Christian Literature and Social Justice:

A Literary Analysis

DISSERTATION

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Abstract

The problem confronted in this study is that preexisting beliefs will influence both what an individual gains from the teacher education experience and what will be transferred into future classroom practice (Villegas, 2007). Social justice education frequently meets with resistance (Conklin, 2008; van Gorder, 2007; Villegas, 2007), and resistance to social justice is frequently attributed to Christian morality (Haidt & Graham, 2007). The purpose of this study is to examine the role of Christian literature in the development of social justice epistemologies among teachers. The study, utilizing both Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Evaluation Coefficient (ECO) analysis, seeks to fulfill the purpose of the study by examining the role of Christian literature in the development of social justice epistemologies among teachers by analyzing the best-selling selections at bookstores associated with two mega churches, those with at least 2000 weekly attendants (Beer, 2009), in central Ohio. The data from this study does not reveal a link between resistance to social justice education and Christian literature; however, it does align with literature in social justice scholarship that can provide insight for teacher educators. In addition, the data from this study indicates additional areas in which resistance may be encountered, namely religious diversity and critical lenses.
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Vita

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine the role of Christian literature in the
development of social justice epistemologies among teachers. Individuals develop their
epipistemological positions on social justice as a result of multiple influences, including
family, culture, and religious communities (Reed, 2008). While there are many
influences on the development of an epistemological stance regarding social justice, one
of the components that merits examination is religion. There is little literature regarding
resistance to social justice that is based in a perception of Christian morality (Haidt &
Graham, 2007; Reed, 2008), though scholars are beginning to see the important role
religion can have on both teaching and learning (Blumenfeld, 2006; Subedi 2006; van
Gorder, 2007). As the dominant religion in the American religious landscape, and one
experiencing increasingly politicization, some interpretation of Christianity is a lens
through which many preservice teachers perceive their studies. As is the case in the
academy, the nature of social justice is also contested among the various Christian
worldviews. As the debates regarding social justice continue, insight into how social
justice is presented to groups enjoying religious dominance, and a resurgence in overt
political and social power (Apple, 2006), could prove instructive in addressing resistance
attributed to Christian faith. Learning more about Christian perspectives on social
justice, and the role texts have in codifying and reifying them, could enable teacher educators to create more effective social justice educational experiences and materials.

**Background**

Due to changing demographics in the United States, and the ongoing homogeneity of the teaching profession, significant commitments to training preservice teachers will be required if they are to be prepared for the challenging task of filling knowledge gaps, interrogating dominant assumptions, and creating space for voices of difference (Subedi, 2006; see also Butin, 2006; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Marshall, 2006; van Gorder, 2007). Conklin (2008), citing McDonald, refers to the issue as the demographic imperative, described as “the convergent challenges of an increasingly diverse student population; teachers whose lived experiences differ markedly from those of their students; and the gap in educational opportunities and outcomes” that characterizes public education in the United States (p. 655). Before they can lead their classes in transformational learning, described as that which occurs when a new awareness changes the way we perceive ourselves, others, and the world around us (Cole, 2011), preservice teachers must first experience it themselves. Blumenfeld (2006), Cochran-Smith (2004), Eck (2006), and Marshall (2006) all suggest activities teacher education programs can employ to encourage students to interrogate their own assumptions and replace them with more inclusive perspectives. Social justice education, itself an acknowledgement of the larger need for individual and societal transformation through interrogations of dominant assumptions, is frequently met with resistance by preservice teachers (Conklin, 2008; van Gorder, 2007; Villegas, 2007).
Many preservice teachers will be introduced to explicit instruction regarding social justice for the first time as part of their teacher education programs (Conklin, 2008; van Gorder, 2007). However, their perception of the issues commonly associated with social justice, such as race, class, gender, and sexuality, can lead to resistance to social justice education. Preservice teacher resistance to social justice education can begin to subtly form based on exposure to biased portrayals of social justice issues at an earlier stage in their socialization. Preservice teachers who have been exposed to negative portrayals of social justice and its related issues may experience discomfort when introduced to the theoretical groundings that push curriculum and materials design into more egalitarian spaces. The values embraced and encouraged by their professors may be in opposition with familial and other sub-group values (Faiman-Silva, 2002).

