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Spiritual Liberation or Religious Discipline: The Religious Right's Effects on Incarcerated Women

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SPIRITUAL LIBERATION OR RELIGIOUS DISCIPLINE:

THE RELIGIOUS RIGHT'S EFFECTS ON INCARCERATED WOMEN

by

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1
The Church and the State Penitentiary:
A History and Introduction to Religion in Women's Prisons

The history of the prison system in the US is inextricably linked to Christianity. Penitentiary shares its root word, penitence, with repentance. Quakers and Congregationalists started the very first prisons because they viewed the corporal punishment of that time to be cruel (Graber 20). Even today, prisons are required to hire chaplains to make sure incarcerated people have the freedom to practice religion inside of the prison. The largest volunteer group serving incarcerated people is Prison Fellowship, an arm of the Religious Right which began in the 1970s and is now the largest faith based group of its kind[1] (Prison Fellowship "Benefits"). Under the umbrella of Prison Fellowship, a pre-release program called InnerChange Freedom Initiative was developed with the specific goal of transforming incarcerated men in order to lower recidivism rates. The Religious Right claims to have positive effects on incarcerated people beyond cultivating spirituality, such as better rehabilitation and lower recidivism. However, their claims have not withstood scientific scrutiny. This begs the question, what are the effects of the Religious Right's programming inside of prisons?

The US prison system, created with the intent of protecting society from criminals, was developed primarily by straight, white, Christian men who intended the system to be for men. Every aspect of a resident's life is controlled by someone else;

[1] In this text I refer to the Religious Right as Evangelicals who believe that all Christians must have a born again experience and be baptized as an adult. Denominations in this category include Baptist, Evangelical, Pentecostal, Non-Denominational, and Churches of the Vineyard. Most mega-churches are part of this movement. However, the label Religious Right also indicates a political ideology similar to Sarah Palen, and George W. Bush; it is pro-life, anti-gay, and fiscally conservative when it suits them.

men and women in prison are told when to wake up and go to bed, when and what to eat, and where they can or cannot go. Even the architecture was designed to impose this mentality of control. However, people who are incarcerated also have basic rights, like the right to religion. While the government (or prison administrations) cannot dispose of their rights to practice, it can use the practice as a form of social control. Prison officials can attempt to further control incarcerated men and women by choosing particular theologies and teachers for prison ministry. As a tool of discipline, religion becomes negative in its force to a change people—especially women and people of color—and to coerce them to accept structures of injustice while also pushing for conformity without free thought, all of this is enhanced by the omnipotence of a disciplining God.

Because prison reformers of the 1800s were compelled by their religious beliefs, the system mirrors a model in which individuals' religious reform is the path toward their social reform. Calvinist and Quaker leaders took on the battle for the ethical treatment of incarcerated peoples in 1790s in Pennsylvania and New York (Graber 24-25). Their efforts resulted in the building of prisons which had previously not been needed. In the prisons, social reform of inmates was based on newly (re)founded religious conversion (Graber 20). Thomas Eddy, a Quaker reformer of early 19th century, thought that criminals took on the lifestyle of crime because they did not have discipline or order, and in order to reform they needed both. He built religious as well as skills-based education into the reform program (Graber 23-24). Christianity was the only faith represented in this new program, and local pastors shared the responsibility of preaching in the men's prisons. At times, inmates contributed to the services as well. Others, such as, Rev. Louis Dwight, a Congregationalist pastor, thought chaplains should play a central role in

discipline. “He believed in sin and the necessity of conversion by God’s grace” (Graber 26). Prison became the new mission field with the added goal of reform of prisoners. Chaplains were not paid by the state at that time.

These mission fields were composed almost entirely of men; the growth of prisons for women was not until much later, in 1873. Indiana led the way with the first separate prison for women in 1873 (Young and Reviere 43). Before this time, some prisons held men and women, though in primarily separate areas of the prison. Because women were fewer in number than the men in the institution, the women were often subject to being confined in their smaller areas with much fewer services because of their segregation from men. When men and women were integrated, the results were equally troublesome because of abuse and intimidation. Progress in creating women’s prisons remained slow, and “at the close of the nineteenth century, Indiana and New York maintained the only separate prisons for women in the United States” (Young and Reviere 43). Women could be shipped to other states, incarcerated in privately owned and operated prisons or incarcerated in co-ed institutions, but their numbers remained small enough that they did not receive their own institutions. It was not until the end of 1997 that each state had its own female-only prison (Young and Reviere 44-45). While this is something to be celebrated as an improvement from the previous system of co-ed prisons, the reasons for the construction of female-only institutions is hardly something to celebrate. Incarceration of women has steadily grown, and since the 1970s, the female prison population has exploded.

The women incarcerated in the early history of the US penitentiaries—1820s—remains similar to those who are currently incarcerated, held low skill and low income jobs, "most of the female inmates, regardless of race, reportedly worked as housemaids prior to incarceration" " (Young and Reviere 56). Further, these women were generally incarcerated for non-violent (or even non-victim) crimes[2]; "the typical white prisoner was in her late twenties, a high school graduate, and had been convicted of prostitution, for which she was serving a sentence of 45 days" (Bresler and Lewis 116). The combination of the low economic status and the types of crime suggest that women's marginalization was a primary factor in their likelihood to commit crimes. Black women, were even further disenfranchised had similar crimes; "the typical black woman was in her early twenties and had left school in the eleventh grade. She was serving a sentence of between three and six months for either a property crime or prostitution" (Bresler and Lewis 120). These women had double to quadruple sentences as the white women's average of 45 days. Bresler and Lewis do not indicate if the property crimes account for this difference, or if the sentencing was racially biased by law or by personal bigotries of judges and juries. One might infer that because the sentence range for Black women is not 45 days to

[2] I suggest that prostitution and drug use/sales do not have a victim in the same way that robbery and murder do. These crimes are crimes against the social order which dictates that prostitution and drug use are bad for the society at large. One might argue that prostitution's victims are all women (and men) who are then seen as objects that can be bought, however, that is not the intent of the law, or else the tricks and pimps rather than the prostitutes would be punished; that would also lead to the criminalization of attending strip clubs. The perpetrators, in fact, can be understood as the victims.

six months that the bias was based on the absurdity of skin pigmentation and the senselessness of white-supremacy built upon it[3].

Today the 'average' incarcerated woman "is a young, single mother with few marketable job skills, a high school dropout who lives below the poverty level" (Glaze 151). These are not entirely surprising demographics for incarcerated women. The crimes which women commit are different than those that men commit:

> Twenty-eight percent of women in state prison at yearend 2005 were sentenced for drug offenses. Property offenses accounted for another 28% of the female state prison population. Together, property and drug crimes – non-violent offenses – make up nearly 2/3 of the population of women in prison. (West 22)

Incarcerated women continue to be economically marginalized through lack of skills and education. Further, their crimes remain much the same non-violent and non-victim crimes.

The US prison system has been gendered and radicalized throughout its history. The percentage of women has gone up significantly with the criminalization of drug use; similarly, as racially motivated laws were developed to systemically undermine people of color, the color of the prison population has fluctuated. During the time of legal and racial slavery in the US South very few black people were incarcerated; after emancipation the Black Codes created slavery within the prisons. During that time Black people accounted for the vast majority of the prison population. Ironically, the Jim Crow laws gave relief to this particular racial injustice, these laws:

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[3] This is not to suggest that there were not benefits for white people from white-supremacy. It was quite sensible in that it strongly benefits white people and their communities and societies through the strategic underdevelopment of communities, societies, countries and people of color (Rodney).

> forbade intermarriage, and they disenfranchised black men. With these laws in place to control the black population, the need for institutional control, through the prison, was less necessary. Once these restrictions on blacks were institutionalized, the 'color' of the female prisons changed from black to white. (Young and Reviere 56)

As the systems of oppression became stronger within the entire society, resorting to imprisonment as a form of control became lessnecessary. However, as human and civil rights are won, we can expect a resurgence of incarceration of those populations as part of the backlash. The backlash against the power movements of the 1950s and 1960s are already visible, "the prisons went from predominantly white in the 1950s to predominantly nonwhite. Once again, institutions have a disproportionately black female population, in addition to housing an increasing number of Hispanic female inmates" (Young and Reviere 57). Policy makers in the US tend to be white and come from wealthy circumstances. They often believe that they deserve their positions of power because of their hard work and their belief in the American Meritocracy. Good work-ethic and individual rationality are the skills they believe will pull individuals out of poverty. For those reasons, the institutionally sponsored religious programming remains individualistic and Euro-centric, rather than looking at systems of injustices from the frame of the Prison Industrial Complex[4].

The structure of prisons still reflects the religious value of individual reform which was instilled by these Christian leaders and expanded with policy makers. Their struggle continues in the work of correctional chaplains and religious volunteers in prison to reform incarcerated people and their behaviors through religion. These programs were

[4] "The Prison Industrial Complex" is a term generally used by scholars and activists who recognize the prisons and the entire justice system as a strategically designed structure to make month through the further oppression of disenfranchised, poor communities of color.

designed with good intentions with the presumed needs of the men being reformed in mind; however, the incarcerated people today are very different from those for whom the programs were designed. The history in this way reinforces a white male normative view of the world and attempts to place that view onto people who are incarcerated.

Some suggest that Christianity is being taught in the prisons because Christianity transcends racial and economic divides, furthermore, the majority of people in prison are Christian. But this argument does not acknowledge the many differences within Christianity. In the United States the vast majority of people in prison as well as in the general population identify themselves as Christian. In the latter category, the Pew Report estimates that 78.4% of the population identifies as Christian in some form (Pew), while in the statistics on religions identification/preference of people who are currently incarcerated is less clearly defined for today. A 1997 study by the Bureau of Prisons found that 74.172 percent of incarcerated people identify as Christian (39.164 percent Catholic and 35.008 percent Protestant, other Christian sects comprise less than one percent each) (Golumbaski). The Christian Research Institute found that very few volunteers in prisons are part of mainstream denominations (Holding 2). A more systematic approach to organizing and categorizing the religious preferences of incarcerated people will probably not be taken in the near future due to budget restrictions and the "moral outlook of most state and federal prison programs" (3). There have been many studies which take for granted the religious preferences of individuals and instead focus on the results and differences between people of different faiths. Instead of asking if certain religious, spiritual, or political beliefs influence institutional deviance or recidivism, studies looking at difference in belief focus on religion: whether

someone is religious, for instance, without consideration of the many facets within religious traditions.

One might suppose that the state would have the most self-interest in choosing chaplains that would use God as a form of disciplining. Because the legal debate has relatively ignored the concern of quality and diversity of religious programming within individual traditions (for instance, within Christianity there may be Protestant services and Catholic services, but a Presbyterian might have to share religious services with a Southern Baptist) authorities could strategically choose chaplains of one denomination or political perspective without public notice or concern, but that would be an individual choice. The state or individual prison administrations could thus effectively push a discipline-focused and conservative agenda through the strategic hiring of chaplains. Another option could be to focus on lowering recidivism through the chaplains' roles. Because research had not been done, there is no evidence if this is or is not currently happening. However, there have not been any published mandates by the Bureau of Justice or Prisons to this effect. Why has this not happened? Prison administrations may choose to not take these strategies because of the value placed upon religion for its inherent characteristics or because of the sacredness of religions and individuals' distaste or fear of attempting to use it in that type of a secular or political strategy. Another explanation is that policy makers believe that chapel-based religious programming already does institutional disciplining and lowers recidivism, regardless of (or because of a lack of knowledge of) the studies that have shown little correlation.

Non-Government Prison Ministries

Prison Fellowship has not shied away from explicitly using religion to lower recidivism. It is the largest volunteer-based Christian organization ministering inside of prisons. It was founded by a formerly incarcerated man, Charles "Chuck" Colson, in order to bring Christ into prison and thus improve the lives of incarcerated men and women. Colson is not the picture of a typical ex-con; instead, he is a former Nixon White House official who served time for his role in the Watergate scandal. His seven month stint in a minimum-security prison ended prematurely when he received early release to be with his family in crisis (Colson 23). Colson's son, Chris, began selling drugs in college to subsidize his allowance (Colson 24). Along with forty other students, Chris was arrested. (Imagine if an incarcerated person was released early every time he or she had family trouble.) The Bureau of Justice Statistics reports that children of incarcerated parents are five times more likely to be incarcerated in their lifetime than children with parents who are not incarcerated (Parents and Children Together). Meanwhile, "809,800 prisoners of the 1,518,535 held in the nation's prisons at midyear 2007 were parents of […] children under age 18 […] accounting for 2.3 percent of the U.S. resident population under age 18." (Glaze). With over half the US incarcerated population with children who are statistically likely to have problems with the law, Colson's situation proves to be an anomaly. His son's crime—on which charges were not pressed—actually lowered the amount of prison time for Colson's family, whereas most of the time the cycle rebounds upon the family. This speaks to his privilege and lucky circumstances as a powerful White House official who committed a white-collar crime rather than a drug related offense—which is the number one reason why parents are in prison today (Glaze).

Colson describes his life before his conversion/rebirth into Evangelical Christianity as the antithesis of what he hopes to be after conversion. Though he still remembers Richard Nixon as a friend, Colson works hard to distance himself from his old life. While working in the White House, he was known as ruthless and always calculating political consequences. He was primarily concerned with his own gain, which often included his party's victory at the expense of others. Colson critiques much of his lifestyle during his time in politics; aside from actually breaking the law, he points out and makes light of the overly seriousness of much of the White House. For instance, he discusses how the entire White House staff was extremely concerned with efficiency down to the second such that top officials did not even open their own doors because the step backwards and the pause of change momentum was too inefficient (Colson 14).

Before his conviction, while working in the White House, Colson had never even entered a prison. When a riot exploded at Attica leaving forty people dead, Colson hardly noted it until the President asked his political advice. Colson, in his autobiographical work, *Life Sentence*, recounts this incident in order to further dramatize his life shift. Incarcerated people had taken guards as hostages inside of the prison and the Governor of New York, Nelson Rockefeller, did not negotiate. Knowing that the "public" would side with Rockefeller's stance over the incarcerated people's or the "liberal jackasses in the press," Colson and Nixon decided to call the once liberal tormentor of conservative politicians, Rockefeller, to offer presidential support (Colson14-15). Colson writes, "It was good politics. We believed that long sentences, increased police powers and tough prisons were the answer to the crime problem" (Colson 15). His conversion and experiences inside of a prison turned his politics 180 degrees on this issue.

According to Prison Fellowship's website, they are active in every state, partnering with 20,000 churches and working with 50,000 volunteers and 300 staff members with a budget of $50 million in the US in 2009 (DeMoss). A volunteer survey conducted in 1992 offers some insight into the volunteers' demographics. The majority of certified volunteers are married (78 percent), white (77 percent), and female (52 percent) (Prison Fellowship "Volunteer"). Another survey of 10,000 volunteers in 1991 by *Jubilee* found that 91 percent were white, 72 percent married, and 62 percent were Republican (Torres). Over 80 percent of volunteers in the 1991 Jubilee survey have a bachelors degree or more education (Torres).

Religiously, the volunteers tend to be "non-denominational or [a member of a] community church (21 percent); 19 percent attended a Baptist church; 8 percent were Pentecostal/Foursquare Gospel/charismatic; and 7 percent each Presbyterian, Methodist, and Assemblies of God" (Prison Fellowship "Volunteer"). They were recruited primarily through their churches (35 percent), family and friends (24 percent), or had already been doing prison ministry before connecting with Prison Fellowship (16 percent). Another 10 percent had been recruited just from reading a book by Chuck Colson (Keyes). Volunteers describe their reasons for working with Prison Fellowship as, "the biblical mandate to visit prisoners, getting Gospel into the prisons, and Chuck Colson" (Torres). These volunteers see their work as for God, rather than directly for the people they visit.

Prison Fellowship began their ministry with Bible seminars for incarcerated people across the country being trained to become Christian leaders inside of their prisons. They developed the program into a network of volunteers entering prisons

leading bible studies in 1977 (Prison Fellowship "History of Prison Fellowship"). In this situation, pairs of volunteers meet with small groups of incarcerated men and women to discuss bible passages. The programming is designed to encourage incarcerated people to repent and convert to Christianity. The reasons why incarcerated people join these groups differ dramatically, but one reason is how religious conversion can be used (or is perceived to be useful) in meetings before the Board of Parole. One testimonial published by Prison Fellowship includes this tidbit: "At first, he admits, Victor sought God for a way to reduce his pending sentence" (Beane 11). Christian conversion is a possible way to attempt to influence those who have power over one's sentence. Prayer can also be—negatively—seen as a coping mechanism to dealing with challenges such as imprisonment. In whichever case was Victor's, renewed faith was the beginning of his freedom, as evidenced through his testimony.

Prison Fellowship is going further in their work to help incarcerated people get out of prison. They now sponsor and facilitate pre- and post-release reentry programs in multiple states (currently Arkansas, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, and Texas) ("History of Prison Fellowship"). Prison Fellowship understands its reentry programming not as a social service, but as another opportunity for ministry:

> Prison Fellowship's focus on reentry ministry has not detracted from its historical commitment to evangelism among prisoners. Rather, Prison Fellowship has *expanded* its evangelistic scope by forging a collaboration with more than 30 other national and regional ministries, particularly through Operation Starting Line (Beane 7).

All the teachings—"spiritual, educational, vocational, and life skills training from an unmistakably Christian perspective"—are "founded upon the teachings of Christ,"

("History of Prison Fellowship"). Prison Fellowship boasts of 865 graduates of their InnerChange Freedom Initiative programs across multiple states and prisons (Beane 15). In order to complete the program incarcerated men and women must meet stringent standards in their Christian lives as well as

> have completed 12 to 18 months of in-prison programming and six continuous months in reentry employed, active in a church of their choice, meeting regularly with a mentor, and participating in one other pro-social activity each week. (Beane 15).

No prison staff personnel are paid because everything is volunteer-led, but in a former program in Iowa some expenses being paid by the state were discovered to be going toward the religious programming.

InnerChange's program was ended in Iowa because of funding, but content of the program, aside from its Christianity, was not called into question. Americans United for the Separation of Church and State successfully argued that the Iowa prisons gave special benefits to those within the InnerChange Freedom Initiative, participants had to accept the religious and political stances of InnerChange Freedom Initiative and its volunteers, and the fact that public tax dollars were supporting the religious indoctrination (Americans United v. Prison Fellowship Ministries and Ashburn v. Mapes). One lawyer commenting on the case suggested that it was the means of the program rather than its ends:

> The lesson, said Kara Gotsch of the ACLU's National Prison Project, is not that Colson's program is wrong or misguided. To the contrary, the lesson is that 'everyone, regardless of their religious faiths and background, should have access to rehabilitative programming. Rehabilitation services do work, and therefore they should be offered to

> minority religious, not just Christians, and even to people who don't have a religion,' Gotsch said (Nir 1).

There is an assumption of positivity concerning religion, as long as the state and religious institutions do not mix too much. Religion is viewed as more than a civil right by people in these cases; therefore, it is logical that the courts have protected as well as limited religious programming inside of US prisons. The courts have upheld religious rights and religious programming that claims to lower recidivism, even though these results have not been shown.

