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CARCERAL CHRISTIANIZATION AS A RELIGIOUS PROBLEM OF GENERATIONS: THEORIZING CULTURAL MISEDUCATION FROM A GENDER-SENSITIVE STUDY OF ORAL LIFE HISTORIES

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CARCERAL CHRISTIANIZATION AS A RELIGIOUS PROBLEM OF GENERATIONS: THEORIZING CULTURAL MISEDUCATION FROM A GENDER-SENSITIVE STUDY OF ORAL LIFE HISTORIES

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICY STUDIES

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There are years that ask questions and years that answer.

—Zora Neale Hurston

To my husband Clarke

And our children McKenna and Callahan

For loving and supporting me in the years that have answered.

And

To my sister Kari

Who has been with me for both.

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Table of Contents

ABSTRACT VII

CHAPTER 1: CARCERAL CHRISTIANIZATION AS RELIGIOUS MISEDUCATION 1

Introduction 4

Carceral Christianization 14

Carceralites 31

CHAPTER 2: PANOPTIC DISCIPLINE 41

Discipline 42

Panoptic Discipline 44

Punitive Discipline 88

Rebuking Discipline 97

CHAPTER 3: COMPULSORY CHRISTIAN CURRICULUM 108

Compulsory Orthodoxies and Orthopraxes 110

Compulsory Teaching Activities 141

CHAPTER 4: SCARS AND BARS, OR LIABILITIES OF CARCERAL LEARNING 162

Inner Scars and Restraints of Carceral Learning 166

Outer Bars and Constraints of Carceral Learning 189

Degrees of Internalization and Varieties of Response 204

CHAPTER 5: CARCERAL CHRISTIANIZATION AS A RELIGIOUS PROBLEM OF GENERATIONS 225

Outer Liabilities of Carceral Religious Learning 236

Inner Liabilities of Carceral Religious Learning 258

Toward a Theory of Transcendent Religious Learning 283

BIBLIOGRAPHY 286

Abstract

Religion is one of the most influential agents of moral education in both private and public domains, and its educational values and practices vary profoundly from one tradition to another. With that recognition, this empirical-conceptual and "gender-sensitive" (Martin, 1981) qualitative inquiry into the "dark side of Christianity" (Harris and Milam, 1994) utilizes narratives from fourteen oral life histories alongside other textual and cultural data to formulate an original pedagogical theory for religious miseducation. I have named this theory *Carceral Christianization* (henceforth CC) and have bestowed the identity of *Carceralites* on its adherents. As an excessively dogmatic and sometimes abusive religious approach to rearing and educating children, CC, however well meaning, metaphorically (Scheffler, 1960) imprisons (Foucault, 1975; Frye, 1983) adherents' coming of age and what I call *coming of conscience*. As such, it qualifies as "cultural miseducation" and poses a complex ethical "educational problem of generations" (Martin, 2002) with regard to religious education. The goal of this study is to help people recognize and understand some of the painful and problematic effects of growing up in CC, not only for individuals but also for communities. Given that Christianity is the predominant religious tradition in the U.S. and is influential in many public spheres (Pew Forum, 2014), and in light of recent growing worldwide apprehension over religious

extremism (Pew Research Center, 2014), the topic represents a central concern for educational inquiry.

Chapter 1:

Carceral Christianization as Religious Miseducation

God loved birds and created trees.

Man loved birds and invented cages.

—Jacques Deval

> *There is a dark side to Christianity… Well-meaning people condemn, manipulate, or hurt others because of the destructive nature of their Christian beliefs. Parents abuse their children, churches abuse their followers, families withdraw love and support, individuals are depressed, angry, fearful, anxious, withdrawn, upset, perfectionist, and are dysfunctional in a myriad of practices commonly found in Christianity. These concepts are being preached and "pounded into"… these abused individuals by their well-meaning parents and by well-meaning, but nonetheless dysfunctional preachers and Sunday school teachers.*[1]
> —Jerry Harris and Melody Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*

Novelist Toni Morrison said, "If there's a book you really want to read, but it hasn't been written yet, then you must write it."[2] My dissertation—an empirical-conceptual and "gender-sensitive"[3] qualitative inquiry into the dark side of Christianity, as described above by mental health professionals Jerry Harris and Melody Milam—is such a book. Utilizing narratives from fourteen oral life histories alongside other textual and cultural data,[4] I have formulated an original theory of religious miseducation, which I call *Carceral Christianization* (henceforth CC), and have bestowed the identity of *Carceralites* on its adherents. As an excessively dogmatic and sometimes abusive religious

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[1] Jerry L. Harris and Melody J. Milam, *Serpents in the Manger: Overcoming Abusive Christianity* (New York: Barricade Books, 1994), 24-25.
[2] "Toni Morrison," *Wikiquote*, accessed December 23, 2013, http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Toni_Morrison.
[3] John Dewey, *Experience and Education*, (Indianapolis, IN: Kappa Delta Pi, 1938; repr., New York: Touchstone, 1997); Jane Roland Martin, "The Ideal of the Educated Person," *Educational Theory* 31, no. 2 (1981), 97-109.
[4] D. Jean Clandinin and F. Michael Connelly, *Narrative Inquiry: Experience and Story in Qualitative Research* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2000).

approach to rearing and educating children, I hold that CC, however well-meaning, metaphorically[5] imprisons adherents' coming of age and what I call *coming of conscience*. As such, it qualifies for what philosopher and educational theorist Jane Roland Martin has recognized as *cultural miseducation* and contributes to what she has termed *the educational problem of generations*.[6] My hope is that this study will help people recognize and understand some of the painful and problematic effects of growing up in CC, not only for individuals but also for communities. Given that Christianity is the predominant religious tradition in the U.S. and is influential in many spheres,[7] and in light of recent growing worldwide apprehension over religious extremism, especially violent religious extremism, the topic represents a central concern for educational inquiry.

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[5] Israel Scheffler, "Educational Metaphors," chap. 3 in *The Language of Education* (Springfield, IL: Thomas Publishing, 1960), 47-59.
[6] Jane Roland Martin, *Cultural Miseducation: In Search of a Democratic Solution* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2002); Martin, "The Educational Problem of Generations," chap. 3 in *Cultural Miseducation*, 62-86.
[7] "U.S. Religious Landscape Survey," *Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life*, accessed August 16, 2014, http://religions.pewforum.org/reports/; Frank Bruni, "The G.O.P.'s Assertive God Squad: Republicans, Evangelicals, Gays and Abortion," *New York Times*, February 25, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/25/opinion/frank-bruni-republicans-evangelicals-gays-and-abortion.html.

Introduction

Christianity undoubtedly lays claim to many praiseworthy values and qualities. It is true, for example, that Christianity has inspired the ideas and works of great leaders, thinkers, and humanitarians. Its canon has fostered a sense of wonder at the universe, nature, and the human race. Its traditions have been a creative influence for some of the world's great architectural, artistic, and musical works. Additionally, many Christian-identified charities and organizations have reached around the globe to bring education and health care to communities in need.

Christianity has also helped communities flourish by supporting important social-solidarity functions that provide people with a vital sense of belonging in the world. Its organization around common beliefs and practices, alongside regular gatherings and activities, has reinforced shared ties that bind individuals into families, families into groups, and groups into communities. Christianity has also helped many meet their fundamental social needs. Christian communities, for example, lend strength and comfort in times of personal or communal crisis and consecrate such important life happenings as birth, marriage, suffering, and death.

Moreover, Christian teachings have provided religious foundations that kindle spiritual growth and a sense of purpose in individuals, and many of its teachers have encouraged others toward a peaceful, loving, joyful, and hopeful life. I even knew a man who attended a church near his home not because he believed as they believed, but "to be around good people," as he explained it. Therefore, I want to make it clear that I regard certain Christian beliefs, practices, and teachers as profoundly positive sources for shaping a conscientious way of living and promoting a particular understanding of life. Having acknowledged that, I also believe that certain other kinds can be profoundly negative and misshaping—the "dark side" of Christianity emphasized by Harris and Milam.

It is with the *Christianization*—or religious education, actions, processes, and aims—and consequences of this darker side that my work grapples. The term "Christianization" is not new, though it typically refers to voluntary or imposed Christian conversions of people and places.[8] My usage of the term, however, is intended to convey the educational means by and through which

[8] "Christianization," *Definitions.net*, accessed November 25, 2014, http://www.definitions.net/definition/christianization; "Definition of Christianization," *Babylon*, accessed November 25, 2014, http://dictionary.babylon.com/christianization/.

Christian agents[9] compel adherents over time to submit to a particular interpretation of Christianity—not just as a belief system but also as a system of ethical practice. These educational means need not include making an individual "Christian" in that sense, nor does it point to a particular sense of being Christian except insofar as being Christian has been or is excessively constraining or abusive to one's developing mind, body, spirit, and conscience (henceforth *tetradeum*, Latin for "group of four"). If a primary goal of education is to "help individuals grow to the fullest humanness, to the greatest fulfillment and actualization of highest potentials, to the greatest possible stature,"[10] as psychologist Abraham Maslow claimed, then CC not only does not facilitate movement toward this goal, but it also prevents the kind of transcendent learning, as I call it, that would nurture it.

To be clear, I am not concerned with particular denominational understandings within Christianity or with engaging in philosophical discussions of what it means to be Christian.[11] Rather, my aim is metaphorically

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[9] Martin, "Multiple Educational Agency," chap. 2 in *Cultural Miseducation*, 32-61.

[10] Abraham H. Maslow, *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences* (New York: Viking Press, 1970), 49.

[11] Nor do I have sufficient space to address topics such as violent religious agents– Christians, for example, who blow up abortion clinics or kill doctors for performing them– or conduct historical analyses of ways in which religious

to enlighten the kind of education that CC demands, along with its consequences for Carceralites and communities, as examined through Martin's "cultural bookkeeping" method and conceptualized primarily through a blend of Harris and Milam's abusive Christian model, philosopher Michel Foucault's work on carcerality, and Martin's ideas of cultural miseducation.[12] I found cultural bookkeeping to be particularly helpful for examining religious education, as it calls for a rigorous tracking and analysis of cultural assets and liabilities to develop "full-blown portraits" of educational agents, which Martin defined as guardians of some portion of the cultural stock, and their transmission mechanisms.[13] One purpose for developing such portraits is to hold guardians accountable for systems, beliefs, and practices that, intentionally or not, undermine and weaken cultural stock, which is, in this case, religious stock.

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education and agents have changed across generations and eras. Both are worthy projects for another day.

[12] "Consequentialism," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, May 20, 2003, substantially revised September 27, 2011, http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/consequentialism/; Martin, "Minimizing the Liabilities," chap. 4 in *Cultural Miseducation*, 87-112; Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 10; Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995); Martin, *Cultural Miseducation.*

[13] Martin, *Cultural Miseducation*, 44, 89.

In addition to Harris and Milam's *Serpents in the Manger: Overcoming Abusive Christianity*, which detailed the connection between Christian beliefs and practices and deep psychological and social ills, other such bookkeeping projects that have helped to inform the current research include:

- *When Religion is an Addiction* by religious studies scholar Robert Minor, which applied contemporary understandings of addiction to right-wing Christian extremism.[14]

- *Righteous: Dispatches from the Evangelical Youth Movement* by journalist Lauren Sandler, which revealed growing subcultures of youth that are a mix of pop culture and "old-fashioned bible-beating fundamentalism," including strict gender dynamics.[15]

- *The Sins of Scripture: Exposing the Bible's Texts of Hate to Reveal the Love of God* by retired Episcopal bishop John Shelby Spong, which analyzed "terrible texts" of the Bible that are used to discriminate, oppress, or condemn people.[16]

- *The Woman's Bible* by suffragist Elizabeth Cady Stanton and committee, which traced and challenged biblical interpretations used to establish men's superiority over women and justify women's subservience to men.[17]

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[14] Robert N. Minor, *When Religion Is an Addiction* (St. Louis, MO: HumanityWorks!, 2007).
[15] Lauren Sandler, *Righteous: Dispatches from the Evangelical Youth Movement* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2006).
[16] John Shelby Spong, *The Sins of Scripture: Exposing the Bible's Texts of Hate to Reveal the God of Love* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2005).
[17] Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *The Woman's Bible* (1895–98; repr. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993).

- *Churches That Abuse* by sociologist Ronald Enroth, which described fringe churches and cults that emotionally and spiritually abuse adherents.[18]

- *Toxic Faith* by Christian counselors Stephen Arterburn and Jack Felton, which drew connections between extreme participation in religious life and addiction.[19]

- *When Religion Becomes Evil: Five Warning Signs* by theologian Charles Kimball, which examined ways in which all religions are susceptible to basic corruptions that can escalate evil and violence on a global scale.[20]

While these scholars utilized religious, journalistic, psychological, and sociological lenses and I use an educational one, we have studied effectively the same problem of the dark side of religion. Provender, a "clearinghouse of sources on spiritual abuse and cult-like practices in groups and churches," is an extensive online version of the same.[21] The ultimate goal of such inventories, according to Martin, is to preserve and maximize cultural assets and disrupt and minimize cultural liabilities, particularly those that "stand in opposition to explicit educational agendas."[22] Accordingly, CC is a cultural bookkeeping project that aims to develop a constructive portrait of religious miseducation in

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[18] Ronald M. Enroth, *Churches That Abuse* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992).
[19] Stephen Arterburn and Jack Felton, *Toxic Faith: Experiencing Healing from Painful Spiritual Abuse* (Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook Press, 2001).
[20] Charles Kimball, *When Religion Becomes Evil: Five Warning Signs* (New York: HarperCollins, 2002).
[21] *Provender*, accessed April 8, 2015, http://pureprovender.blogspot.com.
[22] Martin, *Cultural Miseducation*, 52-53.

part to shine a light on it and to disrupt its liabilities from being passed down to future generations.

My interest in and passion for this topic began with what some scholars call *research as me-search*, and some philosophers call the examined life.[23] That is, this study has been a project of self-examination. My intention has not been to generalize any suppositions about religious miseducation, but to better understand the topic. As a self-identified *emigrant Carceralite*, I aimed to explore more deeply an intuition I had about my religious upbringing, one accompanied by a deep sense of gendered angst. As a member of a Carceralite diaspora, as I have come to think of it, I left the Christian community that raised me.[24] According to the 2008 U.S. Religious Landscape Survey by the Pew Forum:

> More than one-quarter of American adults (28%) have left the faith in which they were raised in favor of another religion—or no religion at all. If change in affiliation from one type of Protestantism to another is included, 44% of adults have either switched religious affiliation, moved from being unaffiliated with

[23] As an example, see Tricia M. Kress, "From Research to Me-Search," chap. 16 in *Critical Praxis Research: Breathing New Life into Research Methods for Teachers,* no. 19 (2011): 219-231.

[24] For Christian emigrants, this can be a scary, lonely, and disorienting journey. Martin offers a composition on culture crossings and crossers in *Educational Metamorphoses* that is helpful for understanding such emigrating experiences. See Jane Roland Martin, *Educational Metamorphoses: Philosophical Reflections on Identity and Culture* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007).

> any religion to being affiliated with a particular faith, or dropped any connection to a specific religious tradition altogether.[25]

Critics of Christianity point to the problems of the Church as a primary reason for adherents' leaving, citing such failures as stubbornness in not keeping up with modern spiritual needs, prejudice against women and sexual minorities, war on abortion and immigration, hypocritical silence on the topics of greed and poverty, and the duplicity of some of its people in relation to its doctrine.[26] The Pew study credits these shifts in part to our nation's tradition of allowing people to choose a religion, or something else, which better suits their conscience. Certainly, it is both.

While the Pew researchers utilized statistical analysis of the religious composition of the United States along with demographic and other quantitative data to provide a forest view of religious shifts (macroscopic phenomenon), my work employs narrative inquiry and other qualitative data to illuminate the trees of individual shifting (microscopic analysis). When I began to research the topic, I found an abundance of reporting on the forest but a lack

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[25] The Pew Charitable Trusts, "U.S. Religious Landscape Survey: Religious Affiliation," *Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life*, February 25, 2008, http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/reports/2008/02/25/us-religious-landscape-survey-religious-affiliation. para. 2.

[26] As an example, see John Pavlovitz, "Dear Church, Here's Why People Are REALLY Leaving You," *ChurchLeaders* (blog), accessed February 2, 2015, http://www.churchleaders.com/outreach-missions/outreach-missions-articles/244545-dear-church-heres-people-really-leaving.html.

of educational analysis of "the trees" from an explicitly insider perspective. Having such a perspective has helped me to recognize markers of miseducative Christian education, thereby creating a more robust cultural critique. Thus, I will make use of my own and others' insider knowledge, experiences, and observations to formulate and illustrate the kind of religious education that drives some adherents to leave their Christian communities for something else.

I acknowledge that connecting such descriptions as *abusive*, *carceral*, and *miseducation* to this project is asserting a certain kind of insider Christian status and that my upbringing has motivated the questions I brought to the project and somewhat influenced the discoveries as well. Consequently, I have worked hard to shed any assumptions I may have carried into the project, and I have been intentional about putting aside any prejudgments to develop a rich portrait of Carceralite experience (in community) and experiencing (as individuals).

I do not claim here a strict polarization between carceral and liberative forms of religious education, for surely there is some porousness between the two in some cases. Nor do I claim that all Christians exposed to the same religious curriculum will share a similar understanding or experience of it, even within the same family. After all, some people in constrained religious environs

lead happy and fulfilled lives. I will say, however, the "spot it, got it" principle tends to hold true when talking with others about CC, especially when talking with emigrant Carceralites. In this way, metaphors are helpful in "touching off an echoing experience"[27] that interrogatively links ideas to help us better understand something. Thus, for adherents whose Christianization (or other form of religionization) was by their own account excessively constrained, controlled, or cruel, the notion of carcerality seems to resonate; the imprisoned recognize the imprisoned, we might say, or the wounded recognize the wounded. Arguably, the more constrained, the deeper the wounding. The deeper the wounding, the more difficult the healing, if healing is achieved at all.

In the remaining sections of this chapter, I will begin to sketch the problem of CC as religious miseducation and introduce the Carceralite identity fostered by it. For the latter, I will utilize narratives from fourteen open-ended face-to-face interviews with self-identified emigrant Carceralites who came to me through volunteering (after hearing about my research) or snowball sampling (after others heard about it). These individuals comprised nine females and five males ranging in age from early twenties to late fifties and collectively grew up in such Protestant churches as Assemblies of God, Independent and Southern Baptist, Charismatic Evangelical, Church of Christ,

[27]Maslow, *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences*, 84.

Jehovah's Witnesses, Nazarene, Methodist, Pentecostal, and Presbyterian.[28] Because of the sampling techniques, they are also primarily white and formally educated, though the overall work strives to include, reflect, and respect a multiplicity of Christian experiences. While I have protected their names with pseudonyms, I hope the voices and experiences of these emigrant Carceralites—woven throughout the work—will encourage others to question and closely examine commonly held understandings and assumptions of Christian education.

Carceral Christianization

As with all education, religious education is an interrelated individual and social process, which begins at birth when people journey from a "creature of nature to member of human culture."[29] Martin described this journey as the "first great educational metamorphosis" and emphasized that it and other life metamorphoses are aided or hindered by "multiple educational agency," which collectively pass down culture from one generation to the next.[30] If one's journey is primarily aided, then cultural agency is considered educative, and if primarily hindered, then it is considered miseducative. Building upon this

[28] See Appendix A to learn more about these individuals.
[29] Martin, *Educational Metamorphoses*, 43.
[30] Ibid., 8, 48.

assertion, I claim that CC hinders educative religious metamorphoses with strong, if sometimes subtle, cultural demands for religious conformity and compliance. Consider, for example:

- A public school assignment that presumes, "On Sunday, I went to church with my mom and dad."
- Public school teachers handing out Bibles to children in their class.
- Christians not permitted to associate with non-Christians.
- Girls and women called "Jezebels" for perceived immodest adornment.
- Young couples demeaned or disowned for pregnancy outside of marriage.
- Women not allowed to serve as ministers on the basis of gender alone.
- Threats of hell and eternal suffering for anyone who does not accept Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior.

These and other *carceralities of tetradeum,*[31] as I refer to them, impede *liberties of tetradeum* that are essential for *freedoms of tetradeum*. Whether seemingly innocuous (the school assignment) or clearly overt (women not allowed to serve as ministers), such encounters suppress "core-religious experience" and "immediate religious experiencing," to borrow from Maslow

[31] Refer to 'tetradeum' on page 6.

and psychiatrist Carl Jung, respectively,[32] and hinder people's ability to know and follow their own religious conscience and will. Hindering the ability to follow one's own religious conscience and will raises the question: What are the educational mechanisms of such religious miseducation and what are its consequences, or both to individuals and to communities? These will be examined closely in the coming chapters, but first, let us begin to explore the problem of carceral religious education.

On Carcerality

> *The "self-evident" character of the prison… is based first of all on the simple form of "deprivation of liberty"… and the technical transformation of individuals*.[33] —Michel Foucault

To be clear, I am claiming CC as a kind of metaphorical prison of religious miseducation with its discipline and curriculum as a network of confining cells, its *orthodoxies* (religious teachings) and *orthopraxes* (religious practices) as the individual bars of those cells, and its teachers as the guards of the institution. Inspired by Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* and philosopher and feminist theorist Marilyn Frye's cage metaphor for oppression in *The Politics of*

[32] Maslow, *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences*, 33; Carl G. Jung, *Psychology and Religion* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1938), 53.
[33] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 232-233.

Reality,[34] my usage of *carceral* is intended to convey aspects of Christianity that, when experienced, constrain adherents in a way analogous to imprisonment. Because Christianity is such a highly esteemed guardian of cultural stock in the U.S. and is generally perceived to altruistically "train up a child in the way he should go,"[35] many have learned to think of Christian education as singularly beneficial. I argue, however, that some of its educational mechanisms are part of a murky, penal-like power dynamic that first compels "the way an individual should go" and then disciplines and punishes those who do not adhere.

Before moving forward, I want to concede a necessary limitation of this project. In my engagement with the subjects of education, power, discipline, and punishment, I attempt to acknowledge good and bad forms, good and bad content, and good and bad usage. After all, one of the functions of education is to transmit moral standards of good and bad and right and wrong in such a way that people internalize them over time and come to accept them as appropriate standards.[36] Because my focus is on the dark side of Christianity,

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[34] Ibid.; Marilyn Frye, *The Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory* (Freedom, CA: Crossing Press, 1983).
[35] Proverbs 22:6 (King James Version).
[36] Jeffrey J. Arnett, "Broad and Narrow Socialization: The Family in the Context of a Cultural Theory," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 57, no. 3 (1995): 618, 623, http://www.jstor.org/stable/353917.

however, the positive expressions of these complex subjects do not receive sufficient emphasis. I leave that for another project. I recognize that good elements of religious education foster legitimate positive consequences for individuals and communities, some of which were listed earlier. The difference for this project is explained by the overwhelming predominance of the bad that comes up when talking with emigrant Carceralites about their experiences. Therefore, the emphasis is necessarily on the negative expressions and miseducative elements of Christian education.

As an example, abuse, the kind of inherent abuse that is characteristic of certain social dynamics and certainly to carceral institutions, is one such bad element, whether abuse of power, position, principles, or people. We know from the classic Stanford prison and Milgram experiments that people can set aside or act in ways incompatible with their values and conscience in deference to authority. In the 1971 Stanford prison experiment on the psychology of imprisonment, college students were assigned a guard or inmate role and put into a prison simulation made to function as close to real life as possible. The researcher, psychologist Philip Zimbardo, was surprised to find that the students quickly settled into the dynamics of prison life and prison identities, with the guards becoming abusive and even sadistic to the prisoners and the prisoners becoming submissive and even turning on each other to gain favor

with the guards. Importantly, Zimbardo determined that the prison environment, not individual internal characteristics, was responsible for triggering these behaviors.[37]

Similarly, in the 1961 Milgram experiment on obedience to authority, conducted by psychologist Stanley Milgram, ordinary people were assigned a teacher role and told by an experimenter to electrically shock learners (who were actors) when they answered questions incorrectly. Many of the teachers followed the experimenter's orders to continue administering increasing levels of shock even when they were distressed by doing so and even when they believed they were delivering unbearable and dangerous shocks to learners. Milgram found the "extreme willingness of adults to go to almost any lengths on the command of an authority" to be the "chief finding of the study and the fact most urgently demanding explanation."[38] Given that commands to obedience—characterized as proper submission to authority and compliance

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[37] "Frequently Asked Questions," *Stanford Prison Experiment*, accessed February 19, 2015, http://www.prisonexp.org/faq.htm.

[38] Kendra Cherry, "The Milgram Obedience Experiment: The Perils of Obedience," *About Education*, 2015, http://psychology.about.com/od/historyofpsychology/a/milgram.htm. One person who reviewed this chapter commented about the Milgram study, "Sounds a lot like what happened when the Nazis made concentration camp inmates 'guards.'"

with commands—appear in the Bible more than 150 times,[39] it is a short leap to extrapolate the harmful effects of their overreach on Christian adherents.

We can conclude from the Zimbardo and Milgram experiments that situated contexts and identities are substantively very important. How much more so when the context is of a Christian upbringing and the identity is that of good Christian; more specifically, when the context is of a carceral Christian upbringing wherein compliance to authority is compulsory (as I argue is the case in CC) and the formation of one's identity suffers dissonance between lessons of freedom in Christ and experiences of excessive or abusive constraint and restraint (as with Carceralites). While some submission to regulation is certainly necessary to social stability and functioning, philosopher and education reformer John Dewey cautioned that authority must be flexible enough to allow for emergence of "new beliefs and new modes of human association" and flexible enough to balance with individual freedoms.[40] Thus, authoritarian power that prevents or does not permit such flexibility and balance is arguably miseducative. In CC, it is the kind of power that subsumes

[39] Determined by counting such variations as "obey," "obedience," and "obedient" in a Bible concordance.
[40] John Dewey, "Authority," *John Dewey: Dictionary of Education,* ed. Ralph B. Winn (New York, NY: Philosophical Library, 1959), 5-7.

individual liberties of tetradeum under strict demands for obedience to Christian authority structures and figures.[41]

Harris and Milam's Abusive Christian Model, which offers a "psychological perspective of the Bible, as interpreted by (some) conservative Christians" (author addition), is contextually helpful in better understanding ways in which this form of Christianity is fundamentally harmful to individuals, communities, and institutions in our culture.[42] This is not to suggest that traditionally more moderate or liberal branches of Christianity cannot be abusive. Nevertheless, they tend "not to take as rigid a position and are often more tolerant of variations."[43] Harris and Milam, mental health professionals who themselves left legalistic and domineering branches of Christianity, began to develop their model after noticing similar experiences and suffering from their clients of Christian backgrounds. The model features four distinct conceptual elements: abusive Christianity, destructive Christianity, Christian abuse, and Christian abusers. I will introduce each of these elements alongside a few of my own remarks, as they help to pedagogically inform CC.

[41] Refer to 'tetradeum' on page 6.
[42] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 9, 48.
[43] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 173.

First, Harris and Milam utilized *Abusive Christianity* as a generic term to cover all abuse that may occur within or because of Christian doctrine and practices, including "discrimination against women, people of color, people of different sexual orientations, and certainly people of different creeds and beliefs."[44] They characterized abusive Christianity as authoritarian, rigid, intolerant of difference, punishment-oriented, controlling of "the children of God by power and threatened abuse," and withdrawing of love when adherents are not obedient.[45] Abusive Christianity represents the general forces at work in their model, similar to the mechanisms of Carceral Christianization in mine.

Let us consider their example of discrimination against women. Some Christian churches claim God-ordained creedal authority to compel adherence to gender domains and roles, which tend to be more controlling of female adherents than males. Put plainly, girls and women are more constrained both doctrinally and in practice than boys and men. The strong expectation for Christian women to be wives and mothers, for example, restricts the possibility of their having complex identities outside domestic spheres. According to Spong, the historical consequences of such restrictions have resulted in fewer

[44] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 22, 48, 251.
[45] Ibid., 9-10, 251-252.

rights and curtailed freedoms for women along with compromised mobility, minimal power (except as related to Christian feminine charms), acceptance of abuse "as both their fate and their due," and an inability to challenge these restrictions without punishment.[46] Indeed, when one woman reviewed this section of the chapter, she responded:

> Feel free to use me as an example: the girl who got pregnant before she was married and, because she didn't want her child labeled "bastard" all of her [the child's] life and didn't want a front-row seat saved for her [the woman] in hell, married way before she was ready to… along with about a gazillion other women.

This is not to suggest that boys and men do not feel limited by rigid Christian gender expectations; however, they have access to a hierarchical tradition that permits boys and men greater freedoms inside and outside their domains and roles.

Second, Harris and Milam employed the term *Destructive Christianity* to refer to widely accepted Christian beliefs that are grounded in rigid biblical literalism and, as such, are inherently abusive and lead people to abuse others. By "inherently abusive," they meant, "if a person tries to literally live by these beliefs, that person will experience pathology or dysfunction."[47] As an example, consider the Christian belief of original sin. A CC interpretation of this doctrine

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[46] Spong, *The Sins of Scripture*, 73-74.
[47] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 49.

is that all humans are born sinners because of Adam and Eve's rebellion in the Garden of Eden. The rebellion is said to have caused the fall of man, which alienated humans from God and brought sin into the world. As progeny of Adam and Eve, all humans are said to have inherited this original sin at birth, a state from which we cannot be saved unless born again in spirit through Jesus Christ.

Divinized in this way, original sin exemplifies a destructive Christian belief because it can cause people to feel defective. "As a born sinner," argued Harris and Milam, "you do not *have* a problem. You *are* a problem. You are a sinner. You are unworthy and doomed"[48] (author italics). Now imagine being taught that our beginning was sown in goodness instead of wickedness, in "original blessing" instead of original sin, as Episcopal priest and theologian Matthew Fox has asked us to do.[49] Such a belief would result in a dramatically different understanding of oneself and one's place in the world. Instead, original sin creates a condition from which an individual needs to be saved while simultaneously mis-forming one's core identity through associated

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[48] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 120.
[49] Matthew Fox, *Wrestling with the Prophets: Essays on Creation, Spirituality, and Everyday Life* (San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 1995) in Dorothee Soelle, *The Silent Cry: Mysticism and Resistance*, trans. Barbara and Martin Rumscheidt (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001).

shame.[50] Destructive Christianity, then, reflects particular problems of Christian canon, which I propose and illustrate in Chapter 3 as *compulsory orthodoxies and orthopraxes*.

Third, *Christian Abuse* happens when one person causes another person to experience harmful emotional reactions (e.g., guilt or fear) or psychological injury (e.g., rejection) because of Christian doctrine, beliefs, or practices.[51] The key words here are *harmful* and *injury*, for certainly developing such emotional capacities is important to individual and communal well-being. Take guilt for example. Developing an "authentic capacity for guilt over our own behavior toward others," as one person described to me, "makes moral sensitivity possible." This is not the kind of emotional or psychological impact that Harris and Milam proposed. Instead, they pointed to emotions evoked by certain manipulative messages to people. To better understand what they meant, let us consider the biblical imperative to win souls for Christ.[52] Some Christians may not understand that compelling or coercing someone to salvation is abusive. Some may not care since the souls of the unsaved *need* to be won over for Christ. Harris and Milam held, however, that any behavior attempting to "force

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[50] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 120-121.
[51] Ibid., 45.
[52] See Proverbs 11:30, Mark 16:15-16, and I Corinthians 19:19-22 (King James Version).

people to 'change their ways,' or to manipulate a person into believing what is seen as proper doctrine or belief" falls under Christian Abuse.[53] Christian Abusers, then, are people who force their beliefs onto others in the name of Christianity or who attempt to gain compliance using guilt or fear.[54] These concepts of Christian Abuse and Christian Abusers typify the kind of *mis-discipline* and *mis-teaching* that I will detail in Chapters 2 and 3.

This kind of dark-side Christianity is hard to identify when one is in it. Completely immersed in Christian disciplinary teachings and practices, their carceral aspects can come to seem natural. For signs, let us look to the following eight characteristics developed by Christian apologetic scholar Pat Zukeran to help adherents discern between abusive and non-abusive churches.

1. Does the leadership invite dialogue, advice, evaluation, and questions from outside its immediate circle?

   Zukeran argued that in an abusive church, assessments are discouraged and disagreement with leadership is equated with being disobedient to God. Individuals who question are labeled rebellious, insubordinate, and disruptive to the harmony of the group.

2. Is there a system of accountability, or does the minister keep full control?

[53] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 45-46.
[54] Ibid., 271.

In an abusive church, the leader maintains full control. If there is a church board, it likely will be full of men, chosen by the leader, who endorse or agree with everything said or proposed by the leader.

3. Does a member's personality generally become stronger, happier, and more confident by being with the group?

   In an abusive church, adherents are subdued through guilt, fear, and intimidation. Assertiveness is seen as a sign of not being teachable and therefore not spiritual.

4. Are family commitments strengthened?

   In an abusive church, despite rhetorical teachings of the family as a priority, church obligations take precedence over family ones, and adherents are made to feel guilty for picking family activities over church activities. Loyalty to God is equated with loyalty to church.

5. Does the group encourage independent thinking, development of discernment skills, and creation of new ideas?

   In an abusive church, there is strong pressure to conform, an emphasis on prescribed rules, and low tolerance for difference. Unity is defined as conformity.

6. Is the group preoccupied with maintaining a good public image that does not match the inner circle experience?

   In an abusive church, the public sees a happy and loving group, which does not reflect the dissatisfaction or emotional and spiritual exhaustion experienced by adherents.

7. Does the leadership encourage members to foster relations and connections with the larger society that are more than self-serving?

   In an abusive church, tactics are used to ensure total dependence from members while protecting and isolating them from a sinful and ungodly world.

8. Is there a high rate of burnout among the members?

   In an abusive church, adherents perform excessive levels of service to gain approval as true disciples.[55]

Emigrant Carceralites with whom I spoke shared stories and examples of bumping up against such barriers, causing religious and spiritual scars initially from trying to remain within their community and then collaterally from trying to leave. I will take a deeper look at some of these *scars and bars* in Chapter 4.

To recap, the following will be covered in the coming chapters:

In **Chapter 2**, I will scrutinize the educational discipline in which CC is grounded, which I call *panoptic discipline*. I will show how panoptic discipline is unceasing, all-encompassing, and accomplished through punitive disciplinary power that compels submission to a compulsory Christian curriculum, and demands obedience from adherents.

In **Chapter 3**, I will unpack some of the carceral orthodoxies (religious teachings), orthopraxes (religious practices), and categories of Christian teachers that make up the compulsory religious curriculum through which CC is imparted. I will argue that these educational tasks are obligatory, imposed,

[55] Pat Zukeran, "Abusive Churches: Leaving Them Behind," *Battered Sheep*, accessed August 23, 2013, http://www.batteredsheep.com/abusive_02.html.

and enforced and, as such, comprise a "faulty curriculum"[56] that does not allow for change, growth, or different understandings of the same curriculum.

In **Chapter 4**, I will consider ways in which discipline and curriculum in CC are harmful to the coming of age and coming of conscience of individual adherents and Christian communities. These *scars and bars* of compulsory learning, as I call them, will be described and illustrated.

Then, in **Chapter 5**, the final chapter, all of these ideas will be brought together—the panoptic discipline that grounds carceral religious learning, the compulsory Christian curriculum that transmits it, and the scars and bars that result from it—to declare CC as a *religious problem of generations*. Contrary to its intended educational agenda, I will show ways in which CC passes down what I call communal liabilities that foster *cycles of religious bankruptcy* and inner liabilities that sustain *individual cycles of spiritual poverty.*

Before leaving the topic of Christianity and abuse, it bears noting that the subjects are frequently yoked. On one hand, a quick Internet search produces tens of millions of results for the two. Even accounting for faulty, duplicate, and dead links, it represents a lot of activity around the topic. On the other hand, portraits of Christianity like the one put forward by Harris and Milam tend to

[56] Martin, *Cultural Miseducation*, 84.

go unexamined or under-examined by mainstream secular and mainstream Christian cultures. There is a need for more educational analysis of the problem in both spheres and for bearing greater witness to such physical abuse as corporal punishment and forced conversion therapy, such sexual abuse as molestation and incest, such psychological and emotional abuse as toxic shaming and shunning, and such spiritual abuse (i.e. mistreatment that hinders spiritual empowerment) as children being taught to distrust and dislike others from different backgrounds and religious leaders making excuses for or covering up abuse to protect more powerful adherents or the institution of Christianity in general.[57]

Understanding that abuse is not particular to religion, these dark-side experiences within Christianity carry the added burden of religious dogma being used to justify and foster them. When abuse of any kind occurs within the context of religion or a religious community, *and* this context is a deeply rooted part of one's identity, *and* Christians are taught to lean on our religion or religious community for refuge and solace, where can adherents of such Christian experiences turn for help?

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[57] For an extensive accounting, see *Religion and Child Abuse News* at http://religiouschildabuse.blogspot.com/. It is a blog archive of news items on child abuse and neglect in religious contexts.

Carceralites

"I was mad at God all the time because of my childhood… and I kept trying to 'do' church. And then I'd get mad, but I didn't understand what all that was about, why I was angry… I was screaming for my life, you know."[58] —Priscilla

"There always was probably a part of me that… couldn't really totally believe it all. Well, I *know* there was a part of me because I used to feel guilty about it… And I thought, 'Oh, I'm a terrible person.' [So you have more than one kind of guilt going on?] Oh yeah. I have every kind of guilt. From the earliest age, I had nightmares. I know a specific house we lived in in Texas when I was three, not being able to sleep, having nightmares. I always just had so much guilt and fear."[59] —Rachel

"I remember I was denied spirituality by the church that I grew up in because my (prayers) couldn't get to God because I wasn't saved… Only the prayers of the righteous are received by God, and I wasn't righteous… [Did you pray?] A lot. Absolutely. And of course I remember as a young child praying, 'Don't come again until I get saved. Don't come again. Don't come tonight. I'm not saved yet.' [You were worried about that?] Oh, constantly."[60] —Barnabas

"For a while there, I was okay from the standpoint of 'once saved, always saved.' So you're in pretty good shape there… But where they get you is they say things like, 'Well, if you were truly saved, you wouldn't be doing this.' So see, it's not that they're undoing the 'once saved, always saved,' but they bring in the question, 'Well, were you really ever saved?' So I basically… I had a lot of 'Please, God,' at the end of church, that sort of thing… That really caused a lot of serious anxiety."[61] —Enoch

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[58] Priscilla, in discussion with the author, February 27, 2008.

[59] Rachel, in discussion with the author, August 25, 2009.

[60] Barnabas, in discussion with the author, September 1, 2009.

[61] Enoch, in discussion with the author, September 8, 2009.

> "None of that (his stepfather's abuse of his mother) made me mad at God. My father dying didn't make me mad at God. My mother having to go through this made me mad, but it didn't make me mad at God. It just made me mad at the church and organizers—the institution and the church, because this guy is a leader in the church."[62] —Samuel

Similar to Israelites, Hittites, Canaanites, and Moabites, to name a few people in the Old Testament, the designation of *Carceralites* is intended to illuminate crossover connotations between biblical and penal milieus.[63] The suffix "-ites" roughly translates to "children of," so the term aims to figuratively bestow an identity on current and former progeny of CC as inheritors of religious bondage. As with any form of bondage, the experience is accompanied by some form and level of suffering.