When values and ideologies collide, reactions can be quite vehement if adherents have internalized ideologies and create identities around them. Individuals who disagree can cease being perceived in such neutral terms and can begin to be seen only as adversarial Others. Students from dominant groups frequently resist (Young, 2011) and take refuge in what DiAngelo and Sensoy (2009) call opinion discourse, during which students whose ideologies are challenged refuse to acknowledge the validity of non-dominant perspectives and insist on relegating them to the easily-discarded status of opinions (see also van Gorder, 2007). Students can be so thoroughly “entrenched in their own subjective spaces--physically, historically, and affectively” that they have great difficulty refraining from “framing the discourse in familiar categories of sameness and difference or ‘self’ and ‘other’” (Faiman-Silva, 2002, p. 191). Consequently, it is not just
“others” who are defined by their positions; each group’s identity is increasingly solidified and caricatured as disagreement turns to militancy. The lack of depth and complexity in curricular supports in these interactions (Subedi, 2010) only exacerbates the likelihood of conflict and resistance in diverse educational settings.

Santora (1995) argues that educators must confront these difficulties, saying that teachers “have a responsibility for building classroom communities that confront controversy and take responsibility for creating a better community, one that values diversity and human integrity and fights inhumanity” (p. 21 - 22). Her words remind us that embracing the political nature of our work in an effort to make learning spaces more inclusive does not mean indoctrinating our students for the benefit of particular political party or side in the culture wars, but instead encouraging our students to embrace a politics of mindfulness and the interconnectivity of all humanity, with goals of peace and justice (Dillard, 2006). Merrett (2004) describes the work of the educator as that of a mediator between society and the individual, a mediator that must choose between “an uncritical, ‘neutral’ education that supports the status quo or choose to empower students to question dominant ideas, possibly leading to social change” (p. 93).

Statement of the Problem

The problem confronted in this study is that preexisting beliefs will influence both what an individual gains from the teacher education experience and what will be transferred into future classroom practice (Villegas, 2007). Social justice education frequently meets with resistance (Conklin, 2008; van Gorder, 2007; Villegas, 2007), and resistance to social justice is frequently attributed to Christian morality (Haidt & Graham,
Teacher educator Cynthia Tyson, deeply committed to social justice education, described an interaction with a student in which the student explained her resistance by asserting that she could not engage in social justice and multicultural education because they embraced multiple perspectives; multiple perspectives were in conflict with her religious commitment to only one perspective. This dominant negative view of social justice within Christianity, however, is not the only narrative. There has been an increased interest in aligning the goals of social justice with the goals of Christianity since the 1960s (Bakken, Engel, and Engel, 1995). The alignment is demonstrated by a growing awareness that justice in poverty, education, and environmentalism are valid concerns within the Christian narrative and history (Ciara-Cruz, 2006; Murphy & Cooperman, 2006; Paris, 2008; Parry, 2006). With this awareness comes the knowledge that the “Christian tradition...does not provide one or two ...mutually exclusive...systems of moral reasoning (e.g., ‘conservative’ versus ‘liberal’)” (Smith, 2000, p. 11; see also Apple, 2006). The competing narratives regarding Christian social justice are illustrated by the intense public debate between notable proponent Jim Wallis and prominent critic Glenn Beck that took place in 2010.

Beck, a Fox News on-air personality, instructed viewers to “leave congregations that refer to social justice or economic justice,” even if only on their website, comparing social justice Christians to Nazis and communists (“Beck’s World,” 2010, p. 9). Beck also encouraged viewers to report their religious leaders to church authorities (Wallis, 2010). The response from Christian organizations committed to social justice included online petitions; Sojourners created a petition in which signers turned themselves in to
Beck (Wallis, 2012), while Bread for the World created a petition calling for Beck to “quit using [his] bully pulpit to spread disinformation and fear” (“Beck’s World,” 2010, p. 9). Even Beck’s own faith community, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, publically declared its support for social justice and distanced itself from Beck (Wallis, 2010). Wallis invited Beck to participate in public debate; Beck declined and continued to engage in on-air personal attacks on and threats to Wallis (Wallis, 2010).