US courts have ruled on cases hinged on the apparent conflict between residents of government institutions' first amendment rights to practice religion and the anti-establishment clause.[5] Federal legislation called the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act of 2000 (RLUIPA) essentially states that the government has the responsibility to provide adequate religious accommodations for people under the state's jurisdiction. The Ohio Department of Rehabilitations and Corrections challenged the legality of this law and the case went to the Supreme Court where RLUIPA was upheld. Ohio did not want to provide accommodations such as Kosher meals or prayer times for all religious faiths, arguing that any accommodation would be a security risk and further arguing that the law favored religious people over non-religious people within the prison. However, the court decided that "RLUIPA does not differentiate among bona fide faiths. It confers no privileged status on any particular sect" (Ginsburg 674). The state's role in the religious praxis and supervision of praxis is still contested by multiple religious groups within prisons. When the administration does openly discriminate

[5] This includes mental institutions as well as prisons and jails.

against particular sects those religious meetings can inflate with incarcerated people trying to support their fellows, as happened with a Jehovah's Witness group in a Texas (Holding 3). The state does not have choice in which faiths to represent; however it does seem to have nearly full choice in whom it chooses to represent the individual faiths. In this way the state still has the control over what social doctrines the chaplains and volunteers espouse. Prisons administrations can choose not to appoint religious (and religiously based political) leftists as chaplains. Further, it can choose to appoint only those who fully toe the party-line on issues of criminology and reform methods as well as wider social and political issues. These issues limit the diversity of religious groups entering prisons with inmate-reform programs in mind.

Further conflicts occur because the of the suggested security measures that target specific faiths. This concern manifested itself in policy in response to September 11, 2001 (a 2004 Bureau of Justice memo from which the Bureau of Prisons created an approved list of religious books in 2007[6]) with the growing fear of Islamists using prisons as a potential recruiting ground. However, prison authorities took the charge much further and spread the concern beyond the one dehumanized faith. The policy by the Bureau of Prisons, called the Standardized Chapel Library Project began in 2004 with a lit of approved religious books and supplemental works. In 2007 the US Federal Government was ordered to stop purging religious books considered to lead to extremist thinking ("Prison Bureau Relents" 18). These books, surprisingly, included *The Purpose Driven Life* by Rick Warren as well works by the Christian theologian, Karl Barth. This policy

[6] A full list of approved books by religion can be found on the World Wide Web at: http://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/21/us/21prison.html

was reversed when three New York citizens in prison sued on behalf of their liberty to exercise religion, and won ("Prison Bureau Relents" 18). One Biblical scholar, Timothy Larsen, reviewing the lists of approved books for the New York Times after the Standardized Chapel Library Project was implemented noted that, "'There's a lot about it that's weird.' The lists 'show a bias toward evangelical popularism and Calvinism,' he said, and lacked materials from early church fathers, liberal theologians and major Protestant denominations" (Goodstein np). With support from the legislature, private organizations such as Prison Fellowship, prison chaplains the informed public, and the suit against the Bureau of Prisons the policy was reversed.

Religion is still very much part of the culture of US prisons, and the face of religion inside of prisons is beginning to change into something more evangelical with the proliferation of Religious Right organizations ministering inside of the prisons. This thesis seeks to examine the externalities of the religious teachings.

I will begin by examining what the Protestant programs are doing inside of prisons, (primarily bible studies and reentry programs) and how those programs affect incarcerated people's recidivism. I will compare their goals and means of the faith-based programs to their measureable affects. Once we establish what the programs claim to do and have been scientifically shown to do, we will move on to the theoretical possibilities of what religious groups can do.

In the second chapter, using Michel Foucault's concept of Panopticon, we will see how the programs are in danger of slipping into a disciplining role rather than a rehabilitative role. We will also explore how the prison system has always been a space

of social control for incarcerated women, and discuss the attitudes with which religious volunteers enter the prison system. We will also explore a critique by C. S. Lewis on the dangers of falling into a role of disciplining which anticipates the concerns of Foucault. After exploring what these programs can do we will look closely at what they are actually doing.

Neoliberal view points, dis-identification by race and class and a re-identification with Christianity work to further depoliticize incarcerated people. Also, the resurgence of popular patriarchy as a form of racial reconciliation and empowerment for incarcerated men further dis-empowers incarcerated people, especially women.

The teachings engrained in the Bible studies are remarkably parallel to the Religious Right's political ends. The next chapter focuses on printed Bible study materials for lay volunteers entering prisons. We will explore the concealed lessons within the structure of the Bible study concerning systems of hierarchy and authoritarian belief, which reinforce the neo-liberal politics of the Religious Right.

This thesis concludes with a call for greater involvement in prisons by religious and non-religious people of all political persuasions, recommendations for strategies to avoid discipline (in the Foucaultian sense) and suggestions for further academic research.

Chapter 2
Science and Religion:
The Measureable Effects of Religious Programming on Recidivism

The studies examined below focus on how Christian religion can be a tool to curb against deviance within the prison setting. The studies which focus on religiosity—

defined in a variety of ways—and institutional adjustment, obedient prison behavior, re-arrest and recidivism have found varying results in large part because of the varying means and goals of the programs being studied. All of the studies focus exclusively on men with the exception of one that includes women but focuses primarily on men. The combination of studies with the diversity in results suggests that Christianity is not the primary factor in reducing deviance in incarcerated men, rather the method in which the programs are carried out may be the primary cause.

Prison Fellowship

Sociologists, Johnson, Larson, and Pitts, find a clear relationship between attending Prison Fellowship sponsored Bible studies regularly and reentering society without return to prison. Prison Fellowship's general programming offers a weekend program in which volunteers teach Christian life skills such as money and anger management, and family life skills. From these programs they recruit incarcerated people to join their regularly meeting Bible studies. They measure the one year recidivism rates of men who attended at least one Prison Fellowship Bible study compared to those who had not attended any; participants were matched in demographics (age, race, religious denomination, county of residence, military background, minimum sentence, and security ranking) in order to control for those recidivism indicators. Each Prison Fellowship participant had one person matched to them of the same race, age, denomination etc but had never participated in any Prison Fellowship events.

The study found that there is no significant difference in one year recidivism levels between the two monolithic matched groups of those who attended at least one

Prison Fellowship event and those who have not (Johnson, Larson and Pitts 8). Simply being exposed to a Bible study or a one-time weekend seminar does not appear to indicate a lower recidivism rate. The authors then divided the Prison Fellowship members into three categories based upon their involvement: *low* if the participant attended only a Prison Fellowship weekend seminar, *medium* if he attended between one and nine bible studies in the past year and *high* if he attended more than nine bible studies (Johnson, Larson and Pitts 7)[7].

The authors began by looking at the likelihood of Prison Fellowship participants to commit institutional infractions (to break the rules of the prison). Between the groups of high, medium, and low participation and their respective matched pair groups no statistically significant difference in the likelihood to commit or not to commit institutional infractions was determined. However, oddly, high-participation Prison Fellowship members and their matched group are more likely to have committed a *serious* institutional infraction than the medium, low and their respective matched groups. The authors suggest that this higher likelihood to have histories of deviance may be why they have moved to high participation in Prison Fellowship (as a form of repentance), but that explanation does not explain why the matched, non-Prison Fellowship group is

[7] Because the participants were matched to a non-Prison Fellowship participant based upon demographic information on a one to one level, the non-participants had equivalent categories composed of the individuals' matched persons. For each Prison Fellowship participant there was someone who had never attended a Prison Fellowship event but has the same demographic information (i.e. age, race, religious denomination, county of residence, military background, minimum sentence, and security ranking); when participants were divided into categories of participation strength (i.e. high, medium, and low) their matched demographic pairs were put into matched groups which is not based upon their group's participation (which is zero) but rather on their partner in the study's participation.

equally likely to have committed these serious infractions. These findings seem inexplicable.

Rates of recidivism shows stronger correlation to Prison Fellowship influence. Recidivism rates were significantly lower for high participation group than the matched group as well as the medium and low participation groups. The correlation shows that the likelihood of returning to prison is significantly lower for high and medium level participation than their matched groups. This suggests, as the authors note, that the Bible studies' fellowship and follow-up are the key changes that affect the recidivism rate rather than attending a weekend retreat and learning life skills from a Christian perspective.

At the fourth year of the study there was no statistical significance to Prison Fellowship participation between the monolithic groups and any comparison between participation strength matched groups (Johnson "Religiosity" 351-352). Re-arrest time, re-arrest percentage at two and three years, and recidivism[8] rates at those markers were also used. *High* participation Prison Fellowship members who were rearrested had a 3.7 year re-arrest time, while their matched group if arrested was—on average—arrested just 2.4 years after release. The percentage of re-arrest at two years for the *high* participation category members was 22 percent and 45 percent for medium and low participation groups(Johnson "Religiosity" 344). At three years, these percentages moved up to 43 and 55 respectively(Johnson "Religiosity" 345). The re-incarceration, or recidivism, rate

[8] Please note the difference between re-arrest and recidivism/re-incarceration. Re-arrest means that charges were not pressed or the person was found to be innocent, whereas recidivism means that the person returned to jail or prison after being found guilty of a crime.

for *high* participation members was just four percent, and the *medium* and low group was 18 percent(Johnson "Religiosity" 345). These rates were not compared to their matched groups, but the authors note, as stated above, the statistically significant effects dissipate after the third year.

Johnson et al. reorganized the division between *high* and low participation groups in the follow-up study which altered and strengthened their findings. The new division is at five Bible lessons—attendance of five or more puts a person into the *high* participation group; four or fewer demonstrates *low* participation. *Medium* ceases to be a category. The matched groups of non Prison Fellowship members were re-divided in order to continue to match. *High* participation (b)[9] had an average re-arrest time of 3.8 years while their matched group was arrested on average after just 2.3 years after release. This is a difference of 1.5 years. Within two years 46 percent of the *low* participation (b) group had been arrested, and 27 percent of the *high* participation (b) group had been arrested as well. At the three year mark over half, 56 percent of the *low* participation (b) group had been rearrested and 41 percent of the *high* participation (b) had also been re-arrested. Recidivism at the two year mark for the *low* participation (b) group was 18 percent and only half of that percentage of the *high* participation (b) (nine percent) had gone back to prison. After three years 26 percent of the low participation (b) group had gone back to prison but only fourteen percent of the *high* participation (b) group had returned to prison.

	Two year rate	Three Year rate	Average Re-

[9] I call this "(b)" to indicate the new measurement of high participation as attendance of 5+ Prison Fellowship bible studies to ensure that quick reference is clearly defined.

		Arrest %	Recidivism %	Arrest %	Recidivism %	incarceration time
High	Participation	27	9	41	14	3.9 years
Low	Participation	46	18	56	26	2.4 years

(Johnson et al. 344, 345)

These findings seem to suggest that a successful strategy for lowering recidivism and re-arrest rates would be to encourage incarcerated people to attend five or more Prison Fellowship bible studies while (some what unexpectedly) disregarding the life skills seminars. One must ask, after seeing these findings what is inside of the Prison Fellowship Bible studies that has the ability to lower recidivism rates so dramatically for the first three years after incarceration—the most volatile years after incarceration? The mentoring of volunteers could be one explanation of why Prison Fellowship lessons positively affect incarcerated people—however if this were the case, then the Life Planning Seminars would be just as effective.

Christian community could be viewed as the factor which lowers recidivism. One might begin by asking why bible studies by Prison Fellowship are more effective than Life Planning Seminars and the major, logical, difference between these two is the continuation of fellowship in Bible studies which is lacking in the one-time Life Planning Seminars. However, Johnson et al's study on religiosity and institutional deviance, examined later in this paper, will call the very idea of Christian community's role in "pro-social" behavior into question. A final possible answer is that Christianity itself lowers crime rates for those who are formerly incarcerated.

The study openly admits methodological concerns in that the Prison Fellowship members were not a random sampling of those who participate, and that the only prison

to partake in study is one which has adequate records from Prison Fellowship volunteers. Looked at as two monolithic groups, the authors found no significant correlation between religious activity and the likelihood to commit serious infractions while in prison (Johnson, Larson and Pitts 8).

Prison Fellowship's InnerChange Initiative

Johnson and Larson study one Texas Prison's reentry program run by Prison Fellowship volunteers: The InnerChange Freedom Initiative (InnerChange). InnerChange has full scale faith-saturated programming within their portion of the prison. Each incarcerated participant spends a year and a half to two years in the program focusing on education, one on one mentoring, religious instruction, life skills, work, substance abuse counseling, and "values restructuring" (Johnson and Larson 4).

Graduates of the program must complete all three phases beginning with a focus, "on rebuilding the inmate's spiritual and moral foundations as well as providing educational and survival skills" which takes about one full year (Johnson and Larson 9). The second phase adds community service (it is a requirement that participants have a security clearance of "minimum-out" which means that they are minimum security and can leave the prison for day work) outside of the prison and leadership within the program. The final phase takes place outside of the prison walls upon release. Participants work with their mentors to find a church community, a job, housing, and meet with their parole officer. Those who do not complete the first two phases (due to early parole, discipline or other reasons) are not eligible to receive these post-incarceration resources. This affected many participants in this study because in 1998 and

1999 Texas was under pressure to reduce its prison population and therefore chose to release many low security people (Johnson and Larson 18). InnerChange participants all met this prerequisite in order to participate in the program, but it was also one of the criteria that parole boards used to release people, therefore nearly a third of the InnerChange participants were paroled early(Johnson and Larson 13).

It is clear that while InnerChange incorporates Bible lessons and faith into every aspect of the work it is a very different kind of faith based program even from other Prison Fellowship programs. Prison chaplains across the state said that if this program could succeed with the people who were chosen to participate, then it would be a success with any group because the worst cons in the state were participating in InnerChange (Johnson and Larson 17).

Johnson and Larson compared the participants[10] of InnerChange to four different comparison groups in their attempt to measure InnerChange's success at lowering recidivism. The first group is called the *matched group*, which comprises people who meet the selection criteria but chose not to participate in InnerChange. The second control group is called the *screened group* which are a subset of the *matched group* and they "were screened as eligible but did not volunteer or were not accepted for program participation" (Johnson and Larson 13). The *volunteer group* is a subset of the *screened group* and they applied to participate but were not chosen to participate, almost entirely because they were not returning to the Houston area, were designated "minimum-out"

[10] Please note that this portion is comparing participants, not necessarily just graduates of the program.

security level, or their sentence was too short to participate. The participants are those who began the program: some graduated, while others did not.

The study found that, "simply stated, *participation* in the InnerChange program is not related to recidivism reduction" (emphasis added, 18). Re-arrest and re-incarceration rates after two years were not statistically different for InnerChange participants and any other group (Johnson and Larson 17).

	IFI participants	Matched group	Screened group	Volunteer group
2 year re-arrest rate	36.2	35	34.9	29.3
2 year recidivism rate	24.3	20.5	22.3	19.1

(Table from Johnson and Larson 17)

Johnson and Larson move on to focus on the graduates of the InnerChange program in comparison with the above control groups as well as participants who did not complete the program and those who paroled early. After two years, those who graduated have a 17.3 percent re-arrest rate and participants who did not graduate have a 50 percent re-arrest rate (Johnson and Larson 19). Similarly, incarceration rates were 8 percent and 36.3 percent for graduates and non-graduates respectively (Johnson and Larson 19). This is significant, but Johnson and Larson admit it may have to do with the after-release services that InnerChange provides in the third phase rather than the program's faith based aspects. Again, the faith-based skills being taught by Prison Fellowship do not seem to lower recidivism. Rather InnerChange's connections in the community seem to dramatically lower recidivism.

Faith-Based Character-Based Initiatives

Accepting that final hypothesis, Florida is home to three Faith-Based/Character-Based Prisons in which incarcerated people are required to attend at least one Faith-Based/Character-Based program per week. Prison Fellowship is very active in these prisons but is not the only programming in the prisons. The structure of the events within the prison is not clear, nor were participants asked about the types of programs they attended—whether they are life skills, bible studies, or AA meetings, and who organized them. The way in which the Faith-Based/Character-Based programming is therefore very unclear for the study examining these prisons' successes at lowering recidivism. These prisons serve people from multiple faiths and of no religious traditions at all. The women's prison, Hillsborough, houses 271 women from all security levels belonging to 22 different faiths (Brazzell and Vigne 237, 239). Another difference in these prisons compared to other prisons is the guards' alleged views of their roles in the process, "many correctional staff view contributing to this positive facility environment as part of their job responsibilities and therefore approach their jobs in a manner conducive to inmate rehabilitation" (Brazzell and Vigne 241). Not only the access to rehabilitation programs, but also the atmosphere of these programs seems to be very different than standard prisons. Over all, women at Hillsborough did not have significantly different criminal histories than the rest of the incarcerated women in Florida, although there are not any sex offenders—as a rule—and there are fewer women who are imprisoned for murder or manslaughter than the general female prison population (Brazzell and Vigne 243). Demographically, there are slight differences as well. Hillsborough houses a higher

percentage of white, older, incarcerated women than the state average (Brazzell and Vigne 243).

Neither men nor women's rates from these special prisons were statistically different from their comparison groups, which were matched by demographics similarly to the previously discussed studies (Brazzell and Vigne 245). The study of the Hillsborough women's reentry focuses on the recidivism rates after twelve, eighteen, twenty-four and twenty-six months of release. However, women who had lived in Hillsborough had slightly higher recidivism rates at every time marker except six months.

Returned to Prison by:	Hillsborough Women	Comparison Group
12 months	4	7
18 months	9	8
24 months	14	11
26 months	15	12

(Brazzell and Vigne 246)

The study briefly points this out saying:

> These findings suggest that the FCBI [Faith/Character-Based Initiative] program does not produce a statistically significant reduction in recidivism for either males or females in the first 2 years out of prison. Because the sample sizes are relatively small, however, the possibility of a small or moderate effect on recidivism cannot be ruled out. *Yet it should be noted that for females, the effect, while not statistically significant, was in the opposite direction from what was expected: a greater proportion of female FCBI inmates were reincarcerated at 18, 24, and 26, months than the inmates from the comparison group*. (Brazzell and Vigne 246 emphasis added)

From this point Brazzell and La Vigne move on to another topic without suggesting why religious or character programming would raise the recidivism level of women even slightly. Nor do they mention that the difference of results between men and women (though both were statistically insignificant) might be a reason for more study. The intellectual foundation upon which to scientifically and methodologically study the

effects of religion on women's recidivism seems to point to interesting results, but no work is yet building upon this foundation. They do not explore the possibility that different character or faith teaching may be detrimental to women's rehabilitation and recidivism. Nor do they explore the formats under which women are using these programs. No conversation is had at all about these remarkable findings. Perhaps the values being taught are detrimental to the values these women will have to utilize one released. Another possible explanation is that the options within the prison are not relevant to the women being served. 28 percent of incarcerated women are in for non-violent drug offences, another 28 percent are in prison for non-violent property crimes (West and Sabol 22). Economic improvement and addiction counseling are appropriate programs for these women, anger management may be less appropriate. Over half of incarcerated women have histories of severe domestic abuse; abuse counseling is an even more important option for religious programming (Gilfus). The programming must be responsive to the women's experiences, not the other way around. Finally, the quality of the programming and volunteers may explain why women are not helped by the programming. None of the above possibilities have been remotely explored by the sociologists who began this study.

