, and this is consistent with observations.

The lack of absolutes, both doctrinally regarding women and practically regarding everyday behavior, promotes the freedom students have to do those things not necessarily in the best interest of everyone at Charity. So much of the behavior that puts down the girls goes unreported and uncorrected because the girls do not feel they know where they stand. They are afraid to let their voice be heard because they do not possess the power needed to make a difference.

Conclusion

Using the theology of submission as a lens into the gendered inequality at Charity, one can see how the religious socialization of

the evangelical church pervades the school.   Gendered religious

socialization occurs through the example of the faculty and through

peer pressure, but the factor that most contributes to its existence

is the lack of attention to those events that support it.   It is a

problem that everyone is aware of and talks about, but few know

how to change it without attacking the religious foundation on which

it   sits.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

So what if I pray like a girl!
T-shirt worn by Nancy

Summary

Girls at Charity Christian School have many different forces acting against them that range from the macro issues of church and society, to micro issues of favoritism and teasing. This study shows not only the reality of the lived experience of the girls in their roles at Charity, but also provides a glimpse at the socializing power of religious institutions on one of its marginalized elements, female children. The three areas analyzed for this study - submission, silencing, and self-policing - are merely fragments of a much larger picture involving God, women, and the church.

Submission

Submission theology and the resulting teasing quickly became the main focus of this study when its overt relationship to the girls

at Charity became known. While it was something rarely observed, it was such a part of the student's discussions that interviews became necessary to discover the depth of the effects of the *submissive teasings* and the general submission theology. Through these interviews, it became apparent that the girls were feeling "less" than the boys in more ways than what society usually dictates.

Teasing is common at Charity, much like any school. According to Taylor, Gilligan, and Sullivan (1995), it is used to regulate behavior of girls. It is interesting that *submissive teasings* came into play after the shift in power from female leadership to male leadership had already occurred. The boys are not fearful of losing their power since they are sure of their position as "rightful leaders", so it is doubtful that the teasing originates out of their feelings of vulnerability. Rather, it would seem that they enjoy using their new power and the sense of domination that comes with it.

The idea of "rightful leader" comes out of Promise Keepers and their push to get men to "step up to the plate." Both phrases are used more than once in reference to the turnover of power from girls

to boys and the prevalent submission theology in general. The demasculinization of men in America has been highly touted (Bly, 1990; Keen, 1991) and Promise Keepers, with their aggressive language ("taking back our positions", "conquer the Devil", "spiritual leadership of males", etc.), has brought the evangelical church into the fray (Messner, 1997). The timing of the girls beginning to pray for more male leadership coincides with the peak of the Promise Keepers movement, around 1997. While Promise Keepers is on a downward trend, according to a recent report (Associated Press Wire Service, 1999), the effects are still being felt throughout the evangelical community and are definitely still felt at Charity.

Another part of the submission problem at Charity revolves around the relationship of Mr. Lincoln to the boys. He openly admits he plays favorites with some of the boys, especially Tom, because they are on a "spiritual" track and Mr. Lincoln feels called to mentor them. He does not feel he can mentor the girls because of the risk of anything looking improper. This concern of propriety is felt throughout the evangelical community and it is standard practice for

men and women, where one is in ministerial leadership, to not be alone together.

However, while the girls admit they are jealous of Mr. Lincoln's favoritism, they also have little interest in having more than an academic relationship with him anyway. They feel as if they have no one to go to that they can trust. Mrs. Hunter is their main teacher and have her at least twice a day, but they consider her untrustworthy and unreliable. Their sense of isolation from an authority that already exhibits submission intensifies their willingness to silence and submit themselves, since in Nancy's words, they "only have each other."

It is unfortunate that the school is not based in a stronger doctrinal setting, especially as regards submission theology. It is obvious the girls feel powerless to change because they do not know where they stand, within the school and within the evangelical religion. The contradictions that exist between what even the boys feel about the girls, let alone what the girls feel about themselves in terms of their role in the church, acts as a powerful agent in their silence and their submission. They are caught in the powerful tug-of-war that currently exists in the evangelical church regarding the

submission of women and what the true biblical interpretation really is.

According to Gallagher and Smith (1999), women in the evangelical church are moving toward a more egalitarian and pragmatic role, yet there still remains the frustration and anxiety associated with a major social change. The girls at Charity are also participants in this change. Their feelings and changing theological positions mirror the same reactions that women in the church are experiencing as they begin to move away from docile submission and begin claiming equality.