Formation of Carceralite Identity

Bothered, uncomfortable, sad, depressed, miserable, burdened, guilty, shamed, worried, anxious, confused, tired, weary, scared, fearful, terrified, hurt, pained, agony, embarrassed, humiliated, demeaned, mad, angry, appalled, bitter, hate, resentment, isolated, offended, dissatisfied, stressed, regret, disequilibrium, disgust, yucky, self-doubt, numb, helpless, and powerless. If our feelings exist to inform us, as personal transformation expert

[62] Samuel, in discussion with the author, September 30, 2009.
[63] With sincere appreciation for my dissertation committee for helping come up with this term.

Debbie Ford once expressed,[64] then these evocative words, spoken by what I term *emigrant Carceralites* in interviews with me, illuminate poignant underpinnings of a shared common identity. Initially awash in a religious experience that is deeply conflicted by tensions between what we are taught, what we learn, what we experience, and what we sense within, Carceralites can become lost in a vacuum of fear, confusion, and uncertainty. We suffer because our sense of selfhood and well-being are so connected to the church, and we struggle because we do not know where we fit in or what our future will be. Contrary to Christianity's aim, then, CC leaves many adherents feeling lonesome and disconnected from self and God.

In their work, Harris and Milam identified styles of adaptation and maladaptation to abusive Christianity, including being angry rebels, Christian perpetrators, self-punishers, sheep, disenchanted dropouts, perfect people, and confessors and forgetters.[65] These sub-identities, if you will, represent survival responses to Christian abuse, which can be extrapolated to CC and which will be evident throughout this work. In keeping with Martin's cultural wealth approach to education, we can say that the adaptive styles are cultural assets helping to disrupt the problem of religious miseducation in some way, whereas

[64] Debbie Ford, Twitter post, October 12, 2011, 3:01 pm, http://twitter.com/debbieford.
[65] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 96-111.

the maladaptive styles are cultural liabilities fostering the same. Adherents can embody more than one style at a time and move through them at different stages. Let us take a brief look at each to appreciate the range of survival responses.

First, *angry rebels* are people who feel abused by Christianity and, as a result, are mad at God, the church, Christian authority figures, and religion in general. These individuals move out of Christian communities and want nothing to do with religion except to attack it. As explained by Harris and Milam, angry rebels cover the hurt and pain caused by Christianity by abusing the abuser, so to speak, and dealing with their pain by externalizing it against the very system that hurt them.

Like angry rebels, *Christian perpetrators* also externalize anger, but it is vented against sinners, vices, social ills, each other, and anything or anyone not conforming to their particular brand of Christianity. They characterize themselves as God's warriors in the battle, and they will stand against anyone who disagrees with them. Harris and Milam emphasized that these individuals have also been wounded by Christianity but are unaware of it. They likened Christian perpetrators to children raised in abusive environments who then grow up to become abusers.

Unlike angry rebels and Christian perpetrators, *self-punishers* turn their anger inward and have learned to feel guilty for everything. Self-punishers experience excessive guilt, as Harris and Milam argued, and feel ashamed even for being human. Part of this guilt can be traced back to the concept of original sin that was discussed earlier. Taught that they are born sinners and therefore are bad, many adherents learn to feel worthless and punish themselves in ways such as negative self-talk to assuage the guilt, and some become mentally or physically sick in the process.

Harris and Milam described the next group, *sheep*, as hard-working church people who commit spiritual suicide by giving up parts of themselves to comply with rigid religious expectations. Disproportionately female, these adherents are said to have "'killed' their spirit in order to follow" traditional roles.[66] Conceding that being a follower in this context could be a "healthy response to a healthy, meaningful, and fulfilling" religious life, Harris and Milam nonetheless cautioned that it becomes spiritual suicide when following means giving up one's thinking, rationality, curiosity, sexuality, sensuality, and anger; basically, one surrenders the essence of what makes one unique.[67] People like this are sometimes derogatively referred to as "sheeple" in pop culture,

[66] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 106.
[67] Ibid.

meaning "people plus sheep." In a religious context, it also means "people plus sheep plus steeple."

Disenchanted dropouts are just that: people so hurt and disheartened by Christianity and Christians that they stop affiliating with religion. Likely to have already gone through a rebellious phase, sick and tired of the rules, "disappointed in the magic that does not work,"[68] weary of abuse, exhausted by the lack of understanding, these adherents simply want out. Unlike angry rebels who easily lock horns over matters of religion, disenchanted dropouts tend to not talk about religion and prefer to be left alone. Also known as apostates, with apostasy representing formal disaffiliation from one's religion, many Christian apostates find "life is better, freer, richer, and more honest without faith in God or involvement in religion."[69] It often comes, however, at the price of being called a backslider or accused of not really being saved to begin with. According to sociologist Phil Zuckerman, apostasy is higher among men, and apostates tend to be more highly educated and more likely to lean left politically.[70] For apostates whose identities and lives have been grounded in

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[68] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 109.
[69] Phil Zuckerman, *Faith No More: Why People Reject Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 173.
[70] Ibid., *Faith No More*. For an overview of Zuckerman's findings, see Phil Zuckerman, "Taking Leave of Religion," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*,

their status and relationships in the church, it can be especially difficult to adjust to life on the outside.

The *perfect people* (aka "do-gooders"), on the other hand, are steeped in denial and out of touch with their emotions, according to Harris and Milam. Similar to Christian perpetrators in their level of intrusiveness but in happiness instead of anger, these adherents love Jesus and want everyone to know it. Human versions of the song "Everything is AWESOME!!!,"[71] they give the impression of living perfect lives in perfect joy with their perfect salvation while being taken care of by a perfect God. Habituated to these emotions, the perfect people have learned to act as if everything is always wonderful and that difficult circumstances and negative emotions are bad and should not exist. One person who reviewed this section similarly suggested, "Perhaps this could also mean that negative emotions are manifestations of Satan according to this type of Christian and therefore do not deserve to exist."

Finally, Harris and Milam identified Christians who *confess and forget it* as a religious version of hypocrites and sociopaths. These adherents are said to

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November 20, 2011, http://chronicle.com/article/Taking-Leave-of-Religion/129799/.

[71] Tegan and Sara featuring The Lonely Island, vocal performance of "Everything is AWESOME!!!," by Shawn Patterson, Joshua Bartholomew, Lisa Harriton, Andy Samberg, Akiva Schaffer, and Jorma Taccone, on *The Lego Movie: Original Motion Picture Soundtrack*, published January 27, 2014.

go through the motions of religious life without any depth of spirit by living however they want and then coming to church to "confess and forget it." As Harris and Milam explained, "Under the superficial exterior lies a rigid ethic that they simply cannot live up to; they have given up and tend to escape into sex, drugs, and 'fun.'"[72] That alone might be unobjectionable; however, these individuals become shallow, narcissistic, and detached from guilt or shame (appropriate or otherwise). When these emotions no longer moderate behavior, empathy is lost, and the propensity to hurt others increases. Think of adherents who perpetrate sexual abuse or incest within a religious context or ministers who preach against same-sex relationships while secretly engaged in one. Confess-and-forget-it Christians survive by remaining religious but lack substance to back up their religious affectations.

To these styles of adaptation and maladaptation, I add *religious delinquent* to the Carceralite identity, a category that accommodates a variety of responses to religious miseducation. According to Foucault, delinquency is the combined effect of the prison, alongside the consequence of its disciplinary power to control illegalities and experiences of being imprisoned.[73] Specifically, penality

[72] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 144.
[73] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 278, 301.

is able to pathologize "the delinquent" by yoking "the criminal" and "the subject rehabilitated" under the singular authority of "the penal system."[74]

Applying this concept of delinquency to CC, then, we could say that Carceralites (delinquents) are coerced (pathologized) to accept such rigidly dualistic identities as born sinners (criminals) who are born again in spirit (rehabilitated subjects) by a compelling Christian authority (penal system) aiming to ensure compliance to legalities (in this case, carceralities of tetradeum).[75] Or Carceralites (delinquents) are disciplined (pathologized) to punish backsliders (criminals) and reward the righteous (rehabilitated subjects) by a controlling Christian authority (penal system) aiming to ensure rejection of illegalities (in this case, liberties of tetradeum). Or, if we assume the opposite, Carceralites (delinquents) are punished (pathologized) when they resist CC (criminals) and are labeled heretics (un-rehabilitated subjects) by a punitive Christian authority (penal system) aiming to "prevent indisciplines"[76] (freedoms of tetradeum).

To be clear, and borrowing from Foucault's concept of delinquency, I propose that Carceralites in general are considered religious delinquents in

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[74] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 256, 276-277.
[75] Refer to 'tetradeum' on page 6.
[76] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 290-291.

need of rehabilitation and are pathologized through coercion, discipline, and punishment. People who are unsaved, backsliders, and resisters are analogous to criminals, whereas those born again in spirit, who are righteous, and who remain in community are analogous to being virtuous. Finally, Christian authorities utilize power dynamics to compel, control, and punish adherents to ensure compliance to the good, rejection of the bad, and prevention of disobedience and waywardness. Understanding there are many possible scenarios and combinations of such elements, it is fair to say that miseducative aspects for each are absorbed by the Carceralite identity.

Similar to Zimbardo, Foucault emphasized that a person's life, not specific acts, characterizes his or her identity. Ever dichotomized in CC as a criminal or rehabilitated subject, whether inside or outside the system, there is tremendous pressure to be one of the rehabilitated or good subjects. In trying to survive, Carceralites end up passing down maladaptive patterns they have learned, which become self-perpetuating transmissions of religious liabilities. Let us now delve into the educational mechanisms at work in this kind of Christian education, beginning with the kind of discipline that grounds it.

Chapter 2:

Panoptic Discipline

The eyes of others are our prisons;

their thoughts our cages.

—Menna van Praag

Discipline

"Discipline" has as many meanings and usages as there are "educational agents"[1] to transmit them. Early origins date to the thirteenth-century and range from "instruction, teaching, learning, and knowledge" to "penitential chastisement and punishment."[2] Early meanings include a "branch of instruction or education," "strict military training," and "orderly conduct as a result of training."[3] More broadly, discipline may represent "complex social fields whereby 'systems of objectification'… are… produced by complex political economies, institutional cultures, and relationships of power."[4] Systems discipline, people within systems discipline, people are disciplined by and within systems, and people self-discipline. Discipline develops, trains, and educates, and it punishes, controls, and imposes compliance. In short, discipline represents social systems and the actions on or by individuals within them.

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[1] Martin, *Cultural Miseducation*, chap. 2.
[2] "Discipline," *Online Etymology Dictionary*, accessed March 13, 2013, http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=discipline.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Pierre Bourdieu, quoted in Gregory J. Kelly, Allan Luke, and Judith Green, "What Counts as Knowledge in Educational Settings: Disciplinary Knowledge, Assessment, and Curriculum," *Review of Research in Education* 32 (2008), x, http://dx.doi.org/ 10.3102/0091732X07311063.

Minds may be disciplined; so, too, bodies, spirits, and consciences. In this way, discipline is said to "make people."[5]

Discipline is taught and practiced by and within many educational institutions in society, including religious ones. Indeed, Christianity as an educational agent has a long history of disciplining people both inside and outside the church.[6] Among others, Christian discipline educates for religious reasons (conversion, right training, and moralization), economic reasons (aid and encouragement to work), and political reasons (struggle against discontent or agitation).[7] I contend that, as Christian people, we begin our lives being-*disciplined*; that is, taught the rules for Godly living and rewarded for keeping them and punished for not keeping them. We then move to *being*-disciplined; that is, we learn to internalize and/or keep the rules automatically. How we come to internalize and/or keep the rules is a contextual matter of importance for determining good and bad Christian discipline.

I argue that Christian discipline obtained through gentle, honest and reflective inquiry represents good discipline (a religious asset), whereas Christian discipline obtained through coercion and domination constitutes bad

[5] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 170.
[6] Monasteries (inside) and the Crusades (outside) come to mind.
[7] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 212.

discipline (a religious liability).[8] The latter characterizes a kind of discipline with the pedagogical power to bully adherents into complying with particular Christian beliefs and practices, even when they are excessively constraining, go against one's conscience, or are abusive. That kind of discipline demands adherence to "right" curriculum and does not respect people's abilities to form their own religious and spiritual decisions. This type of discipline epitomizes CC, which I will further formulate and describe in this chapter.

Panoptic Discipline

"… like having a thousand parents."[9] —Sarah

Imagine that your father is a church deacon and your mother is a church secretary. Imagine that they also are very involved with the private, Christian-affiliated high school you attend and that everyone knows them. Now imagine that people from your church and school tell your parents about any missteps they see you make. One time, you even get reported and punished for wearing a spaghetti-strapped shirt in a public place. Further imagine that you are made to attend chapel every day at school, go to church services three days a week, work on a church service project one night a week, attend a church dinner once

[8] Martin, "Minimizing the Liabilities" and "Maximizing the Assets," chaps. 4 and 5 in *Cultural Miseducation*, 87-112, 113-142.
[9] Sarah, in discussion with the author, May 8, 2009.

a week, and go to a Bible study one night a week. These activities are not optional, and your life is predominantly made to revolve around the church. Now expand this imagining to include your circle of best friends who attend the same church and school, and their parents, like yours, are active members. You cannot even sneak away from these commitments because your parents and/or theirs attend them, and you would be punished for doing so. Can you imagine what that would be like? You might feel, as Sarah does, that it is "…like having a thousand parents."[10]

The Panopticon

Sarah's experiences illustrate a Christian disciplinary context that is all-encompassing and always disciplining. I theorize it as *panoptic discipline*, drawing that designation from the Panopticon, a prison structure proposed by utilitarian philosopher Jeremy Bentham in 1843. The Panopticon was later invoked by Michel Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* as a metaphor for modern disciplinary societies and their tendency to surveil and normalize people.[11] The structure of the Panopticon features a central tower and a surrounding outer

[10] Sarah, discussion.
[11] Surveillance of the population in general, settings and groups, informers and agents. In Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 281.

ring made up of constantly visible and individualized cells.[12] From the central tower, an unseen guard may observe inmates at any time. Inmates, in contrast, see the tower but never know when they are being watched. Nor are they able to see one another because the cells in the outer ring are partitioned.

The Panopticon represents a powerful disciplinary system because prisoners simultaneously experience a fearful sense of *permanent visibility*[13] within the system (always being watched) and an isolating sense of what I will call *lateral invisibility* amidst one another. That is, one is not being seen, feeling as if one has to hide, and not being understood. In short, panoptic discipline imposes *compulsory visibility*[14] on people while also operating through profound invisibility. The former exacts good behavior from inmates since they never know if a guard is watching; the latter conveys the deep loneliness felt by prisoners in the implicit separateness of the structure.

Panoptic Gaze

I argue that CC is a penal-like religious educational system that exercises panoptic discipline over adherents. Running "top to bottom, but also to a

[12] Ibid., 200.
[13] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 201.
[14] Ibid., 187.

certain extent from bottom to top and laterally,"[15] panoptic discipline works itself out on Carceralites through a dominating gaze that I envision as the Central Tower, a thousand central towers, self-enforced towers, and a multiplicity of other intersecting and controlling towers. Essentially, there is no escape. God is watching and judging, others are watching and judging, or people are watching and judging themselves to make sure they believe and/or act as good Christians. Recall for Sarah, it was "a nightmare growing up like that."[16]

The Central Tower

With an all-encompassing architectural design, the Panopticon makes it possible for a single gaze in a central tower, which I will call the Central Tower to represent God, to see everything constantly. From this hierarchical position, "all orders would come, all activities would be recorded, all offences perceived and judged."[17] This is hierarchical power. Foucault declared the gaze from the central tower as "a perfect eye" from which nothing escapes and toward which "all gazes [meaning prisoners, and I will add Carceralites] are turned."[18]

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[15] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 176-177.
[16] Sarah, discussion.
[17] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 173-174.
[18] Ibid., 235.

With biblical verses like the following, which signify God's external and internal surveillance of people, it is not difficult to imagine God as the perfect disciplinary gaze: all-seeing and all-judging.[19]

> Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.[20] —From the book of Hebrews
>
> … the Lord looketh on the heart.[21] —From the first book of Samuel

These verses show that panoptic discipline literally teaches Christians that God – like the unseen guard in Bentham's central tower – is ever-watching and, as one writer described, knows "everything about everything and everybody."[22] We learn that God knows our actions, our thoughts, and our feelings.

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[19] Searching "the all-seeing eye of God" and "God as judge" on the Internet leads to more than a billion links and images. This imagery and symbology spans time, cultures, and religions. One of the individuals who reviewed this chapter wrote in her response to this section, "An eighteenth-century Presbyterian church in a town near where I grew up featured the eye of God on its ceiling right over a very highly placed pulpit!!! When my Brownie troop visited it, while I was attending a Christian day school, it TERRIFIED me!"

[20] Hebrews 4:13 (King James Version). See also Jeremiah 16:17, Job 24:23, Job 28:24, Psalms 11:4, Psalms 14:2, Psalms 15:3, Psalms 33:13-15, Psalms 34:15, Psalms 102:19, Psalms 139:13-16, and Proverbs 15:3.

[21] Arguably, expressions such as "God's eye searches all hearts," and verses such as this one in I Samuel 16:7 (King James Version), "The Lord looketh on the heart," reflect lessons in inner surveillance. See also I Kings 8:39, I Chronicles 28:9, Psalms 139:1-6 and 139:23, Jeremiah 17:10, Luke 16:15, Romans 8:27, and Revelations 2:23.

[22] Churchlayman, "God Is Omniscient – 'He Sees and Knows' Everything," *Christian Perspectives & Free Market Economics* (blog), October 9, 2007, http://churchlayman.wordpress.com/2007/10/09/god-is-omniscient-he-sees-and-knows-everything/.

Importantly, panoptic discipline also teaches us that God is keeping a list of the things he sees and knows, both in our outer and inner lives, and will judge us eternally from that list. I imagine the story of Santa Claus has evolved as one early means of softening young people to this notion, as evidenced by some references to God as a "heavenly Santa Claus" and "over-glorified Santa Claus," and Jesus as "Santa Claus for grown ups."[23]

A Thousand Central Towers

As powerful as the perfect disciplinary gaze of God is, many other gazes participate in the overall functioning of CC. In addition to God as the Central Tower, panoptic discipline comprises a thousand central towers that make up the guards and disciplinarians of CC. Sarah's description – "like having a thousand parents" – speaks to being under an ever-present religious surveillance, which also mirrors Foucault's thought on police surveillance.

> In order to be exercised, this power had to be given the instrument of permanent, exhaustive, omnipresent surveillance… thousands of eyes posted everywhere, mobile attentions ever on

[23] Daniel A. Helminiak, *Spirituality for Our Global Community: Beyond Traditional Religion to a World at Peace* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008), 78. Helminiak also uses "adult version of Santa Claus" (77), "celestial Santa Claus" (81), and "the great Santa Claus in the sky" (86) to describe how some people view God; Deborah, in discussion with the author, November 19, 2007; "Jesus – Santa Claus for grown-ups," *LOL god*, accessed November 25, 2014, http://lolgod.blogspot.com/2011/01/jesus-santa-claus-for-grown-ups.html.

> the alert… this unceasing observation had to be accumulated in a series of reports and registers… (about) forms of behavior, attitudes, possibilities, suspicions – a permanent account of individuals' behavior.[24]

How much greater the surveillance and far-reaching the disciplinary gaze when one is surrounded by 'church'?

It is a common practice for many Christians in my area, for example, to greet new people by asking, "Where/what is your church-home?" I did not realize this was uncommon until a friend who grew up in the North said that she had not heard the phrase "church-home" before moving to Oklahoma. It conveys, in effect, that you are always with church and church is always with you. Barnabas serves as a good example.[25] His parents served in prominent positions at their church. His circle of friends was enclosed within the church. He also attended a private Christian high school that was "so extremely conservative that the John Birch Society (considered a radical right political advocacy group) even visited." Teachers and students from his school also attended his church. Because his home, school, and church experiences were

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[24] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 214. See also Stephen Smith, "Brother's Keeper or Big Brother? 15 Signs of Surveillance in Your Church," *Liberty for Captives* (blog), January 20, 2014, http://libertyforcaptives.com/2014/01/20/brothers-keeper-or-big-brother-15-signs-of-surveillance-in-your-church/.
[25] Barnabas, discussion.

interlocked, I argue that Barnabas was especially vulnerable to a strong collective surveillance and monitoring.

Self-Enforced Towers

In addition to being vulnerable to external gazes that are continually observing and judging one's outer life, some Carceralites are subjected to an intrusive disciplinary dragnet aimed at their inner lives. One emigrant Carceralite shared with me that if her car broke down, she believed God was punishing her for not holding quiet time.[26] Another was so convinced that God was feeding information to her mother that she would tell her mother things even when they were appropriately private. She said:

> As I got older, she (her mother) couldn't physically discipline me as much… and she basically had this spiel about how "God talks to me, and I know what you've been doing." There was a lot of that… It was horrible. I hated that. And I believed her.[27]

Such is the compelling nature of panoptic discipline. Foucault explained it this way:

> He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he

[26] Ruth, in discussion with the author, August 25, 2009.
[27] Miriam, in discussion with the author, November 19, 2007.

> becomes the principle of his own subjection. By this very fact, the external power may throw off its physical weight.[28]

In short, adherents internalize teachings under a powerful disciplinary gaze and, in response, develop a strong inner gaze (i.e., self-enforced towers). We know we are possibly being watched and learn to watch over ourselves, effectively becoming our own guards. "Possibly" is a key word here. Part of the power of the Panopticon is that inmates never know when the guard is watching from the central tower; thus, must be ever vigilant. Bentham referred to this principle as "unverifiable."[29]

Panoptic Power

> "Doesn't matter if you think I'm weird. You're not the one who will be judging me. God is."[30] —Nine-year-old Rachel on her bowling ministry

Foucault argued that an "induced state of conscious and permanent visibility" is the "major effect of the Panopticon" because it "assures the automatic functioning of power."[31] Panoptic discipline, with its Tower and towers, disciplines people in complex relationships that, according to Foucault,

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[28] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 202-203.
[29] Ibid., 201.
[30] *Jesus Camp*. Directed by Heidi Ewing and Rachel Grady. Dallas, TX: Magnolia Pictures, 2006. The filmmakers followed Rachel while she witnessed to random people in a local bowling alley.
[31] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 201.

invest us, mark us, train us, persecute us, force us to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, and to make it obvious that we are part of the system.[32] In short, panoptic power operates to "produce" people.[33] It works to "automatize and disindividualize" people, making us machine-like and all the same, like prisoners.[34] Also, like soldiers. This is useful in CC because Christianity needs good (read: disciplined) soldiers for Christ.[35] Arguably, the implicit role of both prisoner and soldier is one of obedience, submission, and abandonment of one's will to that of another, be they warden, commanding officer, etc. Both prisoners and soldiers are taught not to be critical but to submit, not to be reflective but to obey. They are expected to be ready and willing to do whatever is required by the powers that be.

Borrowing from Foucault's ideas on disciplinary power and cellular power,[36] and from ecofeminist philosopher Karen Warren's notion of power-

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[32] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 25.
[33] Ibid., 194.
[34] Ibid., 202.
[35] For example, Rev. Franklin Graham, son of the revered evangelical minister Billy Graham, was recently quoted as saying, "We are locked in a war against the Christian faith." Wars require soldiers. In Peter Wehner, "Why Evangelicals Should Love the Pope," *The New York Times*, April 4, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/05/opinion/sunday/why-evangelicals-should-love-the-pope.html?comments&_r=0.
[36] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 149, 167, 170.

over power,[37] I maintain that panoptic discipline is characterized by three kinds of interrelated power relationships. The first, *disciplinary power*, is controlling power. It is centralized and hierarchical power wherein Christian people are subjected to God, women to men, children to parents, nature to humanity, etc. It is a kind of power that ordains or, as mentioned earlier, makes people. The second, *cellular power*, is normalizing power. It is decentralized and distributive power. Foucault describes it as power that operates in "every nook and cranny" of society and "the panopticisms of every day."[38] The third, *power-over power*, is coercive power. It is subjecting power that uses pressure, fear, and punishment to force adherents to adopt Christian teachings and practices that are defined as good. Unlike democratic discipline, which tries to spread the power base, panoptic discipline does not. Next, we will take a brief look at these kinds of power.

Disciplinary Power, or CONTROLLING POWER

Disciplinary power is controlling power as I understand it in response to Foucault's notion of controlling power and is exemplified by the omni-disciplinary gaze that is the Central Tower of the Panopticon. As mentioned in

[37] Karen J. Warren, "Toward an Ecofeminist Peace Politics," accessed April 7, 2013, http://instruct.westvalley.edu/lafave/ecofeminism.html.
[38] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, xx, 223.

Chapter 1, disciplinary power is both good and bad. Parenting, for example, necessarily requires this kind of power when a child's safety is at risk. After all, it is a good thing that parents of small children do not let them play in a street or body of water unattended. Even within CC, disciplinary power can be a good thing. Teaching, even requiring, children to give regularly to the offering may help them develop lifelong charitable habits, especially when they are taught to do so in a spirit of generosity instead of obligation.

Disciplinary power that uses panoptic pressure and intimidation to control people, however, is bad power. One person I interviewed, Deborah, put it this way:

> Within the Protestant churches, the most dangerous thing I see is the control… they try to control what you believe. They try to control what you think about yourself. They try to control what fields you study. They try to restrict you from high sciences because it "goes against God."[39]

Though many of Deborah's church's teachings did not resonate with her conscience, she nonetheless yielded. After all, if one is taught that (fill in the blank) goes against God – and everyone around her embraces that teaching – then how does she learn to resist?

[39] Deborah, discussion.

Another example is when parents dictate college decisions to their children. Sarah recounted that her parents offered to pay for her to attend "any college" and then qualified, "but it has to be a Christian college." I imagine "Christian" probably also would be qualified. Sarah was told she would be cut off if she chose any college other than a Christian college. In her case, being "cut off" also would include having to pay for things like health and dental insurance.[40] That is controlling power at work.

An article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education,* "A College That's Strictly Different,"[41] offers another example of omni-disciplinary power as controlling power. The article describes the experiences of former Pensacola Christian College students and graduates who reported that the rules at the college govern every aspect of student lives – "the books they read, the shoes they wear, the churches they attend, and the people they date." Students are required to attend mandatory chapel services, church services, and prayer group meetings. Movies and gaming are forbidden. Access to the Internet and music are restricted. Books and magazines are censored. When students leave campus, they must write down where they are going, and women may not

[40] Sarah, discussion.
[41] Thomas Bartlett, "A College That's Strictly Different," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 24, 2006, http://chronicle.com/article/A-College-Thats-Strictly/25308/.

leave the campus alone. In addition to the written rules, one student learned the hard way that prolonged eye contact with someone of the opposite sex is prohibited. He was disciplined for engaging in "optical intercourse," that is, "staring too intently into the eyes of a coed."

In both cases (Deborah and the Christian college), people felt captive within religious disciplinary systems that were excessively controlling and constraining. To be so controlled does not permit individuals the space needed to explore their own conscience, which can feel especially suffocating to individuals during precious coming of age years. It reminds me of purity ring ceremonies that recently have come into vogue.[42] In these ceremonies, parents (fathers in particular) give their children (girls in particular) a purity ring, which represents both the child's virginity and a pledge to remain chaste until marriage. The child then is expected to present the ring on his or her wedding night as evidence of his or her preserved virginity. In this way, parents feel they are sexually safeguarding (read: controlling) a child's purity.

Though still ethically problematic, one major hitch with abstinence pledges, like those in purity ceremonies, is that they are not always effective. A

[42] Purity balls for fathers and daughters are a formal version of these ceremonies, complete with tuxedos and ball gowns. Examining why purity is so important could become a dissertation by itself. I am bracketing it here for the sake of space; however, it is a worthy topic for future consideration.

2008 study by the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health found that more than half of young people become sexually active before marriage regardless of having taken an abstinence pledge.[43] Since these disciplinary ceremonies often are performed in the sacred space of the church, social pressure is brought to bear on young people to participate.[44] I recently learned of a thirteen-year-old who had experienced this kind of community pressure. She was asked to participate in a four-week ring ceremony class at her church but did not want to do so. She considered skipping church until after the classes were over, but was afraid it would mark her in the community. In short, she felt trapped: damned if she did (by herself), damned if she did not (by her community). It represents a difficult double bind that some young Christians must face.

Some young people may wholeheartedly want to participate in such ceremonies, while others, like the thirteen-year-old above, may do so simply to avoid anticipated community backlash. Some may participate to please their parents; others, to emulate the popular kids at church. Still others participate to evade a sense of inner shame that surely would follow if they chose not to

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[43] Rob Stein, "Premarital Abstinence Pledges Ineffective, Study Finds," *Washington Post*, December 29, 2008, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/12/28/AR2008122801588.html?hpid=topnews.

[44] This pressure would be magnified for young people growing up in small/rural communities and small churches.

participate. By *inner shame*, I am not referring to helpful judgments we pass on ourselves for wrongdoing but rather detrimental judgments that are pressed upon us by others that we learn to take into ourselves and make our own regardless of our conscience. It raises an ensuing question: How many young people feel shame for making a pledge to God that they know in their hearts they make reluctantly (and God knows their hearts) and then suffer compounded guilt and shame if that pledge is broken (because God judges their actions)?

Cellular Power, or NORMALIZING POWER

Cellular power as normalizing power, as I receive it in response to Foucault's notion of normalizing power, is power that operates through the nook-and-cranny panopticisms of everyday life. In short, it is power that plays in minute ways to shape what it means to be a good Christian. A simple sign placed above a church kitchen sink asking, "If Jesus were standing here, would you leave the dishes unwashed?" is an example of this kind of nook-and-cranny power.[45] The sign is a small tactic meant to make people wash their dishes, thus effectively normalizing who and what is good (good Christians wash dishes; bad Christians do not). Taking it a step further, I contend this particular

[45] This example came from a woman who saw this sign in a church kitchen while attending a luncheon for a relative's funeral.

exercise of cellular power is directed at female adherents, likely by other female adherents, as kitchens are explicitly designated as women's spaces.

Another way that panoptic discipline shapes what it means to be a good Christian is through controlling and routinizing people's time and space. In this way, cellular power produces what Foucault described as a "collective and obligatory rhythm" that "constrains and sustains" people throughout their lives.[46] Not unlike monastic orders that have become masters of systematic time and activities, prisons utilize techniques of time and space to effectively discipline inmates. Consider the similarities:

> (In a prison) Life was partitioned according to an absolutely strict time-table, under constant supervision; each moment of the day was devoted to a particular type of activity, and brought with it its own obligations and prohibitions… (Prisons include) processes that effect a transformation on the individual as a whole – of his body and of his habits by the daily work that he is forced to perform, of his mind and his will by the spiritual attentions that are paid to him.[47]

This selection from *Discipline and Punish* sounds like Sarah's experiences, as described earlier. Her life was partitioned according to a strict timetable. Church defined the ways in which her days were structured and the proper use of time in her days. She, too, was under constant supervision (reference her

[46] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 151-152.
[47] Ibid., 124.

"thousand parents" comment). In addition, church stretched into the Christian school she attended, shaped her friendships, and policed her community experiences. I imagine that her teachers at home, church, and school would argue that these routines and processes ultimately benefitted her by shaping her for a Godly life as well as a proper life in the community. However, I am again reminded of her words: it was "a nightmare growing up like that."[48]

More broadly, many Christians are compelled to be in church, on time, sitting in pews, standing, or taking meditative postures (whatever is required at a particular time in a particular church), ready to receive the Word of God. Depending upon the tradition, church times include Sunday mornings, Sunday evenings, Wednesday evenings, regular season, holy season, revivals, vacation Bible school, morning prayer, evening song, and confession of sins. Depending upon the season, Christians are encouraged to take communion and to feast or fast.[49] Christians are also advised to participate in prayer meetings, study groups, youth groups, and other such church activities as choir practices, visitations, church sports leagues, and summer camps. In addition, Christians are instructed to hold individual and family devotionals, which include reading from texts and prayer. Many are even directed on how to pray, the order of

[48] Sarah, discussion.
[49] Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987).

prayer, for what to pray, where to pray, and for how long to pray. This is cellular power at work. It is time and space made totally useful for God by constant supervision, pressure from authority figures, and elimination of anything worldly that might distract people.[50]

I certainly do not claim that all structured and routinized time is carceral. On the contrary, structure and routine are essential to children's learning and budding sense of safety and well-being. So is having unstructured and unroutinized time, I might add. I do claim, however, that excessive use of routinized and structured time, as argued here, takes an emotional and spiritual toll on Carceralites that "leaves nothing to self,"[51] as emigrant Carceralite Omri conveyed.

Allow me to share another example. I ran across an article titled "Ada [Oklahoma] woman writes book to save time for better things" in the February 26, 2006 edition of the *Ada Evening News*. The author shared these reasons for writing the book (a cookbook):

> As mothers and wives, we have so many other things to worry about than what to fix for dinner. I wanted to take away the burden so that you could spend more time with your family, study the Bible, and to attend church.

[50] "Totally useful time" is discussed in Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 149-150.
[51] Omri, discussion.

Setting aside the implication that only mothers and wives worry about what to fix for dinner, her statement illustrates the kind of intrusive day-to-day control that such religious discipline can foster.

Nook-and-cranny power, whether carried out in a prison, church, or other setting, constitutes an "exhaustive disciplinary apparatus that assumes responsibility for all aspects" of a person's life.[52] As Omri explained,

> Once you're a Christian, you have to act like a Christian, dress like a Christian, be like a Christian, listen to Christian music. No matter what you have to do, it has to be a Christian activity. You can't have a life outside of the religion.[53]

Foucault described such control as a "micro-physics of power."[54] Applied to CC, it works in small ways continuously in everyday lives, thus homogenizing and normalizing what it means to be a good Christian. Put another way, religion is everywhere; it is all-encompassing and unceasing, and one is always in it.

Another example may be helpful. In 2012, I ran across a weekly newsletter from a Methodist church in my area, which promoted seventy-nine meetings and activities for that week.[55] Even if members only attend a fraction

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[52] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 235-6.
[53] Omri, in discussion with the author, November 20, 2007.
[54] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 26.
[55] McFarland United Methodist Church, February 26-March 3, 2012.

of these events, that is still a lot of time spent at church and with the people at church.[56] The meetings and activities in this church newsletter also speak to cellular power as *distributive power*. This kind of power allocates people within complex disciplinary spaces. In prisons, according to Foucault, it organizes people into "'cells,' 'places' and 'ranks'" that are "at once architectural, functional and hierarchical."[57] The church newsletter, with its seventy-nine events, apportioned people within the structure of the building (the sanctuary, Sunday school rooms, choir room, nursery, etc.), by purpose (worship, prayer, ministries, support groups, etc.) and through gender ranks (men's prayer breakfast, women's Bible study, Boy Scouts meetings, etc.). In perusing the newsletter, I noticed also that women generally are in charge of ministries involving children's education and activities, food services, and member care, including senior adult care. Men generally are in charge of pastoral ministry, church governance, and youth education and activities. Music ministry and outreach seemed to be shared by both men and women at this particular church at that particular time.

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[56] Pat Zukeran, "Abusive Churches." Many Christians, according to Zukeran, equate business at church with spiritual maturity. He argues, however, that addiction to religious activity becomes a barrier to an authentic relationship with God.

[57] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 148-149.

Undoubtedly, many Christian men and women embrace and celebrate these kinds of divisions. Indeed, many believe that such divisions are biblically ordained. For Carceralites, however, the spaces into which we are allocated either constrain us from spaces we wish we could inhabit (for example, women who want but are not permitted to serve as pastoral ministers) or sustain us in spaces that do not fit (for example, women who succumb to pressure to be stay-at-home parents when they really want careers outside of the home, or perhaps even men who succumb to pressure to have careers outside of the home when they really want to be stay-at-home parents). Gendered distributions end up working themselves out on women and men in ways that constrain the possibilities for our lives. To be unable to pursue a calling or sustained in a role one would not choose is to suffer the difference.[58]

Power-over Power, or COERCIVE POWER

According to Warren, power is only "appropriate or morally permissible when it is exercised to produce needed or desired change *in ways which do not create or maintain oppressive relationships of dominance and subordination*" (author

[58] Gender differences are examined more fully in Chapter 4.

italics).[59] The latter, says Warren, produces power-over power relationships, which she described in this way:

> Power-over power serves to maintain, perpetuate, and justify relations of domination and subordination by the coercive use or threat of force, imposition of harms and sanctions, expression of disapproval or displeasure, or restriction of liberties of the Downs by the Ups. This power-over power may be overt or covert, individual or institutional, intentional or unintentional, malicious or benevolent; its key feature is that it is exercised by Ups over Downs.[60]

Warren's usage of *Ups* and *Downs* is intended to convey that a higher value or status is placed on something considered Up rather than something considered Down. Ups and Downs may include relationships and dualistic ideas, among other things, such as church leaders as Up and church members as Down, parents as Up and children as Down, men as Up and women as Down, reason as Up and emotion as Down, mind as Up and body as Down, etc. In short, whatever is Up is considered dominant/superior, whereas whatever is Down is considered subordinate/inferior.

Power-over power may or may not include things like parents forcing children to attend church, though I have often wondered at what age we should

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[59] Warren, "Toward an Ecofeminist Peace Politics," para. 12.
[60] Ibid, para. 7. Within the article, Warren helpfully distinguishes among five types of power: power-over power, power-with power, power-within power, power-towards power, and power-against power.

allow our children to follow their own religious conscience in this matter. Power-over power certainly does include, however, experiences like this one reported by Miriam.

> I remember (a woman at the church) – I don't know why – I don't how this happened, but I guess I had been sent out to the car after the meeting one night because I was probably being outspoken… She came out there, and she forced me to pray. I wouldn't do it, so she took my hands and took my head and forced it down and prayed and prayed that I would come back to the Lord. And it was – it was physically violent; it was – it was horrible.[61]

Roger Williams, religious leader and one of the founders of Rhode Island, famously wrote, "Forced worship stinks in God's nostrils."[62] For Miriam to have had her head and hands physically forced into a prayer position while an older member oppressively prayed over her is a clear example of forced worship and Warren's power-over power relations. Not only did the woman want Miriam to yield her body to her authority but so, too, I argue, her conscience to the authority of the church. Though I do not know what Miriam had spoken out about, it seems clear that it was not considered good Christian speak.

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[61] Miriam, in discussion with the author, November 19, 2007.
[62] "Roger Williams, Founder of Rhode Island, Arrived in Boston February 5, 1631," *America's Story from America's Library*, accessed November 25, 2014, http://www.americaslibrary.gov/jb/colonial/jb_colonial_williams_4.html.