Chaplains

Byron Johnson's study entitled "Religiosity and Institutional Deviance: The Impact of Religious Variables upon Inmate Adjustment" finds no relationship between religion and deviance for men in prison. Johnson measures religiosity in three different ways: first, by the participant's own opinion as measured in a survey taken upon entrance

into the prison; second, through the judgment of the prison chaplain; and third, by attendance of religious events within the prison, which was kept in the incarcerated man's individual file (Johnson "Religiosity" 21). Johnson measures deviance as the length of time spent in and number of times sent to disciplinary confinement. The study finds no statistically significant data to support a negative correlation between any of the measures of religiosity and deviance (Johnson "Religiosity" 23). This conclusion runs counter to the proposed explanation for Prison Fellowship results that religiousness lowers deviance.

Johnson concludes that, "while religion may inhibit deviance for the general population, it does not inhibit rule violating among a certain segment of that population" (Johnson "Religiosity" 24). He continues with an attempted explanation of these "unexpected" results. He first suggests that perhaps the measures do not accurately measure religiosity of these people. He suggests that the measurements could be skewed due to incarcerated people's initial self evaluation of religiosity being insincere, as the correctional staff suggest, or in line with the over estimate of most Americans' own religiosity (Johnson "Religiosity" 24). The correctional staff also suggests that the chaplains are not seeing the entire or real incarcerated person: that they are being 'conned' in some way, and thus over estimated the religiosity of many participants (Johnson "Religiosity" 25). Similarly they propose that incarcerated people attend religious services as a way to look re-/trans-formed for the Board of Parole Hearings (Johnson "Religiosity" 25). Attendance for personal rather than spiritual reasons would inflate the third marker of religiosity as well as suggest that the incarcerated men would lie and purposely inflate their self-perception of their religiosity, inflating the first

marker. All of these factors lead to the conclusion that the study did not actually measure the religiosity of these men.

Another possibility is that there is no relationship between religiosity and institutional deviance, in which case Johnson cautions against the Board of Parole Hearings using religiosity as a consideration at hearings. If there is no relationship between the two, then one wonders why Prison Fellowship is expanding with the support of policy makers and prison administrations. The assumption that religion or even Christianity lowers deviance or recidivism is well integrated into Christian society, but should be further examined.

A third possible explanation which Johnson does not explore is that the deviance which religion has been shown to inhibit in the general public is substantively different from the rule violation of incarcerated people. In prison, a person can be written up for hugging another person, or talking back to a guard. These are responses that would generally not be punished in the wider society. The rigidity of prison rules can be very different from the outside the barbed-wire fence. That is to suggest that the methodological problem is not in that people or the measurements of religiosity but in the assumption that institutional deviance and crime can be equated as entirely as one might think. The experience of prison is so vastly different from that of the "free world" that norms could possibly be altered and even reversed in this setting. Prison is also a place of high stress and danger which can change how we perceive or utilize religion in that setting.

The issues brought up by the prison staff are reflected in the article, “Conning or Conversion? The Role of Religion in Prison Coping” in which these authors argue that religious services allow incarcerated people to use their time more productively and to help them to adjust to prison. It begins by reminding the reader that corrections in the US has always relied upon the religious institutions, but that “uninhibited religious expression may conflict with concerns relating to security and safety” (Thomas et al 242). Further, they argue that religion can offer a set of values that is “pro-social” and counters the rules of “prison culture” (Thomas et al 244). While some incarcerated people have tired to create religions in order to con the system and receive special privileges as a group or gang, the vast majority of groups are there for non-conning purposes, they assert. Prison administrations want more religious services and programs but are unable to facilitate that because of budget constraints and security issues (Thomas et al 254).

These authors argue from a Calvinist perspective: that it does not matter if incarcerated people are truly converted or ‘born again,’ instead, changing the actions of incarcerated people to better obey the institutional rules is the primary goal within the prison setting (Graber 26). Religiosity, they argue, is *not* something which can be effectively measured and studied; the only things someone can quantitatively or qualitatively measure are the actions of the study’s subjects. Religion can act as a safety net; mode of social solidarity; higher purpose; lesson in delayed gratification, *discipline*, self-control; stress reducer; and sense of well-being for believers (Thomas et al 254). They suggest that studies should attempt to measure the extent to which professed believers actually practice the core values of their respective religions, because, they contend, incarcerated people may attempt to manipulate their attendance and

participation in religious services (Thomas et al 254). Determining in a systematic but useful way what those core values entail remains questionable. Furthermore, the authors call for future studies to "examine the intensity, duration, priority and frequency of spirituality involvement" and measure how these variables correlate to "pro-social" behaviors, deviance, and recidivism (Thomas et al 254-255). Because of their firm belief that the more genuinely religious an incarcerated person is, the less likely he or she will be to be sent back to prison, these authors call for higher spending on religious programming, arguing that it is less expensive than higher re-incarceration rates. However, the link between these two factors is questionable at best and as long as more funding is being allocated, perhaps means tested prescriptions that avoid constitutional hazards would be money better spent.

There are a number of reasons why the representation of prison-housed, faith-based programs may be misleading. One obvious reason is that faith-based is an umbrella term for a variety of diverse programs. Daniel Mears and his fellow authors write much of their systematic critiques of these types of studies in "Faith Based Efforts to Improve Prisoner Reentry." While some faith based programs are by and for certain religious groups—as Prison Fellowship is by and for Evangelical Christians—others have faith as a motivator, avoid preaching those beliefs into the programs, and have very secular purposes. Programs can utilize secular tools, religious tools, or both for either secular or religious ends. Some faith based groups recognize and utilize the power of spirituality and religion but do not dictate a particular organized religion; some cater to multiple faiths at once. Oddly, some organizations categorized as faith based groups by the White House did not want that title imposed on their program (Mears et al 353).

Obviously, different definitions of faith based groups will have different results on recidivism, institutional deviance, "pro-social" behavior and other common goals of their programs.

The format of these programs also varies widely. PrisonFellowship, for instance, has regularly meeting Bible studies, weekend life-skills seminars, and reentry programs like InnerChange. The faith-based, character-based prisons have a wide variety of programs with different activities within them. More than what religion they are being taught, through discussion, reading, lecture, video, or some other format is an important aspect of faith-based programs and all programs. Being faith-based does not actually say anything about the substance of the program at all. Even the assumption that these programs have clearly defined and measurable goals is problematic (Mears et al 360). Prison administrations may question why resources are spent on these programs when there are not always measureable or even clearly articulated goals for these programs. Given the tight budgets of prisons and the inadequate resources for "pro-social" rehabilitative programming, cutting extra religious programs may seem like a wise fiscal choice.

But organizations and academics seem to think that faith-based programs are better than prison-as-usual at lowering deviance and recidivism. Should business as usual be used as the control to Prison Fellowship's Bible studies and life planning seminars? Perhaps book studies would be an appropriately comparable program for the Bible study. Another option—which addresses another question entirely—would be to compare studies of holy books of multiple faiths and from multiple perspectives. Faith based

programs focusing on reentry services would especially benefit from a secular comparison. Religious-scientific approaches would have secular versions of the same programs, however it brings its own problem because the secular tools used in many faith based programs can dilute the power of the faith aspect of the program itself. Another control group commonly used is composed of those who receive the potpourri of reentry services which many incarcerated people currently utilize. The faith-factor can then hide behind the logic and the convenience of having one organization handle all of one's reentry services. It is clear that the studies have inadequate control or comparison groups.

Methodological Problems

Scott D. Camp et al. in their article for the Bureau of Prisons entitled, "An Exploration into Participation in a Faith-Based Prison Program," offer a methodological critique of many of the studies on faith based programs and recidivism. Selection bias is a looming unresolved issue in Johnson's studies because while the authors measure demographics such as race age and type of crime for matched groups, they do not measure the incarcerated people's wills and motivation to change, or the degree to which they were religious at the time of the study (Camp et al 534). Rather, this article suggests that a more appropriate comparison would be between those who completed the program and those who would have completed the program had they participated in it. Johnson could only create a matched group based on demographics, not based upon inner motivation to change and grow. Because this was not measured by Johnson it could be either the preexisting desire to reform or the bible studies power to transform the soul of

incarcerated people in Prison Fellowship Bible study analysis. Spirituality and religiosity are not the same, and Camp suggests that the spirituality—though not yet quantified or qualified—of an incarcerated person may greatly affect the individual's success as much as the program itself (Camp et al. 534). There is, as yet, no known way to control for spirituality when trying to measure religious tools. Camp's focus remains primarily on measuring the individual's religiosity, just as Johnson was concerned in his 2009 study of Institutional Deviance. The criticism on methodology is rather limited but others extend criticism to the programs themselves.

Sociological Criticism of the Programs

Thomas O'Connor, who has also written some studies on the effects of religion on incarcerated people, offers some general criticisms of volunteer-led, faith-based programs which he describes to policy makers in his piece, "Criminology and Religion: The Shape of an Authentic Dialogue." In this article he suggests that:

> Professional chaplains and other religious services staff are in the best position to have the appropriate knowledge, skills, and aptitude to engage, train, and supervise a wide diversity of religious volunteers in an effective correctional manner, and in a way that maintains the non-establishment of any given religions and the separation of church and state (O'Connor 564)

While this doesn't exclude volunteer-heavy organizations it requires chaplains to take on many more duties which they would otherwise not have, such as scheduling and supervising events and training many volunteers. Ironically, professional chaplains in prisons do not claim to lower recidivism rates, but volunteer-led, faith-based programs like Prison Fellowship do (O'Connor 563). Logic might hold that someone who is

trained in corrections in this professional and caring career would know best how to foster a spirituality that would have positive effects on reentry of those he or she serves.

O'Connor argues that the programs which failed to show a correlation between religious activity and recidivism, "probably did a good job of faith development, but failed to reduce recidivism because they did not follow what are known as the principles of effective correctional treatment program delivery type" (O'Connor 565). He seems to foreshadow to the 2009 study on chapel services and implies that Prison Fellowship's success is because of their science-based approached, even though laity perform the services. Finally, he argues that the important question that needs to be asked about the faith-based organizations should not be 'do they work,' but rather, 'what work do they perform?'(O'Connor 566). This is, in fact, the primary question of the thesis.

One final study of Byron Johnsons' was on two prisons in Brazil. Brazil does not calculate a national recidivism rate, but Johnson notes that officials estimate a re-incarceration rate between fifty and seventy percent, which is consistent with most 'western' countries' rates (Johnson "Assessing" 7). Two prisons are more that business-as-usual in Brazil. One, Humaita, is entirely religiously organized and saturated, it was founded by Prison Fellowship International; the other, Braganca, sets private contracts with local companies and employs the incarcerated people, though they don't receive their earnings (Johnson "Assessing" InnerChange). The Brazilian Government is interested in the recidivism rates of these two prisons because it recognizes the need to reform the prison system and is considering using Braganca as a template for other prisons for economic as well as recidivism reasons (Johnson "Assessing" 7). Before the

study was completed, volunteers estimated that recidivism for Humaita was as low as thirteen percent—these estimates did not offer a time period for the recidivism rates.

Johnson began with an attempt to evaluate the likelihood of people incarcerated at either prison to return to prison, in which he found that, statistically, those who were incarcerated at the Humaita prison were incarcerated for more severe crimes than those in Braganca (Johnson "Assessing" 8). In the three years after release recidivism rates were 16 percent for Humaita and 36 percent for Braganca (Johnson "Assessing" 9). Compared to the estimation of Brazil's national recidivism rate both of these are substantially low. However, Humaita is less than half of Braganca's recidivism rates. Even when just the populations with a high risk for re-incarceration was studied (of which Humaita has a higher percentage as part of the prison population) twelve percent of Humaita's people returned to prison in three years, while 38 percent of Bragnca returned in the same period of time (Johnson "Assessing" 9). Surprisingly, at Humaita the high risk offenders had a lower three year recidivism rate (12 percent) then the entire prison population's three year recidivism rate (16 percent). Time before re-arrest between the two prisons was non-significant (Johnson "Assessing" 9). And while both prisons' formerly incarcerated people were equally likely to be arrested those formerly incarcerated at Humaita were less likely to be charged and thus less likely to be incarcerated.[11]

[11] Johnson notes that much of the original data was lost due to Brazilian officials, but that it does not seem systematic or intentional and thus the random loss could be excused as insignificant to the findings of the study.

The problems with these studies individually and systematically show why more studies should be done and better definitions and goals for the programs must be set. Clarity is key if these studies are to be utilized by policy makers. However, even if each of the criticisms in the above pages were met, the findings would still be questionable for the 7.2 percent of incarcerated people who were systematically left out of these studies: women (US Department of Justice). As discussed in the previous chapter, criminologists have been unable to account for women in their gender-washed, male-normative theories and the blatant ignoring of women in these studies shows a great lack of knowledge of this segment of the population inside of prisons.

The umbrella label of 'faith based' does not actually indicate very much about the programs themselves. Being faith based has not been shown to improve results at lowering recidivism or institutional deviance. InnerChange Freedom Initiative's prison programming does not appear to measurably reduce recidivism. Faith-Based life skills taught either in weekend seminars or through reentry programs such as InnerChange are not effective unless paired with community building as was seen in the Bible studies by Prison Fellowship, and the third stage of InnerChange. The community experienced seems to account for the change, rather than religion, religiosity, or even Christianity. However, women's responses have not been studied. Women have been ignored throughout the study of these programs but when they were given marginal attention their results differed from the expected. There is currently no way of knowing how women will respond (through changed in institutional deviance or recidivism) to these programs. These studies tell very little about the actual programs or women.

Faith-Based Programming in Prisons and the Peril of Discipline

The public understands the role of the prison in many ways: as retribution, to punish the incarcerated person, to protect the public from violence, to deter others from committing similar crimes, and to rehabilitate. Disempowering people is not the official goal of modern prisons. The penal system is called The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation in many states. The purpose, in the eyes of the public, is to change bad behaviors and help the incarcerated people leave the prison to live healthy, positive, safe, and productive lives in the society. How the system understands crimes and those who commit crimes becomes a very important aspect of the correcting and rehabilitating process.

Criminologists—whose work affects policy—have developed separate theories accounting for women's crime and criminal behavior as well as separate institutions with goals drastically differing from those of men's prisons. In this work, rehabilitating means empowering individuals to lead better lives than before they were incarcerated. Disempowering people would lead to worse criminal behavior which is the opposite of rehabilitation. Self discipline is sometimes viewed as a primary form of rehabilitation.

Michel Foucault shows the ways that prisons can be places of disempowering discipline. When power is exercised in such a way that conformity rather than health is valued the, prison become more than *and* less than rehabilitative and corrective space. More because the prison is inculcating values and norms; less because the conformity hinders empowerment and rehabilitation. If the concept of an all knowing God is considered as part of the prison's discipline, the discipline *can* become very dangerous and even more disempowering. Religion, like discipline, can be viewed simply as a type

of power; and it can be used for positive, negative, or neutral ends. Religion has been used to justify wars, peaceful protests, and de-politicization, those who practice the religion can use it to reinforce their goals and objectives. Religious groups currently enter prisons as part of their ministries and as part of the prisons' programming. If these religious groups fail to see the structural aspects of white classism, patriarchy and systemic under-development of communities that have shaped the circumstances of the majority of those in prison, they will surely fail to effectively address these structural injustices. Those that do fail to see structural constraints will understand crime as individual choices and believe that individual discipline is the only change that must be made.

Discipline in this work, is always considered detrimental to empowerment because it is a tool for conformity. Because women's prisons have been marked with forms of imposed social control to gendered conformity, the disciplining inside of that space is even more detrimental to empowerment work.

The aim of this chapter is to set up a framework for the rest of the thesis. We begin with a history of women's prisons and women's criminology. This will show how social conforming to heterosexual values has always been an aspect of women's imprisonment as well as how race has been an integral part of the conformity/subjugation process. This thesis will examine the work of Michel Foucault in his structural discussion of discipline and power in prisons. These discussions of power structures and technologies of power are not discussed within groups of volunteers entering the prison. However, volunteers can be the tools of this power. Therefore understanding how

Christian volunteers within the prison view their roles and power becomes useful in understanding their agency and/or complicity with social and political control. The chapter ends with a theory based discussion of and challenge to Christian groups' goals and assumptions while working in prisons. There are two extremes that seem to dichotomize the Protestant debate about prison work. The chapter will frame the debate by these two protestant movements—conservatories and liberals—in order to emphasize the inability to separate the role of God's law as a source of discipline (if one is moved by the discipline of God) and the effects of the many understandings of theology. Theology and praxis concerning the role of women becomes especially relevant with women's prisons because of the special conditions of many incarcerated women as mothers, battered women, and non-violent offenders. Women's prisons are a historically common location of discipline over the soul as a form of rehabilitation and/or conformity. These discussions of social discipline will guide the rest of the paper.

Women's Special Criminal History

Men and women are not equally represented in the criminal justice system. According to the US Bureau of Justice Statistics women present only 7 percent of incarcerated people (Bureau "Prisoners" 2). Even with this comparatively low level of incarceration, the number of women in prison is growing at a high rate: "The female prison population grew by 832% from 1977 to 2007." This is a higher rate than the growth of incarcerated men: 416 percent (Bureau "Prisoners"). Similarly to the unequal representation of the sexes, people of color are more likely to be incarcerated than white people: "Ninety-three out of every 100,000 white women were incarcerated at midyear

2008. During the same time period, 349 out every 100,000 black women and 147 out of every 100,000 Hispanic women were incarcerated" (Glaze 18). This mirrors the statistics concerning the racial makeup of incarcerated men. The 'average' incarcerated woman, "is a young, single mother with few marketable job skills, a high school dropout who lives below the poverty level" (Glaze 151). These are not entirely surprising demographics for incarcerated women. The crimes which women commit are different than those that men commit:

> Twenty-eight percent of women in state prison at yearend 2005 were sentenced for drug offenses. Property offenses accounted for another 28% of the female state prison population. Together, property and drug crimes – non-violent offenses – make up nearly 2/3 of the population of women in prison. At yearend 2005, 35% of women in prison were convicted of violent offenses (Bureau "Prisoners" 22).

Further, when women do commit violent crimes, particularly murder, they are most likely to kill their spouse/partner. This is most probably due to the high rates of incarcerated women's histories of abuse. The abuse rates of women in one New York maximum security prison was 94 percent (Browne et al). The same study found that three quarters of incarcerated women had experienced intimate partner abuse. Similarly high rates (66 percent) of domestic violence were found for women in a study conducted in a Chicago jail. Since 1976 –as resources for battered women have greatly increased—instances of women killing their partners have gone down dramatically (more than 60 percent) while men's rate of killing their partners has stayed the same (Rennison). Although women who do kill are most likely to kill their partners, their rate of killing partners is still half of that of men killing intimate partners (Rosenblatt 153).