It is not only the existing structures, such as the teasing, authority and leadership roles, and theology that allow for the submission problem at Charity. The problem also lies with the girls themselves and why they gave up their power. Jesus asks his followers to lay down their wants and to give up their individuality, in other words, he asks for submission to him. When the girls quietly submit in both practical and theoretical ways, they are merely being the good Christians they have been asked to be by the religious institution that shapes their lives.

The problem of submission at Charity provides an excellent example of gendered religious socialization and the contradictory experiences these young Christian girls go through to be "women of God." They must at once be true to themselves, their feelings of self-worth and their desires, as well as be true to what they have been taught is expected of them by God, that they lay down themselves not only to God but to men.

Currently, the girls at Charity are living what Mary Pipher (1994, p. 22) describes as a "pressure to split into true and false selves." Their peace comes in that they have obeyed and did the right thing according to what they have been told by their main religious institution, the school, to feel is the truth. Their disquiet comes in that while they have been true to God and school, they feel that they have failed to be true to themselves.

Silencing

The teasing by the boys, the leadership and favoritism extended to the boys, and the domination of a only a few people's opinions have acted to silence the girls. To understand what they

lose when they are silenced, one must first understand what having a voice that can be silenced means.

Carol Gilligan (1993, p. xvi) calls voice "a powerful psychological instrument and channel, connecting inner and outer worlds." Taylor, Gilligan, and Sullivan (1995) go on to say that the expression or suppression of voice has important psychological consequences. Many studies (Pipher, 1994; AAUW, 1992; Sadker and Sadker, 1994; Gilligan, 1993) have concluded that girls are not given an equal chance to speak and be heard in school and society in general, and the resulting loss of voice narrows their chances to achieve as much as they could.

Is the loss of voice at Charity different than in the popular literature cited above? It appears to be the same in regards to its peer pressure influence and personal nature, but different in that many girls were made to feel that they would be "arguing against God" when the boys quoted the Bible at them. The girls at Charity are taught the Bible is the final and absolute authority in their lives, providing the rules for the school as well as their lives, so its use in silencing was very effective.

The girls at Charity, as well as some of the boys who do not follow the mainstream ideology, expressed frustration that their opinions and ideas were less important than Tom and Bob's opinions and ideas. It is evident that Tom and Bob not only had practical power of leadership, but they also had psychological leadership as well.

Once again, without the boundaries of rules and doctrines to support what should be allowed and disallowed in and out of the classroom, Charity's lack of absolutes hinders the girls to stand up for themselves. Muting themselves, according to Taylor, Gilligan, and Sullivan (1995), may serve to disconnect the girls from important psychological and relational needs. The girls' need for an "experience of connection which they can feel safe and can speak the truth of their lives without fear" (Taylor et.al., 1995) is keenly felt at Charity. Barbara says, "we don't have any strong female teachers that we can go to" in response to the mentioning of the principal, her father, playing favorites among the boys.

The girls have needs that are not being met, such as leadership choices, freedom of speech, and freedom from tyranny (teasing). A wholesale reform of the boys would not be enough to change the

environment at Charity. The girls must also be empowered to effect change by being given the tools to let their voices be heard. The best place to start would be having the rules and doctrines in place that support an environment where difference is not necessarily bad.

Interestingly, while no one, male nor female, agreed with I Timothy 2:12 which orders women to be silent, silence of women is what is happening at Charity. Traditionally, women have had less of a voice in the evangelical church, and even today in many churches, women are not allowed to hold those leadership positions that would allow her voice to be heard, such as being deacons, board members, and adult Sunday school teachers. The influence of I Timothy is still visible even as it is denounced in the church, and Charity is no exception.

Self-Policing

The girls at charity are indirectly affected by the idea that the only rules are the Bible. They feel the lack of rules brings inequality, yet are glad to be able to bend "the rules" so easily. The fact that there are so few real rules acts both to hinder and help the girls in their quest for equality.

The girls are fine in a system of self-policing because they are taught early on to control their actions and to not be disruptive. There were very few observations of female disruptive behavior at Charity. The boys were a constant disruption in most of the classes observed and seemed more manipulative of the situation. The boys were out of class more often than the girls and talked out during class more.

The exception to the disruptive behavior of the boys was Nelly who had trouble calming down, especially after lunch, until she took her medicine for Attention Deficit Disorder. One instance of self-policing each other happened in study hall, right after lunch, when Nelly came in excited and noticeably more hyper than usual. Carla came over and began brushing her hair and fixing it, seemingly in an attempt to calm her, which it did. The boys were never observed calming each other, although a few would remind other boys to apologize or act differently.