Foucault described a coercive institution as one that "assumes responsibility for the body and time" of people and "regulates movements and behaviors by a system of authority and knowledge."[63] I reason that panoptic discipline is coercive because it does just this: It uses biblical authority and knowledge to tell people what it means to be a good Christian and then compels adherents to comply based on this authority and knowledge regardless of individual conscience. We could include coerced fasting during holy days or holy weeks as another example here. One person who reviewed this section was forced to fast during Lent and Holy Week at an Episcopal convent school. She said, "Fasting can be a meaningful devotion, but force made it tyranny."

Institutions, however, must get access to people before they can assume responsibility for them. Coercion comes into play here, too, though coercion with "carrots." As Rizpah expressed with some disdain during our interview:

> I remember going to church with all my friends, and being really horrified to see all of the donuts and the Coca-Cola and the video games. And I'm like, you're just drugging up kids with sugar and caffeine and then getting their butts in church. It's just ridiculous. You're just dangling a carrot in front of their faces so they'll come.[64]

[63] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 130.
[64] Rizpah, in discussion with the author, April 10, 2009.

Rizpah does not like or agree with churches that entice young people through the doors with spiritually empty carrots only to hit them with sticks when, as she described, their "butts are in church." That is, carceral churches and institutions may get prospects to attend events by providing food and popular activities and then use coercive disciplinary techniques like pressure, manipulation, and fear to keep them attending the church.

Rizpah's observation reminded me of Falls Creek Baptist Conference Center in Oklahoma, the "largest youth camp in the world," which annually hosts more than 54,000 young people for its eight weeks of summer camp and 42,000 others for retreats and conferences throughout the year.[65] In addition to offering the usual summer camp activities like swimming, fishing, kayaking, basketball, and volleyball, Falls Creek boasts one of the largest ropes courses in the nation, a 9,000-square-foot skate park, and a nine-hole disc golf course.[66] She might argue that Falls Creek intended for these activities to be the carrots that would draw new young people to come to camp, where, if needed, their souls could be won over for Christ.

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[65] "About," *Falls Creek Baptist Conference Center*, accessed November 25, 2014, http://www.fallscreekok.org/about/; "Home," *Falls Creek*, accessed March 22, 2015, http://www.fallscreek.org/.

[66] "Falls Creek: Around Grounds: Recreation," *Skopos*, accessed November 25, 2014, http://skopos.org/fallscreek/#/fallscreek/aroundgrounds/recreation/.

And what if people are Bible-thumped with religious sticks while attending such camps? I recently spoke with a non-Christian woman who sent her daughter to summer camp at Falls Creek because she wants her children to experience other religious beliefs and practices as a matter of their spiritual education. Her daughter, who was eight or nine at the time, came back shaken by the experience and asked her mom, "Are we going to hell?"

Coercive Disciplinary Techniques

Let us take a closer look at the intimidation techniques mentioned above: pressure, manipulation, and use of fear. They are employed to compel people away from certain beliefs and behaviors and toward others. Similar to a penal system, they range from minimum to maximum levels of intimidation. Pressure, for example, represents a minimum level; manipulation, a medium level; and use of fear, a maximum level. After examining these intimidation techniques, I will analyze punishment as the foundational technique of coercive discipline.

Pressure

Like Jerry Harris and Melody Milam, I recognize that "family pressure is consistent and strong so that a child in the family really has no choice but to be

of the same religion."[67] I imagine few children of carceral Christian families, for example, are given the choice to attend or not attend church. They are made to go. One emigrant Carceralite, Omri, explained, "Basically, it (life) was made more pleasant for me if I went."[68] Another, Eunice, shared, "I really resented I had to go to church Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night… revivals... I was kind of sick of it."[69] Yet another, Rachel, admitted thinking, "Oh, what a terrible person!" when her younger sister begged, "Can we please just not go to church this morning?"[70] She was sure "God would strike you down if you even asked." Therefore, there is strong parental and family pressure to go.

Religious pressure, however, can come from anywhere. When someone asks upon first meeting you, "Where do you go to church?" (a common greeting where I live), that is implicit pressure. When a school friend asks, "Do you have Jesus in your heart?," that is explicit pressure. When you know you do not have the socially desirable answer to such questions, that is inner pressure. When people begin calling or visiting either to convert you or get you to go to their church, that is outer pressure.

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[67] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 118-119.
[68] Omri, discussion.
[69] Eunice, in discussion with the author, February 29, 2008.
[70] Rachel, discussion.

There are also myriad pressures when one attends church. Some are ongoing; others are cyclical, like this one reported by Enoch, which I also experienced.

> I remember the first election of Clinton. They were putting out materials that "a good Christian would vote for Bush," that sort of thing. And everybody was pissed off because… basically the whole Clinton thing that everybody was just like, "He's the devil."… I wasn't terribly political then, but it was like the good Christian in me — or the side of me that wants to be a good Christian — is saying, "Well, I should be supporting Bush."[71]

My experience was around the same time and happened when I was visiting a family member's Baptist church one Sunday morning. After the pastor opened the service, a deacon traded places with him at the pulpit and announced, "Every good Christian will vote for George W. Bush come this election day."[72] That is pressure! It made me wonder about members of the congregation who may have been supporters of other political parties. As a visitor, a Democrat, and a Christian, my sense of conscience was deeply offended by the comment. As a member, however, it would have been worse. I would have felt tremendous pressure to hide my political identity or to regard my own political views as suspect.

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[71] Enoch, discussion.

[72] Incidentally, if the pastor had made this announcement, it would have jeopardized the church's nonprofit status. I assume that is why the deacon made the announcement.

Manipulation (psychological/social)

The kinds of pressures described above are stressful, even anxiety provoking, and are intended to make people comply. Use of manipulation, including guilt, shame, and fear, ups the ante by bullying people psychologically and socially. Guilt, for example, is frequently used to control people in a carceral religious system and is a form of manipulation that, as Harris and Milam put it, "does not respect the individual's ability to think and decide on his/her own."[73]

As with other techniques, guilt works to force compliance. Miriam's mother threatening her with "God talks to me, and I know what you've been doing" is an example of psychological manipulation using guilt. It reminds me of the earlier illustration of God as Santa Claus. When adults try to control children's behavior by saying that God/Santa sees them, or that they are going to be reported to God/Santa for the naughty list, they are attempting to guilt and threaten children into being good. After all, God/Santa sees us when we are sleeping, knows when we are awake, and knows if we have been bad or good. So, we had better be good.

[73] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 153.

"Guilt is appropriate," said Jerry Harris and Melody Milam, "when the feeling communicates that your actions are not consistent with the way you believe."[74] Guilt is inappropriate, they added, "when it lingers long after we have learned the lesson it teaches, and long after we have made amends or done what we could to rectify our behavior."[75] So what if one's actions are consistent with the way one believes? How does guilt come into play then? Recall Enoch from Chapter 1. When I asked him how he dealt with guilt, he said,

> For a while there, I was okay from the standpoint of "once saved, always saved." So you're in pretty good shape there… but where they get you is that they say things like, "Well, if you were truly saved, you wouldn't be doing this."… That really caused a lot of serious anxiety.[76]

Calling someone's salvation into question only heaps guilt upon guilt and is a blatant means to coerce people into doing what they are told. Other manipulations are subtler.

What and how we say things, for example, can be subtly coercive. Consider this example from Deborah, who talked about the power of repeated threatening language.

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[74] Ibid., 266.
[75] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 267.
[76] Enoch, discussion.

> Presbyterians weren't real big on hell, fire, and brimstone, but… they do this quiet recital of these words all the time. They say that "we are sinners" and that "we will only be redeemed in your light," and "please give us your light" and "please give us your blessing," etc., over and over again. And it's scary when you look at it like that. It's almost like mass programming. It's some kind of psychological and sociological manipulation to keep us from being individuals.[77]

Miriam echoed this concern, except over the cadence of speech in her church.

> I would kind of like go into this weird zone during the meetings. And I think there's something about their speech pattern and the way that they talk. It's kind of this monotone deal, and I think it's maybe kind of like a – I don't know, a hypnotic state or something.[78]

Though these experiences with language were not of the "hell, fire, and brimstone" type, Deborah and Miriam nonetheless felt manipulated by them.

An example of blatant manipulation through use of language may be found in the 2006 documentary movie *Jesus Camp*, which follows the Kids on Fire Summer Camp located at Devil's Lake, North Dakota. One scene depicts a man entering an assembly full of children while wearing a red t-shirt with "LIFE" in big letters across it. The man asks a boy of about twelve to join him on stage. While speaking to the entire room he confides to the boy, "Before you

[77] Deborah, discussion.
[78] Miriam, discussion.

were born, God knew you… You're not just a piece of protoplasm, whatever that is… Not just a piece of tissue in your mother's womb. You were created intimately by God." The children are then told that since 1973 up to fifty million babies "never had a chance to fulfill the dreams God had for their lives."

Next, the man showed fetus-sized babies to the children while shouting, "Kids, I believe that you are the beginnings of a movement that can raise up a moral outcry that can overthrow abortion in America!" Red tape with "LIFE" on it was then stuck over the children's mouths. Similar bands were placed on their wrists. Many of the children were crying. Everyone began chanting, "Righteous judges, righteous judges." Then the pastor pronounced, "You made a covenant with God tonight that you are going to pray to end abortion in America. Don't take that lightly. Don't be a promise breaker. Don't be a promise breaker. Be a history maker."[79] This language and these tactics are highly manipulating. In addition to not being offered a real choice to participate in the ritual, these young children do not yet have the life experiences to understand what it means to undertake a "covenant with God… to end abortion in America."

[79] *Jesus Camp*.

Just as the children in the *Jesus Camp* documentary did not have the life experiences to resist, neither do many children have the life experiences to resist the strong influences on them to "accept Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior." I have spoken with more than a few people who described feeling psychologically and socially manipulated to make the commitment of faith to Christ at too early an age. One person I interviewed, Barnabas, called it "emotionally coerced savings"[80] and another, Eunice, portrayed it as a "high-pressure cooker."[81] Consider the similarities in the following statements.

> … I remember I was really feeling pressured that we were supposed to be thinking about being converted or redeeming our life or whatever. And that wasn't on my plate at the time. I mean, I felt like there was pressure.[82]

> … I also don't like, "Where do you see yourself at the end? Do you want to go to heaven or hell?" It's just not like that. I think that if God does exist that God would say, "I want you to believe in me because you believe, not because of what it's going to get you."[83]

> … The invitation goes on and on… The pastor looks directly at you pleading, "Won't you come, won't you come?" while the congregation sings "Just As I Am," which ends each verse with "Oh Lamb of God, I come, I come." I finally gave in so people

[80] Barnabas, discussion.
[81] Eunice, discussion.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Rizpah, discussion.

> would stop talking to me about it, and staring at me during the invitation each week. I was ten.[84]
>
> … The minister always felt like at the end of the service you had to have the call.… It was like they would pick the longest hymns they possibly could and if nobody came, it would keep going. So if it was six verses and the minister didn't feel like you'd had sufficient time to go out and have a hamburger and then come up to the front, you got twelve… It just felt so fake and so stupid.[85]

Harris and Milam agreed that churches make very long emotional pleas during altar calls to try to get people to come forward. They asserted that it is manipulative and abusive, adding, "Legal contracts signed under this kind of emotional coercion would not be valid."[86]

Before leaving the subject of conversion, I want to mention a kind of conversion that we do not typically talk about: converting individuals through dating, or a practice colloquially known by some as "flirt to convert." Emigrant Carceralite Ruth shared with me that she tried hard to convert her atheist boyfriend to Christianity. Her family did not approve of her relationship with him. She did not approve either, which is one reason she tried so hard to convert him. She said, "He was okay with me talking to him about faith, about the Bible, about scripture, about Jesus, about whatever I wanted to tell him."

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[84] Anonymous 1, shared with the author in 2010.
[85] Enoch, discussion.
[86] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 153.

When he would not convert, however, she tried to "strong arm him into it." Though she felt bad about this tactic, which arguably constitutes emotional tyranny, she also felt responsible for "turning him into a Christian."[87]

Another emigrant Carceralite, David, told me about a high school girlfriend who tried to convert him. As he explained, "I already believed… so her idea of conversion must have been something different."[88] His girlfriend was a more conservative evangelical Christian, and, apparently, he was either not the right kind of Christian or not Christian enough to be legitimate. Neither of these relationships ended with the desired conversions, and I would not be surprised if that contributed to both of the relationships ending.

Reflecting back on the pressure she felt to convert others, Rizpah recounted this instance in her interview:

> I tried to convert my Catholic neighbor to Protestantism because I really feared for her soul when I was twelve. I said the same things to her that others are saying to me now. You know, "Protestantism is the right way. You are worshipping Mary and that's wrong." Just regurgitating everything that I'd ever been taught without this being anything original or creative or organic on my part.

[87] Ruth, discussion.
[88] David, in discussion with the author, September 11, 2009.

Importantly, she acknowledged that while trying to convert others, she also "felt really guilty."[89] In this way, the sense of urgency to convert others can present an emotional double bind for some Christians, who feel guilty if they do not convert others because their sense of success as a Christian is linked with such attempts. Furthermore, they feel guilty if they do convert others because it feels wrong. As Rizpah indicated, sometimes the trying alone can feel bad. If others were allowed to decide what they want to believe and follow their own conscience, no one would have to feel pressured, guilty, or bad.

Use of Fear

> In Catholic school as vicious as Roman rule,
> I got my knuckles bruised by a lady in black.
> And I held my tongue as she told me,
> "Son, fear is the heart of love."
> So I never went back.[90]
> —Death Cab for Cutie

Let me begin this section of the chapter with a longer narrative piece from one of the people I interviewed. Rizpah told me about going to a play at a

[89] Rizpah, discussion.
[90] Death Cab for Cutie. "I Will Follow You into the Dark," by Ben Gibbard, released June 26, 2006. I like it because it pairs fear and love in Christian education.

church that literally tried to scare the hell out of people in attendance. She recounted:

> Each year, they put on all kinds of plays and all kinds of little community things. So we all came for a play. Everyone was there. I was really young, probably six or seven, and my sister was five or something like that. And we're watching this play, and it's really kind of cheesy and not very well done, but it shows these groups of people. One example… There's this family of four… and they're driving and like, "Let's go to the movies, blah-blah-blah," and then they get into a car accident. Then they're brought up to this space where heaven is on one side and hell is on the other; but this family all believed in God, so they all got to go to heaven. So then another group came on and this funny boy, I don't know, he's just like, "Oh, man, I'm just going to drink. I don't care what my parents say." And then he gets dragged off to hell.
>
> And then it's worse, too, when they show where they're going because heaven is this beautiful musical place, all this light comes, and this angel comes and just hugs you and takes you into heaven. And then with hell, it's like this heavy metal music starts playing, and it's all dark all around. All the lights are dark red and all these strobe lights going and all these people dressed in all black. And, like, demons start coming out and just grab you and make all of these terrible noises… like snarls and just terrible growls and things like that. Really scary. Really, really scary. I mean very shocking!
>
> And I remember this mother-daughter pair and this daughter said, "Mom, I just want you to believe in God." And her mom is an alcoholic and all this stuff. And the daughter's like, "I want you to come to church with me, blah-blah-blah," and they die. And this little girl watches her mother getting dragged off to

> hell… and is so upset! Then she's like, "Oh, but I'm going to heaven now," and then… then that's just all erased. I'm just like, "What is going on?"
>
> And my sister is having a panic attack because this is just so scary, and she's five, and it's sooooo scary! She's just freaking out and she told me later, "That was so scary… like that was so horrifying to me!" And I feel like for a while it did a little bit of damage.[91]

One person who reviewed this chapter wrote, "This sounds like the play *Heaven's Gates and Hell's Flames*. A church in my hometown hosted a performance in 2002."[92] In thinking about the experience, Rizpah wondered aloud, "Why would a religion do this to someone? Why would it just prey upon their weaknesses like that? That is just so horrible. I can't understand that!" She then followed with, "I guess it didn't do too much bad because my sister's still Christian and she still goes to church." I argue that the play, which Rizpah described as a *rapture play*, did exactly what it intended to do. That is, it successfully yoked frightening images and sounds (players being dragged off to hell by demons) with comforting images and sounds (players being embraced by angels and escorted into heaven) to win people over to God. Do "A" and go to hell, or do "B" and go to heaven. Who would willingly choose hell?

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[91] Rizpah, discussion. I wonder if these kinds of experiences would reach the level of traumatic bonding that therapists of abuse victims talk about.

[92] There are tens of thousands of links to this play on the Internet. To see videos of the play, go to YouTube. For more info about the creation of the play, go to http://www.realityoutreach.org/reality/dramas/heavens-gates-and-hells-flames/.

Hell houses and scaremares are takeoffs of haunted houses and similar to rapture plays in that they entertain people with depictions of sin and its consequences.[93] Popular during Halloween, people walk through scenes that portray disastrous ends not only for non-belief but also for idolatry, alcohol and drugs, sexual immorality, abortions, witchcraft, suicide, and homosexuality. In 1990, the documentary film *Hell House* was released. It is about a religious group in Colorado that runs a hell house prop theme park portrayed as "an exceedingly scary tour of hell." Here is how the house is described on its website:

> This religious ceremony of sorts is replete with actors, extensive lighting equipment and full audio-visual tech crews. Inside the Hell House, tour guides dressed as demons take visitors from room to room to view depictions of school massacres, date rape, AIDS-related deaths, fatal drunk driving crashes, and botched abortions. Hell Houses have now spread to hundreds of churches worldwide… The movie gives a verite [sic] window into the whole process of creating this over-the-top sermon, while showing an intimate portrait of the people who fervently believe its message.

In hell houses as with rapture plays, scenes of suffering are paired with scenes of consolation. They serve as an emotionally coercive one-two punch that speaks directly to the use of fear as a disciplinary technique. In fact, one

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[93] "Hell House," *Wikipedia*, accessed February 27, 2013, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hell_house; "Scaremare," Liberty University, accessed February 27, 2013, http://www.liberty.edu/index.cfm?PID=25875.

emigrant Carceralite, Rachel, said that she spent a great deal of time memorizing the Bible to avoid hell.[94] Scaring people by threatening hell and damnation is useful to CC because it works to deepen levels of internalization, and pushes people into submission and obedience to the church's teachings, practices, and teachers.

Many Carceralites are intimately familiar with fear because it is the religious water in which we swim. Recalling Foucault's nook-and-cranny panopticisms, we encounter numerous daily lessons that remind us to be afraid. We learn to be fearful of the Devil, who lurks around every corner to lure us or do us harm. We learn to be fearful of going to hell with its eternal lake of fire and gnashing of teeth. We learn to be fearful of not being raptured and being left behind in the end times.[95] We learn to be fearful of the world, which waits to ensnare us in sin. We learn to be fearful of people from other religions, as they may hurt or try to draw us away from the true religion. The list could go on and on. Ironically, we learn to be fearful of fear itself because it signals to others that we are not trusting God to take care of us. For many Carceralites, it feels like a religious no-win.

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[94] Rachel, discussion. Note that she did not study to lay and follow a path to Heaven but rather to avoid a path to Hell.

[95] The best-selling 16-book *Left Behind* series by Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins imagines the end times wherein true believers have been raptured, which leaves the world in chaos and allows the Antichrist to rise to power.

According to political scientist Cynthia Boaz, one reason fear is so effective at controlling people is that it is "the fastest way to bypass the rational brain."[96] I am reminded of a mailer I received one day in the post. It was titled "Discover Prophecy: Coming Saturday, April 12!" I learned from the outside of the mailer that the topics to be covered included:

- "Countdown to Eternity"
- "The Antichrist Beast"
- "The Time of the End"
- "The Mark of the Beast"
- "The Devil's Greatest Deceptions"
- "The Longest Bible Prophecy"
- "What Happens When You Die," and
- "What and Where is Hell?"

When I opened the mailer, "Surviving the Terror" was front and center along with scary images of beasts and burning. Though I no longer hold apocalyptic beliefs, the words and images in that advertisement momentarily triggered the deep visceral fear I used to feel as a Carceralite. Fear kept me from thinking; fear used to keep me in my place. Others with whom I have spoken convey the same triggers. We no longer believe, but then this deeply ingrained

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[96] Cynthia Boaz, "Fourteen Propaganda Techniques Fox 'News' Uses to Brainwash Americans," *Truthout*, July 2, 2011, http://truth-out.org/news/item/1964:fourteen-propaganda-techniques-fox-news-uses-to-brainwash-americans.

fear is triggered by something we see, hear, or read, and we momentarily panic. While our minds and hearts no longer embrace such teachings, it seems that our bodies remember the fear triggered by them.

Fear mongering is a powerful technique and especially on children who are, as I have termed it, coming of conscience. Recall the documentary movie *Jesus Camp*.[97] There is a scene wherein the children's pastor is talking to the entire group of children. In short order, she covers the following subjects:

> "We're talking this week about tactics the Devil uses in our lives. The first tactic," states the pastor, "is that the Devil tempts you with sin." She holds up two stuffed lions: a lion cub and a large, mean-looking adult lion. She explains to the children, "The Devil goes after the young… those who cannot fend for themselves." Then she mimics the scary adult lion overpowering the innocent cub.

Then,

> "Warlocks are enemies of God!" the pastor exclaims. "And I don't care what kind of heroes they are. If this were the Old Testament, Harry Potter would have been put to death!" Many of the children in the room look stunned and shamed. She yells on, "You don't make heroes out of warlocks!"

Then,

> "I've heard there are kids here tonight that say one thing at church and one thing at school." She shouts loudly, "You're a phony and a hypocrite!" She continues, "You do things you

[97] *Jesus Camp*.

> shouldn't do. You talk dirty. It's time to clean up your act… Come up and get cleaned. We can't have phonies in the army of God!" Many of the children are crying when they reach the stage. After the children get cleaned, she yells once more, "No more wishy-washy! No more hypocrisy! Now you get somewhere and pray and do some repenting here!"

These kinds of experiences are common for many Carceralites. We often are subjected to people like this summer camp pastor who, I propose, bully our conscience to instill the fear of God in us. Now imagine multiplying these fearful and judging religious panopticisms with all the other days and weeks in a child's coming of age and coming of conscience. Arguably, they result in a qualitatively different experience from coming of age and coming of conscience in a religious environment that is heavily grounded in love and compassion.

Fear, argued feminist social activist and author bell hooks, is mighty powerful in sustaining structures of domination.[98] I hold that some of these structures constitute inner configurations of fear that come from carceral learning. People recognize this in different ways. Health food enthusiast Horace Fletcher described "fearthoughts" as suggestions that one allows and that make one feel inferior.[99] Poet and philosopher Mark Nepo described "thought-weeds"

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[98] bell hooks, *All about Love: New Visions* (New York: William Morrow, 2000).
[99] Horace Fletcher, quoted in William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*, ed. Martin E. Marty (New York: Penguin Books, 1982), 98.

as agitations of the dark that grow and block out inner light.[100] Writer William Blake wrote about "mind-forged manacles" as shackles of the human spirit.[101]

These are representations of internalized fear, which can lead to toxic guilt and shame and serve to manipulate and control people within CC. As an example, Ruth told me she feared God would punish her if she did not do everything right. For example, she believed God would cause her car to break down if she did not hold quiet time in the morning. She would also "pray like crazy that God would not kill my ferret to get my attention."[102] That is deeply internalized fear mongering.

Punitive Discipline

> *Punitive measures are not simply "negative" mechanisms that make it possible to repress, to prevent, to exclude, to eliminate; but that they are linked to a whole series of positive and useful elements which it is their task to support*.[103] —Michel Foucault

As this statement from Foucault suggests, punishment controls both through "'negative' mechanisms" and "positive and useful elements." I propose that CC primarily encompasses the former. As described in the

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[100] Mark Nepo, *The Book of Awakening: Having the Life You Want by Being Present to the Life You Have* (San Francisco: Conari Press, 2000), 256.
[101] William Blake, "London," *Songs of Innocence and Experience*.
[102] Ruth, discussion.
[103] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 24.

previous section, pressure, manipulation, and use of fear are intimidation techniques in CC that are effectively employed to induce Carceralites to obey particular Christian teachings, practices, and teachers. I will examine how these teachings, practices, and teachers foster the transmission of CC in the next chapter. This section will first formulate and illustrate how punitive discipline provides the foundational educational grounding for CC's coercive techniques.

To be sure, there are as many different usages for the term "punitive discipline" as there are people and organizations making use of it. If one were to conduct a search for the term on the Internet, one would come across numerous references and discussions that range from child rearing and school discipline to workplace behavioral management and military justice. There also are many religious discussions about punitive discipline, especially around the subject of corporal punishment. This often is recognized through the longstanding "spare the rod, spoil the child" debate.

To be clear, I am claiming that punitive discipline in CC comprises a severe educational disciplining of Carceralites' tetradeums and utilizes fear mongering, threats, and punishment to coerce adherents into religious compliance.[104] Put differently, CC encompasses an omni-disciplinary (all-

[104] Refer to 'tetradeum' on page 6.

encompassing) educational setting that also is profoundly punitive. In fact, it is so punitive that it results in unthinking and unquestioning submission to religious authority, effectively imprisoning many adherents in what Foucault called a "punishable, punishing universality" and emigrant Carceralite Miriam described as "damned if I do and damned if I don't… I'll be in trouble anyway."[105]

CC's panoptic discipline is grounded in punitive power relations that effectually amount to Christian bullying. Herein again I draw from bell hooks, whose notion of an *ethos of domination* holds that dominating structures rely on the "cultivation of fear… to ensure obedience" from individuals.[106] bell hooks even designated fear as the primary force supporting structures of domination. I agree with hooks. Characterized by a bully pulpit of fear and punishment, I contend that CC represents an educational structure of domination that makes use of fear to compel religious adherents to obey, employs threatening notions of God to scare adherents into compliance, and commonly uses judgments and punishments to ultimately induce obedience. Herein again, let us briefly consider these in turn.

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[105] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 178; Miriam, discussion.
[106] hooks, *All about Love*, 93, 95.

Compelling Adherents

> *Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right*.[107]
> —From the book of Ephesians

In this verse from Ephesians, obedience is expressed as children's right submission to parental authority. Recall from Chapter 1 that variations of obedience appear in the Bible more than 150 times. There are various ways in which people are commanded to obey: humans to God and his commandments, people to ordained authority figures, wives to husbands, and, as mentioned, children to parents. Note the hierarchical nature of each of these relationships.

Joining these expectations for submission with punitive discipline arguably helps legitimize and cultivate the unquestioning obedience to authority that CC needs from adherents. As Harris and Milam declared,

> Abusive Christians endlessly tell you how you should think, believe, or behave. If you do not behave this way, they will tell you that awful things will happen to you and that you should feel bad for going against God and the church (guilt). Christian Abusers are controlling and punishment-oriented… They attempt to manipulate your fear and your guilt in order to gain your compliance.[108]

How much more effective this kind of manipulation is when combined with threatening notions of God that keep people in a state of fear, dissuade secure

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[107] Ephesians 6:1 (King James Version).
[108] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 271.

attachments, and discourage the kind of unfettered soul-searching that nurtures genuine and honest self-inquiry.

Threatening Notions of God

I earlier established ways in which God serves as the Central Tower of CC. Recall that Carceralites are taught that God, similar to the unseen guard in the Benthamite prison's central tower, is ever watching and ever monitoring. Unlike the unseen guard, however, we come to understand that God is watching and monitoring both our outer *and inner* lives. Further, he is keeping a list of the things he sees and comes to know; will one day judge our hearts, minds, and actions; and then reward or punish us accordingly. One major problem with this notion, as illuminated by emigrant Carceralite Rachel, is that "even if you're doing everything right, you could be sinning." As she explained, "Sins of omission (failing to do something we should be doing) was a big part of it."[109] Since adherents cannot know everything God includes in the "should" category, it induces in some a constant anxiety that one is unknowingly transgressing. This all-seeing, all-knowing, and all-judging conception of God sets the stage for fearful and threatening notions about him to be especially effective against vulnerable and budding consciences.

[109] Rachel, discussion.

Like the imaginary boogeyman that some parents use to frighten (read: threaten) children into minding and being good, Carceralites grow up hearing of an angry God who severely punishes people for sinning. Some of us learn that God will punish us for even *thinking* sinful thoughts. This threatening notion of an angry God is central to Harris and Milam's Abusive Christian Model, in which God is epitomized as what I will describe as the biblical boogeyman for punitive parenting. They reason:

> The behavior of sinful people "made" God angry, so he destroyed them, as recorded in the OT (Old Testament). In the NT (New Testament), sin and sinners offend God to the extent that he punishes them with eternal damnation… Many earthly fathers (and mothers) also follow this model.[110]

If our primary model for discipline largely teaches that God punishes through anger, fear, and ruin, then it follows that adherents will learn to do the same.

Indeed, Carceralites are intimately familiar with this likeness of God and routinely hear threats of eternal ruin. In describing him to me, Miriam portrayed God as "scary," "vengeful," "all-knowing," and "all-powerful," and then added unexpectedly, "Don't mess up!" When I asked, "Or what?," she replied, "Or… the death from which you cannot return… ultimate destruction."[111] Sarah said, "Everything has to do with going to hell, literally…

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[110] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 157.
[111] Miriam, discussion.

They don't talk about heaven, ever."[112] Rhetorically, we may learn about God's forgiveness. Practically, chronic threats over sin/sinning and going to hell convince us that God's primary interaction with humankind must be a punishing one. While threats are an effective tool for disciplining people, they also are effective at harming an individual's conscience and, arguably, a community's conscience as well. This raises philosophical and educational concerns that I will extrapolate more fully in Chapter 4 as the *scars and bars* of carceral learning. Let us first look more closely at the kinds of punishments recounted by emigrant Carceralites.

Judgments and Punishments

"I hadn't grown up with the Bible of love.
I'd grown up with the Bible of judgment."[113] —Priscilla

As earlier argued, panoptic discipline makes use of judgment (God's, others', self) to induce and ensure compliance with CC's teachings, practices, and teachers. This is accomplished through an ongoing examination wherein a person is punished, as the book of Jeremiah notes, "according to the fruit of your doings" and from Galatians, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also

[112] Sarah, discussion.
[113] Priscilla, discussion.

reap."[114] The second book of Corinthians underscores that no one is exempt from judgment and that all of our actions, good and bad, will be recompensed.[115] A protracted explanation for how God judges people and how we are to judge others is offered in the book of Romans. For purposes of this section, let us consider this selection from that book.

> (God) will render to every man according to his deeds. To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life. But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil… But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good…[116]

In other words, do good, get good; do bad, get bad. In the case of CC, good and bad are determined by "the law." Good can be very good, with the best being love, acceptance, and eternal salvation. Bad can be very bad, with the worst being withdrawal of love, rejection, and eternal damnation.

Foucault's thought on penal discipline, which he described as a double system of gratification and punishment, may be helpful here. According to Foucault, penal discipline maintains a "punitive balance-sheet of each individual (via) a whole micro-economy of privileges and impositions… (and)

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[114] Jeremiah 21:14 (King James Version); Galatians 6:7 (King James Version).
[115] 2 Corinthians 5:10 (King James Version).
[116] Romans 2: 6-10 (King James Version).

circulation of awards and debits."[117] As implied by a penal system, CC does not permit individual Carceralites to determine what constitutes good and bad or decide what merits privileges/awards and impositions/debits. Rather, our thoughts are subordinated to the earlier discussed surveilling gazes of the Central Tower (God), the thousand towers (people in our families, churches, schools, communities, etc.), and even our own learned, self-enforced towers.

It may be fairly argued that many Christian rewards come through excelling in the micro-economies of God-ordained roles and activities. Women, for example, are given praise and attention for being good wives, mothers, and caregivers. I remember a woman taking great pride in being recognized as the best cook and baker in her church community. She frequently was called upon to contribute signature dishes and desserts for church activities, and was so accomplished in this area that she led her church's kitchen ministry. Indeed, along with rearing Godly children, this recognition by her church community was central to her identity as a Godly woman.

Though I did not underemphasize rewards or overemphasize punishments when interviewing emigrant Carceralites – or even distinguish them as such – very little was expressed about rewards during these interviews.

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[117] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 180-181.

Much, however, was spoken about punishments and often with deep feeling. This suggests to me that the rewards garnered by these individuals were significantly overshadowed by the punishments. It also affirms my supposition that religious-based punishments, and especially ones that aim to strong-arm individuals into obedience, are a much more wounding educational problem than many may recognize.

Rebuking Discipline

> "I see an evangelical subculture that most people have to rise out from, not evangelical doctrine… usually it has to do with Bible beating, lack of personal freedom, no love or kindness given, little forgiveness, do you know what I mean?"[118] —David

Let us now take a closer look at punitive discipline in CC that I contend crosses a line into abuse because it is severe, excessive, and frequently arbitrarily and summarily administered. This discipline – which I designate as *rebuking discipline* to distinguish it from less severe forms of punitive discipline and to draw attention to its religious significance – results in harsh punishments for sins or perceived sins, for noncompliance to established beliefs and practices, and for disobedience to established authorities. Rebuking discipline is harsh because it can be; its harshness is held up by communal beliefs and practices that make it okay or turn a blind eye when it is not okay.

[118] David, discussion.

Rebuking discipline checks, silences, puts down, restrains, constrains, reprehends, chides, admonishes, reproves, and rejects for even the smallest of sins or infractions, which teaches people to be especially fearful about the consequences of bigger ones.[119] Rebuking discipline bans, excludes, shames, and sacrifices people to beliefs and practices. Harris and Milam described this kind of religious punishment system as *muscle-bound* and declared that it "forms the core of behavioral control in most conservative Christian churches."[120] To better understand rebuking discipline, it may be illustrative to next briefly consider three forms of punitive discipline – corporal punishment, public spectacle, and banishment.

Corporal Punishment

> *He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes… Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell*.[121] —From the book of Proverbs

Intimately linked with religion, corporal punishment is one of the best-known forms of punitive discipline. Consider that most people probably have heard some version of the phrase "spare the rod and spoil the child." Though

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[119] "English verb *rebuke* conjugated in all tenses," Verbix, accessed February 18, 2013, http://www.verbix.com/webverbix/English/rebuke.html.
[120] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 61, 82.
[121] Proverbs 13:24, 23:14 (King James Version).

Samuel Butler coined the phrase in a seventeenth-century poem about the English Civil War, the notion is rooted in the verses above from the book of Proverbs. Taken figuratively, these verses could imply that children will only flourish under active parental discipline. Taken literally, they appear to oblige parents to hit (even beat) their children to demonstrate love and ensure their salvation.

To illustrate corporal punishment as rebuking discipline, I offer these accounts from emigrant Carceralites. First, Miriam shared with me about her mother:

> My mother was a pretty harsh disciplinarian… (which included) Beatings on the butt… She had a wood ruler - that had a little notch on it that said "Hot stick" - that you used to pull out the oven rack. And belts. Her hand. I don't recall being hit except on the bottom.

About being made to pick her switch (a flexible wooden stick picked from a tree):

> It was always horrible because I was sitting in the backyard and I was like, "The small ones hurt this way. The big ones hurt this way." So what do you do? What do you do?... But ultimately I preferred that to punishment by enema.

About *punishment by enema*:

> In addition to spankings when I was misbehaving – and I'm still trying to figure this out – there were a lot of enemas. A lot. And I think that a lot of that was a power thing. I think a lot of it was

> making sure her children were clean and Godly… and to punish and control… But I remember her holding me down on the floor of the hall and giving me an enema and me screaming about how my daddy says this is bad. "Daddy says this is bad. He says it's bad!"… I'm still trying to figure that stuff out. Whatever it was, it was pretty evil.[122]

Though not sanctioned by official teachings of her church, punishment by enema seemed to serve as an informal disciplinary practice among its adherents.[123]

Next, Dinah told me about her uncle, who also happened to be a prominent deacon at their church:

> My uncle was mean. He threatened us really bad. He hit us all the time, so we were scared… The kids did (whatever he wanted) and you got hit if you didn't do it.

About trying to escape punishment:

> We lived in a wooded area, so I'd crawl up back behind there a lot of times if I could get away from him until he found out what I was doing. I have to laugh about it now or I'll start crying because if I locked the door, he would smash it in.

About short escapes:

> I had (lots of) surgeries before I was fifteen. When I was in a hospital, I loved it. I know that sounds… People say, "Why?" I

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[122] Miriam, discussion.

[123] Since this interview, I have spoken with two others who were subjected to such ritual enemas: one from a Christian tradition, the other from a Jewish tradition.

said, "Because I got away from him." I would be in there a couple months at a time sometimes. And I loved it.[124]

What are we to make of religious discipline that forces enemas on young people and causes teens to prefer surgeries and hospitals to family and home? What can be learned about rebuking discipline that, scripturally or in practice, seems to grant adults absolute power over young people's bodies for the sake of their souls?

Public Spectacle

They must see with their own eyes. Because they must be made to be afraid.[125] —Michel Foucault

Rebuking discipline sometimes includes public spectacle, or public punishment, as I understand it from Foucault's work on public spectacle. It is the public and not the guilty party, according to Foucault, that is the primary object of public spectacle. "The aim was to make an example," he explained, "not only by making people aware that the slightest offence was likely to be punished, but by arousing feelings of terror by the spectacle of power letting its anger fall upon the guilty person."[126] In other words, the public is meant both to witness public punishment and to feel frightened and intimidated by it.

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[124] Dinah, in discussion with the author, November 18, 2008.
[125] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 58.
[126] Ibid., 57-58.

To illustrate public spectacle as rebuking discipline, I offer these accounts from emigrant Carceralites. First, Priscilla shared with me a time when she and her family were unsuspectingly made public examples in their church. Enoch recounted being disinvited from helping to run the sound system at his church.

> They had a soundboard… a sound system, and somebody would run it (during church)… They had asked me to do it, and I said, "Well, yeah. I'll do it!" Anyway, eventually, I was approached, and they basically said that I couldn't do it because I was not coming as often as I should… It was kind of like this implicit moral slam that just sealed the deal.[127]

I also am reminded of the article on Pensacola Christian College, with its system of formal punishments for students breaking rules. These included being:

- "Socialed" (not allowed to talk to coeds)
- "Campused" (not allowed to talk to anyone or leave campus)
- "Shadowed" (assigned to and shadowed by a peer floor leader, including to classes), and
- "Expelled" (kicked out).[128]

[127] Enoch, discussion.
[128] Bartlett, "A College That's Strictly Different."

As with Pensacola, it is not uncommon for some religious communities to have a process for formally rebuking its members. How many more untold informal rebukes, such as the pulpit punishment and soundboard sendoff recounted above, occur in our Christian communities every day? What are we to make of religious discipline that aims to teach and induce right and good behavior through publicly humiliating and rejecting those who resist or fall short?

Banishment

> *Nonconformity often results in* ***expulsion*** *from church or from family. These rejected individuals, conditioned to follow the rules, are left handicapped and alone, often without the ability to successfully function on their own.*[129] —Harris and Milam

Explicit and implicit banishments are the ultimate form of public spectacle. When other punitive disciplinary tactics fail to steer Carceralites back onto the straight and narrow path or bring them back into the fold, then we are marked as "fallen," "sinners," and "heretics" and excluded within or from our communities. Being excluded *within* our community means being internally reproved through such practices as shunning and being disfellowshipped. Being excluded *from* our community means being expelled through such practices as disassociation and excommunication.