As the feud between the two unofficial spokesmen developed in the media, Christian social justice became flashpoint in the culture wars. Despite the engagement it produced from adherents to both philosophies, the effect it had on developing perspectives of social justice was largely unaddressed.

The paucity of literature on the effect Christian narratives have on social justice epistemologies is problematic. In an example of the margin becoming the center, Christianity is now largely correlated with the evangelical movement, marked by a willingness to apply religious identification to public issues (Apple, 2006). Driven by a complex set of ideologies, evangelicals, commonly referred to as the Religious Right of the Republican party, are an overtly political group with a developed and articulated plan for reforming education that includes influencing, if not controlling, what will be taught and how it will be taught (Apple, 2006).

Due to their effectiveness, scholars and educators committed to teaching for a more equitable society disregard them at our own peril. As Apple (2006) asserts:

Not only are rightist social movements exceptionally powerful now, but one of the most important elements of learning how to interrupt them is to understand what they did and do. Rightist movements have engaged in a vast social and ideological project. Examining how this has worked and why it has been
successful can tell those of us who oppose it how it might best be countered. In my mind, if you want to stop the right, it is absolutely critical to study what it did (p. 7).

Though Apple’s (2006) explanation of his purpose here is adversarial, his larger work is a nuanced acknowledgement of how “a coalition of forces with many different emphases” has intentionally framed Christianity in an effort to meet needs it perceives as legitimate and based in common sense (p. 7). Apple’s (2006) aims are much larger than those of this study; he seeks to understand and respond to a powerful and organized social movement, while this study seeks to examine the role of Christian literature in the development of social justice epistemologies among teachers. Understanding Christian perspectives on social justice, and the role texts have in codifying and reifying them, will prepare teacher educators to more effectively navigate resistance to social justice education based in perceptions of Christian morality.

**Purpose and Significance**

The purpose of this study is to examine the role of Christian literature in the development of social justice epistemologies among teachers. While there are certainly additional factors in the development of social justice epistemologies, there is little literature regarding resistance to social justice that is based in a perception of Christian morality (Haidt & Graham, 2007; Reed, 2008). As teachers’ “beliefs are powerful filters…teacher educators cannot ignore their students’ entering and developing beliefs” (Villegas, 2007, p. 373). When resistance occurs, we must determine from where it comes so that it can be effectively addressed in teacher education programs. Because teacher education programs remain largely populated with students espousing at least a
culturally Christian worldview (Subedi, 2006), this study examines literature popular in two central Ohio mega churches to determine if there is any evidence for the genesis of resistance to social justice education in popular Christian literature. Data on Christian perspectives on social justice, and the role texts have in codifying and reifying them, could enable scholars to create more effective social justice educational experiences and materials.

Though there are many ways in which Christian narratives are dispersed, including music, local sermons, media, and community events, the focus of this study is on texts from two central Ohio mega churches. The selection of literature as the focus of study was intentional, though it obviously represents only a small slice of the factors that contribute to social justice epistemologies among Christians. Written texts represent an intentional and developed presentation of the ideas within, unlike the possibly "spontaneously” and prematurely presented ideas that can be found verbal communication (Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009, p. 1031). The intentionality and thoughtfulness of the written word are indicative of the ways in which it is used for “archival” purposes, making it “a form for the preservation of significant meanings across generations” (Olson, 1980, p. 186). The intergenerational connection and longevity made possible through the archived and preserved words found in intentionally composed texts can provide a sense of authority, as the words are in some ways divorced from a speaker and made “impersonal, objective, and above criticism” (Olson, 1980, p. 192).
Research Questions

Learning more about Christian perspectives on social justice, and the role texts have in codifying and reifying them, could enable scholars to more effectively address resistance to social justice education. The research questions for this study are a) what religious literature is being read by Christians attending two mega churches central Ohio and b) what are the social justice curricula discussed in these texts and how are they presented?