Foucault (Miller, 1993; p. 323) describes the Christian culture of the self as stressing a "relentlessly suspicious form of self-examination" and as having to "sacrifice a part of who one was in order to follow the will of God." Foucault sums up the main problem

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of Christianity as being the "politics of our selves". The lack of rules and self-policing does force the students at Charity to rely on their own sense of ethical behavior, based on the Bible. Allowing for the multiple interpretations of most biblical passages involving conduct, there are many instances where students diverge in their rule-making and rule-breaking. This lack of absolutes in regards to rules fosters the powerlessness the girls feel since boundaries partially serve to define oneself.

However, the problem of self-policing, while a part of the Christian ideal of self-examination, goes against the evangelical church's history of structured rules regarding conduct. The evangelical church has placed many rules on its members regarding conduct that have no basis in the Bible. Drinking, smoking, dancing, rock music, movies, jewelry, short hair, nude-colored hosiery and even the organ at one time, were all considered "of the devil" and not sanctioned by various evangelical churches. These are the less serious examples of religious socialization, but important to understanding the strong role the evangelical church has had in controlling the behavior of its members.

The fact that Charity is less structured in regard to rules of conduct than most churches may stem from the changing nature of the evangelical movement itself. The fastest growing segment of the evangelical church continues to be the Pentecostal / charismatic movement which often lets go of structure to "follow the Spirit's leading" and has loosened many of the social conduct rules still found in more fundamental churches.

Charity has its own contradictions woven throughout the lives of its students and within these contradictions we find both the positive and the negative of Charity. The positive is an environment that allows for the freedom to teach the whole child: academically, spiritually, and emotionally. The negative is an environment that fails to produce an education equitable to all parties and concerned about the ways in which the church hinders growth rather than helps it.

Implications

Charity has much that informs the Christian school community. This example of a microcosm of religious socialization would be

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found at any other Christian school. The source of authority in any Christian school will always remain the Bible first, and the church second. What Charity teaches is the nature of gendered religious socialization.

Girls at any social institution have to be aware of their position within that institution's context of gender. Girls at a Christian school face not only the institution of the Christian school, but the supporting church or churches as well. It lies within the responsibility of the church for any sense of gender reconciliation to occur.

Within the evangelical movement, there are many different organizations trying to bring change to the relationships in areas that include race relations and gender equality. The largest, Christians for Biblical Equality, concentrates on issues of gender and is endorsed by prominent members of diverse denominations. Another movement centered more on race, International Reconciliation Coalition, is also beginning to recognize gender as a "pioneering movement" within the evangelical church. Denominations themselves have began to recognize the need for

examination of gender issues, although at a far slower rate (Gallagher & Smith, 1999).

As gender struggles to "come out of the closet" in many evangelical churches, it will struggle even harder to be heard at Christian schools, an area of fierce protectiveness among the churches. If the rumors / predictions of a mass pullout of Christian children from the public schools becomes reality, the need to address gender will become even greater as more girls, used to better treatment, will demand to be heard. At Charity, the girls who fought hardest to be heard and not forced into submission, were the ones who spent most of their lives in public school. The girls who willingly gave up their leadership roles and believed in the prevailing submission theology were the ones who had never gone, or had barely gone, to public schools. If Christian schools do not, as Wagner (1997) has suggested, want their children raised in a bubble anymore, than issues such as race, gender, sexuality, and religion will have to be examined with more thought to "the other".

Charity provides a lesson to other Christian schools on how easy it is to let one or two powerful "spiritual" individuals influence a whole school. Neither Tom nor Bob intentionally tried to

hurt or belittle the girls and both strongly believed in female equality in every sense, outside of marriage. Their power was given, not taken, although they both admit they gladly received it in order that they "might be an example of Christ to others at Charity". The lesson is one the non-Christian world also has trouble learning. A few strong, charismatic individuals do not the world, or school, make. No one child or children should hold the power since more democratic forms of schooling are possible. Much like public schools, Christian schools pride themselves on being pro-democratic and patriotic, so it is in their own interest to provide more democratic schooling.

Christian schools will continue to be tied to the existing superstructure of the church and will see no need to divest themselves of that connection, nor should they. What is imperative for Christian schools is to remain wholly aware of not only their purpose to prepare Christian leaders, but to be ever diligent in creating the best whole person possible, whether male or female.