Incarcerating women at higher rates exacerbates many problems which incarcerating more men does not. For instance, “At midyear 2007, approximately 65,600 women in federal and state custody reported being the mothers of 147,400 minor children” of those, 77 percent reported providing primary care for their children (Glaze 2). The state often pays for foster care or adoption for the eleven percent of incarcerated mothers who loose custody of their children. Further, children of incarcerated mothers are five times more likely to commit crimes than those without incarcerated parents (Bloom 75). Given the cyclical and costly effects of the increased rate of incarcerating women, understanding and stopping the events that are shown to cause the higher incarceration is very important and should be addressed immediately.

The way volunteers conceptualize and understand female crime leads to different policy initiatives and actions. Criminologists have failed to come to consensus as to why women commit crimes at a lesser rate than men, why they commit different crimes, and why so many more women have been incarcerated in the past few decades. Volunteers who want to understand the system with which they are engaging may look to criminology for answers.

The study of female criminality has been characterized by a lack of theoretical and academic interest as well as a dependence on stereotypes and distorted perceptions by criminologists who have studied female crime. Criminology of women has been lacking in part because of the relatively lower rate of crime by women which has led to a common feeling among male criminologists that crime is primarily a male activity with the anomaly of female participation at times. Further, the majority of criminologists are

male, which has encouraged a male-centric view of the field. Due to the lack of academic interest and field-wide research a historical explanation of female criminality may seem sparse and incongruent.

In the 1870s, when women were first studied in this field, the explanation for their crimes was biological. Biological indicators were said to predict which women would commit crimes, as well as explain why women commit certain crimes and the rate at which they commit them. The biological explanation of women's crime completely removed men from the discussion, and instead focused on stereotypes of femininity. For instance, in the 1870s women who committed crimes were categorized physically, "prostitutes were said to have heavy lower jaws, large nasal spines, simple cranial sutures, deep frontal sinuses, and wormian bones" (Pollock- Byrne 11). Further, women as an entire group were considered more primitive, vain, sexual, and irritable than men, and the most primitive women were criminals, prostitutes (Pollock- Byrne 11). During these early studies only prostitutes were discussed in part because women's crimes were more covert, such as shoplifting, stealing from work as a domestic worker, of other forms of hidden and private crime. The manufactured equivalence of prostitution and female crime led, in part, to the sexualization of women who commit crimes. The sexualization of women continues in many public views of women who have committed crimes as propagated through the media.

Around the same time the psychological explanation of female crime began to circulate in the criminological field. This theory explained that women who were criminals "possessed more male characteristics, both physical and mental (Pollock-Byrne

15). Their masculinity suppressed the female maternal drive that kept other women law-abiding, and their female traits created a criminal 'more vicious' than the worst criminal male" (Pollock- Byrne 11). Thus, gender roles were strictly enforced or else women acting as men would become super-criminals. Women leaving their gendered role and place was looked on almost as a crime in itself do in large part because of arguments such as, "higher education for women increased crime by prolonging marriage and encouraging the woman to want more" (Pollock- Byrne 11). Even as the theories concerning males who commit crimes began to shift to socio-economic and structural understandings of crime, women's crime continued to be understood primarily sexually (Pollock- Byrne 16). These simplistic theories of female crime persisted much longer than their counterparts for male crime. Psychological explanations for women's crimes included women's high rates of jealousy, sexual repression, envy and 'female rage'[12] (Pollock-Byrne 12). Domestic workers' stealing was not seen as economically based, but rather in women's vanity and their need to gain the attention of male suitors (Pollock-Byrne10). These theories made no distinction between gender and sex, between taught traits and biological. Because the explanations revolved around the idea that the women were failing at being women, solution developed aimed at making them the feminine ideal (Pollock-Byrne 15).

As the 1900s began there were two understandings of female crime. One was evolutionary and the other was that women were the victims of male's bad influences. Frances Kellor, a female criminologist of that time, attributed poorer physical traits and

[12] Which all women have, but only some act upon due to lack of willpower (Pollock-Byrne 12)

qualities to poverty, as well as much of the crimes to inadequate salaries and low skills. However, she also viewed some deviant women as smart but lazy. The latter group of women could not be redeemed and were thus sterilized and held in prison for long sentences to keep them from reproducing. The former group was viewed to be dumb but could be taught morals and appropriate domestic skills in order to gain a husband.

Liberation Theory, which began in the 1880s and continues even today in some criminological circles, argues that as women are liberated and become more equal to men the female crime rate will rise to meet that of males. As part of the *Female Liberation Theory*, a flip in the agency and inherent goodness of women took place in the 1950s.Instead of characterizing women as being characterized by the bad influences of men, they were the driving force behind men's crimes. Women began to be theorized as the deceitful and masterminds of men's crimes. Rita Simon wrote in 1975 that, as women were exposed to opportunities in professional careers that crimes committed by women would go up in white collar crimes (Pollock- Byrne 23). Further, she maintained that violent crimes would as well. She argued that even just feeling liberated might have cause higher crime rates in women, however this has not been shown, in fact the opposite has been shown. Researchers in 1979 found a positive relationship between traditional values of women's appropriate roles and behavior and delinquency, this study suggests that women who internalize these gendered roles are more likely to commit a crime and be incarcerated (Pollock- Byrne 24).

Since the 1970s, a counter theory to *Liberation Theory*, revolving around economics and feminization of poverty, has been developed. Single women with children

have made up a disproportionately large percentage of incarcerated people, as have poor women of color. With the feminization of poverty, women are becoming more desperate, which their higher rate of committing crime exemplifies. Crime rates of women since the "feminist revolution" of the 1970s have risen, however, theorists of this persuasion argue that it is because of greater need not greater independence. They point to the rise in larceny, liquor laws and drug use and sale to raise the entire crime rate of women. However, collecting and synthesizing data on this topic has been a challenge for researchers. There is no comprehensive feminist criminological theory yet. Most of the theories focus primarily on domination of women and economic factors.

Reformatories

Social control and disciplining toward white-middle-class-patriarchal values has always been prevalent within women's incarceration. Because so much of women's crime is deviation from moral standards through prostitution or drug use rather than violence against others ,the prison system has developed differently for women than for men. Historically, women who were viewed as redeemable were sent to reformatories—there was no male counterpart to this system (Rosenblatt 146). Women in reformatories were primarily there for crimes such as adultery, drunkenness, and fornication, stubbornness, vagrancy, serial premarital pregnancies, moral deviations rather than crimes (Rosenblatt 143, 146). Not only were these crimes hardly crimes, but, "a woman might face charges simply because a relative disapproved of her behavior and reported her, or because she had been sexually abused and was being punished for it" (Rosenblatt 146). These reformatories were created to teach women domestic skills and appropriate

morals. These institutions were built to appear like houses, “they usually had cottages, flower gardens, and no fences” and to encourage domesticity and dependence on men though teaching domestic skills rather than job training (Rosenblatt 145). The goal of reformatories was clearly patriarchal social control. This was not the only form of women’s prison, however.

Because of the two theorized types of female criminals—redeemable and irreversibly criminal women—two types of imprisonment were developed for women. Reformatories were primarily for white women. Incarcerated Black women had to contend with similar conditions as incarcerated men. After the civil war, the 13th amendment wrote slavery of incarcerated people into the Constitution. Southern states began to capitalize on this new form of slavery by creating the Black Codes which targeting Black men and women by criminalizing many aspects of everyday life. These people could get life sentences or fines which they could not pay back for ‘crimes’ such as not having a job, loitering, or vagrancy (ironically staying in one place or wandering) (Franklin 4) these laws only applied to Black men and women. Court fees were developed as well to enslave people as they tried to pay back their court fees for prosecution of the Black Codes. In one year a person could pay off $11.29, which was therefore a commonly assigned fee (Franklin 4). The conditions for incarcerated Black men and women were very similar to each other, while incarcerated Black and white women’s experiences were extremely different.

The assumption of reforming women was based in hetero-normative, patriarchal values and assumed whiteness. However, for both Black and white women—whether

'reforming' or not—the primary role of women's prisons is and was social control (Rosenblatt 160).

Women's prisons are clear sites of social control toward domesticity (Giallombardo 68). Michel Foucault writes on the role of the prison in creating coerced behaviors. He primarily argues that the discipline of the prison cannot be positive, that it must be coercive and towards conformity in the worst sense. Prisons empty the incarcerated person of her humanity—leaving only an inmate. There were not always inmates. The view of prison as a place of punishment and discipline through seclusion instead of corporal punishment came along with the ideals of the Enlightenment. The scientific revolution and the understanding of constant progress toward perfection were vital aspects of this revolution in thought. One dramatic change in thought concerns the power of control. In correcting illegal behaviors the previous method used was that of the public spectacle of corporal punishment and/or hiding those who break the law away in dungeons. Jeremy Bentham invented an architecture that utilizes light and surveillance—or the constant possibility of it—to revolutionize the prison system. This structure is called the '*Panopticon*'. This new system is the opposite of the previous corporal punishments because of *how* it exercises power. Instead of relying upon the shame of public spectacles or pain, only those who are paid as guards can view the punishment of imprisonment; contrasted to the darkness and forgottenness of dungeons, the Panopticon would utilize constant light and surveillance to maintain order and discipline.

This new technology changed the form of power over individuals from a physical coercion to coercion over one's consciousness. Power is utilized against another when

one agent acts in a way she would not otherwise; discipline was the method used to exercise this power and conformity. Discipline creates more efficient students, patients, or workers through normalization. Physical force could do this too, but discipline does it much more efficiently through self normalization, rather than one agent telling the other what to or not to do individually. “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 becomes the principle of his own subjection” (Foucault 202-203). He writes, “’Discipline’ may be identified neither with an institution nor with an apparatus; it is a type of power, a modality for its exercise, comprising a whole set of instruments, techniques, procedures, levels of application, targets; it is a ‘physics’ or an ‘anatomy’ of power, a technology” (Foucault 215).

The internalization of a religious code—a form of discipline—becomes a forceful application of power because the threat of punishment is not physical, individual, stoppable, or predictable. While prisons’ architectural structures can be built to lend themselves to the constant surveillance, (the belief in) an omnipresent Christian God is much more searching than any human eyes. The Protestant conception of God could be utilized for the work of discipline through constant vigilance over people in prison. For instance, the Biblical book of Jeremiah (23:23,24) says, “‘Am I a God at hand, says the LORD, and not a God afar off? Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him?’ says the LORD. ‘Do I not fill heaven and earth?’ says the LORD.” In the technology of discipline’s attempt to control the soul, belief in religion seems an effective tool. God can see what one is doing but also knows what one is thinking. The

surveillance IS only visibility—but an omnipresent god can see what cannot be seen—the power to control and see is beyond what a secular prison could accomplish.

Ironically, God does not have to be utilized by the prison authority for vastly conservative ends. Foucault writes:

> All the great movements of extension that characterize modern penality—the problematization of the criminal behind his crime, the concern with a punishment that is a correction, a therapy, a normalization, the division of the act of judgment between various authorities that are supposed to measure, assess, diagnose, cure, transform individuals—all this betrays the penetration of the disciplinary examination into the judicial inquisition (Foucault 227).

When attempting to change another individual, power is being used to cause conformity. Normalization is exercising force on the outliers that must change to meet the rest. Even through progressive religious thought, God effectively becomes the Panopticon's eye in prison. God's discipline teaches imprisoned people to accept their imprisonment and subjugation as Paul's writings do in Romans 13: 3-4:

> For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of him who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain; he is the servant of God to execute his wrath on the wrongdoer. (Revised Standard Version)

God also takes on a role of discipline in any Christian faith-based rehabilitation center or educational center. The concept of God, as many Protestants understand it, meets many of Foucault's other prerequisites for success in effective social control. He writes that, "the major effect of the Panopticon [is] to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power," which is parallel to the conception of living an ethical life according to God's laws (however one conceives

them) because God is watching (Foucault 202). Further, it does not actually matter if God exists, just that people being controlled through God's discipline believe it to be true:

> to arrange things that the surveillance is permanent in its effect, even if it is discontinuous in its action; that the perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary; that this architecture apparatus should be a machine for creating and sustaining a power relation independent of the person who exercises it; in short, that the inmates should be caught up in a power situation of which they are themselves the bearers (Foucault 202).

God becomes a perfect technology for control because to a believer of God, God is both unquestionable and improvable: "it is at once too much and too little that the prisoner should be constantly observed by an inspector: too little, for what matters is that he knows himself to be observed; too much, because he has no need in fact of being so" (Foucault 202). In a strikingly similar fashion to many conceptions of God, "Bentham laid down the principle that power should be visible and unverifiable. Visible: the inmate will constantly have before his eyes the tall outline of the central tower from which he is spied upon. Unverifiable: the inmate must never know whether he is being looked-at at any one moment; but he must be sure that he may always be so" (Foucault 201). A belief in God meets these standards especially if one in inundated with religious programming to keep thoughts of God at the forefront of one's mind. Following God's code or moral standards as understanding by the believer is unchangeable and expected.

The benevolence of the panoptic subject—God—does not come into question, rather the desired reactions of those being disciplined through the panoptic God are sites of concern. When discussing the power of the observer, Foucault argues that, "it does not matter what motive animates him: the curiosity of the indiscreet, the malice of a child, the

thirst for knowledge of a philosopher who wishes to visit this museum of human nature, or the perversity of those who take please in spying and punishing" or the omnipresence of God (Foucault 202). The nature of God's goodness or being is not at question in this debate either, nor is the actual existence of God assumed or relevant except to those being disciplined through the Panoptic God. God, in Protestant theology, cannot help but to know everything, and so God does know everything, and in actuality it does not matter if God is a white racist, benevolent liberator, coping mechanism, spaghetti monster or figment of one's imagination. The only thing that does matter in this conversation is how God's power is used by prison authorities over incarcerated people.

God is an authority and can not be divorced from that power. The only thing that can be done is to think critically about the effects of one's use of 'God' or to disregard its use at all. However within the Christian tradition, ending coercion of God in all its forms seems unimaginable. Deism, Atheism, and agnosticism offer possible alternatives. Giving up the mantle of religion for secular discipline may prove to be useful in destroying a tool of power, but more likely be insignificantly positive *and* prove to be disempowering for those who would gain agency through religious experiences.

Theological Approaches to Crime

Currently many people both within and outside of prisons find their voices through the language of protestant religion. While Christian views match the secular views of imprisonment, there are two primary paths that Protestants take in using God as a rehabilitation tool in prisons within Christian theology and praxis: conservative and liberal; there is a third critical lens as well explained by Lewis. These approaches differ in

many ways which flow from the different views on the nature of humankind and sin, political understandings of crime, and how they view themselves and other actors in prison reform.

The Religious Right is famous for its political work concerning abortion and gay marriage, however, they also have developed Christian ministries and political stances on the Prison Industrial Complex. Their political opinions are heavily founded on their religious interpretations. One commonly held belief within this group is that humankind (although many say "mankind" or simply, "man") is inherently fallen from God. This view primarily aligns itself with prison administration when working with people in prison. Humans live a life of unchallengeable sin until regeneration, when one is reborn through the power of Jesus Christ. Once this change happens, the individual is saved and wiped clean of sin. Some think of this as a once in a lifetime event, while others view it as a constant effort, however, they agree that humans cannot save themselves and salvation happens through God on an individual basis.

Crime becomes a product of humankind's sinful nature and to be addressed through individual conversion to Christianity and with that the acceptance of Christian United States' values (Smith 34). A religious liberal clarifies and critiques this understanding, "for in adopting a notion of redemptive grace that is individualized, we have inadvertently accepted its corollary, that the problem of sin is individualized" (Snyder 65). This is reminiscent of the biological and psychological explanations of women's crimes (Pollock-Byrne 9). Like biological diseases, sin/crime must be treated individually or—if the incarcerated person will not accept Christ—there can be no cure.

The solution, like the problem is inside each individual and addressed/treated separately. Thus, "in the order of creation, everything has its place. And if something has its place, it is possible to be out of place. Everything is 'naturally' something or somewhere, and therefore it is possible to be 'unnaturally' something or somewhere. To be out of place is to be uppity, pushy, weird, deviant, or perverted—all words we have heard frequently about people of color, women, and gays and lesbians" (Snyder 30). Snyder over simplifies this issue, because conservative theology suggests that humans were born out of place. Our right place, they believe, is with God, but we are born into sin, apart from God. Sin is caused by original sin, and the turning away from God. The original sin took place because Adam and Eve broke the natural order by eating from the Tree of Knowledge, according to conservative thought (Snyder 67). Humans can only find their natural place through individual regeneration. Thus, everyone who has not been saved is out of their place, but only those who have heard the good news and still refuse to take their natural place are deviants. Because the gospel is viewed as good news—the literal translation of gospel—not a disciplining or colonizing force, missionaries and evangelists expect everyone to openly accept Christianity. Those who refuse to believe and be transformed are incurable of sin.

Because the Religious Right believe sin is inside of all humans and remains there until they have been saved, they remain very skeptical of humankind including human run government and justice. They believe that because the only justice including racial justice is through Jesus Christ and America is not entirely saved, the government is inherently corrupted by sin (Smith 37). As the Christian Coalition—a prominent organization within the Religious Right—says, America does "not have a skin problem,

we have a sin problem." While rejecting the overarching US Government for being too secular and liable to fall into the human nature of sin, societal problems are also individualized and Christianized. White supremacy becomes a product of sin to be addressed through individual salvation and individual racial reconciliation through Christian fellowship rather than a societal problem to be challenged directly, politically, structurally, or economically (Smith 26, 27, 28, 46 52).

The Religious Right remains skeptical of the prison industrial complex as a set of secular policies and institutions but fails to view it as an economic, patriarchal, and racist machine. For some members of the Religious Right, the patriarchy and racism may not even seem relevant to change—the only change that must be made is to Christianize the prisons (Kimmel 46 and ColorLines). Some advocate for Christian rehabilitation of individual people in prison, some more radical evangelicals argue for the abolition of the US prison system in favor of religious prisons which would rehabilitate people in prison through the discipline of God's law (Smith 38). While these radical views may clash with the prison system as it is now, their primary work with imprisoned people reinforces the power structures within the prison, especially so in women's prisons where women are told that God has subjugated them to men. This is especially relevant to women to the prison industrial complex because most of the men around the prison are Peace Officers[13].

When going into the prison these conservative Christians view the people in prison as children of God who have yet to be taught to walk the correct path and talk the

[13] guards

correct doctrinal message. While acknowledging their humanity the Religious Right also reinforces the otherness of the imprisoned people through a uni-directional exchange of beliefs. This will be thoroughly examined in the following chapter concerning the Bible studies being taught in prisons by lay volunteers. It often manifests in roles of teacher and student with incarcerated people taking the lower roles rather than hosting a dialogue between equals. However, equality as children of God is reinforced. When incarcerated people in the prison do participate in leadership roles it is often through their personal stories/testimonies and do not challenge or deepen the conversation; rather, the story is of conversion (Smith 37). Further, before having the opportunity to share one's testimony these women and men must be approved—unofficially—through devotion to Christ as judged by volunteers. These testimonials are more controlled than similar personal narratives in organizations such as Alcoholics Anonymous. This is a story of individual hope where the person was lost, and through the evangelicals, God found and delivered him or her.