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[129] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 67.

To illustrate banishment as rebuking discipline, I offer these accounts from emigrant Carceralites. First, Miriam helped me understand two forms of being excluded within her church community. She explained:

> (The elders) can't disfellowship you without you going in to talk to them because it's like slander and it's legally prosecutable, I guess. But they can kind of get around it by saying, "This person isn't in good association."

She added, "'You're disfellowshipped' means that – it means that everybody looks through you like you're not there, which is a horrible feeling."[130] Barnabas shared some of the causes for being banished from the private, Christian-affiliated high school he attended:

> Kids at my school were quite well behaved. There was always the one or two that (got into trouble)… but they didn't stay. They were not allowed to stay if they got caught doing anything that we would consider wrong… If you got into the alcohol and showed up drunk somehow, you were kicked out. If you got pregnant, you got kicked out. Or if it was made out that you had even had sex, you were kicked out.[131]

Harris and Milam emphasized the problem of punitive practices such as Christian banishment, drawing attention to the religious cycle of violence that it perpetuates:

> They will talk of "love," but there is no love unless you agree with them and comply with them. The Perpetrators distort love. They

[130] Miriam, discussion.
[131] Barnabas, discussion.

> think that to love is to control people, including their own children, with power and anger. Children are expected to submit to this control. If they do not submit, the Perpetrator parent will withdraw love as a form of punishment. Similarly, if church members violate the rules, other church members will withdraw their love. "Fallen members" are generally expected to leave or may even be excommunicated. In this situation, church members tacitly become Christian Perpetrators.[132]

What are we to make of religious discipline that banishes individuals as a means of controlling them and scaring the greater community into submission? Rejection by one's religious community can feel like being cut off from one's humanity, especially when church members openly or subtly begin to disassociate. How can adherents learn of love and fellowship when rebuking discipline demands they be withdrawn for any act of noncompliance or disobedience? What if, instead, we were permitted to embrace such philosophies as "discipline as 'teaching,' not punishment," and mottos as "love comes first, discipline second," such as these championed by Berry Brazelton?[133]

Sum

In sum, I have claimed that CC is partly accomplished through an omni-disciplinary approach that is unceasing and all-encompassing and through coercive disciplinary power that works to intimidate and scare people into

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[132] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 99-100.
[133] T. Berry Brazelton, quoted in Hillary Rodham Clinton, *It Takes A Village: And Other Lessons Children Teach Us* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 155.

submitting to established beliefs and practices. Further, I claim that punishment comprises the central means by which this approach is accomplished and through which CC gains compliant and obedient members. These questions are raised: At what cost to individuals and communities? How and in what ways might learning to be a good Christian require adherents to become what Martin calls "automaton;" that is, machine-like, lacking in judgment, creativity, and having every decision dictated to us?[134] If people are mistreated or injured by discipline established through a compulsory Christian curriculum, as I argue is the case in CC, how might we learn to resist such disciplining, especially when resistance includes resisting church, family, and even God?

Drawing for a moment from non-religious researchers and practitioners, many have found that punitive discipline not only does not facilitate hoped-for behavior but also often makes undesired behavior worse. Penal discipline, for example, commonly is charged with making better criminals instead of better people. Spanking in particular, argued professor of psychiatry Alvin Pouissant, develops "higher rates of aggression and delinquency" in children and "depression, feelings of alienation, use of violence toward a spouse, and lower

[134] Martin, *Cultural Miseducation*, 84.

economic and professional achievement" in adults.[135] How might CC's disciplinary approach actually *misdiscipline*, as I will call it, adherents? How does such misdiscipline affect adherents and religious communities?

These latter questions will be addressed in Chapter 4, when I examine the scars and bars of carceral learning. In the next chapter, I will first formulate and illustrate ways in which carceral orthodoxies (teachings), orthopraxes (practices), and teachers transmit a compulsory Christian curriculum that, along with panoptic discipline, grounds and nurtures CC.

[135] Alvin Poussaint, "Spanking Strikes Out," *Project NoSpank*, September 27, 1999, http://nospank.net/psnt.htm.

Chapter 3:

Compulsory Christian Curriculum

Some prisons don't require bars to keep people locked inside.

All it takes is their perception that they belong there.

—Lysa TerKeurst

"There is some need for at least a modicum of conformity just to get people on the same page… There are a lot of different potential values that we can adhere to… It is the notion that these (Christian) values and nothing else that is the problem."[1] —Enoch

Chapter 2 theorizes panoptic discipline as the educational apparatus in which CC is grounded and fostered. In this chapter, I will formulate and describe religious orthodoxies, orthopraxes, and teachers that make up the compulsory Christian curriculum through which CC is imparted. Participant interviews, selected texts, selected online media, popular culture references, and self-reflection inspired my view of the curriculum.

By *compulsory*, I mean a curriculum that is obligatory, imposed, and enforced, one that does not allow for change, growth, or different understandings of the same curriculum. As a compulsory religious curriculum of right beliefs, right practices, and right teachers, CC cultivates and effectively assures compulsory learning, practicing, and teaching. In the next chapter, I will explore the individual and social liabilities resulting from this kind of learning more deeply.

[1] Enoch, discussion.

Compulsory Orthodoxies and Orthopraxes

Some Christians hold that orthodoxies (religious beliefs/teachings) and orthopraxes (religious practices) do and should change with time to reflect humankind's evolved and evolving understanding. Other Christians reason they should not precisely *because* humankind is evolving. More to the point, they believe it to be morally degenerating. As with other educational institutions in society, Christianity serves as an initiating religious force for informing and guiding people's ideas, activities, and interactions. As such, it can shape and misshape precious comings of age and comings of conscience. I will argue that CC, with rigidly right orthodoxies, orthopraxes, and teachers is primarily misshaping.

The Bible and Right Curriculum

The B-I-B-L-E, Yes that's the book for me,
I stand alone on the Word of God, The B-I-B-L-E.
The B-I-B-L-E, Yes that's the book for me,
I read and pray, trust and obey, The B-I-B-L-E.
—Children's Bible song

As the inspired word of God,[2] the Bible is the sacred text for a Christian common curriculum that shares such core orthodoxies as the Trinity, original

[2] II Timothy 3:16 (King James Version). The Timothy verse often is paired with one from the second book of Peter, which is used to establish biblical inerrancy: "But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will,

sin, virgin birth, crucifixion and resurrection, salvation by Jesus Christ, heaven and hell, and forgiveness and punishment for sins; and such core orthopraxes as prayer, baptism, communion, confession and fasting. Knowledge of the curriculum is transmitted to adherents by families, churches, schools, youth groups, summer camps, and others, and through sermons, Sunday school lessons, Bible studies, etc.

In CC, the Bible takes on a singular and immutable role. Justified through literal readings of selected biblical texts, some Christians use biblical authority to claim one right (read: true) religious curriculum for everyone in all places and all times. We are taught the curriculum is godly, inerrant, and absolute.[3] In this way, I propose that the Bible acts as a rulebook for right belief, playbook for right practice, and handbook for right teachers. A religious curriculum of right also implicitly suggests a religious curriculum of wrong. Let us consider examples of both in the context of CC's curriculum.

Right:

- Belief in the one true God
- Acceptance of Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior

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but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." 2 Peter 1:20-21 (King James Version).

[3] See II Peter 1:20-21 (King James Version).

- Regular church attendance and tithing
- Witnessing and bringing others to church
- Praying and reading the Bible every day
- Obeying parents and other church leaders
- Putting God first, others second, and oneself last

Wrong:

- Questioning or making jokes about Christian beliefs, practices, or people
- Believing in or considering contrary ideas like evolution and abortion
- Listening to certain music
- Dancing or immodesty
- Playing cards, betting, or gambling
- Watching certain shows or movies
- Playing certain video games
- Using vulgar language
- Being lazy or mentally sick

Right beliefs and practices are structured by and embodied in the panoptic discipline formulated in Chapter 2. Recall, for example, right uses of time listed in that chapter, including being in church, on time, sitting in pews, standing, or taking meditative postures, etc. It seems clear that there are right

ways to accomplish right beliefs and practices. The problem with a singular Christian curriculum, such as CC, is that it both severely inflames and constrains which parts of the curriculum get passed down to the next generation.

The list for wrong beliefs and practices brings to mind stories from people with whom I have spoken over the years. One person recalled his mother's making a spinning number wheel so that he and his siblings would not have to handle dice to play board games.[4] (No gambling.) Another shared that evolution was only briefly talked about in one class one year at her Christian high school. She added, "There was no debate, no speaking out loud, and people were not allowed to talk, just listen to the teacher."[5] (No contrary ideas.) This person also worked for a Christian-affiliated outreach and reported that the organization "doesn't believe in mental illness… or in using medicines." Instead, they believed, "Mental illness is really demons, and God can help people get through it." If clients do not get well, they are judged not to have believed enough, prayed enough, done enough, or loved God enough to warrant God's healing.[6] (No mental illness.) A final story comes from a young

[4] A person who reviewed this chapter challenged this alternative to a gambling object, asking, "But a wheel of fortune is okay?!"
[5] Sarah, discussion.
[6] Ibid.

girl learning about Easter from her mother. When they got to the part of Jesus rising from the dead, the girl's eyes grew round and she exclaimed, "Jesus was a zombie!" The girl reasoned that zombies are people who rise from the dead, and Jesus rose from the dead; therefore, Jesus must have been a zombie. Her mother found humor in the comparison but cautioned her daughter not to say such things to Christians within their community.[7] (No joking about beliefs.) While these examples span a range of possible wrongs, the expectation to resist them is consistent.

Expectations to Conform to the Curriculum

As quoted at the beginning of the chapter, "There is some need for at least a modicum of conformity just to get people on the same page." Understanding that some rules are necessary to manage large groups, how might excessive expectations for conformity and rule keeping at Christian-affiliated institutions and activities, as I argue is the case in CC, compel external and internal compliance to the curriculum? In Chapter 2, I referenced Falls Creek, the self-acclaimed largest religious youth encampment and largest youth camp in the world. Understanding it is a Christian camp promoting a "distinctly Christian atmosphere," campers and sponsors must agree to a fairly

[7] I witnessed this exchange first hand.

exhaustive code of conduct, dress code, and mandatory daily schedule to attend the camp, which does not even include individual church rules.

The camp's code of conduct, for example, understandably prohibits such behaviors as illegal drug and alcohol usage, but also covers such topics as bands outside of cabins, shaving cream fights, cycles on the grounds, headset listening devices, laser pointers, and more.[8] In short, in addition to the established curriculum to which campers must conform, there are a lot of rules with which people must comply. Along with the kind of rules, perhaps also it is the sheer number that some adherents find difficult practicing. Granted, excessive behavioral expectations and rule keeping do not ensure compliance. Still, I wonder how codes such as Falls Creek's code of conduct would be perceived and internalized differently if behavioral expectations for things like fellowship, friendship, and fun were added?

Expectations for conformity are especially hurtful when people are subjected to unknown rules and then punished for breaking them. For example, Priscilla shared, "I was never told the rules… never told until my mother exploded… and did something wacky because I had stepped on some sort of

[8] "Resources," *Skopos*, accessed March 20, 2015, http://skopos.org/resources/?category=38.

cosmic rule."[9] The cosmic rules she had broken in this instance were playing canasta and dominoes with friends, and bowling on a Sunday. A student quoted in the Pensacola Christian College article featured in Chapter 2 echoed this frustration, saying that it was impossible to conform to all the rules because many of them were "made up on the spot."[10] These examples point to curricular double binds for many Carceralites. Break a rule in the curriculum knowingly, perhaps because it is excessively constraining, and suffer consequences. Break a rule unknowingly, and suffer consequences.

Harris and Milam have claimed that such excessive rule keeping in Christianity is abusive to adherents in other ways. They explained:

- The rules are rigid and not negotiable
- The rules cannot be questioned
- Certain topics cannot be discussed
- People must follow the rules: believe or perish
- Punishment for not following the rules is severe: eternal pain and suffering
- Perfection is expected
- Control and conformity are highly valued
- Love is conditional upon conformity

[9] Priscilla, discussion.
[10] Bartlett, "A College That's Strictly Different," para. 46.

- God is Love, but believe or perish – double messages.[11]

Ideally, there would be a balance between expectations for conformity to the rules and the exercise of individual choices. It raises these questions: What avenues are open to people overly constrained or suppressed by religious curricula, and how do they come to learn of them? If we learn orthodoxies and orthopraxes are unchanging because the Bible is unchanging, as CC teaches, and we may not question them, as CC also teaches, how do we learn to recognize and challenge expectations for conformity that are excessive or discordant with our conscience?

"God-ordained" Curricula

> "I was always taught you need to get married and you need to have babies. I feel like all Christian women get that education at some point."[12] —Rizpah

If the Bible is the singular authority for right living, establishes hierarchical organization through a divine order in which humans are privileged, and men hold superior places to women as ordained by God, then it follows that CC's educational tracks are gender-normative in ways that privilege men. Similarly, if opposite-sex relationships are advantaged in the hierarchy and same-sex relationships are rebuked, as in CC, then it follows that

[11] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 52, 62-63.
[12] Rizpah, discussion.

educational tracks are heteronormative in ways that privilege male-female pairings. I will explore liabilities of different religious teaching and learning in Chapter 4 and discuss them as cultural miseducation in Chapter 5. First, let us look more deeply at these educational tracks, beginning with divine ordering.

Divine Order

> *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*[13] —From the book of Genesis

Conflating the creation narratives of Genesis 1 and 2, CC teaches that the biblical order of creation establishes divine order in the following sequence: God first created the heavens, followed by the planet, light, the atmosphere, land, oceans, vegetation, sun, moon, stars, other planets, water creatures, birds, land animals, man (Adam), and, finally, woman (Eve). It also teaches that humans are given dominion over "every living thing that moveth upon the earth" because we are made in God's image.[14] In short, humans are privileged in God's divine order.

The biblical order of relationships, outlined in the second chapter of Genesis, establishes divine human order. This chapter teaches that God, using a

[13] Genesis 1:1 (King James Version).
[14] Genesis 1 (King James Version).

rib from Adam's side, created Eve to be Adam's "help meet."[15] After Eve eats the forbidden fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, as recorded in the third chapter of Genesis, God qualifies the order, saying to Eve, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."[16]

While feminist scholars draw broader meanings from these accounts, for example, Eve intentionally eating the fruit to awaken human consciousness, CC teaches such verses establish men's authority in relationships and women's and children's submission to men. Thus, men are privileged in God's divine human order. If such verses are strictly interpreted, then men, as religion historian Margaret Lamberts Bendroth has argued, would be like gods in their homes, "verily a high priest and prophet of God," and fathers would exercise "absolute authority over their wives and children."[17] In a curriculum deemed to be right, it is not difficult to understand how literal interpretations of biblical texts are used both to justify women's subordinate status in CC and ensure female compliance. Because of cultural changes from the women's movements, many

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[15] Genesis 2:18 (King James Version).
[16] Genesis 3:16 (King James Version).
[17] Margaret L. Bendroth, *Fundamentalism and Gender: 1875 to the Present* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 103.

carceral Christians fear that families and communities are degenerating into depravity and will continue to degenerate if we do not accept and recommit to sex and gender differences (our places in the order).

Roles and Activities

> *Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: as he is the savior of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so* let *the wives* be *to their own husbands in every thing*.[18]
> —From the book of Ephesians

> "Man is head of the household…
> He's the one that prays."[19] —Miriam

A strict literal understanding and application of Bible verses, like the one above from Ephesians, teach Christian men and women, explicitly and implicitly, that God prescribes (ordains) and proscribes (forbids) particular roles for our lives. This understanding differently shapes religious learning, particularly in the absence of "other verses that treat the genders as equals," as one reviewer of this section noted. Consider that boys and men are taught to lead and govern others as heads and husbands, as the Bible verse and quote above make clear. Girls and women are taught to follow and support others as help meets and wives. We are told, as Rachel explained, "God knew things

[18] Ephesians 5:22-24 (King James Version).
[19] Miriam, discussion.

would work better in the world… when women do what women are supposed to do and men do what men are supposed to do."[20]

Because our places and roles are divinely ordered, we are expected to willingly submit to them regardless of individual conscience or choice. For example, gender roles teach us that a good Christian family includes a father, mother, and children. But what if a person does not want to marry? Or, if married, does not want children? Or wants to marry and have children, but the church forbids it? What if a woman wants to head a business or co-head her family? Or a man wants to stay at home and be a helpmate? The possibilities are intensely constrained by strictly adhering to a compulsory Christian curriculum that does not make room for variance in such roles and activities.

Additionally, Martin claimed different curricula (such as the strongly gendered curriculum of CC this section has highlighted) are "likely to be racist or sexist or classist or all three," even when the policy itself is not "wedded to inequality."[21] If CC professes a policy that "Christ frees" and then rebuffs same-sex marriage and girls and women taking leadership positions, for example, how much more difficult it is to challenge a curriculum that supports inequality when we come to understand it as God-ordained.

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[20] Rachel, discussion.
[21] Martin, *Cultural Miseducation*, 124.

Christian Educational Essentialism

In addition to the aforementioned problems of compulsory orthodoxies and orthopraxes, I argue that CC's gendered curricula also promote what I call *Christian educational essentialism* as understood and derived from philosophy of educational essentialism.[22] By Christian educational essentialism, I mean a compulsory Christian common curriculum that imparts core knowledge to adherents. Some branches of Christianity allow for differences and change around core subjects. CC characteristically does not and instead imposes and enforces essentialist ideas of right Christian femininity, masculinity, and sexuality, among others. We are taught, as indicated above, that biblical manhood requires men to be heads, husbands, providers and fathers; biblical womanhood requires women to be help meets, wives, homemakers and mothers; and biblical sexuality occurs in only the context of traditional marriage.[23] Such impositions and enforcements constrain religious liberties for Christian women and men alike.

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[22] LeoNora M. Cohen, "Section III – Philosophical Perspectives in Education," *1999*, http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/ed416/PP3.html.

[23] For an exposition of how Christianity changed the ethics of sexual behavior, see Kyle Harper, *From Shame to Sin: The Christian Transformation of Sexual Morality in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).

Essentialist Christian Femininity and Masculinity

Martin claimed, "Religious traditions, led almost exclusively by men, use textual authority to claim essentialist arguments about sex and gender roles, which subordinate women and legitimate men's dominion over women in homes, churches and society at large."[24] Recall Spong from Chapter 1,

> the historical consequences of such restrictions on women result in few rights, curtained freedoms, compromised mobility, minimal power, acceptance of abuse "as both their fate and their due," and an inability to challenge these restrictions without punishment.[25]

Thus, a compulsory Christian curriculum promoting essentialist ideas of gender advantages Christian masculinity and disadvantages Christian femininity, which is particularly hard on women but constraining to men as well.

As virtually mirrored curricular subjects, essentialist Christian femininity and masculinity are taught and learned in connection with divinely ordained (read: essential) roles, which are linked in the Bible, and, therefore, the Christian common curriculum. CC teaches right embodiments for these roles

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[24] Jane Roland Martin, *Coming of Age in Academe: Rekindling Women's Hopes and Reforming the Academy* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 13.
[25] Spong, *The Sins of Scripture*, 73-74.

and for associated beliefs, qualities, adornments, comportments, activities, and so on. Christian boys and girls, and men and women, are taught and learn the curriculum through traditional educational agents such as family, church, community and conventional media, and, increasingly, through Internet-based and social media agents.

A growing number of Christian institutions and organizations are promoting Christian educational essentialism online. Consider, for example, Liberty University, a private Christian university that advertises a women's ministries major that "trains and educates today's woman in basic principles of Biblical femininity" for such career opportunities as "women's ministry director in the local church, teen girl director, teen girl camp counselor, women's conference coordinator, event planner, teen girl/women's conference speaker, and women's ministry Bible teacher."[26] This statement, too, from the "True Woman Manifesto," found online, characterizes the kind of online content promoting Christian gender educational essentialism:

> We are called as women to affirm and encourage men as they seek to express godly masculinity, and to honor and support God-ordained male leadership in the home and in the church… We will seek to glorify God by cultivating

[26] "Women's Ministries," Liberty University, accessed February 27, 2013, http://www.liberty.edu/index.cfm?PID=8871.

such virtues as purity, modesty, submission, meekness, and love.[27]

I have heard Christian women who hold these ideals described as "women with a heart for God." Can Christian women who do not hold these ideals across the board still be considered to have a heart for God? Ostensibly, women with other ideals of Christian femininity lack this quality.

While surveying online sources, I realized that women's curricula, like the ones above, tend to be concerned with, as I have come to think of them, *across relationships*, which affirm submission to divine order and male headship. Men's curricula like the one below, however, tend to lead with *up statements*, affirming a relationship with God, then *side statements*, supporting other Christian men, and then *down statements*, about right relationships with wives and family. I am using "down" as a directional term, not a value term, though it could be both in this case.

1. A Promise Keeper is committed to honoring Jesus Christ through worship, prayer and obedience to God's Word in the power of the Holy Spirit.

2. A Promise Keeper is committed to pursuing vital relationships with a few other men, understanding that he needs brothers to help him keep his promises.

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[27] "True Woman Manifesto," *True Woman*, accessed February 27, 2013, http://www.truewomanmanifesto.com/read/.

3. A Promise Keeper is committed to practicing spiritual, moral, ethical, and sexual purity.

4. A Promise Keeper is committed to building strong marriages and families through love, protection and biblical values.[28]

Christian educational essentialisms of gender such as these determine what it means to be a good Christian woman and good Christian man by essentializing ideals for Christian femininity and masculinity. I wonder how online curricula might push adherents to rethink Christian gender curricula, especially ones like CC that are excessively disciplining. I also wonder how adherents, turned off by traditional church experiences, might find renewed learning and support in online communities. Given that online sources can be explored privately, without risk of community backlash or punishment, young people might turn to this educational agent more and more for information and support.

Essentialist Christian Sexuality

> *When I was a small boy, evangelical Christian adults informed me that just* thinking *about sex was "evil" (because Jesus said lust was the same as adultery) and that all adulterers went to hell. Just imagine what happened when I reached puberty: it was a terrifying, soul-shattering experience*.[29] —Michael R. Burch

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[28] "7 Promises," Promise Keepers, accessed February 23, 2013, http://www.promisekeepers.org/about/7-promises.
[29] "The Best Religious Epigrams and Spiritual Epigrams," *The HyperTexts*, compiled by Michael R. Burch, accessed August 8, 2014, http://www.thehypertexts.com/Religious%20Epigrams.htm.

In this section, I will briefly examine Christian educational essentialisms of sexuality that are, as I distinguish them, *marriage-normative*, *heteronormative*, and *sexual-normative*. As with gender, a compulsory Christian curriculum essentializes sexuality through right knowledge and practice. We are taught to dress modestly, save sex and babies for marriage, not to have sex outside marriage, and to marry someone of the opposite sex. We also learn of Jezebel women, inherently sinful bodies, sex as dirty, virginity so prized there are ceremonies to ensure it, and that same-sex pairings are an "abomination" and "unnatural."[30] Perhaps most importantly, we learn to be fearful of and ashamed to talk or ask questions about sexuality, thus missing critical opportunities for conversations around Christian sexual ethics. Let us take a look at these in turn.

Marriage-Normative

> *Sex magically becomes okay with two words, "I do."*[31] —Harris and Milam

While there is debate within some Christian communities over such issues as use of contraception, I comprehend a compulsory curriculum for essentialist Christian sexuality as marriage-normative that includes:

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[30] Leviticus 20:13 (King James Version); Searching for "homosexuality as unnatural" on Google brings up hundreds of thousands of results, with many making this case.
[31] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 180.

- Saving sex for marriage (virginity)
- Marriage comprising one man and one woman
- Sex within marriage only (faithfulness)
- Protecting pregnancies
- Bringing forth marital offspring.

The other side of this curriculum is:

- No pre-marital sex
- No same-sex relationships
- No extramarital sex
- No abortion
- No children out of wedlock.

In addition, there are mini-curricula that develop around the core. For example, white weddings have long symbolized a bride's virginity on the wedding night. New rituals, such as the virginity/abstinence pledges, purity/chastity ring ceremonies, and purity balls mentioned in Chapter 2, can pressure some young people who are coming of age to formalize an intention to remain virgins until marriage before they are ready to make such a commitment. Young adherents who have succumbed to sexual temptation can

even regain sexual purity until marriage by committing to being a born-again virgin or redeeming purity.

The number of websites dedicated to such rituals is evidence of their popularity, and they increasingly are part of an essentialist curriculum that aims to keep young people sexually pure until marriage.[32] What are we to make of a curriculum that essentializes sex in marriage so much that young Christians and their purity have become effectively commodified through the prevalence of such ceremonies. On a more general note, what are we to make of the effectiveness of such marriage-normative curricula in light of a recent study by Baylor University, which found that evangelical Christians have higher than

[32] The following is a sampling of such **websites and webpages**: "True Love Waits," *Lifeway*, http://www.lifeway.com/n/Product-Family/True-Love-Waits, "Choose Purity," *Choosepurity*, http://choosepurity.victoryoutreach.org/passion-for-purity/; "Silver Ring Thing," *Silverringthing*, http://www.silverringthing.com/whatissrt.asp; **purity ring stores**: http://www.purityrings.com, http://www.purityringsonline.com, https://www.notw.com/True-Love-Waits-Purity-Jewelry.asp; and **purity balls and pledges**: http://www.purityball.com/purityBall.html, http://www.apurityball.com, http://www.promforpurity.org, http://www.generationsoflight.com, "Purity Pledges," Hollywoodpurityball, http://hollywoodpurityball.com/pledge.php, "How to Pledge Your Purity," *eHow*, http://www.ehow.com/how_8224801_pledge-purity.html; "How to Plan a Purity Celebration," *eHow*, http://www.ehow.com/how_6179155_plan-purity-celebration.html.

average divorce rates and are more likely to be divorced than people who claim no religion at all.[33]

Heteronormative

God made Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve.
—Christian anti-gay slogan

People who have a sexual orientation different from heterosexuality are blamed for undermining traditional marriage, breaking down traditional families, and generally spurring society's sexual and other moral decay. While some Christians accept people who are not heterosexual, a compulsory curriculum of essentialist Christian sexuality as heteronormative judges them abnormal, sinful, mentally ill, or morally depraved. Christian anti-LGBTQ typically is rooted in the biblical story of creation, in which God paired a male with a female, and in the biblical story of Sodom and Gomorrah, in which God destroyed the ancient cities for same-sex iniquities.[34] Thus, CC's compulsory sexuality curriculum establishes and essentializes opposite-sex relationships as right and natural and same-sex relationships as wrong and unnatural.

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[33] Baylor University, "Evangelical Christians have higher-than-average divorce rates, new report shows," *ScienceDaily*, February 5, 2014, http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2014/02/140205103258.htm.

[34] A person who reviewed this section wrote in response to this statement, "Another version of Sodom and Gomorrah is that God destroyed the cities because their citizens were selfish and violent towards foreigners." This is not the version or the lesson Carceralites are typically taught.

Unlike Christians with an approach of loving the sinner and hating the sin, some anti-LGBTQ believers hate the sin and hate the sinner.[35] These Christians, however well intentioned, feel justified in speaking against and rejecting people who are not heterosexual because they are fighting for what God wants. Sally Kern, a state legislator representing the district in which I grew up, for example, believes sexual minorities are a greater threat to the nation than terrorism. She made national headlines in 2008 with this statement:

> Studies show that no society that has totally embraced homosexuality has lasted more than, you know, a few decades. So it's the death knell of this country. I honestly think it's the biggest threat our nation has, even more so than terrorism or Islam – which I think is a big threat, okay? 'Cause what's happening now is they are going after, in schools, two-year-olds… And this stuff is deadly, and it's spreading, and it will destroy our young people, it will destroy this nation.[36]

It bears noting that Kern is a former schoolteacher who is married to a Baptist preacher and is reportedly the mother of a son who is gay.

The most passionate among anti-LGBTQ Christians will protest, bully, and even harm people who are gay and lesbian. Members of the Westboro Baptist Church in Topeka, Kansas, for example, may be the most vitriolic anti-

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[35] I wonder how "love the sinner, hate the sin" is qualitatively different for people who are gay and lesbian from "hate the sin, hate the sinner," if at all.
[36] "Oklahoma State Rep.: Gays "Biggest Threat" to US," *DemocracyNow.org*, March 11, 2008, accessed February 23, 2013, http://www.democracynow.org/2008/3/11/headlines#6.

LGBTQ believers in the nation. Known as the "God Hates Fags" church, its members reportedly have conducted 54,694 pickets in 964 cities as of March 21, 2015, according to its website.[37] They believe that all bad things result from God's punishment for tolerance of "sodomites," even deaths of soldiers. They use a verse from the book of Leviticus, "therefore I abhorred them," as their biblical battle cry.[38] The church pickets both individuals and groups, including other churches, with signs reading "God Hates Fags," "AIDS Cures Fags," "Thank God for Aids," "Fags Burn in Hell," "Soldiers Die 4 Fag Marriage," "Thank God for Dead Soldiers," and "Fags Doom Nations."[39] Their website materials are as hate-filled.

What are we to make of a Christian curriculum that essentializes heteronormativity to such an extent that it justifies, in some Christians' minds, bullying and abusing other human beings who happen to be gay or lesbian? What if, instead, the anti-curriculum could focus on being "a haven of help for

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[37] "Home Page," *God Hates Fags*, accessed March 21, 2015, http://www.godhatesfags.com.
[38] Leviticus 20:23 (King James Version).
[39] "About," God Hates Fags, accessed March 1, 2013, http://www.godhatesfags.com/wbcinfo/aboutwbc.html.

the poor and the downtrodden,"[40] to borrow from Harris and Milam, which certainly would include sexual minorities both inside and outside the church?

Sexual-Normative

"We *never* talked about sex in my house growing up."
—A common statement by Carceralites

A "no-talk" rule about sexuality has existed and continues to exist in many educational settings, especially religious ones. In essentialist Christian sexuality as sexual-normative, the compulsory curriculum takes a *no* approach to teaching and *right* approach to sexual belief and behavior. In short, we learn no thinking, no talking, no dressing, no doing, etc. Consider the following examples:

- Thinking: No thinking about sex, no lusting in one's heart
- Talking: No sexual language, no asking questions about sex
- Dressing: No clothing, hair, makeup, jewelry, excessive skin showing, etc., that might tempt others in "the ways of the flesh," and
- Doing: No acting sexual, no watching movies with explicit sexuality, no masturbation.

The right approach, according to such a curriculum, assumes the opposites of each.

[40] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 46.

I have come to understand that sexual education in CC normalizes both sexual hyperawareness and sexual avoidance. We are intensely watchful for right sexual beliefs and behaviors but intensely unwilling to discuss them. The panoptic and punitive discipline discussed in Chapter 2 come into play here. Threats, such as "Jesus can see you," are used to coerce right sexual practice. Women considered immodestly dressed are called "Jezebels."[41] Children caught touching themselves "down there" have hands slapped. Under a microscope and without sexual outlets, many Christians develop inappropriate or unhealthy ones or learn to avoid sex entirely.

Other common unhealthy responses to right sexual ethics, however, include, borrowing from Harris and Milam,

> fantasy and secret allure of porn, with resulting guilt; guilt over masturbation, a normal human behavior; feeling that sex is "wrong" and the resulting guilt, confusion, and hopelessness; history of family in a rigidly Christian family; vulnerability to homosexual child abuse because there is no clear understanding of sexual limits; lack of

[41] Lately, there has been a trend of Christian women wearing crosses near or in visible cleavages. I do not know how or where the trend began, but it has drawn some sharp criticism, such as this online commentary: "Hey, Beautiful, There's a Cross in Your Cleavage," by Stanley Pace, *Kuyperian Commentary*, March 26, 2014, accessed June 5, 2014, http://www.kuyperian.com/hey-beautiful-theres-a-cross-in-your-cleavage/. In the commentary, the author used words like "Jezebel," "harlot," "wanna-be-whore," and "temptress" to describe women he saw on e-dating sites wearing a cross near/between their cleavage. It bears noting that a good number of women supported his observations in the comments section of the commentary.

> understanding of sex; intense need for love; confusion of love with sexuality.[42]

Working with people recovering from abusive Christian experiences, Harris and Milam observed the consequences of such a sex education:

> They say they were continually reminded as children that sex and their bodies were dirty, nasty, wrong, sinful, and sex was not to be discussed or asked about… Thus, they were conditioned to avoid sexual topics, sexual feelings, and to fear their own sexuality… Sex only becomes "okay" after she's married. But somehow, when a woman goes through a ten- to thirty-minute marriage ceremony, that conditioning does not magically disappear.[43]

Thus, emotional injury is one consequence of religious curricula that normalize sexual hyperawareness and sexual avoidance.

Another consequence, paradoxically, is sexual acting out. I do not mean young people coming of age who sexually experiment. I mean sexual activity that makes the Roman Catholic Church the butt of jokes like "Abstinence makes the church grow fondlers," the kind of sexual activity that self-destructs such preachers as Jimmy Swaggart (adultery with a female prostitute) and Ted Haggard (adultery with a male prostitute and a male church member); and the kind of sexual activity that inspired a recent Protestant anti-pornography

[42] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 179.
[43] Ibid., 224.

campaign committed to signing up one million men to live a pornography-free life.[44]

While some argue the Internet is a digital version of the Wild West, and I agree, it nonetheless offers outlets for pragmatic Christian-centered sex education that openly resists essentialist Christian sexuality. With "more than 150,000 unique visitors any given month,"[45] for example, *The Marriage Bed* is a surprisingly instructive and plain-speaking website for sex education and intimacy education. The site candidly describes and discusses a variety of sexual practices and sexual play, including anal and oral sex and BDSM (bondage/discipline, sadism/masochism). It also discusses sexual problems, such as lack of desire, infidelity, and pornography addiction. However, I would argue its best lessons emphasize the importance of candor, self-reflection, and

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[44] "List of Scandals Involving Evangelical Christians," featured by *The Holy Christian Church*, accessed November 25, 2014, http://theholychristianchurch.com/evangelist-scandals.html. The Wikipedia page to which The Holy Christian Church website refers has seemingly been reworked and retitled, "Category: Religious scandals," *Wikipedia*, accessed November 25, 2014, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Religious_scandals; "Movement Seeks '1 Million Men' to Fight Pornography Addiction," *Baptist Press*, February 22, 2013, http://www.bpnews.net/39752; "Our Mission," Pink Elephant Resources, accessed November 4, 2014, http://pinkelephantresources.com/mission/.

[45] "About the Marriage Bed," *The Marriage Bed: Sex and Intimacy for Married Christians,* accessed November 25, 2014, http://site.themarriagebed.com/about-tmb/who-we-are/about-tmb.

honest communication with one's partner over a range of sexuality- and intimacy-related topics.

Need for Discussion of Christian Sexual Ethics

> *I often feel that expressing a differing view is condemning myself to say that I want kids to go out and just have sex, babies, and abortions till the cows come home! There's a healthier way to view sex than to fear it non-stop until this magical day when you might get married.*[46] —Travis McKee

The frustration expressed in this comment by Travis McKee to a blog post on biblically-based sex education offers keen insights into the kind of Christian sex education that CC imparts. First, holding and expressing different views of sexuality from the established curriculum is wrong and makes one vulnerable to condemnation and punishment. Second, discussing sexual subjects with young people is wrong and condones immoral behavior. Third, fear of transgressions such as fornication and sexual immorality is an integral part of the curriculum. Fourth, it assumes people do not need to know about sex before marriage. Even *The Marriage Bed* is intended for "married and

[46] Travis McKee, comment on Christian Piatt, "The Flaws of Biblically-Based Sex Education," *Christian Piatt's Blog*, February 16, 2011, http://christianpiatt.wordpress.com/2011/02/16/the-flaws-of-biblically-based-sex-education/.

engaged" Christians.[47] Finally, it assumes individuals magically will understand sex and sexual matters and not feel afraid upon saying "I do." I wonder how a compulsory Christian curriculum, especially one lacking in an explicit Christian sexual ethics education, contrary to its aim, makes people more sexually vulnerable or sexually compulsive. How about to sexual coercion? Sexual abuse? Or to sexual violence?

The no talk/no do rules of sexuality imparted through CC are intended to pressure and scare Carceralites into right sexual belief and practice. Many individuals, though afraid, will sexually explore anyway, and some end up "hav[ing] sex, babies, and abortions,"[48] to borrow from McKee. Still others develop sexual compulsions, such as addiction to pornography and even sexual assault. According to a recent report of pornography statistics, fifty percent of all Christian men and twenty percent of all Christian women say they are addicted to pornography, while ninety-one percent of self-identified fundamentalists reportedly are more likely to look at porn.[49] While sexual

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[47] "Start Here," *The Marriage Bed: Sex and Intimacy for Married Christians*, accessed November 25, 2014, http://site.themarriagebed.com/start-here.
[48] McKee in Piatt, "The Flaws of Biblically-Based Sex Education."
[49]Steven Stack, Ira Wasserman, and Roger Kern, "Pornography Statistics: Annual Report 2014," *Covenant Eyes*, accessed June 7, 2014, http://www.covenanteyes.com/pornstats; a religious studies professor told me she was surprised to learn from a student leader in their program that access

assault within Christian communities is more difficult to quantify, I am reminded of recent allegations of a male high school student raping three female classmates in Oklahoma, which set off a firestorm of public coverage. The young man reportedly met one of the young women at a "youth group night at a large local church."[50]

These examples help to ground Harris and Milam's claim that Christian belief systems using fear to control people on sexual issues would instead push them into "paths of least resistance, such as adultery, promiscuity, sexual perversion, marital rape, and suicide."[51] As concerning as are the purported details of the rape cases in Oklahoma, I have been equally concerned by some of the online discussion following an article about them, much of which was lacking in the *ethical reflection* and *ethical dialogue* championed by philosopher of

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and addiction to pornography, not alcohol as she expected to hear, is the biggest problem for students on their campus.

[50] The news article that sparked the coverage was written by Anna Merlan, "Why Were Three Teenage Rape Victims Bullied Out of School in Oklahoma," *Jezebel*, accessed November 25, 2014, http://jezebel.com/why-were-three-teenage-rape-victims-bullied-out-of-scho-1659721302. Others articles followed, in addition to television, radio, and social and other media coverage.

[51] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 246.

education Robert Kunzman as necessary for mutual understanding and thoughtful public deliberation.[52]

Given that Oklahoma ranks in the top ten most Christian states and top ten for teenage pregnancy,[53] and that Oklahomans consistently vote across social (read: religious) issues, and that forty-four percent of all sexual assault victims are under age eighteen, and that about one-third of students age twelve and up are the victims of school bullying,[54] we desperately need some discussion about Christian sexual ethics, including dating ethics. A compulsory curriculum of sex avoidance misses and obstructs opportunities for teaching and learning good things about sexuality, such as sexual intimacy, emotional intimacy, and sexual pleasure. If we grow up learning to be fearful of sexuality, as CC teaches, and are punished for breaking no-talk/no-do rules, sowing seeds

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[52] Robert Kunzman, *Grappling with the Good: Talking about Religion and Morality in Public Schools* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2006), 42, 55, 60.