The first question in the line of inquiry focuses on reading materials provided to and selected by readers in two central Ohio mega churches. The Christian Bible is the most widely read text among adherents; however, as in many religious traditions, there exists a virtual universe of expository, apologetic, or thematic texts designed to assist believers in their religious training and experience. Identifying popular texts within two exemplar Christian communities can provide insight into the various needs readers attempt to meet through their selections, as well as how their communities act to meet those needs through texts. In addition, identifying popular texts will provide access to the instructional cues that are being presented to readers. Popular reading selections of those within the communities could prove instructive in identifying their philosophical and social commitments, as well as indicate the direction of developing trends within the community.

The second question in the line of inquiry builds upon the first; identifying popular texts within two central Ohio mega churches will provide examples of ways in which social justice curricula are being presented to members of the community. As
discussed in the *Statement of the Problem*, social justice has become an increasingly common term in Christian discourse, portrayed both positively and negatively. While some texts will likely include explicit discussions of social justice issues because of its recent notoriety within Christianity, it is probable that some texts will not, as the scope of Christian literature is quite broad. However, even those that do not directly address social justice or related issues may still be providing cues to readers regarding how to perceive these issues.

While understanding the explicit textual cues regarding social justice is valuable, insight into the implicit assumptions about social justice may be even more useful. When explicitly discussed in a text, readers have the opportunity to analyze the argument and consciously accept or reject it. This is not the case with implicit assumptions, as they instruct in such a way that readers will likely be “unaware of having been taught anything” (Portelli, 1993, p. 348). Understanding how social justice and related issues, such as race, class, gender, and sexuality, are implicitly presented to the exemplar Christian communities could prove instructive in addressing resistance to social justice language, ideas, and initiatives.

*Organization of the Study*

The following chapters will provide the reader with an overview of current popular Christian literature and an analysis of its portrayal of social justice and related issues. Chapter One established the *Background* of the study, as well as the *Statement of the Problem*, the *Purpose and Significance* of the study, and the *Research Questions*. The Literature Review in Chapter Two will develop the discussion on the topics
introduced in Chapter One, including an overview of Social Justice Education and teacher Resistance to Social Justice Education. The discussions will include the complexities of identifying a working definition of social justice and the controversies commonly associated with it. Chapter Two will also include a brief section on Identity, with discussions on the significance of religion, literature, and community, as teacher identity plays a significant role in resistance to social justice education.

Chapter Three will describe the design of the study, including descriptions of the Research Sites and process of Book Acquisition. Following these descriptions will be a discussion of the Tools of Analysis, including sections on Critical Discourse Analysis and Evaluation Coefficient Analysis, as well as a section on Triangulation. Chapter Three will conclude with a discussion regarding the impact of Paradigm and Researcher Positionality.

Chapter Four will include a report of the results, which will begin with an Author Analysis, focusing on author homogeneity, and the Coefficients of Evaluation by Author. A brief discussion of the Physical Attributes of the Books will be followed by the Analyses and Triangulation data. Data in this final section will be organized by Location and Research Question, with Question Two broken down by theme.

Finally, Chapter Five will discuss Implications for Teacher Education, including segments on Multivocality, Religious Difference, and the Educational Elite. Sections for the Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Further Study will follow.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

This literature review will begin with a discussion of social justice education, focusing on situating it in the larger field of education by demonstrating its congruity with the fields of multicultural education and critical theory. It will then consider the literature regarding resistance to social justice education, and will conclude with an overview of the impact of community, literature, and religion on identity.

Social Justice Education

Social justice education embraces multivocality, applies critical lenses, and has an explicit interest in learning, teaching, and acting from a stance of equity. It has much in common with, and owes much to, multicultural studies in education and critical theory; it also shares the criticisms and resistance faced by these fields.