The final effect on the converts is an individualized sense of rebirth in which he or she is transformed to meet the standards of Christian society (Smith 52). While this often overlaps with new skills and diplomas in order to survive in the society, the change is nearly entirely individual and one's hope for transformation of any kind is placed on God rather that other 'sinful' people.

Both the liberal and conservative sides of the Christian coin agree that, "There is an undeniable connection between sin and grace within the Christian faith, of course. It is the central claim of the Gospel that God reaches out to us in our needy condition to

redeem us" (Snyder 36). The nature of sin, grace, and God's outstretched hand differ so drastically that their restorative justice works are fundamentally different. In both perspectives crime is a spawn of sin. While the conservatives believe that humans are naturally bad and need God to pull us from that evil human nature, liberals believe that:

> if grace is not so inextricably linked with our falseness (that is not seen only in terms of redemption), we are opened up to the possibility present within the broader Catholic, Orthodox, black church and liberation traditions insisting on the goodness, beauty, worth and moral capacity in everyone God has created. That is, grace is present and at work within all of human experience. Life is graceful. We need not focus on the fall to recognize the presence of grace (Snyder 41).

Thus, grace becomes more than a salvation and new belief for the liberals, "it is also about creation" (Snyder 37). The religious right disagrees, and holds a tighter understanding of grace and sin. Innerchange, a Religious Right program inside several prisons across the US, states that, "Sin, all sin, is a root rebellion and offense against God" ("Smith, Prison Palaver"). This rebellion is primarily the actions of non-beilevers who commit crimes. Individuals sin, and when those individuals form a society the society is rebellious and sinful, and must be quelled through individuals' salvations.

Sin, according to the Religious Left, can be manifest in individuals and in society at large. Sin in this contention can be understood as a breaking of relationship with God or others around one. When a society engages in an unjust war, or the massive incarceration of entire segments of its population society is sinning, in this view white-supremacy, patriarchy, colonization, and oppression of all kinds are all forms of individual sin. Richard Snyder represents this view in his book, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Punishment*. He portrays crime as an injustice stemming from the injustice of

society. The Religious Left believes that people are inherently good but sometimes/oftentimes fall short of the fully good potential. Crime is a sign of sin, but it comes from societal sins such as white-supremacy, economic inequality, and patriarchy as well as individual sins of racism, sexism, and homophobia. The two are emphasized together with a feeling that addressing the societal sins of injustice upon certain groups of people will greatly reduce the reactionary individual sins of desperation to crime. Also, all those involved in creating the structure and circumstances that led to the crime should be held accountable (Snyder 70). While these two Christian archetypes both view sin as the main cause of crime, the way they understand humankind's relationship to sin is so fundamentally different that it changes the very nature of the sins to be addressed. This one word, sin, takes on two entirely different meanings when used by these two groups.

Because the Religious Left accepts the concept of societal sin as well as individual sin both must be expunged. Attending to individual choices and morals through a Christian lens, bible study and possibly through conversion are common steps toward individual change taken by both the Religious Right and the Religious Left. The other half of the liberal understanding and work is addressing wider issues of socio-economic, racial, and sexual justice. These religious acts of politicization receive a lot of criticism as liberation theology and not religiously grounded. Specific actions may take the forms of understanding individual stories of crime within the wider perspective of society's imperfections protesting and boycotting or even voting certain ways. Appropriate responses to crime, instead of conversion or punishment is characterized by a focus on healing the victim *and* the perpetrator of the crime. "Healing" has included restitution, therapy on both sides, vocational and academic training for the perpetrator,

drug rehabilitation, and spiritual development. Instead of a philosophy of justice based in revenge, retribution, deterrence, or rehabilitation, the Religious Left believes in a, "justice based in mercy" (Barbera 128).

Prison authority is viewed even more skeptically by the Religious Left than the Religious Right. Individual guards are still viewed as humans and children of God, but they are also seen as agents of the oppression within the Prison Industrial Complex. The Prison Industrial Complex becomes a structure of sin within the larger sinful society and must be dramatically transformed to something that can better serve justice as members of the religious left understand it. The Religious Left believes that, "both prisoners and the prison system need redemption, and the prison system is a reflection of the larger American society" (Barbera 128).

The role of imprisoned people is more varied in the religious left. Theoretically, like in liberation theology, the imprisoned/oppressed people form the actual theology and praxis and take leadership roles in bible studies and other rehabilitative avenues including deciding which programs are prioritized over others. However, programs can be manipulated into leader/teacher and follower/student relationships in which the imprisoned people take on the subordinate role. The easy slip into power relationships show how easily prisons' disciplining nature can take hold of well meant programs. Working to counteract that tendency becomes an opposition to the Prison Industrial Complex; it opposes the prison's authority in which the incarcerated person is the lowest of the low.

The Religious Left must utilize more than a belief in transformative change through regeneration. Rather, a Religious Left

> prison theology should lead to a creative response to life. It should demand involvement and commitment and responsibility in the business of living. It should use: art therapy, music, story telling, laughter, fun, poetry, drama, volunteering with others, food, community service, victim reconciliation, family, meditation, journaling, parenting, gardening; it should deal with the reality of sexuality and the need for healthy choices. (Haysom 136)

The change in those involved is not dictated through religious moral teachings or a mandated mode of actions presumed to be God's commandments and will. Ideally, the praxis of the Religious Left leads to free thoughts in developing one's religious beliefs and spirituality. Rather than pushing for rehabilitation, Snyder argues for 'habilitation,' suggesting that to restore the incarcerated people to their former selves is not enough because of the systematic disenfranchisement of their communities:

> To habilitate means to enable, having to do with the notion of enabling capacity or qualification. As most of our prisoners in the United States are poor and persons of color, it goes without saying that societal enabling has not been their common experience. When they do achieve, they do so against great odds. (Snyder 97)

Change of imprisoned people is also primary and reflects the goals of changing the society. Instead of focusing on only taking responsibility for one's crime, individuals are encouraged to forgive those around them in a selfless way. Further, society must recognize the white-supremacy and socio-economic barriers place in front of some communities: poor schools, over- (and strategic under-) policing, gangs, as well as child and partner abuse and sexual abuse. As far as education and rehabilitation, the

imprisoned people often receive similar treatments from conservative and liberally minded faith-based volunteer groups.

C. S. Lewis offers a critique of these religious programs, suggesting that their power dynamics force a religious indoctrination in a rhetoric of mercy and humanitarianism. He pre-dates Foucault, and his words accuse an ideology of panoptic God on the part of religious organizations in prisons. Although C.S. Lewis' critique is short sighted, unsightly as policy, and primarily based as a negative critique rather than a plan of action, his insight into Foucault's theory of prison power is important to remember in understanding the work of volunteer, faith based groups. Instead, the prison system's sole and just responsibility is to punish the offenders of a crime (Lewis 225). C.S. Lewis highlights the snares of ignoring power relations within prisons. This view discusses the moral hazards of confusing mercy with justice. He argues that justice can be connected to mercy only through pardon, and pardons *inherently recognize guilt* of the individual and considers crime to be a decision, not as a sickness; in this view, in order to truly have mercy *and* justice one must first recognize the justice of the situation and then decide if there shall be mercy (Lewis 229).

C. S. Lewis writes to those who work to rehabilitate incarcerated people, "you start being 'kind' to people before you have considered their rights, and then force upon them supposed kindnesses which no on [sic] but you will recognize as kindnesses and which the recipient will feel as abominable cruelties" (Lewis 227). This view connects justice to the rights of humans. C. S. Lewis describes it as such: "the things done to the criminal, even if they are called cures, will be just as compulsory as they were in the old

days when we called them punishments" and when they are separated from the just response to the individual crime the 'criminal' loses 'his' human rights (Lewis 226). Although Lewis discusses the problems of addressing crimes as symptoms of disease, most doctors agree that drug addiction is a disease. Further, if one accepts the structural/societal understanding of sin, accepting the concept of societal diseases such as racism, and poverty is no stretch. Lewis seems to suggest that he would have no rehabilitive works inside of prisons instead people should just be warehoused for a while as punishment. In Lewis' conception, the state is not free of ethical restraints, but rather that the punishment is separation from society and thus that should be entirely what one does in prison—be separated from society. This is not to dehumanize those individuals through cruel punishment but rather to enforce societal/governmental justice and *only* enforce societal justice. In many ways this view is a reaction against the possibilities of discipline which Foucault posits.

Christians volunteers bring their God and theology to the prison without the possibility of incarcerated people returning to gesture. "God" can become a colonizing and disciplining force in which the desired actions of incarcerated people by the outside Christian group or prison authority is manifested in the will of the God entering prison. The rehabilative or transformative models become disciplining models if the freewill to chose. Lewis' conception does not inherently rest foundationally upon a view of sin or religious philosophy; but rather, it separates the religious and ethical goals of rehabilitation with the governmental goal of punishment and justice in the retaliation view. Lewis argues that Humanitarian theory, that which he believes the former two groups practice, "merciful though it appears, really means that each one of us, from the

moment he breaks the law [or is punished as though he broke the law], is deprived of the rights of a human being" (Lewis 226). Humanitarian theory is the arm of the discipline about which Foucault theorized. Anything more than secular separation from society is unjust because it takes the power out of the "hands of the jurist whom the public conscience is entitled to criticize and places it in the hands of technical experts whose special sciences do not even employ such categories as rights or justice" (Lewis 226). The state's control should be feared and therefore limited to only controlling people's physical bodies rather than their souls as well. Lewis seems to advocate a return to systems of dungeons in which the imprisoned people were forgotten temporarily or permanently by the society as their punishment. Instead of the conformity and disciplining of panoptic prisons—through God or architecture—Lewis advocated for a liberty of thought and action within the confines of the prison. Lewis' primary critique is that social control which is not dictated by the public nor as part of the assigned sentence will be used on incarcerated people. His concern is that the disciplining of people is unjust.

Lewis is silent on many issues of high importance in the current system of imprisonment. Because rehabilitation is not the goal of Lewis' imagined prison system, the reasons behind crime are not discussed, but crime is individualized. It is not clear if this view of prison would be expected to lower recidivism rates or reduce crime in any way. But it would protect individuals who are incarcerated from the discipline of Panopticism. The reason for individual crimes seems to have little relevance except in the matter of sentencing individual people who break the law and these are not addressed

otherwise. This way the religious right's focus on individuality is assumed and re-emphasized.

This view can be further seen to have no opinion on how to stop repeated crime or proactively address it; however, using people as deterrents is seen as unjust because that person becomes a means rather than a person. He writes, "when we cease to consider what the criminal deserves and consider only what will cure him or deter others, we have tacitly removed him from the sphere of justice altogether; instead of a person, a subject of rights, we now have a mere object, a patient, a 'case'" (Lewis 228). The only suggestion it gives is that the state should not be giving the discipline, but simply content itself with power over imprisoned *bodies*—not one's consciousness. The role of the state is *not* to indoctrinate imprisoned people, it is only to enforce the laws of society. This clearly speaks to the mandatory religious programming within state institutions, but not to the voluntary religious services that many incarcerated people attend. When religious programming is used as part of a decision for parole hearing that religious program is suspect of the kind of injustice and discipline which Lewis decries. Although Lewis recognizes the power structure within prisons in which any volunteer in a prison has power over those who cannot leave it, the disregard for the structural injustices of the society, expose it as an internal critique of the Right, rather than from the Left. Any type of 'cure'—whether it be education or religious indoctrination—in a prison setting is compulsory, proselytizing or politicization of people in prison from a location of freedom is dangerous in that it has the power of the prison structure behind it regardless of the individuals' intentions or goals for the use of that power. This takes out that temptation of

well minded people to teach people in prison the correct path, no matter what method those lessons take.

The role of imprisoned people is less clear in Lewis' critique—they are very passive and not really discussed as having agency except in how they might react to indoctrination. C. S. Lewis says this of their reaction, the humanitarian theorists think they

> are not punishing, not inflicting, only healing. But do not let us be deceived by a name. To be taken without consent from my home and friends; to lose my liberty; to undergo all those assaults on my personality which modern psychotherapy knows how to deliver; to be re-made after some pattern of 'normality' hatched in some Vienese [sic] laboratory to which I never professed allegiance; to know that this process will never end until either my captors have [sic] succeeded or I grown wise enough to cheat them with apparent success—who cares whether this is called Punishment or not? […] Only enormous ill-desert could justify it; but ill-desert is the very concept which the Humanitarian theory has thrown overboard. (Lewis 226-227)

The role of the prison, for C.S. Lewis, is thus only a waiting space. It should meet ethical standards for living and not cause great pain and fear for those residing in it. It is like a purgatory in that the only punishment is the actual waiting for release and the shame of being separated. The actions of the guards and the structure of the prison could be completely neutral and the prison would still be succeeding in its goal of punishment through separation. One could also parallel this view taken by some Christians that earth is simply a place of waiting for freedom and one cannot escape early.

Foucault's analysis of the power structures within prisons shows that the disciplining there has not ended and cannot end. The manner in which discipline is

exercised has changed: women are no longer sent to ‘reformatories’ to learn to be more feminine, or wives, or domestic workers, the new forms of social control are through the internalization of conservative, Christian and conservative Christian belief systems. This new use of discipline is a more invisible and effective technology. Crimes characteristically committed by women, and the socio-economic status of these women has changed very little, but the theories attempting to explain their behaviors has changed dramatically. This phenomenon is a direct parallel to the situation of discipline of women by prison authorities, in that the expected roles and desired domestic behaviors have not changed very much, but the ways in which discipline is taught and enforced have evolved. Because religious can be a such a disciplining technology it must be used with caution and consciousness. For, when it is used without thought it can be as harmful as the most harsh secular forms of discipline.

Chapter 4 Strategic Identification:
The Religious Right's Political Stances with and within Prisons

"'We've got to care about the souls—that's what we are dealing with—the souls of men'" (Colson "Life Sentence" 237).

This chapter will explore how Prison Fellowship understands and describes itself as well as how Chuck Colson rhetorically connects himself and his organization (he would say Prison Fellowship is God's organization) to incarcerated people. I will then explore how the Religious Right addresses (or does not address) issues of race, gender, sexuality, and class, and uses prison experience and shared Christianity to override those facets of identity. As a white, upper-middle class, straight man, how can Colson accurately represent and envelop the stories of so many other incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people of diverse backgrounds, though generally not wealthy and white? Although Colson's 'political' prison work with Congress, party politics, and government employees has done much to meet the physical needs of incarcerated people, his primary goal is religious. In the religious indoctrination of incarcerated people, Prison Fellowship is inculcating social norms through strategic re-identification as a Christian, sinner, and former prisoner. The norms being taught—traditional gender roles and the de-politicization of issues of race and class—are entrenched neoliberal politics and problematic because they exclude the identities and experiences of incarcerated people.

The Religious Right uses the neo-liberal framework of individualism to ignore political issues that would divide Prison Fellowship members and volunteers. This individualism is further utilized in their racial reconciliation programs. Racial reconciliation is also supported by anti-women sentiments. Women are defined almost

entirely by their sexuality, therefore men who are represented with other traits and thoughts are portrayed to deserve control.

Andrea Smith has discussed racial reconciliation in her book *Native Americans and the Religious Right*, within the Religious Right and the Prison Industrial Complex's relationship to the Religious Right. Her work concerning the Religious Right and the Prison Industrial Complex addresses the connections in Restorative Justice between the two groups, and is an argument for a strategic alliance with the Religious Right on political grounds to work toward restorative justice. Smith's project is to "investigate the possibilities of rearticulating the Christian Right to serve more radical political projects" (Smith "Native Americans" 11) Her work primarily focuses on what organizations such as Prison Fellowship do outside of the prison walls, whereas the work of this thesis is focused primarily on the efforts and effects of the activities within the prison. She is critical of some of the Religious Right's stances within their platform for restorative justice, and she work creates foundation on which to discuss Prison Fellowship's politics.

Smith is critical of the missionary work happening within prisons. First of all, the prison population is a very desperate one by definition, and, Smith points out, "Missionaries are often explicit about the fact that the worse off people are the better targets they make for mission work" (Smith "Native Americans" 53). While Colson is not explicit about this fact, his work plays into the words of Don Jackson: "Prisons are 'a new mission opportunity with an exciting future' (Jackson 1973) and 'represent one of the great unharvested mission fields' (Smarto 1993, 165)" (Smith "Native Americans" 53). Jackson wrote those words in 1973, and Prison Fellowship began its work officially

in 1976. Her critiques of the Religious Right's work within the prison will be echoed and furthered in this thesis.

My thesis finds a much more negative view of Prison Fellowship because of the different aspects of their work examined here. Their teachings are still important to examine and critique even if their party politics can be strategically re-aligned for positive purposes. I am primarily concerned with the direct experiences of incarcerated people and their freedom. Freedom from future imprisonment is equally important to the freedom to think as individuals from their experiences. Prison Fellowship focuses on a spiritual freedom, which is an important positive aspect and not to be neglected, however their methods to seeking that freedom leave much to be desired. Not only does Prison Fellowship fail to effectively lower recidivism (though they claim to do so) which would lead to greater physical freedom from prison, it also negatively affects incarcerated people's ability to think critically by depoliticizing their lives and experiences as gendered and racial people.

Prison Fellowship believes that the only real change can come through personal conversion to a commitment to Jesus Christ. One prison warden is quoted reaffirming this position when he says, "'I've been around prisoners a long time,' he said, 'and I've tried out a lot of programs to help these men. Let me tell you my conclusion: Only God can change a man and that's the message of this evening" (Colson "Life Sentence" 263). Change of the heart is the way rehabilitation takes place within Colson's prison programs. The Prison Fellowship model is therefore not a rehabilitation model, but a transformation model (Erzan 1000). Crime—from drug use and petty theft to murder—is

viewed as resulting from sin. One Prison Fellowship representative explains that "criminal behavior is a manifestations of an alienation between self and God. Acceptance of God and Biblical principles results in cure through the power of the Holy sprit. Transformation happens through an instantaneous miracle; it then builds the prisoner up with familiarity of the Bible" (Slevin np) Another, identical argument for fundamentalist conversion/rehabilitation/transformation states that, "the only way to make a difference in a prisoner's life, and therefore reduce recidivism, is through a change of heart" (Levinson). And when that change of heart is understood to only come from a religious conversion the work of lowering recidivism becomes individual: "The answer to the crime problem is Jesus Christ; only he can change people's hearts. Through Prison Fellowship thousands of inmates have come to Christ: living witnesses to God's transformation" (Perry B1). No matter the crime the cure is viewed as a personal commitment to Christianity. According to Prison Fellowship no therapist or support group can help people turn away from substance abuse because "only Jesus Christ is the cure for addiction" (Leaming 10). Prison Fellowship, in their press kit, describes its belief of crime: at the root of "every criminal act is a destructive moral decision" (DeMoss News). This clearly connects with Evangelical theology which presumes that "people are inherently evil. The only escape from this evil is to begin a personal relationship with Jesus Christ" (Smith "Native Americans" 32). Therefore, Colson's goal of addressing the Prison Industrial Complex is dependent upon his ability to convert others to his religious beliefs because "Programs that incorporate the 'Jesus Factor' do not attempt to rehabilitate prisoners to the norms of a corrupt society but rather provide them with the opportunity to develop a saving relationship with Jesus Christ that allows them to live

moral lives" (Smith "Native Americans 34). Prison Fellowship professes that people cannot learn to live moral lives without first learning the ultimate moral authority and that authority is the Bible interpreted in an Evangelical and absolute way.