[53] "Christian Statistics: The Largest Christian Populations," *Adherents.com*, accessed November 25, 2014, http://www.adherents.com/largecom/com_christian.html#states; LiveScience Staff, "Teen Pregnancy Rates by State," *LiveScience*, February 25, 2013, http://www.livescience.com/27417-teen-pregnancy-rates-by-state.html.

[54] "Rape Statistics," *Teen Violence Statistics*, accessed November 25, 2014, http://www.teenviolencestatistics.com/content/rape-statistics.html; "School Violence Statistics," *Teen Violence Statistics*, accessed November 25, 2014, http://www.teenviolencestatistics.com/content/school-violence-statistics.html.

of sexual anxiety, how then do we learn the mind-body-spirit shifts needed for a sexually satisfying adult life, if we learn them at all?

Compulsory Teaching Activities

> *I pledge allegiance to the Christian Flag, and to the Savior for whose Kingdom it stands. One Savior, crucified, risen, and coming again, with life and liberty to all who believe…. I pledge allegiance to the Bible, God's Holy Word. I will make it a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path and will hide its words in my heart that I might not sin against God.*[55] —Pledges to the Christian flag and Bible

> *Automaton teachers are all too likely to fashion their pupils in their own image.*[56] —Jane Roland Martin

In *The Activities of Teaching*, philosopher of education Thomas Green studied schoolteachers to better understand subtle but nonetheless tangible meanings of teaching.[57] He made lists of teacher activities, roughly categorized, to theorize which activities are necessary for excellent teaching. Specifically, Green argued that logical acts, such as explaining and giving reasons; and strategic acts, such as motivating and questioning, are necessary for excellent teaching, whereas institutional acts, such as patrolling halls and taking attendance, are not. Green's point in constructing categories was not to come to

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[55] Pledges of allegiance to the Christian flag and Bible are commonly taught as part of Christian-based homeschooling.
[56] Martin, *Cultural Miseducation*, 84.
[57] Thomas F. Green, "The Structures of Teaching," chap. 1 in *The Activities of Teaching (*New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971).

definitive conclusions about teachers and teaching, although his hierarchical interpretation of these teaching acts could certainly be critiqued, but rather to challenge people to think more deeply about them in the context of such categories.

In this spirit, I will next formulate three categories of teachers in CC – disciplinarians, guards, and offenders – who, along with associated teaching activities, compel adherence to CC. Teachers include anyone or anything imparting knowledge of CC: family members, church leaders and followers, schoolteachers and friends, people throughout the community, oneself, television, radio, the Internet, social media, etc.

These categories presume a kind of religious education that is grounded in discipline as obedience to authority and rules,[58] and were inspired by participant interviews, selected readings, popular culture references, and self-reflection. With acknowledgment that some activities could be shifted to other categories and highlighting different aspects of them, I offer these, like Green, with the hope of better informing and prompting conversation about CC and to challenge people to think more deeply about Christian teachers and teaching.

[58] For an alternative, see John Covaleskie's body of work on moral education and formation.

Teachers as Disciplinarians and Their Disciplining Acts

Discipline brings to mind a variety of activities, ranging from internal control and restraint to external correction and punishment. Grounded in the panoptic and punitive discipline described in Chapter 2, I propose that teachers of CC act as disciplinarians through preserving, examining, regulating, and enforcing activities.

As **preservers** of CC, Christian teachers act as guardians, custodians, keepers, and defenders of Christianity. Preservers help maintain the religion through activities such as bringing people into the fold; being witnesses for Christ; and being involved in political leadership positions in organizations such as the Moral Majority, Christian Coalition, and Focus on the Family, which have emerged as strong and influencing conservers of Christianity in state and national politics. Bearing in mind that what is preserved may change over time. For example, one of the emigrant Carceralites with whom I spoke, Eunice, was born in 1950. She said,

> I'm telling you this for a reason. Because fundamentalism is different than it was. Things weren't as fundamental when I grew up… If you defined fundamentalism as literal interpretation of the Bible, that's not what I was taught. I did not feel that the church was as fundamental, not only in interpretation but in the

> politization [*sic*] of religion at that time. I think the difference is when religious leaders began to have a political agenda.[59]

As **examiners** for CC, Christian teachers act as observers and judges of the curriculum, determining what and who is right. Examiners in CC, as described in Chapter 2, include the Central Tower (God), a thousand central towers (others) and self-enforced towers (self), which together comprise a pervasive, examining gaze. Christian teachers as examiners are always watching and deciding what comprises good Christianity and who counts as good Christians. In Foucault's language, examiners are "the judges of normality (and) are present everywhere."[60]

As **regulators** of CC, Christian teachers act as "technicians of behavior"[61] to control right beliefs and practices. This was expressed by one person I interviewed, Enoch, who said of his parents, "You know my folks, I love them, but they were not at the time particularly oriented towards addressing questions… I think they were more concerned with regulating behavior."[62] For Enoch, the regulating included where he went, what he read, with whom he hung out, etc.

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[59] Eunice, discussion.
[60] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 304.
[61] Ibid., 294.
[62] Enoch, discussion.

As **enforcers** for CC, Christian teachers act as compellers of adherence to a compulsory Christian curriculum. Examples may be found in Chapter 2, where those who use punitive discipline are shown to use pressure, manipulation, fear, and punishment to coerce right belief and right practice from adherents.

Teachers as Guards and Guarding Acts

Many Christians recognize a no-talk rule around openly acknowledging certain guarding acts within CC. We see them, but we are often uneasy and fearful about speaking against use of them. We may not agree with them but anxiously accept them. Moreover, we learn to regard our apprehension about them as dubious. In the context of CC, Christian teachers serve as guards through patrolling, policing, spying, and what I will refer to as outcasting activities.

As **patrollers** of CC, Christian teachers act as lookouts, sentinels, and gatekeepers of Christian curriculum; that is, they keep outsiders out. Similar to individuals who guard national borders to keep illegal immigrants from entering a country, Christian patrollers keep people deemed outside the flock from joining communities. A clear example is Christian leaders who overtly keep non-heterosexuals from joining Christian churches. Recently, for example,

I ran across a church website with something like "all welcome, unless you are atheist or homosexual" posted near the top of the homepage.

As **policers** of CC, Christian teachers act as warders within church communities; that is, they function to keep insiders in and behaving right. This includes leaders policing members, members policing other members, family policing family, women policing girls and women, boyfriends and girlfriends policing one another, and individuals policing themselves. Being put on the Wednesday night prayer list, for example, is a shaming tactic used by some policers to bring others' beliefs and practices back in line.[63] One of the people I interviewed was often prayed for during Wednesday night prayer meetings. Specifically, church members prayed for his soul. When I asked Barnabas how he felt about that, he said, "You get used to it, of course. But that was part of the negative experiences. I mean, how many times can you be told, 'You're not one of us' before you finally take them up on that?"

As **spies** for CC, Christian teachers act as both covert and overt surveillants of people, reporting and/or confronting when they miss the mark. In Chapter 2, I wrote about Miriam, who felt surrounded by a built-in spy network that included people in her overlapping home, church, and school

[63] Barnabas, discussion.

communities. For example, people would tell her mother if she participated in worldly school activities like holiday craft projects, saluting the flag, or singing secular songs, which were prohibited in her church.[64]

As **outcasters** for CC, Christian teachers act as "contemporary stone throwers,"[65] banishing people from church communities for breaking rules and not following the curriculum. As Harris and Milam noted about abusive Christians, outcasters "feel no guilt because they think they are right."[66] Examples of those who are outcast include women pregnant before marriage, church leaders caught drinking, and members engaged in extramarital affairs.

Teachers as Offenders and Offending Acts

> *Preaching is a distant second to practicing when it comes to instilling values like compassion, courage, faith, fellowship, forgiveness, love, peace, hope, wisdom, prayer, and humility. By putting spiritual values in action, adults show children that they are not just for church or home but are to be brought into the world, used to make the village a better place.*[67] —Hillary Rodham Clinton

"Hypocrite" was a word often spoken by emigrant Carceralites when describing Christians who preach or teach one thing and do another; punish others for sinning while doing similar or worse things; and abuse others

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[64] Miriam, discussion.
[65] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 266.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Clinton, *It Takes A Village*, 178.

mentally, spiritually, physically, and sexually. In keeping with the carceral concept of this research, I call these Christians *offending teachers*. Whether realizing it or not, these teachers become "Christian perpetrators,"[68] to borrow from Harris and Milam. In the context of CC, teachers act as offenders through conning, abusing, and bystanding activities.

As **cons** of CC, Christian teachers act as deceivers, charlatans, and hypocrites in Christian communities. National scandals involving prominent Christian leaders have come to seem almost commonplace. As I write this paragraph, a top British cardinal in the Roman Catholic Church resigned over sexual misconduct.[69] Protestant leaders are equally guilty. In November 2006, Ted Haggard, then pastor of one of the largest evangelical churches in the U.S. and president of the National Association of Evangelicals, resigned his position as a result of a sex and drug scandal involving a male prostitute.[70] There are cons closer to home as well. One of the individuals I interviewed spoke of his

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[68] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 100.
[69]John F. Burns, "Following Resignation, Top British Cardinal Acknowledges Sexual Misconduct," *New York Times*, March 3, 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/04/world/europe/cardinal-keith-obrien-acknowledges-sexual-misconduct.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0
[70] Billy Hallowell, "Disgraced Ex-Preacher Says There's a Major Culture Problem in Evangelical Christianity," *The Blaze*, December 16, 2013, http://www.theblaze.com/stories/2013/12/16/ex-megapastor-ted-haggard-says-something-is-very-wrong-in-christian-culture-following-pastor-isaac-hunters-suicide/.

stepfather, a known traveling evangelist who regularly abused his mother emotionally and physically.[71] These are teachers who "talk the talk but don't walk the walk" and hurt both people and the credibility of religion in the process. Harris and Milam argued that these individuals "are wounded by Christianity but are not aware of it" and that these scandals "reveal their pain, neediness, and lack of peace."[72]

As abusers in the interest of CC, Christian teachers act as what I call *bullies of tetradeum* and *tetradeum-injurers*.[73] Christian bullies of tetradeum spiritually and religiously intimidate others through such activities as

- Telling adherents how to think, believe, and act; and fear-mongering and shame-mongering if adherents go against God's will;
- Demanding submission and obedience based on hierarchy (e.g., "…because I am the pastor, husband, father, parent, fill in the blank"[74]);
- Minimizing or dismissing others' questions or thoughts (e.g., "…only talks about religion using things that she has memorized,

[71] Samuel, discussion.
[72] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 99.
[73] Refer to 'tetradeum' on page 6.
[74] According to Harris and Milam, "If by appealing to position, unique claims or special anointing, leaders succeed in creating a hierarchy in the church, they can more easily control those beneath them. They can also defend themselves against any who might challenge them." Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 99.

and she's got an answer for everything;"[75] "…went to talk to the pastor. I was really mad at God…; He gave a totally ineffective answer. It was 'You need to go home. You've got time to get over this'"[76]); and,

- Witnessing and proselytizing through tenacious zeal, fear, threats, etc. (discussed below).

Saving souls for Christ is such an important activity that some Christians are taught different methods to accomplish it. For example, Miriam had to practice and was graded on door-to-door proselytizing skills at ministry school as a child.[77] Ruth admitted to "arguing people into the Christ thing" in middle school and high school, including one boyfriend.[78] Still another, Rizpah, talked about preachers on college campuses browbeating, name calling, and generally trying to scare people into accepting Jesus.[79] Regarding the latter, articles featuring preachers on campus regularly make headlines in my city's college newspaper. The most recent one features a preacher who, in addition to talking to (verbally taunting) students as they walked to classes, is wearing a sandwich board with warnings of judgment against such groups of people as "sex addicts," "baby killers," "sports nuts," "thieves," "pot smoking little devils,"

[75] Rachel, discussion.
[76] Priscilla, discussion.
[77] Miriam, discussion.
[78] Ruth, discussion.
[79] Rizpah, discussion.

"two faced people," "child molesting homosexuals," "lewd women," and "Mormons," among others.[80]

On a different and ironic note, a young woman approached me while I was working on this section at a coffee shop. Having been trained in what I think of as *cold-call witnessing*, I sensed what was about to happen: introductions, general life questioning, prayer-related questioning, prayer, church home questioning, followed by an invitation to attend her church. If any of these questions had not been answered right, the young woman likely would have asked more questions, partook in more witnessing, etc. While apologizing for interrupting my work, the woman did not ask permission to sit down nor wait for an invitation. Nor did she ask me any questions about my religious or spiritual beliefs. I argue she is a bully of conscience because my wishes, and beliefs for that matter, were subordinate to her mission. It bears noting, this is the second time in a year someone has witnessed to me in a coffee shop. Similarly, one of the individuals who reviewed this section wrote, "I have witnessed this practice in coffee shops since we moved here. That's how I happened to overhear that Episcopalians are 'not Christians' and suddenly

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[80] Paris Burris, Dana Branham, and Gloria Noble, "Free Preach Zone: Campus Preacher Makes a Stop at OU," *The Oklahoma Daily* (Norman, Oklahoma), September 21, 2014, http://www.oudaily.com/news/free-preach-zone-campus-preacher-makes-a-stop-at-ou/article_dcd034a0-3ea9-11e4-a3bb-001a4bcf6878.html.

knew there was a lot I had to learn about this culture. I also found out somewhat later that Roman Catholics were also regarded as 'not Christians.'" She asked, "By what twists of mind could these claims have come to achieve credibility here?"

Christian teachers as tetradeum-injurers use or abuse biblical or church authority and, intentionally or not, wound the mind, body, spirit, and conscience of others. Consider Christian teachers who injure people mentally, psychologically, and emotionally through non-physical intimidation. Examples include telling folks they are unworthy of God's love without salvation, telling children they have black hearts that need Jesus's cleansing blood, threatening children with a direct hotline to God, obstinately quoting scriptures at people instead of talking with them, threatening eternal damnation for non-belief or wrong beliefs, and using the silent treatment or threats of disownment to bring children back in line. I also include children being made to witness abuse in this category, like a person I know who was forced to watch a brother being "spanked into submission," as she described it.[81] She considered herself a

[81] See Valerie Tarico, "Breaking Their Will: The Sick Biblical Literalism That Leads to Child Abuse and Even Death," *AlterNet*, September 24, 2013, http://www.alternet.org/belief/breaking-their-will-sick-biblical-literalism-leads-child-abuse-and-even-death.

secondary psychological victim of her brother's abuse. I think of such abusing Christians as *anxiety-mongers*, and *peace-of-mind stealers*.

The notion of Christian teachers as body-injurers is partly framed in the discussion of physical punishments in Chapter 2. Recall that some Christian teachers use corporal discipline (spanking, switching, hitting, punishment by enema, etc.) to punish individuals straying from the right curriculum. Body-injurers can range from parents "screaming and throwing shoes"[82] at a child for studying a non-Christian religion to harassing and harming anti-LGBTQ and pro-life advocates.[83]

One area of bodily injury not yet considered is sexual abuse, which certainly intersects with psychological, emotional, and spiritual abuse. Harris and Milam claimed that a "high percentage of sexual offenders are extremely religious, conservative, and uncomfortable with sexual issues."[84] I have had many conversations with emigrant Carceralites, primarily women, who suffered sexual abuse and incest within their homes or church-homes, and have read or watched stories of others. I am reminded, for instance, of an ABC News story about a fifteen-year-old girl who was raped and impregnated by a fifty-

[82] Deborah, discussion.
[83] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 98-99.
[84] Ibid., 232-233.

two-year-old man from her church. The pastor made her confess her sin to the congregation, and banished her until after the baby had been delivered.[85] I am also reminded of a Minnesota preacher who taught it was God's will for the girls in his congregation to have sex with him, and families regularly tuned over their young daughters to the care of his Shepherd's Camp. When one young woman confronted her mother about the years of sexual abuse at the hands of the preacher, the mother responded, "I don't want to hear it. The blood of the lamb cleanses everything."[86]

Pointing to cognate research into incest and child abuse, Anglican Archdeacon Joanne Woolway Grenfell also claimed that sexual abuse "is more prevalent in fundamentalist religious branches than in more liberal branches or in secular society."[87] Nevertheless, we do not hear about it as much as sexual abuse in Catholic churches or in society at large. Perhaps this is because

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[85] Sean Dooley and Alice Gomstyn, "New Hampshire Man Found Guilty of Rape of Tina Anderson," *ABC News*, May 27, 2011, http://abcnews.go.com/2020/new-hampshire-man-ernest-willis-found-guilty-rape-tina-anderson/story?id=13702833.

[86] "My Father Offered Me as a 'Maiden' to an Alleged Cult Leader," *Dr. Phil*, November 25, 2014, http://drphil.com/shows/show/2311/; Karl Kahler, "Minnesota cult leader called the girls "brides of Christ' – and he was 'Christ,' *TwinCities.com*, May 17, 2014, http://www.twincities.com/localnews/ci_25783953/victor-barnard-called-girls-brides-christ-and-he.

[87] Joanne Woolway Grenfell, "Religion and Eating Disorders: Towards Understanding a Neglected Perspective," *Feminist Theology* 14, no. 3 (2006): 370, http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0966735006063775.

Protestant churches lack a central reporting structure for such abuse. It seems instead that many Christians caught sexually abusing or molesting members, whether adults or children, are quietly dismissed and thus are free to secure memberships and positions in other churches. Or, worse, women victims are blamed, silenced or banished.

Several women with whom I spoke revealed Christian sexual abuse and incest while growing up in CC. Consider this statement by Priscilla:

> Both religion and the sexual abuse were completely merged in my world because sexual abuse was from my father, and he was a major leader in the community and in church.[88]

And this account by Dinah, a woman with a physical disability who was sexually abused by her uncle:

> My aunt and uncle raised me… He molested me since I was born, I guess. I don't know when he started, but it would be every day… I'm like a really old person from my waist down… I couldn't get away. I couldn't walk or nothing, so that was to his advantage… I didn't believe that was Christian, because, how could he do what he did to me and still be a Christian? I even went to their preacher for help. He went and told him. And I got beat. I got beat very, very severely. [I asked her, "Did anybody call the authorities?"] No. [I next asked, "Did they talk to him at church?"] No. He told them I was making it up… Then I knew they were

[88] Priscilla, discussion.

> all out. No one can be trusted… I just assumed they were all like that, and that they all did it to their families. So I just grew up believing that.[89]

"They were all out" meant that Dinah decided she could not trust anyone in this particular church ever again.

Sexual abuse and incest in the context of religious community are extremely confusing and hurtful. I consider it to be *soul-injuring*. Psychoanalyst Leonard Shengold has even pronounced it as *soul-murder*.[90] If the offender is a parent, another family member, or a church family member, what does that teach adherents of divine worth and divine self-worth? Childhood sexual abuse damages developing self- and sexual identities. How much more so in the context of one's sacred space? I know of Christians who defend quietly dismissing members for sexual transgressions because the credibility of the church would be hurt if such acts were made public. In essence, individual victims of such transgressions are sexually sacrificed for the sake of the greater communal good. But what message does it send to adherents who have been sexually injured, especially by people within their church communities?

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[89] Dinah, discussion.

[90] Leonard Shengold, *Soul Murder: The Effects of Childhood Abuse and Deprivation* (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1989) and *Soul Murder Revisited: Thoughts About Therapy, Hate, Love, and Memory* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999).

As **bystanders** to CC, Christian teachers act as passive onlookers to Christian abuse. Standing by, as argued by Jim Carnes, director of the Teaching Tolerance Project, "sends the wrong messages to victims and perpetrators alike."[91] He explained, "The latter learn that in adult eyes their behavior is perfectly acceptable. The former learn to "suffer in silence."[92] Consider the woman above whose uncle sexually abused her. She needed her aunt to intercede; her aunt did not. She needed her pastor to intercede; he did not. The lessons she learned from this experience included "they were all like that," "no one can be trusted," and "they were all out." Thus, when teachers' offenses are overlooked, sustaining bonds between individuals and communities ultimately are supplanted with destructive ones.

How does CC propagate and defend a Christian curriculum that produces offending teachers? How might we challenge compulsory teaching activities in general to help people be less vulnerable to them and the teachers that transmit them? What are the orthodoxies and orthopraxes, and who are the teachers that, instead, embody such teaching activities as advocating, supporting, nurturing, encouraging, helping, healing, role modeling, and allying? Finally, how might we mediate the effects of harmful teaching

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[91] Jim Carnes in Martin, *Cultural Miseducation*, 102.
[92] Ibid.

activities for ourselves and future generations? To borrow from politician Hillary Rodham Clinton, "if we find mediating influences along the way… we can learn even from the painful lessons our upbringing has to teach us."[93]

Discussion

Christian teachers of CC do not generally ask, "What should I/we be teaching?" They believe that they already know based on a compulsory Christian curriculum of right orthodoxies and right orthopraxes. Martin's work in *Cultural Miseducation* points to three reasons to reject compulsory curricula. First, they "introduce a strong dose of compulsion into education,"[94] thereby not permitting change, growth, or new understandings of the curriculum. For example, Christian educational essentialism says that young girls and women, though believing they are called to ministry, are not allowed to serve in that capacity because the Bible does not allow it. It disallows females to serve in this capacity. What if we were permitted to reinterpret orthodoxies that shape gendered educational essentialisms? How might families and churches change as a result?

[93] Clinton, *It Takes a Village*, 51.
[94] Martin, *Cultural Miseducation*, 125.

Second, "individual interests and abilities get short shrift and difference is perceived as deficiency;"[95] therefore, CC assumes people learning the same curriculum will believe and practice Christianity in the same way. For example, CC charges married couples to "be fruitful and multiply"[96] as instructed by God in the book of Genesis. The expectation is that children will follow soon after marriage. I know a couple, however, that waited a decade. When they announced their pregnancy, several people commented, "Oh! We just thought Ellen couldn't get pregnant." The couple's decision to wait was perceived as deficiency, particularly on the part of Ellen. What if Christians were permitted to practice marriage outside of sex and gender role expectations without it being viewed as strange? How might families and churches change as a result?

Third, compulsory curricula implicitly endorse "dependence on others with personal inadequacy and failure;"[97] therefore, CC obligates us to submit our bodies and consciences to the will of higher-ranking teachers even if they are morally weak. The obvious example is daughters, or sons for that matter, who learn to submit to people who sexually abuse. Christian teachers who sexually abuse children are not models of a moral compass. What if Christians

[95] Martin, *Cultural Miseducation*, 125.
[96] Genesis 1:28 (King James Version).
[97] Martin, *Cultural Miseducation*, 125.

were permitted to challenge and resist teachers without fear of being shamed, punished, or shunned? How might families and churches change as a result?

A compulsory Christian curriculum based in invariable knowledge neither allows nor accounts for the fact that orthodoxies and orthopraxes do change. Consider, for example, when common folks were not permitted to read the Bible (now expected), when reformers threw off Catholic purgatory and confession (now Protestants), and when Jesus was thought to be white and European (now brown and Middle Eastern). Such compulsory religious curricula deny self- and ecclesiastical-examination.

In sum, CC characterizes and transmits what Martin calls a *faulty curriculum*. According to Martin, "Teachers, to the extent that they have been subject to the same faulty curriculum, will be in a poor position to detect the faults."[98] Borrowing from Martin, I argue that CC constitutes a faulty religious curriculum with flawed orthodoxies and orthopraxes or mistaken interpretations by teachers. As such, it cultivates and effectively assures the compulsory learning, practicing and teaching that contribute to the religious "educational problem of generations"[99] proposed in Chapter 5. First, let us take a deeper look at the inner (individual) and outer (communal) liabilities of CC as

[98] Martin, *Cultural Miseducation*, 84.
[99] Ibid., chap. 3.

formulated and discussed in the next chapter, which I call the *scars and bars* of compulsory learning.

Chapter 4:

Scars and Bars, Or Liabilities of Carceral Learning

How long will grown men and women in this world

keep drawing in their coloring books

an image of God that makes them sad?

—Meister Eckhart, *Love Poems from God: Twelve Sacred Voices from the East and West*

They keep us in our cells for a long time...

And, if we get out, we lug them with us on our shoulders,

like a porter with a chest of goods.

—Visar Zhiti, *The Condemned Apple: Selected Poetry*

"The Creation of Me"[1]

On the sixth day, God created Adam. And when he saw what he had created he said it was good. The Goddess stepped in and said, "Hmmm? I do believe it's missing something. Maybe something like boobs and a vagina. You egotistical bastard."

God rolled his eyes and said, "'Kay, fine." And he took some spare parts from Adam and made Eve. Then God said, "Hey, you know what, Goddess, maybe this could work. That thing would make an excellent help-meet."

"Fuck you very much," said the Goddess. Then she crossed her fingers hoping that they would all come to their senses one day.

They didn't.

So Adam and Eve did the nasty and had babies. Those babies grew up and had sex and had babies, who grew up and had sex and had babies, who grew up and had sex and had babies. And on and on it goes for thousands of years until the exact right two babies grew up and had sex and made me.

There I was all chubby and dripping blood and fluid, taking my very first breath, seeing people for the very first time, a whole new world to explore and a lifetime of wonders ahead of me. A joyous moment, right?

It wasn't.

The moment my head crowned, the church said, "She's a sinner. Her only value will be in taking care of the man and giving birth."

Mom and Dad said, "Damn straight," and then they prayed.

And I asked, "Hey, don't I get a say?"

And God, Dad and Mom all said in unison, "Shut up and do what you're told." Then a bottle was shoved in my mouth.

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[1] Anonymous 2, "The Creation of Me," undated, shared with the author in 2008.

Happy birthday to me.

Something unexpected happened as I began writing this chapter. I kept feeling pulled into sleep. I could not drink enough coffee to stay awake. I had to leave favorite writing spots because I kept nodding off. I felt restless and unsettled, unable to get into a zone. I worked on one page for several days. And I noticed a rash had developed on my neck over my voice box, so this morning I stayed in bed to write. I figured if I felt tugged into sleep, I could catch a quick nap and keep going. After working several hours and briefly dozing, I awoke to the realization that I was subconsciously resisting writing this chapter. I may have wanted to do so on an intellectual level, but had been fighting going there on an emotional level because some of the content triggered painful remembrances.

The words in the opening narrative bear witness to the deep and often privately held pain experienced by some people raised in CC. As inheritors of a particularly rigid religious stock, Carceralites are shaped and misshaped by religious-based experiences that form our evolving selves. While there is an unknown "X factor" at play in how individuals come to understand and respond to similar religious experiences, as evidenced by siblings raised in the same family who take different religious and spiritual paths, it seems clear the

more constrained, controlled, or abused a person, the greater the injuries to one's developing conscience and sense of selfhood.

To be subjected to CC is to be wounded on some level. For example, chronic bullying of one's conscience through Christian "scare tactics"[2] is wounding. Coerced embodiment of sex and gender roles is wounding. A curriculum that demands unreflective and unconditional adherence to teachings, practices, and teachers is wounding. Corporal and communal punishments for falling short are wounding. Such religious injuries result in what I call *wounded-Beingness*, or *woundedness* for short.[3] To borrow from novelist and essayist Leslie Jamison, "No injury has discreet edges. It bleeds. Out of wounds and across boundaries."[4] In this way, religious woundedness harms individuals by injuring our sense of inner humanity, which bleeds across and into our outer communities. Such woundedness can be long-term, distorting our view of the world and our place in it.

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[2] Sarah, discussion.

[3] I have heard emigrant Carceralites speak of feeling "damaged," as in "damaged goods." A friend suggested that people should think about religious and spiritual injuries in terms of being "wounded" instead of "damaged" because "damaged" implies someone is in need of "fixing" whereas "wounded" implies someone is in need of "healing."

[4] Leslie Jamison, "Never Hurts to Ask: 'The Empathy Exams,'" *New York Times*, April 4, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/06/books/review/the-empathy-exams-by-leslie-jamison.html?_r=0.

I argue that woundedness is a religious liability cultivated in the panoptic and punitive discipline formulated in Chapter 2 and transmitted by the compulsory Christian curriculum outlined in Chapter 3. As transmission mechanisms of CC, they virtually guarantee that adherents will suffer religious injuries and spiritual scars. I will develop the idea of CC and woundedness as a religious problem of generations that results in cycles of spiritual poverty in the next chapter. First, let us look deeply at liabilities of carceral learning, beginning with the inner liabilities of woundedness, bullied conscience, injuries and scars, and dehumanization.

Inner Scars and Restraints of Carceral Learning

Woundedness

Recall some of the collection of feeling words in Chapter 1 expressed by emigrant Carceralites in interviews: Bothered, sad, miserable, guilty, worried, confused, weary, fearful, hurt, agony, humiliated, mad, appalled, hate, isolated, dissatisfied, regret, disgust, self-doubt, and helpless. These words are powerful spoken manifestations of inner woundedness to people's tetradeum, emotions, psyche, etc., that form in the curricular spaces of repressive outer religious experiences. A clear case of woundedness can be seen in people who suffer childhood sexual abuse or incest within the context of Christian circles. Recall

from Chapter 2 that Joanne Woolway Grenfell argued sexual maltreatment "is more prevalent in fundamentalist religious branches than in more liberal branches or in secular society."[5] While sexual abuse and incest may not visibly scar a person's outer skin, it certainly wounds the inner skin. Consider the words of this emigrant Carceralite:

"Roots of Unworthiness"[6]

I wanted to be saved, and nobody came to save me.
I wanted my mother to save me,
Yet her footsteps were absent outside the locked bedroom door.

My father sexually abused me,
Instead of honoring, protecting and loving me.
How could he do that if I was worthy?

My mother turned a blind eye,
Instead of honoring, protecting and loving me.
How could she do that if I was worthy?

No one protected me. No one saved me.
Toxic, twisted roots… that linger on.

As the poem indicates, this woman was wounded by ongoing sexual abuse by her father and a lack of protection after telling her mother about it. Put plainly, her father abused her, and her mother covered it up. As advocates have emphasized, the effects of sexual abuse are made worse when adults willfully look the other way or fail to believe or protect a child, which compels adherence

[5] Grenfell, "Religion and Eating Disorders."
[6] Anonymous 3, "Roots of Unworthiness," November 15, 2005, shared with the author in 2011.

to a no-talk rule and participation in a conspiracy of silence about the abuse. That is wounding, not only to the person being wounded but also to the one doing the wounding.

The woundedness of the woman who wrote the poem was deep because her family regularly attended church. She had unconsciously learned to conflate her earthly and heavenly fathers' abuse, she explained, and to equate her mother's and God's turning of a blind eye. In short, she learned to feel "unworthy of honor, protection and love" not only from her parents but also from God. This reflects pastoral counselor and spiritual caregiver Carrie Doehring's claim of an inter-relationship between severity of childhood traumatization and representations of God; specifically that women who have been severely traumatized come to understand God "as absent or wrathful" as part of their ongoing religious experience;[7] in this case, the poem writer could have perceived God as absent.

Similarly, Doehring found that children in Protestant families who suffered "severe corporal punishment from an early age" may "intrapsychically fuse memories of physical abuse with God representations." In the case of corporal punishment, the fusion is of "fear, pain, rigorous control, breaking the

[7] Carrie Doehring, *Internal Desecration: Traumatization and Representations of God* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1993), 113-114.

will, submission and obedience."[8] How much more so when there is a combination of sexual, corporal, and emotional abuse? As Doehring asserted, "Such memories cannot be pieced together into a narrative of a loving, benevolent God."[9]

Returning to the woman who was sexually abused by her father, her father physically and emotionally abused her as well. She learned from these experiences to distrust people and to suffer in silence, as made plain in this poem.

"The Lesson of Trust"[10]

I grieve in silence
As I suffered in silence
Weeping in the bathroom
Water running
Where no one can hear my cries.

I am terrified to share my pain with others.
Why?

Because early pleas went unanswered?
Perhaps.

Trust no one…
A lesson well learned.

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[8] Doehring, *Internal Desecration*, 47.
[9] Ibid., 121.
[10] Anonymous 3, "The Lesson of Trust," January 6, 2006, shared with the author in 2011.

Trust no one, in her mind, included God and Jesus—the persons in whom she was explicitly taught to put her trust in times of distress and to whom to turn in times of need. I imagine the abuse she endured had prevented her developing, in general, trust that is necessary for grounding one's sense of self and *well-Beingness.*

Psychiatrist Judith Herman explained that sexual trauma "shatters the construction of the self that is formed and sustained in relation to others." Moreover, it "undermines the belief systems that give meaning to human experience."[11] Doehring and Enroth both have stated that people who suffer such abuse within religious environments also often suffer posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).[12] Not being able to trust anyone, including God, confuses adherents and thwarts the healing process. How might such teachings as "Just trust in God" intensify harm in the context of ongoing abuse? How much more shattering is the construction of self when abuse happens in the context of a religious belief system? How much more difficult to find meaning when God is understood as insensitive to one's suffering by not interceding?

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[11] Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery* (New York: Basic Books, 1992), quoted in Doehring, *Internal Desecration*, 22.
[12] Doehring, *Internal Desecration*, 15-16; Ronald M. Enroth, *Recovering from Churches That Abuse* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 39, quoted in Zukeran, "Abusive Churches."

Bullied Conscience

Other instances of religious woundedness are not as clear-cut as sexual abuse. For example, a *bullied conscience*, as I call it, is less clear because people generally do not perceive bullying in this context. By this expression, I do not mean evident emotional bullying such as what often occurs in schools, though it certainly applies. Rather, I mean unapparent, or hidden, bullying that works through accepted beliefs and practices to silence and thus control adherents. To illustrate, consider the following *religious cards* that I created from selected interview and textual accounts. Christians may play them with well-intentioned aims; however, when excessively played, and especially when paired with punishment, the cards have the power to bully and thus harm a person's conscience.

- The God card: "Just trust in the Lord" or "You need to do what God says"
- The Bible card: "The Bible says (fill in the blank)" or "That is man's wisdom, not God's word"
- The Prayer card: "Have you prayed about it?" or "Just pray on it"
- The Satan card: "Satan is at work here" or "Satan has gotten a hold of you"

- The Shame card: "Shame on you" or "You should be ashamed of yourself"

- The Good card: "Good Christians (fill in the blank)" or "Good Christians don't (fill in the blank)"

- The Enough card: "You aren't praying enough/praying hard enough/doing enough (to gain God's favor)"

- The Period card: "Because the Bible says so, period" or "Sex before marriage is wrong, period," and

Many adherents are desperate to discuss inner religious tensions and angst with people in their church families because these often are the only people with whom they associate; however, they are shut down by responses like the ones above. Such statements cut off the possibility for deeper connection by quashing questions, dismissing doubts, fanning fears, playing down problems, discouraging difference, and encouraging self-enmity by making people feel as if they are not good enough. As Enoch explained, "There were no really good, satisfactory answers."[13]

I contend such statements affect an individual's conscience by minimizing and discounting and thus bullying it. Such responses not only do not encourage honest self-inquiry and reflection but also discourage it.

[13] Enoch, discussion.

Consider, for example, the following instances of a bullied conscience when the good card is played.

> (After studying different religions) I came back and asked my mom if I could be Jewish. She didn't take that quite so well, and I soon discovered that I really didn't have a choice… She wasn't about to let me go run off and be Jewish or anything else.[14]

And,

> (After getting a job that conflicted with church) I would miss one or two services a week, and my friends just started being really mean to me and really hateful. The youth minister was constantly like, "Why can't you be like your friend Amy? If she can quit her job, then you should be able to stand up for your beliefs and quit your job too…" It challenged everything I had always known. Then I started hating to go to church because I hated to deal with that… It got bad and I would just cry and cry, cry and cry. And cry some more.[15]

And,

> You know, I would love to not be the type of person to ask questions — it would be fine — but I am. And so then… it's a feeling that because I'm asking questions that I'm not a good Christian.[16]

[14] Deborah, discussion.
[15] Sarah, discussion.
[16] Enoch, discussion.

Political scientist Cynthia Boaz has claimed that bullied people "feel shame and anxiety… and cede authority"[17] to others to end present discomfort. Harris and Milam similarly held that, over time, adherents "learn to fear their own independent thoughts and impulses," adding, "Their minds become a battleground where their Christian beliefs wage war with their humanity and their independent thinking."[18] I am reminded of the phrase "mind fuck," which was used by two emigrant Carceralites when discussing their experiences with me. The phrase alone conveys a sense of bullied conscience. Consider people who believe that God will do something bad to them or someone they love in retaliation for living a less than perfect Christian life. Recall Ruth, the woman in Chapter 2, who strongly feared "if you don't do it right, something bad is going to happen."[19] She was certain God would cause her car to break down or kill her ferret if she did anything wrong. On the other side, consider people who believe that God will do something special for them or their loved ones if they work hard enough for the church or contribute enough money to church causes. Televangelist programs come to mind here, though certainly this plays out locally in many ways. People become confused and blame themselves when things do not work out.

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[17] Boaz, "Fourteen Propaganda Techniques" "7. Bullying."
[18] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 265.
[19] Ruth, discussion.

More critically, some adherents internalize carceral teachings so deeply they learn to become their own, and sometimes their worst, bully of conscience. For example, self-bullying can result in "negative and abusive self-talk,"[20] which includes frequently telling ourselves we are not good enough or worthy enough for God's love. Such self-bullying, which Harris and Milam described as a "poisonous internal minister" and Doehring as "the aggressor (that) comes to dominate the inner world,"[21] shapes what we come to understand about ourselves as individuals, as Christians, and as people in the world.

When the tone of abusive self-talk becomes too severe, or related double binds too conflicting, some adherents will bully their bodies as well as their consciences to mitigate the woundedness. For example, non-heterosexual Christians who grow up learning that homosexuality is an abomination to God face an inherent and dissonant double bind. To resolve the tension, some leave their Christian community, which often includes their family. Others stay and deeply repress or deny their sexual orientation, becoming good Christians who follow the right curriculum. Still others stay and become overwhelmed. Consider this account by Harris and Milam of a man who chose the ultimate

[20] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 127.
[21] Ibid., 95; Doehring, *Internal Desecration*, 20.

form of self-bullying to resolve what he saw as a chronic and unresolvable tension. They wrote:

> He saw himself as condemned with no way to reduce the conflict and no way to escape the conflict between his marriage, his religion, and his homosexual orientation. He could not resolve his inner conflict and pain… He could not abandon his religion and family, and he could not abandon his homosexuality… He killed himself with a .45-caliber semi-automatic pistol.[22]

This man felt trapped in a "damned-if-you-do and damned-if-you-don't" situation, and became what hooks called "the enemy within."[23] He struggled against a strong punitive religious voice, and, ultimately, his conscience and sense of selfhood were irrevocably overcome by the church's conscience. By "church," I mean the compulsory curriculum that says, "Homosexuality is wrong, period," and the rebuking discipline that directly and indirectly condemns not only same-sex behavior but also people who are non-heterosexual.