Multicultural Education

Multicultural studies in education can generally be described as seeking to equalize access to, and quality of, education for all students (Banks, 1996). Bennett (2001) describes the initial growth of multicultural education in the mid-20th Century as a “hopeful and idealistic” result of the turbulent decades of the Civil Rights Movement (p.171; see also Banks, 2004). Her description is supported by the focus of early multicultural education scholarship on the cultural and academic needs of minority students in newly desegregated schools. However, the initial issues-based scholarship
born of desegregation gave way to broader conceptual frameworks in the 1970s (Bennett, 2001). Focus began to shift from preparing students, teachers, and communities for their new experiences, interactions, and expectations; scholars were now beginning to considering larger issues of equity. Born out of a concern for difference and equality, and evolving organically over time, the field of multicultural education has come to include a variety philosophies and pedagogies which can be difficult to conceptualize.

Bennett (2001) organized the scholarship within multicultural studies into four Clusters according to common themes and interests, which roughly mirror Banks’ (1993) Levels of Content Integration. The evolution of the field, as is evidenced by the consecutive Clusters, also demonstrates the increasing depth, and disruptiveness, of multicultural studies. It begins with interrogating what we teach, proceeding into interrogations of how we teach, culminating in interrogations of why we teach, including transformational goals on both the personal/interpersonal and societal levels.

The first Cluster focuses on Curriculum Reform, and would generally coincide with Banks’ (1993) Levels One and Two, respectively, the Contributions and Additive Approaches to Content Integration (Bennett, 2001). Research and scholars within this field assert that all knowledge is constructed, and the knowledge privileged in public education is Eurocentric and reinforces racism (Bennett, 2001). Bennett’s (2001) second Cluster, Equity Pedagogy, affirms that children’s unique strengths and cultural heritages influence how they learn. Equity Pedagogy studies also emphasize that the purpose of public education is to facilitate all student achievement to each child’s individual potential. Scholarship in the Equity Pedagogy Cluster roughly corresponds to Banks’
(1993) Third Level of Content Integration, that of the Transformation Approach. At the second level of multicultural scholarship, we must interrogate how we teach as well as what we teach, ensuring that the environment is safe and inviting to all students.

The third Cluster endeavors to reduce prejudice and create multicultural individuals, and thus is named Multicultural Competence (Bennett, 2001); this Cluster also generally corresponds to Banks’ (1993) Third Level of Content Integration, the Transformation Approach. In Bennett’s (2001) Equity Pedagogy Cluster, the transformational goal is focused on the learning environment; in the Multicultural Competence Cluster, the transformational goal is focused on the learners. Bennett’s (2001) final Cluster, Societal Equity, is based on the idea that change is not only necessary, but beneficial to fundamental American ideals such as democracy. The final Cluster corresponds to Banks’ (1993) Fourth Level of Content Integration, the Social Action Approach. The key concept in the Societal Equity Cluster is power and involves interrogating who has it, how is it (re)produced, and how can we equalize access to it; the transformational goal is at the societal level.

**Social Justice Education**

Just as interrogating the possession and use of power is the aim of the Societal Equity cluster, it is the hallmark of social justice education, which Martin and Smolen (2010) describe as an examination “of power in terms of gender, racial or ethnic background, and socioeconomic status” (p. 425). Despite its ubiquitous presence in education literature, there exist persistent difficulties related to identifying the core concerns and parameters of social justice education (Merrett, 2004). Indeed, many of the
texts that encourage a social justice perspective fail to specify what it means (Buettner-Schmidt & Lobo, 2011; Dover, 2009; Heybach, 2009; Hytten and Bettez, 2011; Miller, 1999; Novak, 2000; for example see Darling-Hammond, French, and Garcia-Lopez, 2002). When descriptors are attached to social justice education, they often vary according to author intent and target audience.

For example, themes from philosophical and conceptual literature include transformation, empowerment, power, identity, social construction, and liberation (Quin, 2009), while themes from practical literature include examining equity outcomes, crossing boundaries, empathy, vision, interrogation, and engages in the interchangeable use of the phrases “teaching for social change” (Darling-Hammond, French, and Garcia-Lopez, 2002) and “equity-oriented” (Carlisle, Jackson, and George, 2006). The variety of descriptions of social justice education likely stem from the divergent views of what issues it needs to address and what it looks like in practice; for example, some equity scholars focus on content or pedagogy and teacher/staff training, while others focus on issues of access and economic opportunity (Dover, 2009).