Through conversion and individuals' changed lives, Colson hopes to tackle the injustice of the Prison Industrial Complex[14]; instead of working against a system, Colson believes that God works through him and other Christians to make change. "As Christians we believe changes in people—and thus in society—come not through political, exterior structures but through changes in the heart" (Colson and Vaughn 1987, 23). Individual converts to the politics of Prison Fellowship and the Evangelical faith become the foundation of change, thus political issues themselves (regardless of how personal) become second to individuals' stories.

In the same way that possible structural issues are spiritualized, the perceived agency of those who make change in societies are considered God's actions, not humans'. Further, the political approach to prison reform is not believed to come from institutional change, or even from individuals: "the great reforms of history, I could see, came about not so much because of political institutions but as a result of God's power flowing through righteous and obedient people" (Colson "Life Sentence" 100). The agency of even the reformers is called into question in their obedience to God.

However, when institution-wide change is made, it is still attributed to the spiritual work of the few Christians. After returning from an intensive two week Christian

[14] Because Colson rejects systemic analysis of the prison system, he does not use the term "Prison Industrial Complex" however, because I find that framework very compelling and useful I am employing the language of that movement.

leadership program led by Colson, two incarcerated men—through prayer—began to make institution-wide change: "After a few months, a small fellowship group began meeting regularly. Under Staggers' dedication the group began to expand. Conditions began to improve inside; stabbings and beatings became less frequent" (Colson "Life Sentence" 83). According to Colson, the conditions were improved not by added security, better anger management or a peace agreement between incarcerated people—but because of a small prayer group. The men founding the fellowship were not the violent perpetrators[15]. Rather, the power of Christian prayer Colson argues to measurably reduce violence within the prison.

Only Christian prayer and obedience to God can make positive change according to Colson, not even the good intentions and efforts of secular men and women count. In a conversation with a well meaning middle class white friend Colson assures that only God can create good things, "Jim smiled. 'I know what you're thinking, but people can do the right thing if they really want to and without God.' I shook my head. 'Yes, they can,' he insisted" (Colson "Life Sentence" 175). The agency of imprisoned and free people is discredited; God is, in Colson's rhetoric, the only actor for good.

Colson's Christian-centric attitude is a mirror of his Euro-centric and masculinist views. His Christian-centric focus is acceptable and understandable in its role within the ministry, but his stances are inappropriate in a wider political conversation. For instance, Colson, through his Christian work, does not take into account the good work of non-Christians. Through his work toward greater freedom and equality for his Christian

[15] Perhaps some of the participants were but Colson never confirms or offers an explanation of this.

brothers, Colson is creating a new hierarchy in which Christian men are the top. Like the Apostle Paul writes in the book of Galatians, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (3:28 RSV). No longer is the distinction between imprisoned and free made, Prison Fellowship claims; but Colson’s distinction between Christian and non-Christian becomes paramount. Accoridng to Prison Fellowship’s rhetoric, only through Christianity can social change or justice manifest itself, in the view of Colson: “true equality, I’ve learned, is always experienced at the foot of the cross” (Colson “Life Sentence” 259). Only in the shadow of Jesus Christ’s redeeming act of self-sacrifice can Colson imagine equality between so many different people. This equality becomes less than political or economic; it is rhetorical and spiritual. Because Colson believes that all those ‘at the foot of the cross’ are redeemed and equally sinful, each person is equal in his or her wretchedness and rebirth.

Racial Equality

The Religious Right understands as equality among individuals, and therefore does not focus on systemic inequality between races. Smith notes that, “evangelicals generally understand racism as individual prejudices” (Smith “Devil’s”). The Religious Right has begun a campaign and several groups that work toward racial reconciliation between Black and white people. The reconciliatory work of the evangelicals is between Christian individuals. The Religious Right effectively maintains that, “racial reconciliation is an individual posture, but not a collective struggle.” However, this is not enough: “Being less racist in one’s personal life may be laudatory, but without a program

of institutional remedies, it leaves untouched the chief forces that keep that inequality in place" (Kimmel 49). White men confront their individual prejudices (at least their evident prejudices) normally with, middle-class, Black men (Smith "Devil's"). But they may still be harming poor communities of color through continued stereotypes, fears, and government spending.

Prison Fellowship members and volunteers unite through their conservative Christianity (as well as classism and patriarchy (Kimmel and Smith "Devil's")) during the times set aside for racial reconciliation, but Michael Kimmel questions how reconciled these groups are, even in their personal—non structural—times, "The barriers that are broken down in the stadiums [at Promise Keepers events] are still there when people come home to their communities. I think most black pastors see it as being rhetoric, which is something most of the black community has heard for a long time" (Kimmel 50). The rhetoric of racial reconciliation is a good start. If structures of racism were started because of hegemonic individual bigotries, one small step in rectifying these injustices is calling upon white people to be held accountable for their individual bigotries and racism. However, this work is too little, too late, too limited, and reformed in such as what that it is harmful to progressive anti-racist movements.

The rhetoric of the Religious Right's race reconciliation is causing injury to systemic work. Lots of anti-white-supremacy movements use a rhetoric of anti-oppression; the Religious Right also utilizes that rhetoric: "In order to enlist the loyalty of people of color, the Christian Right transfers the label of 'oppressed' from people of color to the Christian Right itself" (Smith "Devil's). Any action against Christians for any

reason can be labeled as oppression of conservative Christianity. The way this issue is viewed masks the real way oppression occurs: systemically. The Religious Right refuses to recognize this fact.

Because the Religious Right is utilizing the language of anti-racism, but not instituting anti-racist policies or even offering anti-racist political stances, their work is detrimental to progressive racial equality work. Even if their work is almost positive, because they use language of progressives, they are diluting the anti-racist message of anti-white-supremacists:

> For one thing, there's the message of reconciliation itself. Theirs is not a call to support those programs that would uplift the race and set the nation on a course toward racial equality. This is not about anti-discrimination legislation or affirmative action—heck, it's not even about integration. It's about being kinder and more civil. It's about hearing their pain, not supporting its alleviation. It's choosing to be nicer, but not about policies that force us to be fairer. (Kimmel 49)

The Religious Right's rhetoric of anti-discrimination has no teeth. There is not a challenge to society or even communities to recognize the structures of oppression and power. This rhetoric of individual reconciliation allows for further white-supremacy to take place under the guise of anti-racism.

The way in which racism is challenged doesn't appear to be genuinely focused on equality between the races—rather it is a strategy of (mis)identification with Black people in order to recruit them to the Religious Right. This can be seen in Religious Right "periodicals [which] present an article on the evils of racial prejudice and then follow them up with calls to repeal affirmative action, support immigration moratoriums, and

oppose multicultural curriculums in schools" (Smith "Devil's"). The beliefs of the Religious Right are firm and unchallenged, and its racial "diversity" is extended. Black people—all people—can choose to participate in the Religious Right, but the lack of conversation about systemic injustice exposes the strong possibility that the Religious Right is just an apologist for white-supremacy. The apolitical framing of race is a strategy to make structural racism invisible.

The character of Jesus becomes apolitical as well. In one of Colson's sermons inside of a men's prison, he expresses his view of Jesus' solidarity with the poor to mean something other than economic solidarity with those living through poverty:

> Jesus Christ came into this world for the poor, the sick, the hungry, the homeless, the imprisoned. He is the Prophet of the loser. And all of us assembled here are losers. I am a loser just like everyone of you. The miracle is that God's message is specifically for those of us who have failed. (Colson "Life Sentence" 298)

He begins discussing "the poor, the sick, the hungry the homeless, and the imprisoned" but quickly moves away from those aspects of economic inequality which could lead to a confrontation with, white-supremacy, mental health, and patriarchy to discuss the nebulous characteristics of being a loser. Colson, who has a law degree and formerly worked for the Nixon White House, suggests that he is poor in the above quotation. Instead of recognizing his privilege or structural racism he strategically identifies with the incarcerated men whom he is addressing. In Colson's rhetoric Jesus' prophesying to and for the "losers" and the poor of the world, is nothing more than a solidarity with no implied structural action. Instead, sharing humanity and breaking bread becomes the ultimate form of equality called for by Prison Fellowship.

The prophet Isaiah prophesies that the Messiah will free captives from prison and heal the blind (42: 7). Jesus, according to the Gospels, did the latter quite literally: after the healing the blind people, they could see what happened on around them with their eyes. When Colson speaks of the freedom offered by Jesus that freedom is anything but literal. The imprisoned people are still held captive within the prison, but they have a spiritual freedom which Prison Fellowship believes comes from choosing salvation in Christ. Colson writes of this freedom through Christ:

> The message of Jesus Christ is for the imprisoned—for your families, some of them who aren't making it on welfare on the outside. Christ reached out for you who are in prison because He came to take those chains off, to take you out of bondage. He can make you the freest person in the entire world, right here in this lousy place. (Colson "Life Sentence" 298)

Jesus, in this state-authorized group, is the triumphant savior present to release the incarcerated people; but there have not been any Prison Fellowship led prison-breaks. Rather, spiritual freedom within the prison is what Prison Fellowship offers. Prison Fellowship suggests, incarcerated men and women are no longer chained to racism or their imprisonment because they are new creations. No longer a murderer or criminal, but a child of God, loved by his or her brothers and sisters in Christ but not treated fairly or with respect by those around him or her. This individualistic community of equality is the primary result of the racial reconciliation on which Prison Fellowship prides itself. Because of the fiery preaching of one Prison Fellowship employee the barriers of race, class, and imprisonment were broken. This "message stirred the congregation and the communion that followed produced a rich time of fellowship between black and white, rich and poor, imprisoned and free. At the end, the chapel seemed to overflow with joy

and love" (Colson "Life Sentence" 237). While this is not a sentiment or event to be scoffed at it is as far as Colson ventures into issues of race. It harkens back to the very neoliberal approach that the Religious Right takes.

Economic Policy

Given that the Religious Right has many politically powerful members party politics often come up. The way these political policies are framed is strategic and ironic as well. After one conservative politician met an incarcerated Christian woman, Becky, he was moved with compassion to say: "'Becky committed a crime, but I wonder which is the bigger crime: stealing for your kids or voting a budget which produces such a big deficit it's bound to create more inflation. That's just stealing dollars out of the pockets of little people like Becky. Maybe I am the one who should be in prison'" (Colson "Life Sentence" 232). His politics seem suddenly transformed. He is now compelled to cut the government budget, probably starting with the social services that would help Becky and others in similar situations. Or, perhaps he would cut the Prison Industrial Complex budget, and the first things to be cut would be rehabilitation programs.

Women as the Personification of Temptation

Becky was one of the good women of God, but Colson depicts the majority of women he meets as deceitful temptresses. One evening in a hotel he is told that he must stay in a certain room—not to trade rooms with his companion; he trades rooms. Minutes later two women in trench coats—possibly nothing else—run to his former room, when they discover that the occupant is not Colson they leave. The next morning he and his companion discuss the incident, "'It had to be a setup planned to compromise you,' Mike

concluded. 'I was in *your* room, there's no telling what or how little those gals had on underneath their coats, and they lied to me about being chased'" (Colson "Life Sentence" 266). These seductresses were allegedly going to dance or prostitute themselves to Colson to discredit his ministry work[16]. Another woman on a plane tried to do a similar thing—but Colson noticed that her dress was too low on top and too high at the bottom. His friend takes the picture strategically —but of the seat next to them. Women, especially strangers cannot be trusted and are sexualized demons.

Similarly, incarcerated women prove their worth by acting in non-sexual, Christian ways. Two women attended the first two bible studies that were hosted outside of prison. During the second session the binary was personified in two women: "Aware of the danger Jennifer posed to the group, Jackie kept close to her for the two-week period, day and night" (Colson "Life Sentence" 89-90). Jennifer, an alternate and the clerk of the chaplain at her prison had been a model, well educated, and traveled ("Life Sentence" 88). She was a danger because of her raw and distracting sexuality. Conversely, Jackie was a woman of God, she made it her role to save men from the dangers of falling into Jennifer's lusting clutches. Jennifer was primarily viewed as a temptation, not a child of God. One leader said of her, "'Well, we aren't taking her how she is,' he growled. He wheeled around to Molly Kay. 'Get a bra on her. Tonight!' Before a startled Molly Kay could reply, Harold added, 'and a wool shirt and dungarees—loose ones too" (Colson "Life Sentence" 87). Jennifer does not have her

[16] Colson co-opts the oppression and persecution of Christianity rather than disenfranchised groups.

own voice—given, this is an autobiographical account of Charles Colson—nor does Jackie have any remembered qualities other than containing Jennifer's temptation.

Most women, in Colson's writing, are defined primarily as dangerous locations of hyper-sexuality; the exception, of course, is the woman whom he knows and loves best. His wife is never spoken of sexually; instead she is seen as supportive and submitting. Colson notes that his wife wants him to go back to law because, "wives worry about security and finances" but when he decides to continue on his path of evangelism, she consents (Colson "Life Sentence" 43). Women can choose to change their minds throughout their lives. And neither side of a marriage should dictate the other's occupation, however Colson's marriage exemplifies the "soft patriarchy" being taught in many Religious Right circles.

"Soft" Patriarchy

Promise Keepers is a Religious Right organization that calls men to take back their traditional role as head of the household. Chuck Colson has been a keynote speaker for this organization, and since 2003 the organization has been hosting seminars in men's prisons across the nation ("History of Promise Keepers"). This organization, "promotes a kind of soft patriarchy, male domination as obligation, surrender and service—sort of 'Every Man's Burden'" (Kimmel 48). Men are told that it is part of their religious duty to take care of their wives and children with a steady job, and household leadership. This leadership is expected to be welcomed and helpful to the women in Promise Keepers lives, "in return for submission, or being 'responders,' women are promised the respect and honor that went with the traditional patriarchal pedestal" (Kimmel 48). Women are

expected to rejoice in those traditional forms of honor and respect as well as men taking responsibility for their share of the family. Nowhere on the Promise Keepers—a masculinist group of the Religious Right—website is there a space explaining how to respond if women do not accept their traditional roles. Women are of importance in this organization they hold the entire culture in their hands, "For their part, women are urged to give [the traditional male role as head of the house hold] back, [f]or the sake of your family and the survival of our culture" (Kimmel 48). For all their importance, why then do women not have a say in the household? They are expected to be responders, and relegated to certain spheres of the family and social life rather than have equal say in decisions and sovereignty over their choices.

In promise Keepers' rhetoric, men have the responsibility to fulfill the role of a 'man' for the sake of their marriage and the society. Promise Keepers, using sports analogies, meeting in stadiums and encouraging male bonding, "ministers brilliantly to men's anxieties and needs, while promoting that masculine sense of entitlement that we believe is our birthright" (Kimmel 48). The neoliberal understanding of individual human choice—rather than collective or structural restraints—is reinforced as being that which creates or destroys entire cultures. Men accepting Promise Keepers must be masculine: assertive, strong, driven, ambitious, dominate women, and self-reliant. For "'the demise of our community and culture is the fault of sissified men who have been overly influenced by women,' writes Tony Evans, a black Dallas-based evangelist, who is among the Promise Keepers' most popular rally speakers" (Kimmel 47). Even though men are responsible to uphold the current order, they are not seen as the root cause of the problems. This rhetoric suggests that women are the cause of problems in communities;

women overly influence men, who become "sissified" and no longer held their roles as fathers and husbands, which causes women to take those roles as well as their own gendered roles.

The men chosen to represent the Religious Right in Prison Fellowship must display the characteristics of being a *man* of God, not just being Christian but being a Christian *man*. When Colson was looking for a Prison Fellowship chaplain he writes, "mentally, I checked off the requirements for the position: *ordained, experienced in a prison, preferably an ex-con, young, masculine so the tougher prisoners could relate, willing to work long hours and a teacher*" (Colson "Life Sentence" 212 emphasis in the original). Colson focuses on choosing someone who is relatable to the incarcerated men being served. For the success of the program and the comfort of the men this is a wise strategy, but Colson does not acknowledge the full reality of the incarcerated people he is trying to serve. That masculinity is chosen in this short list is questionable. Why does the prison need *another* tough face, instead of a kind and caring face to represent God? Colson's fear of Christians being seen as gay because of the brotherly love they share, is apparent in his concern that the chaplain be masculine as well as his awareness of being viewed as gay.

Colson walks a fine line between philia[17] and eros[18]. He notes this awareness when he chooses to hug his friend recently out of prison, "regardless of what Arthur thought, I threw my arms around Myron and hugged him" (Colson "Life Sentence" 284). Arthur knew Colson and Myron, he knew that both were married, that Colson would note

[17] Greek for friendship (*Phil*adelphia is the city of brotherly love.)
[18] Greek for desire.

the awareness and concern of what Arthur might think is odd, unless he is part of a homophobic community. This marginalized group is one with whichColson does not strategically identify. He applauds anti-equality activists in his books lamenting of one such woman, "Anita Bryan's courageous stand against gay rights movement resulted in major entertainment contracts being canceled and constant threats on her life" (Colson "Life Sentence" 196)[19]. Colson argues that he is not homophobic, rather the idea that the Religious Right is homophobic is a form of Christian oppression and persecution, "Homosexuals are eager to paint us as homophobic" (Colson, "Are Christians Homophobic?"). He even evinces his lack of homophobia by discussing how he cares for individuals dying from AIDS in prisons. The homophobia, like the white-supremacy is "soft" as Michael Kimmel describes the patriarchy of the Religious Right. Rather than attempting to physically hurt the homosexual sinners, Colson wants to—as a Christian humanitarian—convert them to the truth and help to pray the gay out of these men:

> We know we are sinners saved by the grace of God and we ought to look at people in the homosexual lifestyle, not with contempt, but with genuine love, compassion, and a deep desire to bring them out of it. When I visit prisons for example, I always ask to tour the AIDS wards. I've often found myself embracing people dying of the disease (Colson, "Are Christians Homophobic?").

The homosexuality (not the rape) that the current prison system allows is one commonly noted reason by Colson to change the entire system. Colson's believed duty to minister to incarcerated people is precisely to stop the continued homosexual 'lifestyles' that they currently practice. The injustices of the prison system are understood by the Religious Right to include allowing homosexuality:

[19] This is just another example of how "oppression" is co-opted by the Religious Right.