Injuries and Scars

> *The emotions used to manipulate in Christianity (guilt, shame, and fear) are the same emotions that end up with people damaged and scarred… These emotions are evoked by messages given to the victim (we are all born sinners and deserve to go to hell, Jesus is the only way to salvation,*

[22] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 124-125.
[23] bell hooks, *Feminism Is for Everybody: Passionate Politics* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2000), 14.

> *Christ shed His blood for you, etc.)… If you do not do this, you are, of course, excluded. You are an "outcast, sinner, reprobate, heretic, atheist, agnostic, not one of the fold."… That only leaves one place for you to go. Hell. You are unworthy of heaven.*[24] —Harris and Milam

I argue the rigidity of CC's discipline and curriculum sustains the soil in which wounded-Beingness grows and constrains religious experiencing with sacrificing singularity. *Religious injuries* are what we suffer in carceral learning; *spiritual scars* are what we are left with. By spiritual scars, I mean emotional, psychological, and spiritual marks that form on our inner skin as we attempt to heal our woundedness. Religious injuries can leave adherents feeling, as Blue described, "spiritually disorganized and emotionally cut off from the healing love of God."[25] If left alone, they can "damage the central core of who we are," "desecrate our personality," and "eventually kill our soul."[26]

Harris and Milam asserted, "Our culture isn't very understanding of psychological injuries because we can't see them."[27] This manifests quickly when people ask about my research. I typically encounter three reactions: (1)

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[24] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 118-119.
[25] Ken Blue, *Healing Spiritual Abuse* (Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 15, quoted in Zukeran, "Abusive Churches."
[26] Ibid; Doehring, *Internal Desecration*, __; Carl G. Jung, *Psychology and Religion: West and East*, ed. and trans. Gerhard Adler and R.F.C. Hull, 2nd ed., The Collected Works of C.G. Jung 11 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), 11-12; Leonard Shengold, *Soul Murder: The Effects of Childhood Abuse and Depression* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), quoted in Doehring, *Internal Desecration*, 2.
[27] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 41-42.

immediate resonance (people relate), (2) curiosity (people want to know more), and (3) defensiveness (people dismiss or discount individual experiences in favor of defending the institution of Christianity). The last group tends to be unwilling to try to understand carceral experiences because they see them as attacks on Christianity at large. They offer indifferent responses such as "That's the exception, not the rule" and "It's in the past; people should move on." These responses not only are not helpful but also can demoralize and reinjure people who are working to heal woundedness. Indirectly, they ask Carceralites to resubmit to the very discipline and curriculum that were injuring in the first place.

Whether called "psychological injuries and scars," "intrapsychic injuries," or "psychological turmoil," as described by Harris and Milam; "psychic traumatization," as described by Doehring; or "psychical dangers," which Jung called "much more dangerous than epidemics and earthquakes," people grapple with how to define and discuss inner injuring by religious experiences.[28] We point to suffering through the particularities of our specific disciplines (e.g., psychology, religion, education) even though we are contextually concerned with the same problem.

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[28] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 42, 126, 158; Doehring, *Internal Desecration*, 1; Jung, *Psychology and Religion*, 11-12.

The earlier and severer the religious injuries, the more and deeper the spiritual scars. According to Harris and Milam, the age at which abuse occurs is an important consideration.

> The abused child attempts to find a style of behavior that will either reduce the abuse or lead to an escape from the abuse. If abuse occurs at an early age, these attempts to survive will become a part of the child's character. The characteristics will become a part of the child's identity. The abused adult also will attempt to find a style of behavior that will reduce or escape the abuse. However, these characteristics tend to be roles the adult takes on, and not necessarily a part of the adult's identity, unless the abuse is constant and the role dominant and consistent… a role the individual has assumed is much easier to change than the character of an individual.[29]

Understanding that different adherents suffer different religious injuries and internalize and respond to them in different ways, let us nonetheless consider the following.

Psychological Injuries identified by Harris and Milam and Martin:[30]

- Emotional neglect and abuse
- Emotional distress
- Long-term emotional pain
- Self-doubt and self-hatred
- Silenced victims

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[29] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 91.
[30] Ibid., 36-37; Martin, *Cultural Miseducation*, 102-103.

- Damaged reputation of targets
- "Those people" taken less seriously, and
- People internalize their devaluation.

The religious cards described earlier provide examples of how emotional neglect and abuse play out between Christian parents and children. Let us imagine a young person reared in CC who is interested in dating. Let us also imagine at some point, they are tempted to explore sexually with someone before marriage, which could include anything from heavy kissing to sexual intercourse. It would take a lot of courage for a young person in this situation to approach parents with questions or concerns, especially given the tremendous value placed on Christian sexual purity and the absolute belief in no sex before marriage. When parents only play religious cards in response to their children – "You need to do what God says," "The Bible says to keep yourself pure," "You need to pray about it," "Satan is tempting you," "Messing around before marriage is wrong, period!" – that is emotional neglect. When the "good" and "shame" cards are added – "Good Christian girls/boys don't mess around before marriage," "I'm ashamed of you for even thinking about it" – that is emotional abuse, which chips away at a person's sense of self. It is much more likely that young people will not approach their parents when they need them

most because they figure that their parents will not listen to them or will judge or punish them.

Another example comes from a person I interviewed, who told me that she got baptized to make her mother happy. It was, she said, "one of the only times I remember my mother honestly embracing me… like she wanted to touch me, she was proud of me; she liked what I had done."[31] The emotional neglect in Miriam's outer world had deeply injured her inner world, and she went to great lengths to attract the emotional love and attention she needed from her mother. One could argue, and I would agree, that the mother, unable to meet her daughter's emotional need, is yet another victim of CC.

Harris and Milam said that the "emotional and psychological scars from this type of Christianity are well known among therapists."[32] While the "type" for them is "Abusive Christianity" and for me is "Carceral Christianity," we essentially are concerned with the same injuries. Let us examine some of the scars they have identified in their therapeutic work with formerly abused Christians.

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[31] Miriam, discussion.
[32] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 120.

Psychological and Intrapsychic Scars:[33]

- Problems with deeply trusting others
- Problems trusting oneself and one's ability to survive rejection
- Nurturance deficit, a deep need to be loved that leads to loneliness
- Tendency to incorporate or enmesh with a loved person, to fill emptiness
- Lack of self-love, lack of positive self-feeling, poor self-esteem, poor self-image, low self-worth, low self-confidence
- A self-critical nature, low expectation of success
- Awareness that "something is wrong with me"
- Excessive guilt, toxic shame, neurotic shame-based life
- Constant worry and fear
- Sexual suppression, sexual guilt, sexual addictions, sexual dysfunctions, and sexual acting out
- Internal punishment
- Passivity, low self-initiative, lack of assertiveness.

As an unceasing, all-encompassing, punitive, and compulsory educational agent, CC establishes carceral learning, which virtually assures transmission of woundedness. For example, learning to internally punish oneself is not surprising if one is constantly being taught to feel bad or guilty.

[33] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 93-94, 121, 126, 177.

As emphasized in Chapter 1 about Christian self-punishers, some have even learned to "feel guilty for being human."[34] The more self-punishing, the more deeply internalized the guilt. The more deeply internalized the guilt, the more entrapped one becomes by it.

As another example, learning to feel worthless and not good enough is not surprising when one is constantly reminded of one's sinful nature. As an example, Rachel shared, "Our church talked a lot about, even if you're doing everything right, you could be sinning."[35] Such a position keeps people bound between a rock and hard place since one could be sinning and not even know it. Feeling constantly trapped in possible sins of omission only serves to propagate a sense of worthlessness since one literally cannot be good enough to prevent them happening.

Feeling worthless and not good enough is established in CC through right belief of original sin. Some Christian women, for example, especially internalize worthlessness because we are taught it is *our* ancestor, Eve, who disobeyed God by taking the proffered apple from the serpent and sharing it with Adam. Instead of the possibility that Eve made a conscious choice to take and share the apple or that Eve and Adam share responsibility for eating it, we

[34] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 102.
[35] Rachel, discussion.

come to understand that original sin is primarily woman's fault. Explicitly, we learn that we are responsible for the fall of man. Implicitly, we learn that we are responsible for men.

I wonder how Christian women come to understand the difference between being responsible *to* the men in our lives with regard to our roles as daughters, sisters, mothers, wives, etc., and not responsible *for* them in terms of their salvation, godliness, and godly living, and how this understanding or lack of it shapes the choices we make. How might we come to learn the difference? How might boys and men? How might children in general be understood differently without a rigidly imposed notion of original sin? The answers to such questions point to important distinctions between CC and other kinds of Christianization. I like to imagine, as Harris and Milam did, "Without the oppression of original sin and its implications, a child may be perceived as positive, loving, and sensitive… and will be respected and not manipulated."[36]

Dehumanization

"So you were denied your humanity."
—Friend of author's response to author's explanation
about no longer attending the church in which she was raised

[36] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 68-69.

"Part of being a human being," reasoned psychologist Jim Taylor, "is accepting one's basic humanity."[37] I maintain to be a good Christian, one who follows what Carceralites believe to be the right curriculum, denies Carceralites a sense of basic humanity, requiring instead that we become "something besides a human being."[38] Emigrant Carceralites express this in various ways. I have already discussed angst expressed by women severely constrained within rigid sex and gender roles and by non-heterosexuals compelled to compulsory sexuality. People are vulnerable when strictly following a curriculum that directly or indirectly attacks their Beingness. Consider Deborah, for example, who painfully recalled being told by her parents that she was fat and inconsiderate, walked and acted like a pig, did stupid things, and acted like an idiot. She continued:

> It became wrapped up inside my church life because that was a part of it, too. You go to church, and you're supposed to beg for forgiveness for your sins. And apparently mine… my sins… were not that I was just inconsiderate. It was because my butt stuck out funny, and I walked like a duck. And all I could do to redeem those sins was to pray that somebody would come down and

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[37] Jim Taylor, "Parenting: Raise a Human Being, Not a Human Doing," *The Power of Prime* (blog), *Psychology Today*, April 19, 2010, http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-power-prime/201004/parenting-raise-human-being-not-human-doing, para. 7.
[38] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 63.

> forgive me for being human?! It's just appalling. It's a part of who I am.[39]

Deborah not only felt deeply dehumanized by her parents who verbally abused her, but also by the orthodoxies and orthopraxes that she had come to understand supported the abuse.

Another example comes from a woman who once was with her father as he recuperated in a hospital following surgery. She told me that a nurse had asked him, "So what does your son-in-law do?" He proudly gave the nurse his son-in-law's title and place of business. Then she asked, "What does your daughter do?" The woman was shocked and embarrassed to hear her father flippantly respond, "I don't know. Something at (business name). You can ask her." At that time, she had been working in the same profession for almost two decades and was accomplished in her position. She felt deeply shamed by her father's not knowing what she did for a living and, moreover, that he did not seem to care to know. Later, she realized that her value in his eyes was only as a Christian woman and only as the right kind of Christian woman; that is, a woman who embodied the conventional roles of a good Christian girl, daughter, wife, and mother. These roles precluded the possibility of being recognized as a professional woman, a role that she greatly valued. Therefore,

[39] Deborah, discussion.

her professional life was made invisible. The next time we talked, she said, "My father doesn't even know me"; however, I wonder if deep down, she also was wondering, "Am I not good enough to be known by him?"

Being made to feel as if you are never quite good enough is dehumanizing. It disconnects us, as Taylor described, from a sense of our basic humanity. I hold that it stems in part from an extreme pressure in CC to be the right kind of Christian. Ever subjected to panoptic discipline and a compulsory curriculum, adherents learn to become outward-oriented, which comes with, as Enoch described, "considerable anxiety about not being a perfect Christian."[40] Many adherents implicitly learn that simply *being* is not enough, so we strive to meet expectations of Christian perfectionism and become "human doings"[41] in the process.

I have argued that panoptic discipline shapes what it means to be a good Christian through excessively controlling and routinizing people's time and space (human doings), thereby producing an obligatory rhythm that constrains and sustains people throughout their lives. "Human doings," according to Jim Taylor, learn self-esteem based on external accomplishments, which become

[40] Enoch, discussion.
[41] Taylor, "Parenting," para. 1.

"the basis for their own self-love as well."[42] Drawing from Taylor, I contend when adherents fall short of Christian perfectionism, which we inevitably do, we come to feel unworthy of love, including self-love, love from others, and God's love. That is dehumanizing.

I found that the emigrant Carceralites I interviewed who felt unworthy and dehumanized also often felt like outsiders within their Christian communities. They used words like "outcast," "out of place," "misfit," "different," "other," and "disenfranchised." Consider these accounts:

> I was pretty used to being an outsider. At church, we were outsiders because my father was an unbeliever. At school, I was an outsider because I was a [Jehovah's] Witness. And I was an outsider within the congregation. I was three when my mom became a Witness, so I had a time where maybe I wasn't as clean… These kids that were Witnesses when they were at church, not when they were at school, had higher status (as "cradle" members) and wouldn't let me into their clique, and that was upsetting to me.[43] —Miriam

> And,

> I never got saved, and I was therefore always on the outside and different. ("Different" means?) You get prayed for... You get excluded from the Lord's Supper every Sunday… You can't pray in public in prayer meetings. (And therefore not fully part of the community?) Right, always being considered an outsider and different. And high school [a private Christian high school] was

[42] Taylor, "Parenting," para. 1.
[43] Miriam, discussion.

> for me not a happy place. I felt like an outsider there very much as well, and I saw sort of a very ugly side of fundamentalists.[44] —Barnabas

And,

> I always felt a little bit different from the other kids at church. I was kind of always the one that, uh… I wasn't like a hell-raiser or anything like that in the church. I was actually a good kid, you know, did what I needed to do but always tended to ask the "Why?" question. And the problem in that context is that you're not supposed to ask why; you're supposed to do.[45] —Enoch

Some adherents are surrounded by a feeling of outsiderness, or otherness. They sense it at home, at church, at school, and sometimes in the community. I call this feeling of outsiderness *enclosed otherness*. Along with woundedness, a bullied conscience, and dehumanization, enclosed otherness is yet another inner liability of carceral learning. *Enclosedness* is an outer liability as well, which will be discussed next along with other outer liabilities, including limited experiencing and exclusivism.

Outer Bars and Constraints of Carceral Learning

> *Organized Religion, the churches, finally may become the major enemies of the religious experience and the religious experiencer.*[46] —Abraham Maslow

[44] Barnabas, discussion.
[45] Enoch, discussion.
[46] Maslow, *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences*, viii.

Like inner scars that restrain and hinder one's sense of humanity and selfhood, CC fosters outer bars that constrain and control interactions of members within church communities and beyond. By *bars*, I mean religious barriers that sharply divide life between godliness and worldliness and people between us and them. According to Maslow, the sacred and profane have an "absolute need for each other."[47] Dichotomizing them disrupts "the dialectic between them, the mutual effect and feedback, the constant shaping of each other, and their usefulness to each other."[48]

Applying Maslow's thinking to CC, I contend that a compulsory Christian curriculum that sharply divides life and people makes it harder to wholly see them. If we cannot see life and people wholly, it is easier to dehumanize them. More specifically, I claim that CC dichotomizes religious life by communally enclosing adherents against worldliness, limiting experiences to those that are deemed correct, and compelling participation in Christian-only activities. In this way, CC fosters constricted curricular spaces that limit what Maslow called "religious experience and the religious experiencer."[49] Let us now take a closer look at these outer bars of carceral learning.

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[47] Maslow, *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences*, 17.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid., viii.

Enclosedness

> "My church didn't have a lot of a swinging door,
> people coming in and coming out."[50] —Samuel

Recognizing there are some benefits to guarding against excessive worldliness, limiting overly risky experiences and encouraging shared activities, I believe adherents of CC are nonetheless disadvantaged by a compulsory religious curriculum that imposes enclosedness upon them. By *enclosedness*, I mean religious space that is bounded within itself, walling people within the fold while creating a moat to keep away people outside of it. Adherents within enclosed communities can feel surrounded on all sides, contained in certain domains, and confined to certain activities.

A Christian curriculum that insists upon enclosedness does not permit, for example, befriending people from other religious traditions, irreligious people, and sometimes even people from other Christian denominations. Harris and Milam observed, "The very question 'Are you a Christian?' implies 'Are you like me or different from me?'"[51] An added qualifying question where I live is "What church do you go to?," code for "Are you the *right* kind of Christian?"

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[50] Samuel, discussion.
[51] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 163.

The response can significantly change the way people relate to someone, for good or ill.

Consider these thoughts from Rachel about befriending people outside her Christian tradition:

> I don't think that I really ever judged them that much in my head, but it was like, don't spend time with these people, this is not how you want to be. I had just internalized it so much that I was thinking, it's fine to be friendly but I don't want to be actually closely associated with these people because they don't believe how I believe.
>
> Then she added:
>
> Or, you try to convert them. Those are the options.[52]

Miriam echoed this position saying the only reason to talk to someone outside the church "is because you are paying for your gasoline, or ordering your food at a restaurant, or you are bringing them into the fold."[53]

Them and *these people* and *they* are the "Other;"[54] in this case, people outside the church who are different from and thus dangerous to *us*. Adherents of CC are taught that separating ourselves from *them* protects our godliness and

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[52] Rachel, discussion.
[53] Miriam, discussion.
[54] "Otherness: Essays and Studies" (journal), *Centre for Studies in Otherness*, accessed July 30, 2014, http://www.otherness.dk/journal/.

salvation. Meanwhile, many of us also learn to demonize others and to fear the world. Harris and Milam described religious division in this way:

> Religion tends to divide people and to classify people. You are either a Baptist, a Catholic, a Methodist, or some other religious classification. But you are different from, and do not agree with and are not similar to, an individual with a different classification. You may not like that person, and probably would not associate with that person simply because of religion… The fear was that people who believe different than you are potentially dangerous to you and especially your belief system. Many Christian ideas and concepts teach us to fear and not tolerate people who are different from us.[55]

The assumption is clear. If we are safely enclosed within *our* Christian community and not associating with *those* people, then *their* beliefs cannot get to *us* or to *our* children. In *It Takes a Village*, Clinton calls for the gradual relinquishing of our children to their independence in a "series of surrenders." As children develop, "their sense of self is permitted to unfold. As they continue to grow and to learn, they develop a sense of their own power."[56] This is contrary to CC's curriculum of enclosedness.

The idea that enclosedness keeps outsiders from influencing us is one side of the argument, which, drawing from Foucault, includes isolation. In *Discipline and Punish*, he called isolation a critical feature of the "complete

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[55] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 33-34.
[56] Clinton, *It Takes a Village*, 93-95.

reformatory" in that insiders are separated from anyone and anything that might "motivate an offence."[57] The other side of the argument is that enclosedness keeps insiders contained within a singular understanding of orthodoxies, orthopraxes, and teachers. In this way, to draw again from Foucault, isolation maximizes power over people such that it cannot easily be overthrown by other influences.[58]

There are two important activities going on here that apply to CC. First, there is an intentional separation from the outside world. Instead of permitting young people to learn about religious ideas that conflict with the compulsory curriculum and follow their own conscience, CC attempts to separate them from information that might influence them away from right teachings and practices. The popular Christian motto "Be in the world not of the world" comes to mind, as do these frustrated words by one emigrant Carceralite: "'Worldly.' They liked to use that word a lot. 'Worldly.' Everything's 'worldly!'"[59] Here is an example of what she means:

> The clothing deal was a big deal... My mother always got us clothing that was handed down through the congregation… It's kind of built in to the religion, kind of another part of not being worldly, so the clothing that you're wearing shouldn't matter so

[57] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 236-237.
[58] Ibid., 236-237.
[59] Miriam, discussion.

> much. I was always made fun of for my clothes… Looking back on it, it seems like she intentionally dressed us unfashionably to make us even more separate from our classmates.[60]

Even clothing, or perhaps especially clothing, is purposed to set people apart from worldliness.

Second, the more people are separated from the outside world, the easier it is to ensure their compliance with right beliefs and practices, especially when yoked with the disciplined use of time described in Chapter 2. When I spoke with Sarah, for example, she described a schedule full of church activities, many of which were also attended by her parents. She once asked if she could go to a different church within the same denomination, and they refused her.[61] Rizpah similarly shared, "We were in the church community a lot, and we went to church a lot, and all of our friends were from church." Rizpah also "went to a private school with our church." She said, "Those were the only kids we knew, and the only friends that I knew were in church."[62] Even when young Carceralites attend public schools, some are kept from such coming-of-age activities as dating and prom.

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[60] Miriam, discussion.
[61] Sarah, discussion.
[62] Rizpah, discussion.

Christian-based homeschooling, wherein parents become principal guardians of their children's education, brings together both sides of the argument. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, parents commonly choose homeschooling to provide religious and moral instruction to their children.[63] Thus, homeschooled children are enclosed within a singular surround of church-home-school and are separated from the worldly influences of public schools, in which religion is not part of the formal curriculum, and possibly from influences of other children who may challenge or make fun of their beliefs. Additionally, homeschooling parents can control their children's social interactions by making certain they choose friends who are good influences.

Understanding there are claimed benefits of homeschooling children,[64] what are we to make of imposed religious enclosedness that is so extreme it leaves some people feeling they constantly are working to "recover from the

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[63] U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *The Condition of Education 2009*, by Michael Planty, William Hussar, Thomas Snyder, Grace Kena, Angelina Kewal Ramani, Jana Kemp, Kevin Bianco, and Rachel Dinkes, NCES 2009-081, (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2009), 14-15, http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2009/2009081.pdf.

[64] Diane Flynn Keith, "Yes, My Grown Homeschooled Children Are Odd—And Yours Will Be Too!," *Homeschool Blog*, *The Link: The Nation's Homeschooling Magazine*, March 31, 2011, http://www.homeschoolnewslink.com/blog/?p=629.

cult-like control"[65] of their homeschooling parents, as one person described? What are we to make of religious enclosedness in general, which leaves people feeling trapped, isolated, confused, and helpless? Given that many of us learn to fear judgment from people within our church communities and to fear life outside, where can we turn for help in dealing with these feelings?

One answer is found in the "electronic village"[66] of the Internet and social media, which was unavailable decades ago when Foucault was writing about the isolation of the complete reformatory. Battered Sheep Ministry, for example, identifies itself as a web-based ministry for "sheep who have been wounded and victimized by authoritarian and legalistic churches," and the Child-Friendly Faith Project has a website providing a list of more than sixty organizations that support diverse "faith communities and professionals in their efforts to discuss, learn about, and protect children from religious and cultural maltreatment."[67] I am curious to know how such technologies specifically help adherents disrupt isolation and singular understandings of Christian curricula.

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[65] Joey, comment on Keith, "Yes, My Grown Homeschooled Children Are Odd."
[66] Clinton, *It Takes a Village*, 82.
[67] "About This Ministry," *Battered Sheep*, accessed May 3, 2013, http://www.batteredsheep.com/about.html; "Helpful Organizations," *Child-Friendly Faith Project*, accessed April 8, 2015, http://childfriendlyfaith.org/member-organizations/.

Limited Outside Experiences

> "I always felt like there was a time and place in life where you're allowed to sow a few wild oats, although Church of Christ doesn't think you're allowed to do that."[68] —Sarah, on not being allowed to join a sorority in college

Hand-in-hand with enclosedness, CC works to limit experiences outside church communities, which simultaneously limits inner experiencing. I contend these limitations are supported partly through the compulsory Christian curriculum described in Chapter 3 (right orthodoxies and orthopraxes and authoritarian teachers who compel strict adherence to them) and partly from how people come to understand and embody its teachings and practices and obey its teachers.

Essentialist Christian femininity (as I think of it), for example, calls for ultra-feminine dress and comportment, which limit ways in which girls and women present themselves in public. Christian women may not be allowed to wear pants, or, if allowed to wear pants, unable to wear jeans because only boys wear jeans. Some may not be allowed to cut their hair short because short hair is not ladylike. Some may not be allowed to wear pierced earrings because only

[68] Sarah, discussion.

worldly women have pierced ears.[69] On the other hand, some Christian women may feel pressured to fix their hair and makeup and wear jewelry every day because that is the feminine standard in their church community. It depends on how Christian femininity is interpreted and embodied within a particular community. Particular interpretations of femininity intrusively bound and define ways in which some Christian women are allowed and not allowed to dress.

Regarding comportment, some Christian girls and women learn to be deferential in social interactions because it is how godly girls and women are supposed to act. This is manifested in different ways. I know of an emigrant Carceralite, for instance, who purposefully lost a race against a boy in school because girls are not supposed to beat boys at sports. How might such understandings, repeatedly played out over time, affect Christian girls' growth into selfhood and womanhood? How might similarly restrictive expectations for dress and comportment affect Christian boys' growth?

As another example, particular understandings of sex and gender roles can limit job and career paths for both Christian men and women. Christian

[69] One emigrant Carceralite told me her brothers could pierce their ears when she was forbidden to do so. According to her father, "They are men and can make their own decisions."

women who want to work outside the home, for instance, are met with limitations such as this one:

> If you need to acquire a skill to support yourself, well, then it's okay to go to college. But you definitely don't go to a four-year university setting. You're not going to be in a sorority. You're not going to live in the dorms. You need to stay at home with your parents. They basically need to still be in control of everything that you're doing.[70]

The assumption is that a woman needs an education only if a man is not supporting her; further, if a man is not supporting a woman, her parents likely are. This presents an existential conundrum for Christian women who want more for their lives. As expressed by Sarah, "I think it was like a whole church mentality. We're not grownups until you get married. And it won't matter if I was twenty-eight; I probably still couldn't make decisions on my own. I could do that once I was married."[71] Except at that point, instead of deferring to her parents, she would be expected to defer to her husband. When I asked Sarah if parents placed the same kind of restrictions on young men, she responded, "Uh, I think guys' parents are just are different with them. I mean, probably because guys won't put up with it — 'I'm going to micromanage you, and you will do what I say, or you can be completely cut off and go do it on your own'

[70] Miriam, discussion.
[71] Sarah, discussion.

— guys just left." I suggest that these young men were educated to the possibility of making a choice to leave, whereas the young women were not.

To bridge the tension, some women take jobs within Christian communities, and they understand that the positions are limited to those that adhere to the right curriculum. Even when taking this path, women adherents sometimes limit themselves. For example, I know of a woman who went through seminary and chose not to be ordained. As a person in charge of the church missionary ministry, she understood that to be ordained would have barred her from being able to speak and serve in many conservative churches.

Other women take jobs outside home and church communities. Positions adhering to the notion of *woman's work*, such as elementary school teaching, may be met with approval; however, historically male positions may be met with tacit resistance, open opposition, or broad disregard in one's community, such as what the woman experienced with her father in the hospital. Again, there are many possibilities at play here. The key is that certain Christian women feel conflicted about, limited by, and overlooked for their work and career choices. I should note that certain Christian men do as well. How might such limitations effect the possibilities and choices we make for our lives? How might they weaken our connections and relationships with others?

Exclusivism

Exclusivism also goes hand-in-hand with enclosedness. I am employing exclusivism here in its normative form. By it, I mean that adherents are expected to follow communal standards for participating in right (read: Christian) activities. Right activities tend to confine adherents to a singular milieu and separate them from non-Christians and wrong Christians. Emigrant Carceralites talked about this in terms of friendship and dating. They were allowed to hang out with and date people who believed as they believed and were not allowed to hang out with or date people who did not.

They also pointed to exclusivism in terms of education. If they applied to college, for instance, they had to apply to a Christian institution. Sarah, anticipating daily chapel and extracurricular activities she was made to participate in while attending a private Christian high school, said, "I didn't want to do that because I just wanted to get away."[72] Another example comes from Miriam, whose mother forbade her to go to college. When I asked, "The danger being…," she revealingly replied, "Critical thinking is dangerous, very dangerous."[73]

[72] Sarah, discussion.
[73] Miriam, discussion.

Finally, emigrant Carceralites talked about exclusivism in terms of expectations to stay within one's own church. Earlier, I mentioned Sarah, whose parents refused to let her go to a different church within the same denomination. Barnabas similarly explained:

> It's not that my parents were terribly strict or anything, but they were not big on you going to other churches. You didn't go to other churches; you went to your church… You probably can relate in many ways to that same sort of shelter; this is your circle, this is your circle of people; your circle of people are really mainly contained within the church that you go to.[74]

He was correct. I could relate.

We are taught at a very early age that "Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world. Red and yellow, black and white, we are precious in His sight."[75] Sometime after that, we internalized outer bars that isolated us within communities and separated us from the outside world, creating what NeoPagan author Dianne Sylvan described as "walls where there might otherwise be bridges."[76] How might enclosedness determine our understandings of people? If well-Beingness ultimately is a universal endeavor with a common and shared humanity, as others and I maintain, I wonder how

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[74] Barnabas, discussion.
[75] Clare Herbert Woolston and George Fredrick Root, "Jesus Loves the Little Children," n.d. This song is a popular Christian children's hymn.
[76] Dianne Sylvan, *The Body Sacred* (Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn, 2005), 191.

Christians who are enclosed within a singular setting learn to see others and view themselves as part of a broader community.

Degrees of Internalization and Varieties of Response

This section briefly formulates and illustrates what I conceive of as degrees of internalization of CC (minimum, medium, and maximum) and varieties of individual response to such religious education (fight, flight, freeze, front).

Degrees of Internalization

I propose we think about *internalization* as an *educational process of making the outer inner*. Recall in Chapter 2, in which I argued that we, as Christian people, begin our lives being-*disciplined*, that is, taught the rules for Godly living and rewarded or punished for keeping or not keeping them. We then move to *being*-disciplined, that is, we internalize and keep the rules automatically. If internalization is an educational process of making the outer inner, as I contend, then it also is a process of moving from being-*disciplined* to *being*-disciplined. More specifically, I argue that CC is a religious learning process through which people, in varying degrees, come to accept and integrate into their conscience and sense of selfhood particular Christian discipline, beliefs, practices, rules, norms, etc., such that they need less and less external

discipline to follow and practice right curriculum. In general, I argue that degrees of internalization of CC tend to reflect levels of religious carcerality.

To some degree, all are imprisoned by the cultures that initially raise us, including religious ones. We simply cannot escape. Recall, Martin named the process for this initial education the "first great educational metamorphosis" and described it as a cultural process wherein human beings "journey from a creature of nature to a member of human culture."[77] CC is one of many educational agents that initiate people and, in this case, initiate individuals to a particular religious culture and to their roles and places within that culture. Understanding that individuals internalize religious education in different ways and with different intensities and in keeping with CC's carceral concept, I envision degrees of internalization of CC's curriculum by Carceralites on a metaphorical penal continuum of *minimum*, *medium*, and *maximum internalization*. Just as inmates are able to move through and out of prison systems, Christian adherents are able to move through and out of CC. I maintain that the moving through, which, in deference to the subject, I refer to in terms of transcendence, tends to reflect degrees of imprisonment and

[77] Martin, *Educational Metamorphoses*, 8.

internalization.[78] Adherents who come of age in minimum-CC and only minimally internalize its discipline and curriculum tend to transcend CC quickly and meet with few obstacles. These adherents often spiritually transcend before they are able to do so religiously. On the other hand, adherents who come of age in maximum-CC and deeply internalize its discipline and curriculum take a long time to transcend CC and meet with many obstacles. These adherents often religiously transcend before they are able to do so spiritually, if they are able to transcend at all. Adherents of medium-CC fluctuate on a continuum between these two poles. Let us consider each in turn.

Minimum Internalization, or Confined

In penal systems, minimum-security institutions are the least confining to inmates in that daily schedules are rather flexible and guards have only slight control of the inmates' movements. Inmates are even permitted to participate in outside work. Thus, while confined, they enjoy some degree of freedom to explore self-interests. Applying this context to CC, I contend that adherents of minimum-internalization – or minimum-CC – as contrasted with

[78] This study brackets the experiences of adherents who do not move through or out of carceral religious upbringings. That is a different, though equally worthy, subject matter for study.

those in medium- and maximum-CC, have more room to explore their conscience and selfhood. Perhaps this is due, in part, to being subjected to less panoptic and punitive discipline and thus able to look outward less and inward more.[79] Perhaps they meet with less rigid interpretations of CC's compulsory curriculum. Perhaps they simply are people with an indefinable 'X factor' that makes them freer to resist and challenge.

Whatever the reasons, emigrant Carceralites in this group point to marking time until becoming old enough to leave home and church and, sometimes, Christianity altogether. Consider these examples:

> I went [to church] because my parents asked me to. Most of the time, they assumed I was one – a person just like them, assumed that I had conformed even though I still had been studying my own beliefs.[80]

> And,

> By the time I was fourteen or fifteen, I was pretty done, but my parents made me go until I walked out of the house. (What would

[79] It bears noting that many Protestant churches are decorated simply and lack religious representations such as elaborate architecture, stained-glass windows, and iconography, in part to discourage an external spiritual focus and encourage an internal one. Encouraging an inner focus is a worthy aim that is prevented by CC's curriculum, which I argue has the opposite effect. This will be highlighted more specifically in the upcoming section on maximum internalization.

[80] Omri, discussion.

> happen if you said, "I'm not going"?) Well, you just didn't say that.[81]

And,

> I really resented I had to go to church Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night, revivals… I was kind of sick of it. And by the time I got to college, I was "no more."[82]

And,

> I think I'd always had an interest in other churches… When I was about twelve or thirteen, I would flirt with the Episcopal Church. After graduating from high school, I would simply become an Episcopalian.[83]

These individuals broke with their churches spiritually before being able to leave physically. While externally confined, they nonetheless had active inner lives. It reminds me of Roger Williams's work on conscience, in which he likened a persecuted conscience to "soul imprisonment" when it is uninjured by a religious community but still in need of "breathing space to act on their conscience's promptings, searching for meaning through whatever forms of prayer, worship, or writing and speaking they select."[84] Carceralites who have

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[81] Priscilla, discussion.
[82] Eunice, discussion.
[83] Barnabas, discussion.
[84] Roger Williams, *The Correspondence of Roger Williams*, ed. Glenn La Fantasie (Providence: Brown University Press, 1988), quoted in Martha C. Nussbaum, *Liberty of Conscience: In Defense of America's Tradition of Religious Equality* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2008), 54.

minimally internalized CC tend to be spiritually uninjured but in need of such breathing space.

Medium Internalization, or Confined and Controlled

Arguably, minimum-CC and maximum-CC offer clear contrasts for levels of internalization, and are thus easier to formulate. What I will say about medium-CC, however, is that it includes various degrees of internalization along a continuum between the two poles. Medium-CC, like a medium-security prison, is more confining than minimum-CC. Church-related schedules and activities are more regimented, movements are more controlled, and there is more punishment. Whereas I have imagined minimum internalization primarily through confinement, I imagine medium internalization through confinement in addition to attenuated external control. Thus, internalization is deeper than in minimum-CC but not as much as in maximum-CC. By this, I mean that CC's beliefs and practices are taken in but not fully internalized, though adherents will follow them to be good Christians and/or avoid punishment.

Maximum Internalization, or Confined, Controlled, and Subject to Cruelty

I have imagined minimum internalization as confinement and medium internalization as confinement plus control. I now propose maximum

internalization as confinement plus control plus elements of cruelty. In penal systems, maximum-security institutions are the most confining to inmates. Daily schedules and movements are rigorously monitored and controlled, and non-compliance is met with disciplinary and punitive measures along with harsh punishments, including lockdowns, disciplinary segregation, and time in the hole. There exists extensive cruelty between people within these institutions, partly due to what I refer to as *survival politics*. Thus, inmates in maximum-security settings are more fearful, focused on survival, and continually externally focused on the people in and politics of the environment. Penal systems compel an extreme outward self-orientation, which hinders the space needed for thoughtful and reflective inwardness. This extreme external orientation partly explains why many former inmates find new environments disorienting and hard to negotiate upon release from prison – a "reentry problem" of culture crossings, as Martin described. Emigrant Carceralites, also accustomed to an extreme external orientation, experience similar disorientation as they move out of religious communities and into something else.[85]

Applying survival politics in this context to CC, I contend that Carceralites in maximum-CC have little room to explore their conscience and

[85] Martin, *Cultural Miseducation*, 75.

selfhood, and even that space often is self-hindered. Again, this is due in part to being subjected to extreme panoptic and punitive discipline that externally regulates adherents, which keeps them focused on the outer and preventing them from focusing on the inner. It also is due in part to being subjected to an exceedingly regimented curriculum of right beliefs and practices, which adherents come to accept and incorporate as their own even when they go against conscience and otherwise injure. These conditions foster compliance and transmission of CC through both outer and inner adherence to CC.

It bears repeating that Carceralites are made to adhere to CC through use of threats, fear mongering, and severe punishments. If a carceral curriculum is deeply internalized, and especially if cruelty and abuse are part of it, then how might these adherents learn to value inherent Beingness? Unlike the woman earlier in the chapter who was still struggling with "toxic and twisted roots that linger on," how might emigrant Carceralites of maximum-CC come to internalize their intrinsic worth?

Maximum internalization imprisons one's tetradeum to such an extent that adherents preserve, to borrow from Herman, a "sense that the perpetrator is still present, even after liberation."[86] Sometimes this shows up in dreamscape,

[86] Herman, quoted in Doehring, *Internal Desecration*, 20.

as with Priscilla, who shared, "I used to have nightmares about the afterlife because all that stuff was drilled into me. Through my whole twenties, I was either crying or having nightmares. It's just a blur of pain and agony."[87] Sometimes it shows up in what Doehring called "visceral sensations and responses"[88] and author Lia Mack called "body memory."[89] Consider this account by Miriam, for example:

> I have physical responses to the Armageddon beliefs. Sometimes I have panic attacks. Sometimes I see things on T.V., some—natural disasters in one place after another. Man, if I hear that, it can really send me going, like heart racing, like freaking out, freaking out; the end of the world is coming; the end of the world is coming. And it's absolutely like this built-in response because I—well, I think it's very possible that the end of the world is coming. I just don't think it's according to their interpretation. And I'm not really afraid of the end of the world coming because I'm like, "Hey, if that's what's happening, that's what's happening…" That's what I believe logically. But I guess these—these responses that I have are just very kind of… (Hardwired?) Yes, yeah.[90]

As an emigrant Carceralite, I also experienced this kind of body memory to hell, fire, and brimstone teachings. It took about ten years before I could hear people talk about hell and not viscerally respond to that hardwired sense of it.

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[87] Priscilla, discussion.
[88] Doehring, *Internal Desecration*, 135.
[89] Lia Mack, "What are Body Memories? And How to Heal Them…," *Survivor Manual*, November 5, 2011, http://www.survivormanual.com/2011/11/what-are-body-memories-and-how-to-heal-them/.
[90] Miriam, discussion.

As I understand it from Doehring and apply it through the semantic of this work, religious beliefs directly tied to woundedness that are left open "find expression" in "anxiety attacks and panic disorders,"[91] even when those beliefs are no longer held. They also interfere with formation of new and healthy ones. It takes pulling up old beliefs and practices by the roots (that is, unlearning) in conjunction with seeding, nurturing, and growing new beliefs and practices (that is, relearning) to move past such curricular memories (that is, new learning). If new beliefs and practices do not solidly supplant the old, some Carceralites will unintentionally and unknowingly keep triggering the religious elements that were so injurious in the first place by default.