In the same way Bennett’s (2001) article provides a manageable framework for the scholarship in multicultural education, Hytten and Bettez’s (2011) literature review organizes scholarship in the arguably more complex field of social justice education. Hytten and Bettez’s (2011) framework consists of five categories, including philosophical/conceptual, practical, ethnographic/narrative, theoretically specific, and democratically grounded scholarship.
Philosophical/Conceptual Category

The first category, concerned with the philosophical groundings and theoretical concepts of social justice, seeks to clarify conceptions of justice, identify the systemic nature of injustice, and trace the historical roots of philosophies of non-dominant resistance. Hytten and Bettez (2011) note that many scholars in the Philosophical/Conceptual category utilize conceptions of social justice from fields other than education, including politics and the philosophies of Kant, Mills, and Rawls. It is in this first category that the goals and methods of social justice, perpetually “elusive and contested,” are debated (Merrett, 2004, p. 93; see also Miller, 1999). Merrett (2004) compares the situation of scholars within social justice education to those within geography, who have “been trying to define its scope of study almost from its inception,” when he explains that “while we may not have one single definition… we do have a working definition which sustains the discipline” (p. 94).

Though social justice is commonly associated with distributive justice, to the extent that the terms are sometimes used interchangeably (Miller, 1999), there is some debate within the field regarding procedural justice versus distributional justice. Procedural justice maintains that the outcome of the system cannot be held as the assessment of its justice (Miller, 1999). Merrett (2004) describes procedural justice as that which provides “equality of opportunity” and focuses on “civil liberties,” which emphasizes individual and property rights (p. 94). He describes distributional justice as that which provides “equality of outcomes” and focuses on “relational justice,” which
emphasizes concern for the community that embraces a redistribution of wealth (Merrett, 2004, p. 94).

Though both systems have some merit, the policy implications of the two systems illustrate the implicit tension between their respective focus on positive freedoms versus negative freedoms. Norman Rockwell’s iconic *Four Freedoms* series is useful in providing examples of positive and negative freedoms. His *Freedom of Speech* piece is representative of a positive freedom, while his *Freedom from Want* piece is representative of a negative freedom. Positive freedoms are those things we desire to have, while negative freedoms are those we desire to avoid; both types of freedom are valuable, though sometimes in conflict. Procedural justice would entail “minimal welfare” and “unequal school funding” (Merrett, 2004, p. 94), ideas which would be anathema to many social justice educators who adhere to Rawls’ (1999) difference principle, which argues that “society must give more attention to those with fewer native assets and to those born into the less favorable social positions” (p. 86). When it does not, “there is an inverse correlation of liberty between the rich and the poor” (van Gorder, 2007). Echoing George Bernard Shaw, Merrett (2004) explains:

‘Liberty means responsibility.’ If we agree that…democracy requires us to…respect the freedom of others as you would have them respect yours - then we see the potential for conflict between libertarians who prioritize individual rights above all else versus those who adopt a community-oriented distributive perspective (p. 95).

The increasing focus on procedural justice despite its limitations may be a reflection of the changing measure of freedom. Apple (2006) argues that as “consumer culture has grown, the measures of freedom’s success has moved away from issues involving, say,
the social relations surrounding paid and unpaid labor and has moved toward the
gratification of market desires” (p. 12).

There are also diverging opinions regarding the methods that should be used to
attain social justice. One camp lobbies for justice through material redistribution, while
the other supports justice through cultural recognition (North, 2006). The tension lies in
the fact that focus on one may lead to the neglect of the other; Miller (1999) reports
scholarship indicating that “as societies become multicultural, issue of material
distribution decline in political significance, to be replaced by issues of cultural
recognition” (p. 252-253). However, North (2006) embraces the tension between the two
ideals and affirms that both are necessary for social justice to be realized. Despite, or
possibly because of, the tensions within the field, scholars meet the challenge creatively
by “fight[ing] for justice while simultaneously constructing what that is” (Tyson, 2008).
Tyson and Park (2006) aptly describe the work of the social justice educator as that of
“moving toward social justice as both a process and a goal” (p. 23; see also Miller, 1999).