> The results of the present penal system can no longer be acceptable to Christians who recognize that prison have often become places of social contamination. *Prison homosexuality*, idleness, overcrowding, and excessively long sentences, sometimes for misdeeds not requiring imprisonment, serve to demoralize the prisoner, reinforce his criminal behavior, and minimize his future social usefulness. (Knudten 114 emphasis added)

That "prison homosexuality" would be understood as a technique that reinforced criminal behavior, and "minimizes future social usefulness" is absurd. Prison rape meets those criteria of demoralization etc, but by not using 'rape' if they mean it, they make homosexuality and rape rhetorically equal. The Religious Right strategically identifies homosexual men as rapists.

These concerns manifested themselves in Iowa's InnerChange Freedom Initiative. Men were encouraged to free themselves from the sins of homosexuality: "Gay inmates were told that their behavior is sinful and advised that sexual orientation can be changed through religious conversion. Books used in the program condemn homosexuality as an 'abomination' and a tool used by Satan to mislead" ("Iowa"). This was not a case in which people were raping one another, these were genuine, consenting gay men being told to stop. Given, the Religious Right has a right to their own political opinions, and to express those opinions, but when they hold the power of an authoritative God who can reject one's forgiveness[20] and who is represented primarily by Religious Right volunteers[21] and their beliefs and even more so when their programming holds special tangible benefits. Men were forced to leave the program because they did not fully accept

[20] This will be discussed later on page 98.
[21] This was discussed in the one-directional exchange of knowledge on page 53.

the religious teachings—the parole board seeing that might decide it indicated a reason to reject parole.

The Religious Right perpetrates a false identification with incarcerated people for its own political needs. Their rhetorical of empowerment for men who feel marginalized and of racial reconciliation rests upon classist and sexist foundations. Even these, "gender politics are also used to reinforce racist ideologies. Many black male conservatives blame the 'welfare queen' for the demise of the black family and hold black female-led households, not a racist criminal justice system, responsible for the large numbers of black men in prison" (Smith "Devil's"). The ability to shape the conversation between the religious right and these groups in order to find a shared identity is strategic in that is enforces the Religious Right's doctrine without representing a structural view of the injustices it would seek to address. Within the prisons participants in Prison Fellowship programs are told much of the same rhetoric, "They're told that the Bible ordains men to run households; that homosexuality is a sin' that non-Christian religions are 'of Satan' and that only persons baptized as adults can get into Heaven" ("Iowa" np). These statements reinforce hierarchy instead of destabilizing them and equalizing humans as God's creations. Incarcerated straight men may feel an importance in being in charge of their households, not an abomination, and individually reconciled to those around them of different races, but that feeling comes at the expense of enforcing patriarchy, homophobia, and systemic racism. The reality of the teachings is that "Good, kind, decent men (and white people) can indeed develop better, more emotionally resonant and caring relationships with women and people of color, and then support precisely those

policies that perpetuate their pain" (Kimmel 50). The Religious Right is not solving the problems it seeks to address, rather it reinforces them.

Faith-Based Programming Resource Evaluation: Looking at Authority and the Individual

This chapter will dissect the Bible studies developed by PrisonNet, an Evangelical organization that serves incarcerated people. PrisonNet's Bible studies strategically avoid topics of power relations and social/racial/economic justice. Its ability to do so is an exercise of its power to shape the structure, and content of the Bible studies. These Bible studies are sites of discipline to God's perceived will—as told to the incarcerated participants by PrisonNet volunteers—manifested in a Neo-liberal ideology.

PrisonNet is based in Boston, Massachusetts and describes itself as "non-denominational, with participants from several local churches. We are strongly evangelical in our theology and practice. Over a 25-year period, more than 200 volunteers and more than 20,000 inmates have participated in weekly Bible study sessions. About 90 -100 incarcerated men participate regularly" (PrisonNet.org). While this organization currently only serves men, they specify in their mission statement, that "personal salvation is a result of Christ's sacrifice, death, and resurrection; and that men's *and women's* lives are profoundly changed when they accept God's will and allow His Holy Spirit to guide their thoughts, words, and deeds" (PrisonNet.orgemphasis added). They specifically publish their Bible lessons online in order to encourage others to expand the ministry throughout the US and the world; it can be inferred that they feel these lessons would be equally appropriate for women as well as men (PrisonNet.org). These Bible lessons have a twofold purpose: the first is to evangelize and the second is to teach core 'Christian values.'

PrisonNet's Bible study series is called "Living in God's Kingdom." It is the firstof several Bible study curriculums that PrisonNet has developed for incarcerated people. The goal of this series is to introduce basic Christian tenets to new believers. It focuses on parables as a way to show how "the Kingdom of God was at the center of Jesus' teaching throughout his ministry" ("Choices" 1).

Themes Repeated Throughout the Lessons

Similarly to how body language can be more communicative than the words spoken, the teachings of the Bible study extend beyond the actual parables and typed words. The structure of each Bible study and the way it is conducted proves to say as much as the intended/apparent lessons. The structure of the lessons is well dictated by the organization that produced them; it ensures a uni-directional movement of knowledge, rather than genuine conversation. Each lesson's materials comprise the same sections; there are four pages of leader's information, a page with the discussion questions and another which has take-home thoughts for the participants. The leader's materials include: the verses printed on them in the New International Version translation—so a physical Bible need not be referenced; an introduction which could be read aloud word-for-word; a brief analysis of the Bible verse; then discussion questions *with suggested answers*. Notes for the leader are also given which include suggestions such as time limits for discussion and the use of positive encouragement. The highly structured format of these lessons indicates that a genuinely open and free-flowing discussion of the text is not intended; rather a particular moral lesson is to be taught. This structured text assumes

and requires hierarchial power relations between a teacher and students to be successfully operationalized.

PrisonNet's Bible studies were created specifically for incarcerated people, a fact that is both apparent and invisible throughout the text of the Bible studies. Imprisonment is invisible because the words that are spoken and the Christian themes do not reference the location of intended audience. However, the imprisonment—and power relations that the situation entails—is visible throughout the texts in the structure of the Bible studies, hierarchy, authoritarian belief system, and some assumptions concerning possible suggestions from participants.

The surface-level appearance of indifference to the context of prison suggests two analyses. First, it suggests that incarcerated people are equal to and just as important as their free Christian-siblings. This strategic equalization is humanizing and positive It shows that people can and should be defined by more than their (mis)deeds. And it is a reminder that even in prison humans have many of the same concerns and spiritual needs. All that matters is the Christian brotherhood (sisterhood) of these participating in the studies.

However, the lack of attention to the context of prison is troubling in that it allows for ignorance of the societal issues that facilitate the mass displacement of certain communities to prison. This strategic equalization allows for the rhetoricaly erasing to issues of class, race, gender, sexuality, and imprisonment itself. Simply pretending that study is not being lead in a prion with all the baggage of incarcerated people will not make the systemic issues disappear. The lack of prison specificity thus sidesteps the

issues of systematic injustice while reaffirming the equality of all humans. In avoiding systemic issues, the Bible lessons offered by PrisonNet lend themselves to a neo-liberal mindset, in which the backgrounds and experiences of oppression are ignored and denied. Scholar, Tanya Erzan, describes the way in which incarcerated people are taught to relate their religious experiences: “Mobilize evangelical testimonies of conversion to produce political stances” (992). In this rhetoric, societal/structural injustices are posed as individual sins. The complete solution is not societal reform or a revolution, but individual conversion to Evangelical Christianity by all. Salvation—like sin and crime—is seen as an individual choice and act. The emphasis on the individual allows for a conception of all people being equal actors with equal pressures acting upon them.

Not all the problematic themes can be thoroughly addressed in this thesis. One of the themes found throughout the lessons is the focus on evangelism and on training incarcerated people to become evangelists within the prison. This reflections on the testimonial strategy of the Religious Right and shows itself to be a strategic form of encouraging ‘agency’ to incarcerated men and women(Erzan). Another element which runs through the texts but is not discussed is the common use of the male pronoun to refer to God. While this is common and historically the case, many Christian leaders are moving away from the masculinization of the Christian God. The theologian Marcus Borg sums up why the view of a wholely masculine God is problematic, “patriarchal politics, patriarchal religion, the patriarchal family are all connected to the monarchical

model of God" (69). The patriarchal work of the Religious Right can be seen in the discussion of Promise Keepers.[22]

Evangelism of the incarcerated person and those with whom they interact is the primary focus of these Bible studies. Each lesson ends with a half sheet of 'Take-home Thoughts' which summarizes the lesson and emphasizes the main points. The leaders are reminded to make sure to pass out the take-home thoughts because "this will help them [participants] remember the things discussed in the lesson. Some of them may also use these handouts to explain the lesson to a cell-mate or in a letter they write to their families. You never know how far the lesson materials may travel, or whose life may be affected by them!" (Choices 5). The goal of each lesson is not primarily conversation but a desired change in behavior. This indicates a transformative model of change, rather than rehabilitative. Instead of a slow progress of learning through trial and error, or therapeutic work, a religious epiphany is expected to cramatically change the inside of incarcerated people. The change in the transformative model originates in God.

The given answers in the leader's materials often indicates a stereotypical understanding of incarcerated people, or the emphasis seems uniquely prison related, however, the lessons do not name the context or the referent; specific instances within this pattern will be discussed individually. This practice side-steps the issues while trying to teach certain counter-prison-culture lessons, housing fraud for instance is brought into one parable. It proves to be problematic because it is a facade covering the particular

[22] Page 80 of this thesis

morals PrisonNet wishes to teach. Clarity and honesty seem like they would be the most appropriate approaches to moral lessons.

Lesson One

The first of the Bible study's weekly lessons is entitled 'Choices' and focuses on the texts Luke 8:4-8, 8:11-15 and 6:46-49 ("Choices"). The first of the two biblical texts is the parable of the farmer scattering seeds as a metaphor for spreading the good news of Christianity. The latter is the parable of the two men who build their houses: one on a strong foundation and the other on the sand. The selection of these texts to begin the Bible study does two things: it identifies God as a site of discipline,--as Foucault explains it—and it begins the pattern of disciplining to particular neo-liberal norms of assumed white middle class values and perspective that will be present throughout the Bible studies.

PrisonNet's problematic and relative commentary begins on the very first page of the first Bible study; it reads, "For those who have invited God's spirit to live in them, he said, 'the kingdom of God is within you' (Luke 1:20-21)" ("Choices" 1). The verse is actually their paraphrase of Luke 17:20-21:

> Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within[1] you." (Luke 17:20-21 The New International Version)[23]

PrisonNet says that Jesus Christ must be invited into one's heart, but Jesus told the Pharisees that the kingdom of God was among them. They had not confessed him as their

[23] NIV footnote: "1: Or Among"

savior, or invited him into their hearts, but he still identified himself as such. The New Oxford Annotated Bible explains that Jesus was referring to himself as the kingdom of God and emphasized that the "God's *kingdom* is present and available" (Metzger 109 NT). For the biblical quotation was in context of Pharisees testing Jesus and expecting a grand political transformation/revolution but Jesus turns this back on them and suggests that he is the kingdom of God. The Pharisees were the testers and often enemies of Jesus, they had not "invited God's [Jesus'] spirit in them" as PrisonNet suggests must be done. However, the authors of the Bible lesson have added the portion which implies that an invitation for God is necessary ("Choices" 1). This commentary implies that humans have the power to start their relationship with God and discounts theories on the omnipotence of God and concept of grace. Further, it runs counter to the context of the scripture which they reference. The Bible study strays from the Biblical text in order to encourage conversion and acceptance of Christianity—PrisonNet's Christianity—as absolute truth.

This focus on human action andchoice points to the disciplining nature of the lesson rather than a theological and intellectual exploration. The content is inextricably mixed with the hierarchy and assumptions of incarcerated people. The rhetorical erasing of structural injustices cannot be deconstructed without a parallel and intermixed deconstruction of the content being taught.

According to PrisonNet the farmer parable was chosen for the first Bible lesson because Jesus explained it in the Bible ("Choices" 1)[24]. Further, one can infer, as an evangelical organization, this is a good starting point to help those incarcerated people

[24] This might not be accurate, but it is what they explain as their reasoning.

who would become evangelists to other incarcerated people begin to understand how some people will react negatively, without feeling completely discouraged; that is why Jesus told it to his disciples, the lesson materials explain to the leader ("Choices" 2). According to the lesson this parable was not only to explain how some will react but also to tell the disciples that their job for Jesus was to spread the word of his teachings ("Choices" 2). Jesus' explanation of the parable is put in plain words by PrisonNet in this lesson:

> Some, whose "hearts were hard," would not be interested at all. There would be others who would seem at first to be believers, but who would drop out as soon as the going got tough. There would be still others who might believe what they heard, but they wouldn't be willing to let go of other things in their lives that were more important to them than their relationship with God, *so they would never grow up to be good for very much*. But there would be some, like the seed that fell on good ground, who would **hear**, and **believe**, and their **lives would be changed**, and they would tell others in their villages and towns, and their lives would be changed, and perhaps eventually a hundred people might become members of the Kingdom because of one person who **heard**, and **understood**, and **believed**, and was **willing to follow Jesus**. ("Choices" 2 italic emphasis added)

This is a parable of human inaction. When Jesus explains this parable he only explains that, "the seed is the word of God. The ones along the path are those who have heard…" (NIV Luke 8:11-12a). In discussing these plants and their existence no real judgment is made of them as individuals or as a group. In being described as plants which are not often considered to have agency, one cannot really blame them for being in the path, rocks, weeds, or good soil after all that is where their seeds were thrown. The question of whether or not human kind has agency is very relevant when humans are compared to scattered seeds or plants in the primary example used in a Bible study entitled, *Choices*.

The first Bible study is directing incarcerated people to convert to Christianity by playing on insecurities that PrisonNet assumes of the incarcerated people and manipulated the text to fit. In the commentary presented by the Bible study materials, those in the weedy/thorny soil "would never grow up to be good for very much" ("Choices" 2). This judgment of those who undervalue God is not present in the Bible verse which it references: "And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature" (Luke 8:14; Revised Standard Version). The New International Version —used by PrisonNet—does not mention the fruit in its translation simply that, "they do not mature." This semantic difference is important to note because humans not maturing is different from not producing mature fruit, which is far from never being good for very much. In a place like prison which is designed in part to express society's devaluation of its incarcerated members, suggesting that those who do not accept Christianity will "never grow up to be good for much" is a strategy preying upon the low feelings of self worth of incarcerated people ("Choices" 2). The commentary of lack of worth comes across as the opinion of God. Not only is society judging the incarcerated people as not good enough for anything by placing them in prison, but until these people accept Christ they are no good in God's view.

This lesson also touches upon is the parable of the two men building houses. The New Revised Standard Version tells the story like this:

> 'Every one who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep, and laid the foundation upon rock; and when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house, and could not shake it, because it had been well

> built. But he who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation; against which the stream broke, and immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.' [Luke 6: 47]

This parable, like most in the Bible is not explained, but the lesson's commentary equates the house as people's lives, the foundations as basic values, the flood as troubles and the rock as solid faith ("Choices" 4). This parable does not promise that by founding one's life on solid faith that troubles can be avoided, but that by this foundation one will spiritually survive the turmoil.

One of the lesson's guided questions asks, "Why do you think the man the two men made such different choices?" And it goes on to answer it with a few suggestions for the leader to make sure come up in the conversation:

> Maybe the man who build [sic] his house without a solid foundation didn't know what he was doing.
> Maybe he didn't have enough money to build it right.
> Maybe he was lazy.
> Maybe he planned to sell it to someone who didn't know the difference, and get out of town before the first big rainstorm came! ("Choices" 4)

Before even discussing the implications of the individual answers, the fact that only the man who mis-built his house is discussed. Only people who have made the wrong decisions are ebing discussed. The Bible study assumes that those who are participating are like the wrong man because they are in prison, but that is not spoken out load. Since this is the first lesson, the incarcerated participants are not expected to be born again and have a house on the rock. One interpretation of this choice in the Bible study is that once they accept Jesus as their savior, and accept the discipline of a "Christian" life—as defined by these volunteer—their house will have a strong foundation and the storm that is prison or a life of crime will not break them down.

What does it mean if we are to accept any of the individually proposed answers? We can assume that both men knew about construction because the premise of the parable is that two people who know the word of God but only one chooses to believe and follow its guidance. The second seems to be a demonization of being poor and is particularly problematic in a prison setting given that the poor are systematically imprisoned. Furthermore, this is even more problematic for women, for whom the home is often a common theme of their lives. The third suggestion, that he was just lazy is the mainstream reason given for people going to prison: they were too lazy to get a job and climb up the latter. The final suggestion seems especially added for the prison context. Construction scams seem like something a little more recent than Jesus' time, and that response implies criminality, an offensive assumption that does not follow logically from the text.

The first lesson is setting the foundation for God's authority. The two stories presented both tell a similar message: God cares what you do thereforedo what God says. The lesson's Bible verses were chosen for their messages, that message is as the International Commentary explains, "Jesus warns his new disciples that they must show by their actions that they really are his followers in deed, not just in word" (Farmer 1390). This verse is intended to parallel the experience of those twelve disciples. Just like in the context of the Bible passage, this is directed to (assumed) new followers of the Bible. For that reason the importance of God's authority and the focus on changing behavior to meet God's standards, 'the themes of Lordship and discipleship are further emphasized in this story" (Adeyemo 1216). The participants are inundated with a new

authority to whom to submit. This clearly shows the desired change in human behavior as God's will.

Lesson Two

The second Bible lesson in the *Living in God's Kingdom* series is focused on Security ("Security"). Within the prison system, security is a serious issue and not to be taken lightly; ironically the message of this lesson is that those who try to find security are wrong to worry. Obviously, the types of security are different, but the choice in the title, "Security," was deliberate. Basic security of physical security—in PrisonNet's usage of the term—is assumed, as is the sovereignty of of the participants over their bodies. He security which PrisonNet advocates agasint is a security that the incarcerated people do not even have. Note that this lesson also begins with the Luke 17 verse on the kingdom of God as do the majority of the lessons. Because it has already been discussed within this chapter and is not prominent in the lesson let us move on to the second Bible passage. Financial security and the most basic needs of everyday life are those things discussed in these parables. However, working in slave labor (literally[25]) and having little power over one's basic needs such as food, shelter, and clothing is the reality of most incarcerated people. The Bible in this series is being used as a rule book of sorts with little critical analysis of the text or the nature of a God who would require these rules. This points to an unquestioningly obedient look rather than a critical eye.

The study's second text suggests that humans shouldn't worry about money. Luke 12:13-34 begins with Jesus being asked to arbitrate a conflict over money between two

[25] The 13th amendment writes slavery into the Constitution rather than out: "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction." Labor inside of prisons is slave labor.

brothers; he refuses and instead tells the story of a man who has more than enough grain in his barn and decides to retire, and but God kills him that night instead. “This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God” (Luke 12:21 NIV). From there Jesus tells of how God provides for the most temporal and insignificant of creatures and will thus surely provide for humans; therefore people should stop worrying about their material security.