Returning for a moment to Williams's work on conscience and applying it to maximum internalization, in addition to soul imprisonment, Williams likened a persecuted conscience to *soul rape*, which he defined as forcing people to uphold and practice what they do not believe. To Williams, both kinds of cruelty, persecution of conscience and persecution of the body, are violating, traumatizing, and isolating experiences. Unlike minimum-CC, where adherents can live within confines in ways that lessen internalization and woundedness, maximum-CC, to borrow from Williams, "goes inside a person and does

[91] Doehring, *Internal Desecration*, 135.

terrible damage," and harms "the soul in its very capacity to strive."[92] In other words, soul imprisonment, like minimum-CC, may confine and constrain an individual for some time; however, the inner space is left uninjured. Soul rape, on the other hand, violates a person's conscience, sometimes through violation of the body, and is capable of inflicting great injury to one's inner life.

Williams's thought on persecuted conscience is similar to Doehring's work on traumatization. In *Internal Desecration: Traumatization and Representations of God*, Doehring examined the impact of trauma on what she called the "inner sanctuary,"[93] or the core of personality. Doehring characterized the internal affect state and psychological response to sanctuary damage through an earthquake metaphor, with damage ranging from minimal external signs (similar to Williams's soul imprisonment and my minimum internalization) to structural damage (my medium internalization) and complete destruction (similar to Williams's soul rape and my maximum internalization).[94] Doehring named this damage *internal desecration* and emphasized that it can be temporary if a person is supported through the trauma. If not, the inner sanctuary remains desecrated. Doehring added that if a person is mistreated by their social supports during or after trauma to the inner

[92] Williams, quoted in Nussbaum, *Liberty of Conscience*, 54.
[93] Doehring, *Internal Desecration*, 10.
[94] Ibid., 2.

sanctuary, even unintentionally, the effects of desecration will be compounded and cause *sanctuary trauma*.[95] I will come back to this point later.

As an example, let us recall the woman in Chapter 3, Dinah, who was frequently sexually abused by the uncle who raised her. Recall that the family attended church at least twice a month and her uncle served as a deacon. Recall, too, that the day Dinah asked her pastor for help, essentially for sanctuary, her uncle came home and beat her "very, very severely." The pastor had spoken to the uncle, who not only denied the abuse but also accused his niece of being an unruly teenager who made up stories to get attention. The pastor accepted this explanation without any further conversation with her or making any referral to child protection, police, or other authorities.

Besides feeling utterly trapped and helpless at home, Dinah also felt deeply betrayed by her church community. As we spoke, she wondered aloud about her uncle, "How could he do what he did to me and still be a Christian?" To her former pastor, "How can you do that? I thought that [confidentiality between pastor and congregant] was supposed to be sacred."[96] Dinah had painfully learned that being part of a church community did not necessarily mean she would be protected by or within it. Indeed, she continued to be

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[95] Doehring, *Internal Desecration*, 3.
[96] Dinah, discussion.

preyed upon by her uncle and stopped believing in that particular church's teachings. To borrow from Doehring, Dinah had suffered both external and internal desecration and sanctuary trauma.

How might emigrant Carceralites learn to form positive feelings about themselves, community, God, and religious and spiritual experiencing in the face of such suffering. Doehring supposed that a loving image of God might not be possible to attain when abuse is prolonged and repeated.[97] She cited a Dutch study of women who were sexually abused as girls in Christian families. All but one, like many of the women in my study who had been sexually abused, had "turned their backs on the church of their childhood."[98] Additionally, in the Dutch study, each woman had described God as an "all-seeing, all-powerful being who didn't intervene in the abuse because 'I was a bad girl who deserved to be punished.'"[99] Doehring conceptualized the following scene, which powerfully conveys what might be happening to precious inner lives in such moments.

> We can imagine the churches within the interior landscape of the violated child. In the moment of violence, the church doors are

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[97] Doehring, *Internal Desecration*, 119.
[98] Annie Imbens and Ineke Jonker, *Christianity and Incest,* P. McVay, trans. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992), quoted in Doehring, *Internal Desecration*, 49-50.
[99] Ibid.

> ripped open, intruders enter and begin smashing the sacred symbols, defacing the icons of the inner saints. They smash the stained glass windows. The bright sunshine of noonday is no longer refracted into rays of light that shine within. When inner lights burn at dusk, the brilliant colors of the windows no longer glow. The altar is overturned, the food scattered, the vessels broken. The sacristy lamp is shattered, extinguishing the light, plunging the inner sanctuary into darkness. Such is the desecration of the inner temple when violence strikes.[100]

Imagine the kinds of things a Carceralite comes to learn about one's sense of self (their Beingness) when wounded by physical and other abuse in the context of CC and, especially, of maximum-CC. How might we learn to support ourselves in religious communities that ask us, explicitly and implicitly, to not tell and/or to look away from such abuse?

Emigrant Carceralites in maximum-CC spoke to me of breaking with their churches physically before being able to do so spiritually. In fact, many shared feelings of tremendous fear and guilt for leaving; they just knew they could no longer stay. The more deeply internalized are CC's punitive discipline and compulsory curriculum, the harder it is to break away. It can take decades to heal from wounded-Beingness, which requires a practice of real-Beingness to realize well-Beingness. By that, I mean reaching a place where one's inner and outer worlds can unite and be redeemed, whatever that means and however

[100] Doehring, *Internal Desecration*, xv.

that happens for each individual. Otherwise, an adherent may unintentionally come to embody and transmit the very religious discipline and curriculum by which she or he was first imprisoned and then wounded.

Varieties of Individual Responses to CC

What happens when Christian adherents are bullied or abused within the context of religious experience or compelled or coerced to accept beliefs and practices that go against their conscience? Understanding there are many ways in which this question can be approached, I propose looking to the classic stress responses of fight, flight, and freeze as interpreted within the context of religious carceral learning.

Fight and flight have long been recognized as principal biological responses to acute stress, alarm, or fear. First introduced in the 1920s, the theory holds that animals, including people, instinctively react to external threats by fighting or fleeing. Since that time, experts have recognized "freeze" as a third response; it is especially useful to describe when fighting or fleeing is not possible or is unlikely, as is the case when young people are coming of age.[101] To these, I propose adding *front* as another response (explained below). That is,

[101] Norman B. Schmidt, J. Anthony Richey, Michael J. Zvolensky, and Jon K. Maner, "Exploring Human Freeze Responses to a Threat Stressor," *Journal of Behavior Therapy and Experimental Psychiatry* 39, no. 3 (2008): 292-304, http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jbtep.2007.08.002.

some Carceralites fight and struggle against CC. Some flee from and escape it. Some freeze within and surrender to it. Finally, some put up a front and do their time until they are able to get away. Certainly, some Carceralites may embody more than one response across time. Let us briefly consider each of them in turn.

Fight Response

As fighters, Carceralites have felt abused by CC, are angry with God and the church, and, one way or another at one time or another, have openly resisted or acted against its beliefs, practices, and teachers. These are the angry rebels described in Chapter 1. Consider this colorful example from Deborah.

> I was still forced to attend church past sixteen. I did so with obviously outright and obnoxious amounts of protest. One time, I found a pentacle. Biggest one I could find. And I refused to dress up. I wore jeans. I wore t-shirts. I had four black t-shirts, and I wore one every day. And I wore my pentacle just as bold as brass right into the church, and a dog collar, and I sat there and I stared down anyone who tried to talk to me with this whole "fuck you" thing on my face.[102]

It is not uncommon for people who are angry at religion to reject it altogether for a time.[103] This certainly is the case with many emigrant Carceralites with whom I have spoken. While some have found a way back to Christianity and

[102] Deborah, discussion.
[103] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 96-97. For their list on "How to Know if You are an Angry Rebel," see 116.

others have journeyed to a different religion or mix of religions, still others have emigrated from religion altogether. What kinds of inner and outer teaching and learning help guide Carceralites to these varying choices?

Flight Response

As fleers, some adherents escape the dissonance between inner and outer experiences through such means as self-punishment, self-medication, and illness.[104] Others escape by literally fleeing or "exiting" the church community, as Zukeran described it,[105] which may include having to flee their families and communities as well. These are the self-punishers and disenchanted dropouts described in Chapter 1.

I am reminded of Dinah, whose brother exemplified the flight response to CC through both illness and exiting. Like Dinah, the brother was subjected to extreme cruelty by their uncle, a leading deacon of their church. She explained:

> He's really messed up now. He has to take lithium. He's in a home. If he don't take his medicine, he cuts his hair all into his groin. It's gross. They called and told me, "He's cut his hair all off into his scalp." That is because of what my uncle did.
>
> She went on:

[104] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 104.
[105] Zukeran, "Abusive Churches," para. 2.

> My brother don't go [to church] at all now. I've tried I don't know how many times to get him in, and he says, "I'm not going. I don't believe in that… I'm not." You know, he never will. He is strong-headed about it.[106]

Unlike Dinah's brother, many Carceralites who have fled CC have discovered such venerated church qualities as godliness, devoutness, peacefulness, wonder, community, and affinity, in other church communities and branches of Christianity. Still others have realized them outside of religion altogether. Individuals have described, for example, transcendent journeying that was aided through music, nature, intellectualism, and exercise. In sharing their stories, emigrant Carceralites pointed to a *something* that resonated with them in a deep and meaningful way, nourishing a sense of realness and wellness in them. How do emigrant Carceralites come to discover such things?

Freeze Response

As freezers, Carceralites are unable or unwilling to transcend the bullying and coercion of conscience and instead cave into it. One could argue there are some good things about caving, including praise for being a good Christian; however, we often are required to give up a part of our *utmost self*, as I will refer to it, in the trade. Put differently, we are at risk of "becoming the

[106] Dinah, discussion.

wound instead of healing."[107] Consider this observation by Priscilla about her sister, which is juxtaposed with her own.

> Some of us have an intrinsic ingredient that others don't have. And in me was some kind of survival motif … whatever that ingredient is, is the same ingredient that I believe made me act out, made me do all kinds of things for survival in this system, whereas [my sister] caved in to it. She's had really a sort of pathetic life. It damaged her far deeper than it damaged me… She caved. I fought.[108]

These divergent responses to CC are helpful in understanding how people within the same home and church-home can respond differently to the same compulsory curriculum. All things being equal, however, I contend the more fear-mongering and punishment to which we are subjected, the more susceptible we are to freezing.

Again, Harris and Milam's work on abusive Christianity is helpful in understanding ways in which adherents can become frozen within the context of religion. In addition to the sheep identified in Chapter 1, they identified and theorized the guilty, or adherents who come to assume blame for everything; and the martyrs, those who become the worker bees of the church.[109] Certainly, there are personal and psychological costs associated with each.

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[107] Mark Nepo, *The Little Book of Awakening* (San Francisco, CA: Conari Press, 2000), 51.
[108] Priscilla, discussion.
[109] Ibid., 136, 140-141.

Front Response

To these three stress responses applied to CC (viz., fight, flight, and freeze), I offer *front* as a fourth. One of the meanings for the word front is "façade," that is, a pretense, a cover, or an outward show. In the context of CC, adherents are continually putting forth a Sunday persona. As *fronters*, Carceralites pretend. We pose. We fake it. We outwardly conform to the compulsory curriculum while inwardly resisting. We do our time until we are old enough or independent enough to leave. We put on a happy face until we manage to shake loose the outer bonds of our church communities. I suspect there are numerous adherents who put up a front within carceral churches across the U.S., though it would be difficult to determine, as we mostly are unknown to one another due to the isolating character of CC.

Sum

In this chapter, I have formulated and described certain inner scars and restraints of religious carceral learning, including woundedness, a bullied conscience, injuries and scars, and dehumanization; and outer bars and constraints, including enclosedness, limited outside experiences, and exclusivism. I also have briefly theorized degrees of internalization of CC and varieties of individual responses to it. It is my hope that these scars and bars

will help people recognize and understand some of the painful and problematic effects of growing up in CC, not only for individuals but also for Christian communities. To be subjected to CC is to be subjected to religious miseducation that is ripe with cultural and educational liabilities. In the next chapter, the final chapter, I will bring all of these ideas together—the panoptic discipline that grounds CC, the compulsory Christian curriculum that transmits it, and the scars and bars that result from this kind of carceral learning—to formulate CC and woundedness as a religious educational problem of generations that results in cycles of spiritual poverty.

Chapter 5:

Carceral Christianization as a Religious Problem of Generations

The world is not a prison house,

but a kind of spiritual kindergarten

where millions of bewildered infants

are trying to spell G-O-D with the wrong blocks.

—Edwin Arlington Robinson

Whatever is inside us continually flows outward to help form, or deform, the world – and whatever is outside us continually flows inward to help form, or deform, our lives.[1] —Parker Palmer

Sociologist Parker Palmer's statement emphasizes an enduring interplay between people and culture. I would reverse the order of relationship, however, from "inside outward, outside inward" to "outside inward, inside outward" to emphasize the initiating primacy of cultural agents on individuals. As emphasized earlier, we journey from "creature of nature to member of human culture."[2] We could argue, then, that an individual is initiated into culture via an educational journey that originates outside the person and flows inward, where it is internalized in differing degrees. This primary education is then circulated back into culture for good or ill. Put simply, coming of age and coming of conscience are an educational journey wherein initially the outer is made inner and then outer again. Accordingly, whether the initiating journey forms or malforms, educates or miseducates, or liberates or imprisons depends in part upon context and experience.

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[1] Parker J. Palmer, *A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward an Undivided Life* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004), 46-47, quoted in Richard J. Vincent, "Uniting the Divided Self," *TheoCenTriC* (blog), December 27, 2004, http://www.theocentric.com/ecclesiology/community/uniting_the_divided_self.html.

[2] Martin, *Educational Metamorphoses*, 8.

With acknowledgment that religion, religious discipline, religious curricula, and religious people can be richly formative, educative, and liberative, I have argued in this dissertation that CC characterizes a particular religious context that is highly malformative, miseducative, and imprisoning to Christian adherents' tetradeums. I have identified and named the inheritors of this religious miseducation "Carceralites" and have endeavored to give a voice to their experiences. Specifically, CC is religious miseducation that is grounded in panoptic and punitive discipline, transmitted through an excessively constraining and compulsory Christian curriculum, and negatively affects Christian adherents and communities. As such, it represents a complex "educational problem of generations,"[3] specifically with respect to religious education (hereinafter, *religious problem of generations*), which, contrary to Christianity's aim of spiritual abundance, instead transmits what I call *cycles of spiritual poverty*.

Before unpacking what I mean by a religious problem of generations and cycles of spiritual poverty, let us set the stage by revisiting the gendered religious education of some Christian girls and women adhering to denominations practicing CC, which silences and makes us invisible in some Christian spaces. I have argued that a strictly gendered religious education is

[3] Martin, *Cultural Miseducation*, 64.

miseducative and leaves many girls and women feeling disconnected from their Christian communities and religiously and spiritually unfulfilled. Further, we learn to swallow dissent to remain good Christians in good standing in our communities.

Recall the right notions of God-ordained and divinely ordered gender roles and activities discussed in Chapter 3. I have argued that such notions educate men for authority and women for compliance, men for leadership and women for following, men for commanding and women for obeying, men for speaking and women for paying attention, men for public domains and women for private ones, and men for work outside caregiving and women for work inside it. In short, these gender lessons compel what it means to be a good and true Christian woman or man. In this way, right (read: rigid) notions of gendered religious education are miseducative and limit the possibilities for both women's and men's lives.

Men are freer to resist CC even if they choose not to access its privilege; women are not. As noted in Chapter 3, one way that women are prevented from accessing privilege in CC is through exclusion from shaping the curriculum. We are taught that the Bible prohibits us from taking ministerial or administrative positions, which could influence or change the rules and

practices to which we are subjected and by which our daily lives are governed. In the days following the election of Pope Francis, for example, I witnessed Catholic women around the world beseeching the new Pope for expanded leadership opportunities in the church, specifically for the ability to serve in the priesthood. While the Pope has actively praised women's contributions to the church, including "sharing some pastoral responsibilities with priests in looking after persons, families and groups," and has said that women should play a larger role, he has stopped short of lifting the ban against women's ordination.[4] Until changes are made that allow *every* individual to follow their calling and conscience within Christian communities, some Carceralites will continue to face the dilemma of staying within the church and thus denying or going against their conscience or leaving and going against the church. Neither is a choice without injury to individuals and even to communities.

In addition to being explicitly left out of curricular decision-making positions, women are left out through a hidden curriculum of being *less than*, which harms our sense of self and sense of value to both God and community. Consider emigrant Carceralite Deborah, for example, who looked for positive female imagery in the Bible and found it lacking. She shared:

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[4] The Associated Press, "Pope Francis urges women to take a greater role in the church," *CBC News*, January 25, 2014, http://www.cbc.ca/m/touch/news/story/1.2511354.

> I read the Bible several times. I had this children's version that I read over and over and over again… But I didn't identify with the Bible. I did not whatsoever identify. There's no women! You know? You hear about one here or there, but there's not a whole lot… and I didn't have anywhere to relate. I didn't have any kind of positive role model in the Bible or in the Christian faith to look up to… and to base myself on. And this is the time where I'm trying to really discover my identity, and there's not one shred of it in the Bible. There was just no pull for me there. I'm looking for something to really call me, something to help me figure out who I am and my place in this world. And there wasn't a shred of it. There wasn't even a picture [of a woman] in my picture Bible![5]

Deborah's lamentation speaks to a steady stream of gendered miseducation that silently runs below the surface of CC, which harms adherents' *coming of Christian identity*, as I think of it, if one just notices.

Not noticing is an important element of hidden curricula. Similar to Deborah's observation of "no women" in the Bible, I have noticed women's imagery is missing or, at best, minimized in the architectural and interior elements of many churches and am surprised that others seem not to notice. If buildings and the things we choose to put in them teach people about what a community values, what might Christian girls and women learn about self- and communal-worth when left out of or minimally included in such church features as pictures and paintings that greet the community, stained glass

[5] Deborah, discussion.

windows that teach and uplift members, and sculptural figures that remind and inspire us?

A clear exception to this observation is Mother Mary. Her image can be found in many churches, especially Catholic ones, yet even she is left out of some Christian churches. While traveling in the Baltic area a few years ago, for example, I sought out "The Church of Our Lady" in Copenhagen, Denmark. I wanted to see this Lutheran church because it serves as both the Cathedral of Copenhagen and the National Cathedral of Denmark. Initially, I was not disappointed. I entered a bright and bustling structure with enormous marble statues of Jesus and the apostles that encircle the nave. Colorful helium-filled balloons were everywhere. People were holding some; others were tied to items in various locations around the church. A man handed a bright green balloon to me and cheerfully explained that the church was celebrating Earth Day. He then invited me to tie my balloon anywhere in the church. I was enthralled. Though the marble statues were tempting, I decided to honor the church's namesake with my balloon and went in search of Mary. To my dismay, I could not find her anywhere—not a statue, not a painting, not a picture, nothing.

Unwilling to believe that a church named for "Our Lady" did not contain a single image of Mary—especially in light of the majestic masculine

display around me—I returned to the man who handed the balloon to me and asked if he would please direct me to her statue or painting. After looking genuinely confused for a few seconds, he responded, "I don't think we have one." I asked, "But this is the Church of *Our Lady*, correct?" He replied, "Yes." I pressed further, "And there aren't *any* statues or paintings of Mary?" He thought for a few more seconds and then somewhat sheepishly responded, "No." Enthrallment turned to disappointment, and I tied my balloon to the statue of Judas Iscariot in protest.[6]

Certainly, there are stories of remarkable women in the Bible, such as Deborah, who helped lead a great military victory for her people; Esther, who helped save her people from genocide; and Abigail, who saved her husband from a king's jealous and murderous wrath. These, however, are not the women about whom Carceralites are taught. Instead, we learn of Eve and her disobedience (the sin for which women are still paying today), Mary and other blessed mothers (whose stories set an impossibly high bar for women), and Delilah and other seducers and betrayers (whose reputations scare women toward striving for Mary's perfection).[7] In short, we are taught about women

[6] The statue of Judas Iscariot in the Church's nave has since been replaced by one of St Paul.

[7] Importantly, however, each of these women – the good and the bad – is defined in relation to the men in their lives and not solely on their own merit.

who sit high or fall short and learn to feel unsure of our Christian–daughter/wife/mother selves either way.

In these ways, girls and women are not represented (missing from), singularly represented (for example, as maidens and mothers or prostitutes and adulterers), underrepresented (women's stories, written and spoken, take a back seat to men's), misrepresented (narrow or skewed images of biblical women), or a combination of these in curricula in CC. I shall return to my earlier question: What do such religious disparities teach girls and women about gendered worth? Here is an equally important question: What do they teach boys and men? I suggest that we learn explicitly that Christian males are of greater importance and value in the eyes of God, church, and Christian people, including its female adherents. We learn implicitly that Christian females are of lesser importance and value and essentially less worthy of divine and communal reverence. Religious disparities like these miseducate both sexes by inflating the worth of one and diminishing the worth of the other to the injury of both.

This, then, speaks to a religious problem of generations: the transmission of gender liabilities that foster gender-specific spiritual poverties, such as the gendered scars and bars described in Chapter 4. To unpack this idea further

and with full understanding that others could be articulated in lieu of these, let us consider the following liabilities that I have formulated and claim contribute to CC as an overall religious problem of generations. *Extreme conformism* and *sanctified bullying of difference*, as I call them, are communal liabilities that support religious dualisms, exclusionary practices, xenophobia, groupthink, and superiority. These outer liabilities of CC perpetuate inner ones, which I call *twofold towers of docility-utility* and persona-*fied selves*, which foster *docility of tetradeum* in Carceralites. This learned docility assures a certain sacrifice of *liberty of tetradeum* in submission to discipline and curriculum in CC, thereby perpetuating CC as a religious problem of generations.

I acknowledge that individual Christians, like all people, are not born with ambitions to excessively constrain and thus injure people religiously or spiritually. They are educated, or rather miseducated, to it. I have said that CC makes up a particular context of carceral religious learning that is miseducative. I further claim that Carceralites become *prisoners of tetradeum* at varying levels through this particular context of carceral learning. Specifically, CC inhibits the

gentle, honest, and reflective *inquiries of tetradeum* that are necessary for transcendent religious learning.[8]

I am using "prisoner" here in the sense of *educated-beingness* and/or *miseducated-beingness,* both of which encompass inner and outer elements of feeling, belief, and action that together inform our greater sense of individual and communal *well-Beingness* and/or *wounded-Beingness*.[9] Understanding that there are shades of experiences between the two, the difference between well-Beingness and wounded-Beingness is either helped or hindered by the kind of religious education we initially receive.

Let us now look more closely at liabilities of CC that I propose contribute to carceral religious learning, beginning with communal ones. While I refer to the overall category of communal liabilities as *outer liabilities* of carceral religious learning and the overall category of individual liabilities as *inner liabilities*, each includes internal and external elements. To help distinguish these for the reader in the following sections, I will utilize the terms *inside* and *outside* when referring to communal liabilities and *inner* and *outer* when referring to individual ones.

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[8] I plan to develop a pedagogical theory for transcendent religious learning in my next work, which will serve as a companion piece to this one on carceral religious learning.

[9] Wounded- and well-Beingness are discussed in Chapter 4.

Outer Liabilities of Carceral Religious Learning

As emigrant Carceralites, we "copy what we know"[10] until we learn to know what we know and then come to claim what we know. Carceral religious learning, however, obliges adherents to copy what the community knows whether for good or ill. I contend that part of what Carceralites learn to copy is *extreme conformism* by individuals inside church communities and *sanctified bullying of difference* of those outside them. Let us consider these briefly in turn.

Extreme Conformism, Or Inside Community Liabilities

Sociologist Hong Xiao claimed that the more religious a person is, the more likely he or she is to value conformity and less likely to value autonomy. She partly grounds this claim in parent-child relationships that are established through biblical doctrine and that emphasize children's strict obedience to parental authority.[11] I do not claim that conformity inside Christian communities is a problem per se. Rather, I claim the expectation for "strict obedience to conformity,"[12] as Xiao noted, and "conformity at any cost,"[13] as

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[10] Priscilla, discussion.
[11] Hong Xiao, *Childrearing Values in the United States and China: A Comparison of Belief Systems and Social Structure* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2001), 69; Xiao, "Class, Gender, and Parental Values in the 1990s," *Gender and Society* 14, no. 6 (2000): 799, http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/089124300014006005.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 60.

Harris and Milam emphasized, is a problem. CC cultivates, intentionally or not, a miseducative position of extreme conformism that fosters such inside communal liabilities as dualistic thinking and exclusionary practices. Examples for both follow.

Dualistic Thinking

One consequence of being taught to unquestioningly obey (read: strictly conform to) a compulsory Christian curriculum is learning to see the world dualistically, or in black and white. For example, Carceralites come to understand that God and creation are separate; people are godly or worldly, virtuous or sinful, follow God or Satan, go to Heaven or Hell; acts are good or evil, right or wrong; and other people are with us or against us. We also come to understand that humans are spirit and body. Finally, Carceralites are expected to believe everything or are accused of believing nothing. Let us return to the topic of gender to see how such dualistic thinking becomes a religious educational problem.

Consider the duality of sexual purity and sexual sinfulness, which I have argued is strongly gendered and dichotomized in CC. As emphasized in Chapter 3, sexuality, and female sexuality in particular, is a central concern in carceral Christian communities and homes. Carceralites are taught to exhort

sexually pure women as Madonnas and virtuous and sexually sinful ones as Jezebels and whores. It is an either/or proposition. There is no space in between these poles. Harris and Milam wrote about the effects of such dualistic thinking as it relates to sexuality, revealing a rippling effect of gendered religious miseducation that arguably entraps Christian females and males alike. They explained:

> This duality is "real." It starts at puberty when "bad girls" have sex and "good girls" do not. This duality of identities impacts the behavior of both males and females. It affects self-concept in females. It affects the way males choose companions and how they treat them sexually and socially… The dichotomy of the nun/whore in this variation can entrap both the male and female. The female is entrapped in that she is ashamed and abandoned. The male is entrapped to love and leave and to never establish long-term intimacy… In marriage, the male begins to see his wife as the "nun"… sets up his search for the "whore"… (and) will resort to affairs… Happiness becomes the whore and compliance becomes the nun.[14]

In this way, CC simultaneously imparts extreme dualities of sexuality to which Carceralites must conform and establishes a measure by which individuals can be judged as good or bad members of the flock. Such dualistic thinking does not help young adherents learn how to meet life's complexities and gray areas nor develop the compassion necessary when encountering

[14] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 214-220.

variance inside and outside one's community. These young people then grow into adults who lack the same benevolence and understanding.

Exclusionary Practices

In addition to learning to think dualistically, adherents learn to accept exclusionary practices inside the church as right. In Chapter 4, I wrote about CC being exclusivist. That is, Carceralites are expected to conform to communal standards for participating in right (read: Christian) activities, specifically, those that one can and cannot *do outside* the church community. "Exclusionary," on the other hand, conveys what one can and cannot *be inside* the community. Often structured around the sex and gender roles outlined in Chapter 3, this statement from Deborah serves as an example:

> I couldn't be a priest. I served in choir… and as a layperson during youth month. Women did serve in government of the church, but women weren't allowed to be priests… They won't let gay people become priests either. They can't even be members of the church unless they are non-practicing.

She continued,

> I was starting to get really interested in religion. I was starting to really develop a little bit of a passion about finding God and understanding the universe… and to have a limitation like that really offended me. It really made me quite angry.[15]

[15] Deborah, discussion.

It is understandable that being excluded or educated differently and unequally on the basis of one's sex angers some people. Indeed, lingering anger is unmistakable when talking with emigrant Carceralite women who were excluded from ministerial positions on this basis. Because females of the church are taught that the Bible compels our submission to male authority, Carceralite girls and women are particularly induced to conform to exclusionary communal standards. What of those with different aspirations, who push against such standards?

One of the problems with a curriculum that requires extreme conformism inside religious communities is that it does not guarantee inner compliance from their adherents. Consider, for example, this admission by Enoch.

> Basically, it was more outward conformity, if I went to church or whatever. But it was that sense of the internal… I'm questioning internally, but I'm also… putting on a happy face and going (to church)… That was a time period I was actually kind of depressed because it just seemed like I could not conform in a way that was anything other than external.[16]

Indeed, many emigrant Carceralites have described outwardly conforming while inwardly resisting, though certainly to different degrees. This is a problem. Individuals are prevented from living their best life. Religious

[16] Enoch, discussion.

learning that requires adherents to check one's utmost self at the church door in strict deference to the community is a religious liability that ought not be passed on to future generations.

Sanctified Bullying of Difference, Or Outside Community Liabilities

> "We're being trained to go out and train others… to be God's army, and to do God's will."[17] —Levi, twelve-year-old
>
> "We're kinda being trained to be warriors, only in a much funner way… 'Martyr, martyr.' It's really cool."[18] —Rachel, nine-year-old

Levi and Rachel are two of the children featured in *Jesus Camp*. Along with other lessons, the children were taught that Islam and Muslims are the enemies of Christianity and Christians. Their comments highlight a militaristic religious education of children inside some Christian communities. Explicitly, young adherents are taught to be good Carceralite Christian soldiers.[19] Implicitly, we learn that God sanctifies winning battles and souls for Christ by any means, even if the means—including the bullying-of-conscience described in Chapter 4—induce the ends.

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[17] *Jesus Camp*.
[18] Ibid.
[19] A popular hymn sung in many churches is "Onward, Christian Soldiers." The first verse – reflecting the statement in II Timothy 2:3 to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ – goes like this: "Onward, Christian soldiers marching as to war, with the cross of Jesus going on before; Christ, the royal Master, leads against the foe, forward into battle see His banners go."

Training to be good Christian soldiers is not limited to an overt curriculum taught in Sunday school and church services. It also extends to a whole host of social and hidden curricula. When in elementary school, for example, my son played on a flag football team in a church-sponsored league. He had joined the team with one of his best friends, whose family attended the church. When I visited the church, I was struck by the interior decorations in the children's wing, which resembled a castle. The decorations were medieval-themed and included full-bodied standing suits of armor and large cloth banners hanging on the walls, including white banners with red crosses on them. The decorations reminded me of images of the Crusades.

As "the world's largest Christian sports league for youth athletics," according to its website, this league, Upward Sports, served approximately 500,000 participants in 2,400 churches in 2013.[20] Its aim is to "strengthen athletes mentally, athletically, spiritually and socially," and during games my son did indeed receive strong positive encouragement from coaches, other players, and parents. The problem is that the league seemed to assume all players are Christian (and the right kind of Christian) and should be if they are not. Players were asked to memorize Bible verses each week beginning with ones that speak of individuals' being born sinners and in need of salvation. These verses were

[20] *Upward Sports*, accessed March 18, 2014, www.upward.org.

then discussed during coach-led mini-devotionals held at each practice. During these mini-devotionals, players were strongly encouraged to be prayer warriors and lead prayer time. My son was not asked if he held different religious beliefs or if these practices made him uncomfortable, though I will say the coach was considerate when I spoke with her of his conflict of conscience.

Understanding that there are other sports leagues in which my son and other youngsters can participate, I wonder how much more effective the league would be in reaching its goal to "strengthen athletes spiritually" if its organizers and coaches simply tried to persuade children by their example and not pressure them to explicitly participate in these practices. Though my son did not use this description, I would argue his conscience was bullied by the league's curriculum. While he enjoyed playing on a team with his friend and had fun during the games, he told me he would never play in a religious league again because of the pressure to participate in activities with which he did not agree.

In such ways, CC cultivates, deliberately or not, a sanctified bullying of difference that fosters such outside communal liabilities as xenophobia, groupthink, and a sense of superiority. Let us consider these briefly in turn.

Xenophobia

In thinking again about the children's quotes that opened this section, when taught we are being "trained for God's army" and "trained to be God's warriors," we learn to view the world in terms of them and us. Further, usage of words like "army" and "warriors" implies there are enemies to be defeated for God. In an ever-shrinking global community, and even if it were not, this xenophobic worldview contributes to a religious problem of generations. After all, if a primary identity is that of God's warrior, what does it teach a child about herself or himself, their place in the world around them, and how to relate to others?

I contend that CC transmits what political scientist Anamaria Dutceac Segesten called "the fear of the different"[21] and cultivates what Harris and Milam described as "religious xenophobia." Such xenophobia, argued Harris and Milam, "promotes prejudice and fear of anyone who is different than you."[22] It bears noting that religious xenophobia, in the context of CC, also applies to other branches of Christianity. Samuel, for example, told me that his (Protestant) uncle believes Catholics are going to hell and that the Antichrist

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[21] Anamaria Dutceac Segesten, "On Fear," *University of Venus* (blog), *Inside Higher Ed*, July 17, 2011, http://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/university_of_venus/on_fear.
[22] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 70, 163.

will come out of the Catholic Church.[23] Xenophobic assertions such as these underscore that Carceralites learn to fear the wrong kind of Christians as much as non-Christians and adherents from other religious traditions.

Groupthink

> *There is an almost unspoken ethic in Christianity not to ask questions about the religion, not to doubt the religion, and not to think rationally about the beliefs… Everything must be consistent with their beliefs.*[24]
> —Harris and Milam

"Groupthink" implies all members of a group must think alike, as the statement from Harris and Milam suggests. A common Christian maxim reflects a variation of this phenomenon, "Don't think, just believe." Presumably, thinking may cause adherents to question or doubt, and our job is not to doubt. Doubt is viewed as bad or sinful. Instead, adherents are to have faith and believe. According to Irving Janis' groupthink theory, groupthink leaders do not encourage difference or discussion, and members censor themselves inside the group to maintain the façade of group agreement.[25] Consider this observation by Omri, who, in his interview, effectively described groupthink in the context of CC.

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[23] Samuel, discussion.
[24] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 131-132.
[25] "Groupthink," Oregon State University, accessed April 11, 2013, http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/theory/grpthink.html.

> You can't think for yourself. You have to think the way the church makes you think. You can't look things up for yourself and research for yourself and try and find your own beliefs. They give you your beliefs and the way you think, and you have to go with them.

When I asked Omri if he was openly discouraged from researching other beliefs, he replied:

> Oh, yes. They don't like people to try to conform to other or try to join other religions. They don't like people knowing about other religions. I don't know if that's out of fear that people will conform or join the other religions or if they just think it's a sin to look at that kind of thing, but it was strongly discouraged for me to be researching other religions.[26]

When Carceralites are taught that people outside *our* church communities are *other*, *we* learn as a group to distrust or demonize *them*. When unable or unwilling to grasp their beliefs or practices, we, in the words of Omri, "automatically think it's evil… and don't try to understand what it is or why it's there… Whatever 'it' is."[27] In this way, groupthink is a religious problem because it teaches some Christians that other religious people and curricula are suspect or wrong and, likewise, that anyone who wants to learn more about them is suspect or wrong. We then use this information to justify distinctions between them and us and, as groupthink theory holds, to oppose outside groups not in agreement with our ideals. For Carceralites such as Enoch, who

[26] Omri, discussion.
[27] Ibid.

"always tended to ask the 'Why?' question,"[28] groupthink makes it impossible to raise concerns, objections, and alternatives to such distinctions. We are told instead to "trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding," and "in all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."[29] "The Lord" here refers explicitly to God and Jesus and implicitly to the church. In short, there is no place for what I will call *criticalthink* or *individualthink* in religious groupthink.

Superiority

> *Arrogant confidence in one's own tradition coupled with condescending dismissal of others ironically reinforces, by example, the argument that religion is the problem*.[30] —Charles Kimball

In addition to xenophobia and groupthink, I contend that carceral religious learning fosters a sanctified sense of superiority in adherents, an idea that was raised in interviews with emigrant Carceralites. Specifically, they expressed frustration with Christians who believe they are better than other people, including some people inside their own churches. Observations similar to this one from Rachel were fairly common:

> A lot of what I didn't like was intolerance and ignorance of other people's perspectives and the superiority that comes with a small

[28] Enoch, discussion.
[29] Proverbs 3:5 (King James Version).
[30] Kimball, *When Religion Becomes Evil*, 27.

> group of people feeling that they have the only right way... They so much want to set themselves apart that it's like they make it difficult for anyone to be part of their group. It's just very intolerant… It bothers me… It's like they have the only exclusive line to God.[31]

Rachel underscores what Harris and Milam described as "spiritual elitism," or the attitude that "I have the Spirit; you do not. Therefore, I am somehow special and honored, and you, for some reason, have been left out or are lacking."[32]

I am also reminded of Barnabas, who explained about the elect in Calvinism:

> Part of the five-point Calvinism is that there are 'the elect,' and those elect were written before the foundation of the earth. They will be saved. It will happen. There is no way of changing the list. You're either in the elect or you're not. So it's just—at what point you recognize your status on the list. (When asked about active members of the church who are not on the list…) If you were in the church but you were never saved, well, then you're still going to hell. So you were not part of the elect, and it's that simple.[33]

Xenophobia and groupthink in the context of CC propel this sense of superiority through its compulsory right curriculum. Further, any contrary ideas are summarily dismissed as humanity's wisdom, not God's.

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[31] Rachel, discussion.
[32] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 73-74.
[33] Barnabas, discussion.

Taking this idea a step further, Cynthia Boaz claimed that invoking the superiority of the Christian God is a propaganda technique that totalitarian entities employ to brainwash people. As she explained:

> The idea is to declare yourself and your allies as patriots, Christians and "real Americans" (those are inseparable categories in this line of thinking) and anyone who challenges them as not. Basically, God loves Fox and Republicans and America. And hates taxes and anyone who doesn't love those other three things.[34]

When CC teaches adherents to view *our* beliefs, practices, and people as biblically or otherwise superior to *their* beliefs, practices and people—whoever "their" is—it sanctifies a kind of bullying of those outside real and true Christianity. This can be expressed from person to person: For example, a European student who believes that Protestantism teaches critical thinking recently shared with me that an American student told her that idea is heretical. It can also be expressed from groups to others, such as the picketing "God Hates Fags" church described in Chapter 3. Whether well intentioned or not, or injurious or not, *real* and *right* Christians feel justified in imposing their beliefs onto others because it is for their ultimate good. That is a problem.

Religious Bankruptcies of CC

[34] Boaz, "Fourteen Propaganda Techniques" "10. Invoking the Christian God."

> "Whenever I run into a non-Christian, there is always something that doesn't feel right. Makes my spirit feel yucky. It's like candy, and I want the meat. The Holy Spirit is like the meat. The candy makes you sick."[35] —Levi, twelve-year-old

CC transmits what I will call *religious bankruptcies*, as I have come to understand the idea from Jane Roland Martin's educational concept of *cultural bankruptcy*. According to Martin, if we fail to prevent cultural liabilities from being passed down, we may place the next generation in "cultural bankruptcy," contributing to "cultural debt" and "cultural poverty."[36] Drawing on this "cultural wealth" approach to education, I claim that outer liabilities of carceral religious learning, such as extreme conformism and sanctified bullying of difference, transmit communal cycles of religious bankruptcy from generation to generation. Further, these communal bankruptcies sustain inner liabilities that foster individual cycles of spiritual poverty, which will be discussed later in the chapter.