Important to those in public school settings, is the need to understand that the forces shaping a girl's gendered identity come in many different forms. An evangelical girl in a public school will

have resistance issues that involve more than just appearance and voice. Issues such as chastity and dating, for example, have new meaning when the church begins preaching that dating is wrong. This is a current trend, started with a popular book, I Kissed Dating Good-bye which advocates not dating until a serious relationship that will probably lead to marriage comes along. Since only ten percent of evangelical Christian children attend private schools (Baer & Carper, 1998), understanding the background and current trends of evangelicalism and gender is important to those in the public schools as well.

Conclusions

Gender socialization is occurring at Charity in common and predictable ways. The girls are inevitably better behaved, more academic, and more socially aware than their male counterparts. Teachers expect the girls to be more compliant and the boys to be more disruptive. Both female and male students model those behaviors typical to their gendered adolescence, such as appearance issues and peer acceptance. Charity displays gendered socialization

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much like any other school, although the girls have larger socialization issues regarding chastity and purity than most public schools.

As expected, religious socialization occurs to a greater degree than gendered socialization. Expectations of "godly" behavior, where actions align themselves both to Biblical principles and Christian tradition, are "preached" not only by the faculty, but by the students themselves. Spiritual undertones present themselves in every facet of the school, and activities in and out of the class assume and expect a Christian position from all parties. Shaping of the mind is secondary to the shaping of the soul, and "the spirit" can lead students and teachers at any time to work on spiritual aspects of their lives instead of the academic.

Gendered and religious socialization at Charity is not unusually different from that found at a school, church, or church-school. However, the combination of the two into a new notion, *gendered religious socialization*, provides a distinct glimpse of the reality of being a Christian girl. Charity has provided a definition for this in terms of notions of submission and silencing. It is clear

that 2000 year old expectations of female behavior are still prevalent in the church, as well as Christian schools.

The Christian religion is full of contradictions and discrepancies, so often it is discarded as oppressive and old-fashioned. However, naively dismissing the influence of the church on anyone's life is foolhardy, and to ignore its influence on the ones who have a loss of voice, female children, would be a transgression.

Charity Christian School provides an unique opportunity to see a fragment of the intersection of religion and gender. Focusing on the topic of submission to detail the problems and possibilities of life in a Christian school is the limit of this study. Further inquiry into even just one area of this study's findings, such as the area of self-policing, would provide other fascinating research equally rich with the contradictions that are a part of this arena of "almost absolutes."

In hopes that by looking at gender in a microcosm, the macrocosm might be informed, this study presents findings that point to one battleground largely ignored by society, children's education outside the public schools, specifically education in religious schools. Issues of religion are considered personal and not

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part of the public sphere, but feminist theory would have the private

made public so that the inequities might be seen. Hopefully this

study has done a small measure of that.

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APPENDIX A

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

DATE: 01-14-99

IRB #: ED-99-070

Proposal Title: GENDER ROLES AT A CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Principal Investigator(s): Natalie Adams, Stacey Elsasser

Reviewed and Processed as: Expedited with Special Population

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

Signature: *Carol Olson*   Date: January 22, 1999

Carol Olson, Director of University Research Compliance
cc: Stacey Elsasser

Approvals are valid for one calendar year, after which time a request for continuation must be submitted. Any modification to the research project approved by the IRB must be submitted for approval. Approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. Expedited and exempt projects may be reviewed by the full Institutional Review Board.

VITA

Stacey Elsasser

Candidate for degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: "SO WHAT IF I PRAY LIKE A GIRL": GENDERED RELIGIOUS
           SOCIALIZATION AT A CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Major Field: Curriculum and Instruction

Biographical:

   Personal Data: Born on January 12, 1967 in Omaha, Nebraska,
      the daughter of Kenyon and Donna Elsasser.

   Education: Graduated from Central High School, Omaha,
      Nebraska in May 1985; received Bachelor of Science
      degree in Elementary Education from North Central
      University in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Completed the
      requirements for the Master of Science in Curriculum and
      Instruction in July 1999.

   Experience: Taught 3rd grade in inner-city Houston for one
      year and one-room 1st through 6th grade for one year in
      Massachusetts. Two years in the People's Republic of
      China teaching English as a second language. Graduate
      research assistantships in research, teaching, and
      student teacher supervision.

   Professional Memberships: American Educational Research
      Association, Phi Delta Kappa.