In Jesus’ story, a rich man is punished for greed and his poor relationship with God (Luke 12:21). However, throughout the rest of the lesson’s planned discussion the issue of class is not mentioned. Is greed the same for those who have more than enough as those who do not have enough? In a setting where one has no possessions, nor a house or barn in which to store (future) possessions, how is this story understood to be about and directed toward the participants in the Bible study?

The story ends with a call to “sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Luke 12: 33-34 NIV). Again the class issues are apparent and rather surface level, but ignored by the Bible lesson’s material.

The study implies certain actions that are not reasonable in the situation of prison. First, it suggests that poverty would be accepted, instead of people attempting to build of earthly riches. This is a common romanticism of the poor as more Godly because they have no earthly treasure to keep them attached to the world, but it ignores the dehumanizing conditions of poverty. Actually, this Bible study compels the incarcerated

participants to accept middle class ideologies, but romanticizes their economic position of poor.

Some commentaries written (without a focus on imprisonment) suggest that the focus of the text is not for the poor to give up their greediness, but for more to be given to the poor. The entire gospel of Luke is focused on giving to the poor, a "persistent concern for the poor and a persistent call for radical change in the wealthy and powerful are widely recognized as strong characteristics of Luke" (Adeyemo 1229). This argument runs counter to the lessons actually being taught by PrisonNet. The analysis being suggested by scholars is focused on social justice. If the actions of anyone are being changed it is those in power, "Jesus warns against the habit of putting the things of this world first while denying others the right to life" (Adeyemo 1229). This critique is not to those being denied safe lives, it is to those refusing to confront the injustices of capitalist greed. Although the verse itself and the scholarship behind it seems clear about the intended audience—PrisonNet seems to suggest that those in prison are the rightful listeners and that their greed must be addressed before any other spiritual matters can be.

The unyielding structure of this lesson directs identification of the participants to the rich man or the man who is arguing with his brother over inheritance. It involves a de-specification of the wealth and class as well as an inherent assumption that God will and has provided for the listeners. In order for these lessons to be relevant or even effective forms of discipline they need to connect with the realitites of incarcerated people. Those who are not going to inherit from their family, or who will never be wealthy are taught

this lesson as though it applies to their lives. Assuming that it does apply reinforces the false idea of the American meritocracy and disregards structural racism.

If God cares for the grass and the lilies, what does it mean to recognize and question why God does not appear to care for all humans? These questions quickly lead to theodicy and away from moral lessons, so they are avoided and ignored by PrisonNet. However, it can also reinforce low self-esteem as one can easily ask 'what did I do to not deserve God's love and care?' The intended conversation is a lesson on how good Christians must love, but this class-washed conversation is in the midst of a classist place.

Lesson Three

In the third lesson forgiveness is framed as one of the most important laws/principles of the Kingdom of God. PrisonNet defines forgiveness as a "**decision** to relate to someone who has done wrong to you **as if it had never happened**" (author's emphasis) ("Forgiveness" 1). The parable used to illustrate this principle is that of the debtors, Matthew 18:21-35. In this story a king/master is collecting all the debts owed to him and decides to forgive one servant a huge debt—ten thousand talents. This servant is overjoyed but soon runs into a fellow servant who owes him a small amount—a hundred denarii. The first servant will not forgive this debt. When the master hears of this incident he un-forgives the servant and sells him and his family into slavery in order to rectify his large debt. This story is effective at reminding readers to let the small stuff go and to be grateful in receiving forgiveness and gracious in giving it.

However, the cycles within domestic abuse complicate the moral of this lesson. What do this parable and the heavenly mandate to perpetually forgive mean to a woman

in or recovering from a violent relationship? Cycles of domestic abuse explain that the abuser will ask for forgiveness each time, but it is part of the repetitive cycle, and can be expected to lead to abuse again. Forgiveness in abusive relationships can get an abused man or woman killed.

Forgiveness is pointed to as an absolute demand of a Christian life. PrisonNet poses it as the appropriate response to being wronged. In the parable Jesus tells the listeners are identified with the greatly indebted servant and the entire solution should have presumably been mercy and giving those in debt more time to make amends. This is the request often made of wives in abusive relationships. If she forgives her abuser or attacker even seven times will she live long enough to forgive another seventy times? If people suffering any injustice forgive and do not hold those causing injustices accountable, nothing will happen. Complacency to the system is being taught.

The question that is not being asked is how to eventually collect one's debt or achieve jsutice. For the king plans to collect the debt until he 'realizes that his servant, despite his promise, will never be able to pay back the debt. So he exercises mercy, cancels the debt and lets the servant go" (Adeyemo 1147). Mercy—absolute mercy—becomes a choice to be made and one choice in the many types of mercy. Further, this commentary suggests that if one could pay back the debt it would not be forgiven. Mercy becomes unclear in the commentaries—what exactly constitutes mercy? Certainly a full pardon of debt is within the bounds of mercy, but is an extension of the time limit within the bounds? This concept is not explored in the Bible study but must be addressed for the sake of day-to-day living.

This is designed to be a disciplining text and the first lesson reminds the participants that every action must be in line with God's law. The primary lesson taught in this Bible study is that if one does not forgive others she will not be forgiven by God. Especially with the assumption of guilt of a crime, most sins or debts against her become comparatively small. Forgiveness is a mandate of God—to not give it will result in not receiving it. In the parable the man was sold into slavery, but the implied punishment in PrisonNet's context is eternal damnation.

Extending forgiveness to a society that exercises structural racism or sexism allows the society to continue not to be accountable to the communities which are disenfranchised. Further, one's anger against systemic injustice can now be called the opposite of forgiveness and worthy of not receiving forgiveness in return; forgiveness is a dangerous thing to demand.

The irony of this lesson's moral is that it teaches that, "the mercy of God is unlimited, nevertheless there is divine rejection and condemnation with appropriate punishment" (Farmer 1308). It teaches that God forgives and accepts each human unconditionally, under the condition that each believer loves and accepts those around him or her. The unconditional mercy seems conditional. This rhetorical strategy reinforces the authority and disciplining nature of God. Without mentioning hell once the fear of that retribution enforces the actions of the participants.

This Bible study strategically edits out the verses immediately before the examined verse. Matthew 18: 15-17 is used to offer practical solutions to addressing violence:

> If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. (Revised Standard Version)

The approach of responding to the sin is far more appropriate than unconditional forgiveness for women and men in abusive relationships. Domestic abuse moves in cycles. After an instance of abuse there is generally a period of guilt, making up, or a honeymoon stage, in which the abuser sometimes asks for forgiveness, blames the victim, or minimizes the episode (Mid-Valley Women's Crisis Center, Turning Point, and DomesticViolence). This lesson suggests that instead of recognizing the cycle of abuse someone suffering abuse should forgive until she or he is killed. However, the Bible passage before the verse indicates that justice can be sought out within a Christian tradition. Domestic violence affects between 40 and 90 percent of incarcerated women, asking them to forgive those who treated them as less than human and at least partially caused the woman to come to prison is absurd and a clear disregard for the different realities and experiences of incarcerated women.

The structure of the Bible study stops a critical engagement with the concept and this specific understanding of forgiveness. On the other side of the coin, participants of the Bible study are warned that, "thinking that you don't need forgiveness is about the most serious spiritual mistake a person can make, and that's why Jesus told the religious leaders they were in deep trouble, even though they were very 'religious'" ("Forgiveness" 3). The servant's belief that he did not need forgiveness is the explanation given for why the first servant chose not to forgive the other person who owed him that

small amount. However, this seems like it is another way in which PrisonNet is indirectly addressing issues of crime rather than focused discussion of the Bible verse. Jesus does not explain this point. However, Prison administrations encourage recognizing one's guilt and visibly repenting. This discipline of individual responsibility is designed specficially for the prison context.

From there, the lesson moves on to discuss Luke 17: 3-4 in which Jesus instructs those around him to forgive people as many times as they seek forgiveness and repent ("Forgiveness" 4). However, the focus of this portion of the lesson is not on giving forgiveness; rather, it is on seeking forgiveness and acknowledging guilt, "the important principle here is 'repentance,' which mean a sincere desire and willingness to change" ("Forgiveness" 4). The Bible study shows its goal of transforming incarcerated people through Bible stories, rather than have a genuine conversation about spirituality or religion. This is neither the intended point of what Jesus says nor part of the emphasis in this lesson. One wonders why it is added at all. If the bible study took place in any other context, it would not be there at all. The prison context and the assumptions from it are the obvious reason for this kind of teaching. Jesus was calling on his disciples to forgive, not to ask for forgiveness. Remorse for one's crimes is a common and logical way or deciding if someone is rehabilitated. This requirement is directed at guilty people and people defined by their guilt. The Biblical teaching in this story is parallel to the previous verses discussed in the PrisonNet Bible study. The changed teaching—from the Biblical mandate to forgive to the PrisonNet mandate to ask for forgiveness—is another instance where prison and the individualistic disciplining are hidden within the text.

Lesson Four

The next lesson moves on to a discussion of love and what biblical love is. The authors are very careful to point out a difference between biblical love, or agape in this passage, and common conceptions of sexual love. There is no conversation about the Greek term agape. Instead, they define love as "trying to 'do good' for someone and it does not necessarily depend on whether that person shows love for you" ("Love" 1). This is an interesting definition; it is emphasized throughout the lesson that love is a choice, not an emotion. Loving is no longer necessarily a genuine emotion but a surface level action which could be understood as having ulterior motives, i.e. a commandment. Furthermore, the biblical translation (presumably of Matthew 5:44, which is not directly cited in this Bible lesson) says that people should love their enemies. However, PrisonNet says that people must *show* love to their enemies. This semantic change is almost unnoticeable but it either (or possible both) points to a new definition or understanding of love as manifest in concrete actions, or it points to a distancing of homosexuality and the possibility of one man or woman 'loving' another person of the same gender or sex. Although this conversation is not directly had, I posit that this is another case of shadowing anti-homosexual politics.

The Bible verse used in this lesson is the parable of The Good Samaritan. The Bible study prefaces the story with a little background about the conflict between the Samaritans and the Israelites. They say, "some of the problems were racial differences, and some were religious differences. The situation was not too different from the way the Israelis and the Palestinians feel about each other today!" ("Love" 1). This is an odd

choice of comparison in the Bible lesson as racial and religious conflicts are often manifest in prison settings or even US settings.

The story is from Luke 10:25-37 in which a man was beaten on the road near Jerusalem and left naked and half-dead. The first person, a priest, to pass him on the road crossed to the other side. A Levite, another high ranking Jewish official, passes by on the other side of the road, ignoring the wounded man as well. Finally, a Samaritan sees the man, saves his life by bandaging his wounds and taking him to an inn at which he pays the innkeeper and offers to pay for any additional expenses when he comes back that way. This is the kind of individual love-action that the Bible study is discussing.

But so much more is happening; Jesus is flipping the scales of righteousness in favor of this marginalized group over the high religious officials. This is a radical story and lesson, but the radical message gets lost in the conversation that PrisonNet dictates.Instead of focusing on the lowly position the Samaritan had in Jesus' society, and the parallels about how kind actions create righteousness rather than how society decides, or decrying the high religious officials and those in power for not caring for the nameless people falling through the cracks of the system or deliberately being ignored, PrisonNet makes this a disciplining moment in which to dictate how to live a Christian life.

The lesson materials even confuse one point in the Bible story: the man who was attacked has no identity. The readers, like those who pass by him, don't know if he is an Israelite or a Samaritan. The Bible lesson materials include one question asking what the risks of helping the injured man were for the Samaritan ("Love" 3). One answer is, "if some Samaritans came along, they might have given him trouble because he was helping

a Jew… one of 'them'" ("Love" 3). But this is not actually indicated in the original story. Rather, this is a story about the unlikely man helping a stranger, not a man helping his enemy. This does not change the nature of love in the story or the Bible study, but it changes the power dynamics of the story.

Conclusion

Whenever the Bible lesson material stray from a close reading of the lesson it is in order to push certain moral points, or abstractly reference the prison setting without naming it directly. Honesty and openness about when the lesson materials are trying to teach certain lessons or relate to the prison context would be appropriate. Honesty in the intentions of the divergences from Biblical text and context would help to clarify the moral being taught and the "Truth" of the Bible. The other primary criticism of this text has revolved around the confinement of the highly structured material. Without room for free thought and discussion of the many aspects of each of these stories can the stories really sink in, aside from the small portions examined by the structured lesson plans? If these volunteers want to coerce incarcerated people into certain actions they should apply to work in the prison as guards.

These lessons are not designed for conversations, they are lessons in correct action. The authors designed them like a teacher designs a lesson in writing cursive: "there is only one way to do it, it is not up for discussion, everyone will be able to clearly see if you practice, and you will need to use it for the rest of your life". More than disciplining into particular individualistically driven norms with no reference to social justice or systemic issues or white-supremacy or patriarchy PrisonNet's work rhetorically

erases over those issues. These Bible studies are designed not to free incarcerated people but to place another authority figure—God—above them; this figure is identified with the male pronoun, indicating another male authority. In women's prisons, the male authorities are guards. The 'new' male authority figure of God can easily be conflated with guards: guards are now agents of God, and God effectively becomes a guard. Further, the lessons would teach an unconditional forgiveness which is dangerous for those experiencing violence whether in their homes or while inside the prison. The lessons misidentify incarcerated people as always guilty and primarily greedy, instead of recognizing the conditions of prisons. In fact, those conditions are ignored by the Bible lessons, except to discuss the supposed identity understood as the sins of the incarcerated people. Not trusting God becomes the primary reason for sin, neglecting and un-founding the structural and individual injustices of the society. Finally, anti-homosexuality is implied in the lesson on love.

Chapter 6

What Can Be Done

Religions has been assumed to serve positive outcomes for incarcerated people beyond servicing spiritual needs. However, this thesis calls into question the work of the Religious Right inside of prisons. The sociological studies of religion in prison indicate that Christianity serves no measurable institutional positive. It neither lowers institutional deviance nor lowers recidivism. The religious program that showed the most positive effect was led by weekly volunteers entering the prison. The power of volunteers entering that highly hierarchical space is present but often invisible. Their choices in how they choose to conduct themselves in relation to the incarcerated people they meet with determine the extent to which they discipline in the Foucaultian sense. The role of discipline has changed to be more subtle and invisible, for that reason many volunteers might not realize their role in a technology of discipline, and that makes their work even more apt to fall into it. However, volunteers can choose to be aware of this and make the choice to try to avoid it.

Breaking down barriers between incarcerated and non-incarcerated people is one primary way in which to avoid discipline—this, however, is being done far too little. Focusing on discussion and conversation in which each experience is valued is an example of such a strategy. However, because of the dogmatic structure of much conservative Christian theology, there is little opportunity to engage in this type of conversation. Instead, many of the volunteers are reinforcing, instead of destabilizing, the power structures within the prison. The importance of having an applicable moral lesson for each Bible study indicates the reality of this disciplining within Bible studies. The

shadowing of the prison context and socio-economic injustices exemplify the invisibility of the disciplining as well.

The disciplines being enforced are more than prison discipline. The Religious Right is strategically mobilizing people of color, incarcerated/formerly incarcerated people, and men to support the Religious Right's political agenda. The rhetoric of racial reconciliation is a mask for white-supremacy, and the call upon men to take responsibility for their families is "soft-patriarchy." These political stances reinforce their anti-gay-rights movement and the movements against women's right to sovereignty over their own bodies, but more than that they also work against the very communities that are supporting them. Through the rhetoric and strategic identification Prison Fellowship depoliticizes these communities and asserts that political processes will not solve issues of racism, oppression,[26] or injustices in the Prison Industrial Complex.

The Religious Right would not have the power to do this if other religious groups were making their voices heard (and hearing the voices of incarcerated people) inside of prisons. Within Protestantism Evangelicals are the vast majority of those volunteering in prisons. Groups with differing theological and political opinions must enter the prisons in order to at least offer incarcerated people a choice. Incarcerated men and women are looking for a theology that liberates rather than the current option which tends "to be doctrinaire in the rigid dogmatic sense. They smack of external demands for conformity. Rather than liberate, then tend to incarcerate, but now in chains on the mind" (Barbera135). There must be at least an option for incarcerated people to choose from.

[26] Oppression, in this rhetoric, is re-defined to include mainstream Christianity in the US. It also strategically confuses persecution and not being supported by others.

In societies entirely of women, such as Prisons for women, women from the outside must enter the prison without a man to show that independence is possible, acceptable, and celebratory. How volunteers enter (with or without spouses) is a statement of one's politics and a disciplining force. As long as female volunteers only enter with their husbands, incarcerated women will only see that marriage is a mandatory obligation, even if they have a history of domestic violence. If women choose to enter the prison without the 'protection' of their husbands it shows a different attitude, not only are women in a safer space to share experiences of womanhood (however that is defined) but also being reminded of the freedom of not being under a man's control (I mention this as a reminder that all the men in these prisons work for the prison, and have control over the incarcerated women).

Not only must more people of a diversity of mindsets and experiences enter prisons, but once out of prison formerly incarcerated people must be accepted into the communities they are now entering. Without question, having the ability to enter someone else's community without their ability to reciprocate is a form of power. People who have never been incarcerated must recognize that power, and choose not to let it be exercised, not by avoiding prison (for the power is in being *able* to enter) but in welcoming others into their communities, and supporting them as they get settled.

Of course, more academic research must also be done. No work has been done on the Religious Right's work inside of women's prisons. Because of how they view women, subservient to men, this is an interesting space to study. Neither the actions of the Religious Right inside of women's prisons nor the results of those works have been

studied as of yet. These questions must be addressed. Although the majority of incarcerated people are male, prisoners are both male and female. As long as the reality/sex/experience of the studied prisoner is only male, women (both inside of prisons and outside) are excluded from these conversations. Mankind is not humankind.

Further, the instances of racial reconciliation by the Religious Right inside of prisons must be studied by ethnographers. One assumes that their rhetoric inside of prisons is the same as outside on this issue, but that cannot be known. Similarly, Promise Keepers, which hosts events inside and outside of prisons should be studied for differences or similarities in their programs depending upon location.

An issue which was only mentioned in passing is the conflation of "prison homosexuality" and "prison rape." Women's experiences of companionship in prison which are often deemed as homosexual are generally opposite of the stereotyped instances of prison rape in male's prisons. This rhetoric must be further investigated and compared to the reality of both men's and women's prisons.

The experiences and the leanings of prison chaplains has not been surveyed. Do many of them encourage the disciplining of the state and/or the Religious Right? Are their services ecumenical enough to allow for a conversation between different theological and political view points? In what ways do they support of impair religious groups attempting to enter the prison for Bible studies and fellowship?

The reality is that much of this field is unstudied and ignored. The imprisoned population of the United States is often an invisible population; the incarcerated women are invisible within the imprisoned population; and their experiences of religion, god,

spirituality, and the transcendent are invisible. A light must be shined upon those experiences and these people must be redeemed, not through conversion or repentance, but through society's embracing of their experiences.

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