First, let us think of bankruptcy not in the legal sense but in the sense of impoverishment. The latter lends itself to the notion of CC as an educational means (instead of end) of making Christian communities and people poorer. For example, whether overt or hidden, a religious curriculum that teaches young Christians that non-Christians are like "candy that makes the spirit sick,"

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[35] *Jesus Camp*.
[36] Martin, *Cultural Miseducation*, 66.

as described by Levi in the quote above, impoverishes both communities and individuals. Such a curriculum teaches children that non-Christians are sickening and, like germs, are to be avoided, which ultimately divides human beings. Everyone is made poorer in the course of such religious miseducation.

This idea that a purported educational system can unintentionally impoverish its students crosses scholarly fields. Philosopher Michel Foucault emphasized, "The prison cannot fail to produce delinquents."[37] Psychologist Abraham Maslow argued, "Every exploiter is damaged by being an exploiter."[38] And mental health professionals Jerry Harris and Melody Milam stressed, "Perpetrators of Christian Abuse end up being abused and victimized themselves by the abusive concepts of their theology."[39] Similarly, I claim that Carceralites are imprisoned by a religious curriculum that professes freedom but instead excessively constrains and punishes. What do people actually learn from such a religious curriculum? Instead of learning to become better people, I propose adherents of carceral religion learn to avoid punishment, especially when breaking or resisting CC rules. Arguably, adherents learn to repress feelings and impulses that can later emerge in harmful ways. As an example of

[37] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 266.
[38] Maslow, *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences*, 106.
[39] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 50.

the latter, let us briefly revisit the problem of childhood sexual abuse and incest within a Christian context.

According to Harris and Milam, certain Christian dynamics "create the very problems that Christian preachings frequently attack."[40] Specifically, "rigid sexual ethics and fear of sexuality force individuals into the very behavior they condemn," including "perverse sexual behaviors, such as fetishism, pedophilia, exhibitionism, incest, or prostitutes."[41] Consider this account by an emigrant Carceralite of her father's sexual abuse against her.

> My father's sexual abuse was very difficult for me to understand. I had grown up continually hearing that chastity and purity is the highest ideal for Christian females. I was told biblical stories about Jezebel women, the sins of Eve, and hellfire and damnation punishment awaiting those who engaged in any kind of sexual impurity. I was taught that even *thinking* a sexually impure thought made one guilty of the sin. And yet, by virtue of his acts against the child-me, my father—an upstanding church member, a youth group leader, and member of the choir—had made me the very kind of female that he and the church held in the lowest esteem.[42]

Not only do such examples speak to a religious problem of generations, but also to a sexual problem of generations as well.

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[40] Ibid., 20.
[41] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 236, 231.
[42] Anonymous 4, selected narrative from a paper shared with the author in 2010.

Harris and Milam emphasized that such problems are virtually guaranteed within a community made vulnerable by a rigid religious sexual ethos and explained that such conditions could especially occur "when a man cannot meet his sexual and emotional needs with a female" or "when his sexual ethics may be so punitive and 'muscle bound' that he has no acceptable means of sexual expression."[43] The following observation by Priscilla personifies this problem.

> There's a part of me that feels my dad was a victim. He's in a conservative Christian church. He's somehow got some sexual impulses that don't get met in the marriage… You can't have an affair. You can't have a mistress. So what happens? You've got beautiful daughters… I'm not trying to rescue my dad or fix him. What he did was not only sinful, it was absolutely wrong. It was just wrong, morally and every other way wrong. However, there's a piece of me that sees the church as part of the fault of that because there were no ways out.[44]

It is the very rigidity of some Christian beliefs about sexuality and having "no ways out," as Priscilla described, which increases the likelihood of perverse behavior.[45]

I contend that such rigidities also contribute to *estrangement*, another bankruptcy of carceral religious learning that impoverishes Christian

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[43] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 232; Presumably, Harris and Milam are referring to men here because the prevalence of male-to-female and male-to-male abuse is statistically higher than female-to-male or female-to-female.
[44] Priscilla, discussion.
[45] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 233.

communities. By estrangement, I am referring to disharmony and separation. Estrangement inside Christian communities serves as a double-edged liability. A self-aware Carceralite who chooses to stay inside a church community risks becoming estranged from his or her utmost self and is especially vulnerable to loneliness, which can be experienced by adherents who are among, yet psychologically and spiritually separate from, members of their community. Or Carceralites may choose to leave and risk becoming estranged from or by the community itself, which often includes family. The latter risk isolation through such formal communal punishments as disfellowship, public reproval, and shunning and such informal ones as disapproval, judgment, and cold indifference. This makes continued filial ties difficult, if not impossible, to maintain.

Importantly, both of these liabilities of estrangement get in the way of Carceralites having a voice. In the case of the former, Carceralites learn to self-silence. In the case of the latter, the community explicitly and implicitly silences them. Indeed, many emigrant Carceralites expressed a deep desire to be heard and understood by members of their family and church community, but they were met with characteristic responses such as this one shared by Miriam:

> I still have these fantasies about actually going and walking in and saying something. The deal is I want—I think that I would

> have some closure in knowing that my words met their ears. But at the same time, I've had these arguments with—with my mother, and she's glassy-eyed. They just don't hear. None of it gets through.[46]

This kind of indifference to perceived wayward members only serves to widen an already painful gap between members of carceral Christian communities and those who have chosen to leave them.

Estrangement from people outside Christian communities is similarly harmful. Author of books on spirituality Neale Donald Walsch said that "separation breeds indifference."[47] Drawing on this sentiment, I argue that estrangement in the context of CC keeps Christians separate from and indifferent to other religious and nonreligious points of view, including those held by Christians whom they deem wrong. In 2013, professional basketball player Jason Collins publicly announced he was gay. Because former professional football player LeRoy Butler sent a supportive tweet to Collins following this announcement, he lost a speaking engagement at a church. Butler was told that if he retracted his support for Collins and asked God for forgiveness, then the church would let him keep the agreed-upon $8,500 speaking engagement fee. Butler declined and challenged the pastor, saying,

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[46] Miriam, discussion.
[47] Neale Donald Walsch, Twitter post, August 16, 2011, 1:02 pm, http://twitter.com/nealedwalsch.

"This is a form of bullying, what you're doing. You're trying to get me to do something I don't want to do." When the pastor disagreed, Butler said, "We agree to disagree," to which the pastor replied, "No, I'm right and you're wrong." Ironically, Butler was scheduled to speak at the church on the issue of bullying.[48] Such bullying signifies a sanctified separation over other worldviews, including other Christian worldviews, which sustain religious bankruptcies.

In addition to estrangement from those inside Christian communities and estrangement from those outside them, carceral religious learning causes estrangement among individuals. Harris and Milam, for example, found that

> Some men are afraid to get close to another male because emotional intimacy could have sexual overtones. They fear that someone might think they are gay. And they fear that they might begin to feel attraction to the other male. After all, intimacy is often sexualized.[49]

This reminds me of an emigrant Carceralite who once shared that his severe Christian upbringing scared him away from touching his children. Because his parents had only ever harshly touched him, he had not learned how to touch others gently and lovingly. Therefore, erring on the side of cautiousness, he

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[48] Cindy Boren, "Church Cancels LeRoy Butler Speech After Jason Collins Tweet," *Early Lead* (blog), *The Washington Post*, May 1, 2013, http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/early-lead/wp/2013/05/01/church-cancels-leroy-butler-speech-after-jason-collins-tweet/.
[49] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 243.

decided that touching his children was out, so he did not help with changing diapers, bathing, dressing, or other tasks that required physical contact. Nor was there much cuddling or hugging. Many years later, the man realized that in trying to break the cycle of a harsh Christian coming of age, which included not wanting his touch to be misinterpreted, he had unintentionally deprived his children of the nurturing touch they needed from him and he needed from them. That is a problem.

Such estrangements—loneliness, not being listened to or heard inside one's community, being disinvited from a speaking engagement for supporting a gay man's coming out, and never touching your children for fear of unintentionally crossing lines with them—sacrifice communal coherence and fellowship on the altar of right religion and preserve and perpetuate religious liabilities and bankruptcies. How might carceral Christian communities first come to understand and then embrace "disagreement without division,"[50] as editor of Christian content Ted Griffin implores? How might adherents of CC learn "to question one another without destroying fellowship,"[51] as he suggests?

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[50] Ted Griffin, "Disagreeing without Dividing," *Battered Sheep*, accessed May 3, 2013, http://www.batteredsheep.com/disagreeing.html.
[51] Ibid.

I have heard jokes that Christianity and Christians are in need of a conversion. Arguably, some Christian communities and people would benefit from one. For example, instead of teaching of God as demanding, restricting, controlling, strict, and rigid,[52] to borrow from psychologists Peter Benson and Bernard Spilka's God scales, what possibilities for teaching of God primarily as helping, accepting, and understanding? Instead of teaching of God as primarily punitive, as others and I have critiqued, what possibilities for teaching of God as primarily loving? I have argued that a curriculum of carceral religious learning cultivates prisoners of tetradeum. How might a curriculum of transcendent religious learning foster liberations of the same? Surely, the answers to such questions hold the keys for moving CC beyond religious bankruptcy for some to religious abundance for all.

Inner Liabilities of Carceral Religious Learning

Recall that Martin cautioned if we fail to prevent cultural liabilities from being passed down, then we might place the next generation in cultural bankruptcy, contributing to what she called "cultural debt" and "cultural

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[52] Peter Benson and Bernard Spilka, "God Image as a Function of Self-Esteem and Locus of Control," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 12, no. 3 (1973): 297-310, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1384430. The Controlling God Index is determined from the following five pairs of adjectives: demanding–not demanding, freeing–restricting, controlling–uncontrolling, strict–lenient, and permissive–rigid. In Doehring, *Internal Desecration*, 33.

poverty."[53] I have claimed that CC poses a religious problem of generations and imparts such outer liabilities of carceral religious learning as extreme conformism and sanctified bullying of difference, which transmits communal cycles of religious bankruptcy. I further claim that religious bankruptcies bolster such inner liabilities of carceral religious learning as *twofold towers of docility-utility* and persona-*fied selves*, formulated in this section, which contributes to individual cycles of spiritual poverty.

By *cycles of spiritual poverty*, I mean inner and outer liabilities of carceral religious learning that inform and misinform what I call an *educated-Conscience* (big C). By Conscience, I am referring to internalized religious education and miseducation that affects adherents' tetradeum. I propose it is our educated-Conscience that we present and circulate in the wider world or not. I will unpack what I mean by this in a moment.

First, my choice to draw on "conscience" for a project on religion is certainly not new. A quick Google search of the combination produced tens of millions of results. A similar search for "inner conscience" produced more than nine million results, with another four million for "outer conscience." Even my pairing of "educated conscience" is not unique. A Google search yielded more

[53] Martin, *Cultural Miseducation*, 66.

than seven million results for this combination. Even when accounting for duplications, the combination is not unique per se.

To be clear, I am employing Conscience in a sense similar to the concept of "educated-Beingness" that was formulated in Chapter 4; that is, an educated-Conscience encompasses inner and outer elements of our initiating religious education. These elements include feelings, beliefs, actions, and experiences and serve as assets or liabilities to inform our greater sense of *well-Beingness* or *wounded-Beingness*. If CC imparts religious miseducation, as I have claimed, then a Carceralite's educated-Conscience primarily inherits inner and outer liabilities of tetradeum. We might also think of it as a *miseducated-Conscience*.

Let us take a closer look at some inner liabilities of carceral religious learning that contribute to a miseducated-Conscience, beginning with twofold towers of docility-utility followed by *persona*-fied selves.

Twofold Towers of Docility-Utility, or Inner Liabilities of Conscience

> *These methods (infinitesimal power over the active body, the economy and efficiency of activities, and uninterrupted and constant supervision of the processes of activities) made possible the meticulous control of the operations of the body, which assured the constant subjection of its forces and imposed upon them a relation of docility-utility, might be called 'disciplines'… This discipline forms a relation that in the mechanism*

*itself makes one more **obedient** as one becomes more **useful**.*[54] —Michel Foucault (bolded by author)

As this passage from Foucault emphasized, carceral institutions utilize a particularly powerful and pervasive disciplinary system that works simultaneously to ensure more compliance ("docility") and more usefulness ("utility") from its occupants. Foucault paired these ideas together so often in *Discipline and Punish* that I have come to think of them as the twofold towers of docility-utility.[55] I especially like the image because it brings to mind the panoptic towers theorized in Chapter 2—the Central Tower, a thousand central towers, self-enforced towers, and a multiplicity of other intersecting and controlling towers—which employ punitive power-relations to control, normalize, and coerce what it means to be a good Christian.

One means by which the twofold towers are made effective in the context of CC is through *cellular power*, as I have come to understand it through Foucault's work; that is, power that excessively routinizes and structures adherents in time and space so that all is made totally useful for God.[56] I claimed in Chapter 2 that such power compels strict obedience to right orthodoxies, orthopraxes, and teachers (read: docility) and right embodiments,

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[54] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 137-138.
[55] Ibid., 24-26, 137-138, 208, 218.
[56] For a discussion on "totally useful time," see Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 149-150.

relations, and uses of time both inside and outside Christian communities (read: utility). I propose that these twofold towers of docility-utility cultivate inner liabilities of carceral religious learning by imposing passivity on adherents, which, paradoxically, is partly achieved through compelling excessive participation in Christian-related activities. In other words, carceral religion makes the mind and spirit docile as it keeps the body busy. Let us briefly look at some ways in which *passivity of tetradeum* can be shaped through religious curricula.

Passive Mind

"Don't think, just believe."
—A common carceral Christian admonition

I recently ran across a cartoon that pokes fun at the pressure brought to bear on Christian adherents to *not think*. In the cartoon, a pastor announces to his congregation, "We would like you to come down to the front if you are a *thinking* person." The pastor continues, "We will lay hands on you and pray that you will not become any kind of a threat to the way things are done around here."[57] Irrespective of its intention, I find this cartoon useful in that it points to religious curricula that educate adherents for a passive mind. Consider these examples from emigrant Carceralites:

[57] Jon Birch, "1081," *ASBO Jesus: The Ongoing Adventures…* (blog), May 7, 2012, https://asbojesus.wordpress.com/2012/05/07/1081/.

> At some point, I had issues while I was growing up with my faith. But I just kind of tried to push it to the back of my head like it's just not important.[58] —Rizpah

And,

> I'd never been taught politics. I'd just been taught to do what my parents and then-husband told me to do and to think like they thought… I didn't even vote for years and years. It wasn't modeled for me.[59] —Priscilla

Charles Kimball claimed, "Religion that requires adherents to disconnect their brain" is a big part of the problem of religion becoming evil.[60] Harris and Milam argued that abusive Christianity requires adherents to follow a "packaged belief system without rationally examining the system," which fosters what they call an "attitude of anti-thinking."[61] And I have claimed that CC employs disciplinary techniques, such as fear mongering and punishment, to quell adherents' will to question, which, as argued in this chapter, hinders critical thinking.

Carceralites are taught that allowing one's mind to be open makes one vulnerable to being led astray by Satan and/or the world. In the process, we learn not only to repress critical examination of the church's beliefs, practices,

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[58] Rizpah, discussion.
[59] Priscilla, discussion.
[60] Kimball, *When Religion Becomes Evil*, 29.
[61] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 261, 65.

and teachers but also to deny the reflective self-examination that I argue is critical for breaking cycles of spiritual poverty.

Passive Body

> *In every society, the body was in the grip of very strict powers, which imposed on it constraints, prohibitions or obligation*.[62] —Michel Foucault
>
> "It's not something we talked about."
> —Frequently heard in interviews with emigrant Carceralites

I have already described ways in which Christian bodies are made passive, or docile, through use of time and space (see Chapter 2) and through imposition of right orthopraxes (see Chapter 3). In this section, therefore, I will offer some thoughts on ways in which Carceralites are educated for passivity through a particular extension of the body—the voice—and specifically as carceral religious learning educates adherents for silence.

Religious silencing begins early with such reprimands as "Children should be seen and not heard" and grows to encompass a host of taboo subjects. As part of their work, Harris and Milam created a list of "Thou Shalt Not Talk About" subjects, which included such taboo topics as sins that one commits, anything sex-related, consumption of alcohol and other drugs, doubts about God, doubts about the church's rules and beliefs, and certain aspects of

[62] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 136.

Jesus' life (e.g., sexuality, illness, and disease), among others.[63] Lacking avenues for expression, Carceralites have learned to keep silent on such subjects for fear of reproval and punishment.

The issue of not having and/or not being able to use one's voice came up frequently in interviews with emigrant Carceralites. Some referred to gendered silencing, "Women were encouraged more to listen than to participate. It would have been a lot easier for me as a man to ask questions."[64] Some pointed to rebuffed voices, "I always tended to ask the why question, and the problem is that you're not supposed to ask why; you're supposed to do."[65] Some talked of singularly sanctioned voices, "The only voice I ever had was when I sang in church… It's all really boring, stupid music, too. But, boy, did I sing it because it's all I had."[66] Some were courageous enough to reveal their voices and were met with judgment, "I had a voice, but it was not an approved one."[67] Finally, some were punished for using their voices, such as Miriam, who was formally disfellowshipped from her church community when she no longer kept silent.

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[63] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 148.
[64] Omri, discussion.
[65] Enoch, discussion.
[66] Miriam, discussion.
[67] Priscilla, discussion.

In short, Carceralites are strongly pressured to say the right things and not say the wrong things. In the process, some of us learn to say nothing. Consider Priscilla, who kept quiet about her deacon father's sexual abuse of both her and her sister. She had come to believe her daily survival depended on her silence and, therefore, never revealed the abuse to anyone. When her sister told their mother of the abuse, and her mother asked Priscilla about it, she denied it to her, explaining to me:

> [Mother] sat me and the other sister down… It was just this moment of, "If I say yes, that is going to unravel this family, and I don't know that Mother isn't the type that wouldn't blame me." You know? I mean, all of that was in a flash, not real conscious. But, boy, I could feel that survival. It was like, "Nope, nope, never happened to me." Well, I knew then I betrayed my sister. It's an impossible position.[68]

Later, Priscilla had come to understand that her sister had learned an important lesson that day. As she explained, "My sister had the courage, spoke up, and that got her slammed against the wall. So now she has no voice. And I don't know if she'll ever find it."[69]

The issue of having a voice or not, an informed voice or not, an independent voice or not, and a valued voice or not within the context of CC is complicated. What I maintain, however, is that carceral religious learning

[68] Priscilla, discussion.
[69] Ibid.

educates us for silence. When explicitly taught to listen to the voices of others over our own, we implicitly learn to overvalue theirs and undervalue ours, trust theirs and mistrust ours, and accept theirs and question or deny ours. In other words, Carceralites learn to passively accept religious-based silencing though certainly not without emotional angst. Learning to listen to, value, and assert our own voice is another vital key to breaking cycles of spiritual poverty.

Passive Spirit

> *In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*[70] —From the book of Thessalonians

By *passive spirit*, I am referring to a certain disposition for which Carceralites are educated and through which we come to accept that external entities and circumstances ultimately control our lives. It is not uncommon, for example, to hear "My life is in God's hands" and "Not my will, but Thine, be done."[71] Compare these with "Pray to God, but row toward shore" and "Do not ask God to guide your footsteps if you're not willing to move your feet." I contend that predominant usage of the former reflects an education for a passive spirit, such as in CC, while predominant usage of the latter reflects an active one.

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[70] 1 Thessalonians 5:18 (King James Version).
[71] Luke 22:42 (King James Version).

As another example, consider the subtle differences in the usage of the popular maxims "God is my pilot" and "God is my co-pilot." "God is my *pilot*" arguably suggests learned passivity, deference to authority, and a deflected sense of ultimate responsibility, whereas "God is my *co-pilot*" suggests learned activity, a shared sense of authority, and acknowledged responsibility. In other words, adherents educated for a passive spirit would rely on belief and appeals to a higher power (the pilot), which may be okay, but adherents educated for an active spirit would rely on belief, appeals to a higher power, and purposeful action (the pilot and co/self-pilot), which is essential for resisting passive dependence on external sources and being in control of one's life.

Emigrant Carceralite Omri described this passive disposition as "too much faith in one being." When I asked what he meant, he clarified:

> I was talking about certain Christians who believe that everything is up to God, that your entire life is decided by God, and that nothing you do really matters because it's God's will that chooses what happens, whereas they're ignoring the fact that a person's choice in their life will change things that happen, and that a person has a very good amount of control over their own life.[72]

When Carceralites are taught that life is "the way God wants it," we learn to credit external sources for success and blame the same for failure. When Carceralites are taught that "God will provide" but then does not, we learn to

[72] Omri, discussion.

feel shame and a lack of self-worth when struggling with chronic issues, such as poverty, abuse, and illness. When Carceralites are taught that "Jesus saves," we learn to wait for someone to deliver us from tragedy, discontentment, or loss and to feel resigned when this does not happen. In other words, passivity or activity depends, in part, upon what is divinized. A passive spirit teaches us to project internal troubles as external ones, which makes it difficult for Carceralites to learn how we might save ourselves.

Passive Conscience

I have argued that cycles of spiritual poverty transmit inner and outer liabilities of carceral religious learning, which inform and misinform an educated-Conscience. Recall by Conscience, I mean internalized religious education and miseducation that effects adherents' tetradeum, which is passed down from generation to generation. With this in mind, I propose that we think of the inner liabilities of carceral religious learning, or passive tetradeum, collectively as a *passive-Conscience*.

As I have claimed, Carceralites are made passive through the twofold towers of docility-utility, which are built upon panoptic and punitive power-relations and supported through compulsory religion. I further claim that such towers, in addition to compelling passivity, prevent the cultivation of an *active-*

Conscience, which is essential for recognizing and resisting carceral learning. In future research, I will explore how emigrants Carceralites learn to cultivate the active-Conscience necessary to disrupt and even grow beyond such inner liabilities of Conscience. Let us now, however, regard some of the outer liabilities that contribute to the same.

Persona-fied Selves, Or Outer Liabilities of Conscience

I first heard the term "Sunday persona" when I was in high school. It was a pejorative expression used to describe schoolmates who presented themselves as perfect Christians to parents, school, and church authorities while simultaneously breaking orthodoxies and orthopraxes. Though my high school was not formally a religious school, it was located in a tightknit, religious community where being a good Christian mattered. Thus, I had inwardly learned to judge these schoolmates as hypocrites, especially if they flaunted their church affiliation and were vocal with their personal testimony. As an adult, I have come to understand that some of them, like me, had simply learned to survive a strict Christian coming of age and coming of conscience by putting up fronts.

To be clear, my use of the phrase "*persona*-fied self" is intended to convey a public persona that Carceralites have learned to present, depending upon

audience and place, to lessen the risk of judgment and punishment, which includes self-judgment and self-punishment.[73] By "*persona*-fied self," I do not mean a public image that individuals present in putting their best foot forward each day or even in hiding their worst. I mean a public way of being in the world that specifically does not comport with one's Conscience. Such dissonance between our outer and inner lives functions to shore up the façades we learn to construct, consciously or not, to withstand a carceral religious curriculum, making it difficult to break free. Or, as Debbie Ford observed, "Our personas often start off as a protective mechanism and soon become what imprisons us."[74]

In the next section, we will look at the *Turntable Self* as one example of a *persona*-fied self, followed by the *Fragmented Self* as an example of the inner toll paid by Carceralites for keeping up such personas.

Turntable Self

> *For years I lived this way: turning the side of me to others that they could understand, spinning the aspects of my true self like a lazy Susan, offering only what others wanted or needed or felt most comfortable*

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[73] Carceralites also learn to personify a certain Christian image outside our community to protect the church's public image. I am bracketing this issue to focus on individuals instead of the community.

[74] Debbie Ford, Twitter post, September 6, 2011, 7:04 am, http://twitter.com/debbieford.

with… The cost eventually was a subtle, but ever-present spiritual suffocation.[75] —Mark Nepo

My usage of the phrase *Turntable Self* is intended to illustrate rotating personas that Carceralites learn to present to the world. It was inspired by Mark Nepo's usage of the phrase "lazy Susan" in the narrative above, which refers to the rotating, circular serving tray that is placed in the center of a table so that food may be easily shared among guests. Nepo applied the image of this particular style of turntable to describe the way he had learned to dish up whichever side of himself he thought others "wanted or needed or felt most comfortable with," even though it came with the price of "a subtle, but ever-present spiritual suffocation."[76] It is in the spirit of this sentiment I engage the phrase.

Nepo's statement also points to a challenge of language here. Others and I have grappled with how to define and discuss what I am calling a Turntable Self, though I acknowledge there are limitations to the usage of this metaphor, as with any metaphor. I find the image useful, however, because it personifies one mechanism by which Carceralites have learned to appear to be good and right Christians; that is, we have learned to dish up a *persona*-fied version of our

[75] Nepo, *The Book of Awakening*, 306.
[76] Ibid.

self for a given audience at a given time. It also underscores the pressure many of us feel to live up to such appearances.

Others have drawn on comparable metaphors to describe similar experiences. I will discuss two such metaphors in this section—wearing masks and pretending—to highlight the greater problem of inner liabilities of carceral religious learning, particularly because they were mentioned in interviews with emigrant Carceralites. First, Doehring and Harris and Milam have written of "masked selves" and "Christian masks," respectively, in the context of their work on surviving religious trauma.[77] More generally, Dianne Sylvan argued:

> Every day we don masks to face the "real world" that for most of us feels entirely unreal. We hide our religion, our sexuality, our intelligence, and strap on armor that we hope will be impervious to the slings and arrows of (fill in the blank)... versions of, but not the totality of, our true selves.[78]

Drawing on these, we could say Carceralites have learned to masquerade versions of them selves to better survive CC. Such masquerading begins early. As Debbie Ford observed, "Our masks were formed through our early observations about which of our behaviors were deemed acceptable and which

[77] Doehring, *Internal Desecration*, 136; Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 151.
[78] Sylvan, *The Body Sacred*, 69.

were not."[79] In the context of CC, the idea is that Carceralites have learned to put on personas to hide from, be acceptable to, conceal our Conscience from, and be protected from others in the community. While the practice of masquerading certainly is not particular to CC or even to religion, I would argue it carries the added burden of God's disciplinary gaze, which, as mentioned in Chapter 2, is all-seeing, all-knowing, all-judging, and all-punishing. Importantly, Carceralites have come to understand we cannot hide ourselves from God's gaze.

If masks are what we learn to don, pretending is what we learn to do. Nepo explained, "When growing up, I had to check myself at the door like a coat in order to relate to others. Often, I had to pretend to be less than I was in order to be loved."[80] Similarly, a friend recently shared with me his lifelong struggle of "being valued." Though raised in a loving Christian family, he nonetheless felt constant pressure to "look right" and to "not look bad or fail" in other people's eyes. Perhaps his example does not reach the level of pretending per se; however, it points to assuming a persona that others would find acceptable, and that is a type of pretending. It made me wonder if the

[79] Debbie Ford, Twitter post, September 25, 2011, 1:04 pm, http://twitter.com/debbieford.
[80] Nepo, *The Book of Awakening*, 197.

pressure he feels is grounded in a level of carceral religiosity that he simply does not recognize.

It bears noting that pretending and posing share circular qualities in the context of a Turntable Self. A poser is someone pretending to be part of a group, but not actually a member of that group. A pretender is someone who is a member of a group, but does not feel entirely part of that group and, thus, is posing to fit in. In this way, Carceralites exist in a lonely in-between place, which makes some feel phony. Enoch explained it this way:

> I started kind of disengaging gradually. I'd still go to church on Sunday, or whatever, but you know I just felt different. And it always felt like there was something fake going on. And that was one of the experiences that was really difficult… that I don't like to feel that I'm putting on. You know it's like you go in, you participate but then you feel… like I'm pretending.[81]

Emigrant Carceralite David shared this sense of fakeness and compared it to being in *The Matrix*, a reference to a science fiction film series depicting a simulated reality that is perceived by humans as actual reality. Consider his moment of realization:

> Have you seen the movie *The Matrix*? I felt like that when I walked into a local church, and I listened to sermons, and I looked at the community and the way they behaved and listened to their questions. I just felt like it was fake… All of a sudden, one day, [my wife and I] were in this church community, and we just kind

[81] Enoch, discussion.

> of looked up at the screens they had, and I turned to her and said, "I feel really out of place. I don't belong here. I don't fit in."[82]

For David to associate his experience in the church at that time to the premise of *The Matrix* is telling, especially because he was going through Baptist seminary at the time and serving at a Baptist church.

If masks are what Carceralites have learned to don and pretending is what we have learned to do, as I have said, then fake is how it makes some of us feel, as Enoch and David have pointed out. Before leaving the topic, I want to share a snippet from a scene that was included in the documentary film *Jesus Camp*. The scene was of an elementary school-aged boy who announced to a room full of his peers, "To believe in God is really hard. I don't see him. Sometimes I don't believe what the Bible says. Makes me feel like a faker." While taking in the wide-eyed expressions of the other kids in the room, I wondered how long it would take before the *persona*-fied self of this child became contrived enough that he no longer vocalized such doubts.

Fragmented Self

I have argued the Turntable Self conveys the rotating personas that Carceralites learn to present to keep safe, depending upon audience and place. I further argue that maintaining such a *persona*-fied self over time ultimately

[82] David, discussion.

contributes to a Fragmented Self. Herein, again, there is a problem of language. While I am drawing from Doehring's work on religious-based internal traumatization, wherein she distinguishes between a "fragmenting self" and "self-fragmentation,"[83] I am applying the term more specifically to my concept of Conscience. By "Fragmented Self," then, I mean a dissonant splintering that occurs between the inner self (what resonates with one's Conscience) and outer self (what we have been taught through a compulsory Christian curriculum and strongly compelled to follow through punitive discipline) and sometimes even between inner selves (our Conscience versus the confusion and guilt we feel for wanting to follow it against what we have been taught is God's will).

Many others have employed imagery of a *divided self* to describe similar dissonance, including philosopher William James, Parker Palmer, and bell hooks, who wrote of severe separations in early life assaulting essential human connection.[84] Nepo described having had a "divided life" wherein he would "listen to the divine inner voice secretly at night, but deny it day after day."[85] He called this kind of divided life "split living" and held that it prevented

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[83] Doehring, *Internal Desecration*, xvii, 18, 122.
[84] James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, xxii; Vincent, "Uniting the Divided Self;" hooks, *All about Love*, 15.
[85] Nepo, *The Book of Awakening*, 62.

people from being authentic.[86] Similarly, Harris and Milam's work emphasized the danger of extreme fragmented selves. They work with Christians, for example, who are LGBTQ and, at the same time, prejudiced against sexual minorities due to their Christian upbringing. According to the pair, such adherents become "ego dystonic," meaning "foreign to the self."[87] Sometimes, such double binds lead individuals into therapy but also to reject themselves, engage their "sexual immorality" and feel guilty, self-destruct, and, most extremely, die by suicide.

Whether preventing Carceralites from coming to know and acting upon one's Conscience or alienating it to such an extent that one would consider suicide, inner liabilities of carceral religious learning must be seriously attended to examine how they sustain and further the religious problem of generations. In addition to the injuries and scars illustrated in Chapter 4, inner liabilities of carceral religious learning, such as the Twofold Towers of Docility-Utility and *Persona*-fied Selves, thwart breaking cycles of spiritual poverty. As I will argue in the next section, this ultimately leads Carceralites to giving up, or sacrificing, their utmost selves for the sake of being good Christians and to remain in good standing in the community.

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[86] Ibid., 78; Nepo, *The Little Book of Awakening*, 44.
[87] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 244.

Spiritual Poverties of CC

> *The vict'ry is* most sure*, to him who strives to yield* entire *submission to the law of conscience; conscience reverenc'd and obey'd, as God's most intimate presence in the soul, and his most perfect image in the world.*[88]
> —Wordsworth

> *Group dynamics can fragment individual consciences*.[89] —Charles Kimball

Let us begin this section by remembering more of the words spoken by emigrant Carceralites in interviews with me: uncomfortable, depressed, burdened, shamed, anxious, tired, scared, terrified, pained, embarrassed, demeaned, angry, bitter, resentment, offended, stressed, disequilibrium, yucky, numb, and powerless. These words do not reflect the victories of conscience, if I may, evoked by Wordsworth in the quote above. Rather, they reveal the fragments of conscience raised by Kimball, and bear witness to spiritual poverties experienced by some Carceralites who, unable or unwilling to resist CC, have learned to *give up parts of their utmost selves* for the sake of religious compliance and conformity. In the process, they develop what Harris and Milam called a *religious* or *false self*.[90]

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[88] Wordsworth in Thomas H. Palmer, *The Moral Instructor; Or Culture of the Heart, Affections, and Intellect, While Learning to Read* (Boston: Wm. D. Ticknor and Co., 1842), i.
[89] Kimball, *When Religion Becomes Evil*, 37.
[90] Harris and Milam, *Serpents in the Manger*, 106.

Pediatrician and psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott argued that a false self "enforces a life of guardedness and secrecy," causing individuals to "hide what we know/feel to be true."[91] Abbot Basil Pennington described the false self as a "lonely place," and cautioned that giving primacy to the estimation of others "imprisons us and makes us serve it in varying degrees of misery."[92] I have come to think of the practical consequences of giving up parts of our utmost self to coexist in a religious community as self-*sacrifices*, which, if unchecked, can lead to *self*-sacrifice. Certainly, membership in any cohesive community requires some level of self-sacrifice. CC, however, compels excessive or extreme "submission to the law of community," to borrow from Wordsworth, which is a kind of Christian coexistence that propagates spiritual poverties for individuals and communities alike.

When adherents come to internalize such lessons and grow to become teachers of the same faulty curriculum, then communal cycles of religious bankruptcy and individual cycles of spiritual poverty are made complete. It raises the question: Despite the kind of education that is intended, what kinds of lessons might Carceralites and other adherents of religious miseducation learn outside of the curriculum proper? In partial response to this question, I

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[91] Donald W. Winnicott, quoted in Nepo, *The Little Book of Awakenings*, 42.
[92] M. Basil Pennington, *True Self/False Self* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2000), 35-36.

propose the following list of lessons, or rather mis-lessons. The list was inspired by and modeled after Dorothy Law Nolte's 1972 poem called "Children Learn What They Live."[93] Though only the tip of a religious miseducation iceberg, these lessons speak to the dialectic relationship of carceral communal and individual cycles.

Carceralites Learn What They Live

- When Carceralites live with constant reminders of sin and being sinners, we learn unhealthy shame.
- When Carceralites live with excessive punishments, we learn to be fearful.
- When Carceralites live under an omnipresent gaze, we learn to hide.
- When Carceralites live with frequent judgments, we learn to be judgmental.
- When Carceralites live with rigid rules, we learn to be dogmatic.
- When Carceralites live with absolute obedience, we learn to unthinkingly follow.
- When Carceralite girls and women live with expectations for total submission, we learn to be subservient.
- When Carceralite boys and men live with an understanding of absolute headship, we learn to be autocratic.

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[93] Dorothy Law Nolte, "Children Learn What They Live," *EmpowermentResources.com*, accessed April 20, 2015, http://www.empowermentresources.com/info2/childrenlearn-long_version.html.

- When same-sex Carceralites live with admonitions that homosexuality is wrong, we learn to feel defective.

- When Carceralites live with beliefs that sex is wrong, we learn to feel guilty over normal sexual impulses and behaviors.

- When Carceralites live with highly structured and monitored schedules, we learn to feel guilty for having fun.

Compare these against such messages as:

- When Christians live with love, we learn to respect ourselves and feel affirmed in our identity.

- When Christians live with affirmations, we learn to value others and ourselves.

- When Christians live with openness, we learn honest self-inquiry and reflection, etc.

As emphasized in an earlier chapter, such religious experience (in community) and experiencing (as adherents) collectively result in a qualitatively very different religious coming of age and coming of conscience, with the former illuminating liabilities of religious and spiritual poverties and the latter reflecting assets of religious and spiritual abundance. We may not have a choice in the particular religious culture that initiates us into selfhood and community, but we, like the emigrant Carceralites with whom I spoke, can make choices to claim a different kind of religious education and strive toward a more authentic self.

Toward a Theory of Transcendent Religious Learning

It is not enough that the abuse caused suffering. Suffering accompanied by resolve becomes the catalyst for change. One needs the spark of indignation that recognizes the unfairness and imbalance of power in one's situation.[94] —Kristen DeVoe

Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name.[95]
—From the Book of Psalms

In this work, I have claimed CC as a kind of metaphorical prison of religious miseducation with its discipline and curriculum as a network of confining cells, its orthodoxies and orthopraxes as the individual bars of the cells, and its teachers as the guards of the institution. More specifically, I theorized panoptic discipline as continuous, all-encompassing, and accomplished through punitive disciplinary power that compels submission to a compulsory Christian curriculum and demands obedience from adherents. I proposed carceral orthodoxies, orthopraxes, and categories of Christian teachers that make up the compulsory religious curriculum through which CC is imparted. I theorized "scars and bars" as ways in which discipline and curriculum in CC are harmful to the coming of age and coming of conscience of individual adherents and Christian communities. All of these ideas were

[94] Kristen DeVoe, "Opening The Lockbox: On Breaking the Code of Silence," *Battered Sheep Ministry*, accessed May 3, 2013, http://www.batteredsheep.com/lockbox.html.
[95] Psalms 142:7 (King James Version).

brought together to declare CC as a religious problem of generations, which, contrary to its intended educational agenda, passes down communal liabilities that foster cycles of religious bankruptcy and inner liabilities that sustain individual cycles of spiritual poverty.

With a primary focus on individual Christians instead of Christian communities, how might Carceralites come to move from carceral to transcendent religious learning? What kinds of alternative educational experiences (inquiries of tetradeum) illuminate the spaces between the bars (liberties of tetradeum) that help guide people out of CC (freedoms of tetradeum), and how might Carceralites come to learn of them? With narrative accounts like the ones above, how might emigrant Carceralites begin to heal inherited woundedness to form positive feelings of self, community, and God? While these and other related questions are to be the focus of my next project, I imagine some of the keys will include moving from a place of fear to courage, submission to resistance, looking outward less and inward more, docility to dynamism, restraint to exploring, limited experiencing to expanded experiencing, disempowerment to inner-empowerment, giving *up* self to giving *to* self, and from surviving to striving and ultimately thriving.

As emphasized in an earlier chapter, transcendent religious learning takes pulling up old beliefs and practices by the roots (that is, unlearning) in conjunction with seeding, nurturing, and growing new beliefs and practices (that is, relearning) to move past curricular dissonance to something that resonates with our sense of self and conscience (that is, new learning). Suffice it to say, to break out of CC is not easy and not without its own kinds of sacrifices. It would require, for example, vulnerability and a willingness to reenter, reexamine, and even to re-feel the dark-side of Christian experience and experiencing to move past it. There are, however, "treasures to be found in the darkness and hidden riches of secret places."[96] To discover these treasures, Carceralites must be willing to revisit the darkness and find the spaces between the bars that lead to transcendent learning. My ultimate hope is that this work will help illuminate such discoveries.

[96] Isaiah 45:3 (King James Version).

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