Heybach (2009) goes so far as to embrace the ambiguity, arguing that “to
concretely ‘define’ social justice in a formulaic way…would tame its insurgent
democratic nature” (p. 239). With deference to the ongoing debates, but out of necessity,
social justice will be defined, for the purpose of this study, as purposely acting, and in the
case of educators, teaching, from a stance that embraces multivocality, applies critical
lenses, and has an explicit interest in societal equity. While such conceptual work and
debate are necessary in the development of any discipline, educators have difficulty in its
application (Hytten and Bettez, 2011).
Practical Category

Concerns of application are addressed by the second category, focused on the practical application of social justice education, which addresses more pragmatic issues. Scholarship on the Practical category of social justice education provides educators with descriptions of the goals of teachers, and the skills desired for students, engaged in social justice education. In this category, we see much overlap with multicultural scholarship, particularly with Bennett’s (2001) Equity Pedagogy Cluster. An instructive example is Ladson-Billings’ (1995) conception of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP), which has many components in common with Carlisle, Jackson, and George’s (2006) and Dover’s (2009) principles of social justice education.

CRP rejects the notions that traditional education frameworks are sufficient and academic failure is due to a deficiency in students or their communities. Instead, it challenges educators to interrogate dominant expectations, activities, and assessments. Pollock (2008) describes the need for interrogating dominant pedagogy, explaining that “students of color may be particularly vulnerable in white-dominated spaces to experiencing student and teacher behaviors as exclusionary or stigmatizing” (p. 227; see also Lee, 2005; Morrell, 2008). These exclusions and stigmas affect students of difference because most of our traditional classrooms are unfairly biased against the cultural norms of minority students (Delpit, 1995; Nieto, 1999).

An attempt to balance bias, CRP is not necessarily linked to any particular teaching style; instead, it is a commitment to a philosophy of teaching and learning (Ladson-Billings, 1995; see also Tisdell, 2006). These teacher commitments include a
positive perception of themselves and their students; a sense of belonging and responsibility to the community of their students; the fostering of a mutually responsible learning community in the classroom; and a conception of knowledge that encourages critique and allows for growth (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Social justice frameworks, such as Carlisle, Jackson, and George’s (2006) model and Dover’s (2009) model, maintain the contextual community-specific situation of knowledge, learning, teaching, and assessment found in Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, and then include additional principles related to teaching and activism regarding societal inequities (Nieto, 1999).

Though not all scholarship in social justice education explicitly discusses diversity (Quin, 2009), it features greatly in the Practical category (for examples, see Carlisle, Jackson, and George, 2006; Darling-Hammond, French, and Garcia-Lopez, 2002; Dover, 2009). Indeed, Nieto (1999) characterizes an affirmation of diversity as the heart of social justice. While the models provided in this category are particularly useful in assessing programs and institutions, they are critiqued as being context-specific and as lacking wider applicability and inspiration for instituting social justice education (Hytten and Bettez, 2011).

Ethnographic/Narrative Category

The third category, Ethnographic/Narrative scholarship, provides inspiration for instituting education for social justice. Described by Hytten and Bettez (2011) as “passionate and evocative,” these pieces are grounded in the lived experiences of the authors and often provide a moral imperative for social justice education (p. 14). Notable scholars in the Ethnographic/Narrative category include Jonathan Kozol and bell hooks;
their works are widely used, as they “appeal especially to students and educators who are new to social justice…as they are viscerally moved by experiences that are both resonant with, and foreign to, their own” (Hytten and Bettez, 2011).

Theoretically Specific Category

The fourth and fifth categories are organized around scholarship not necessarily born from the experiences or theories specifically associated with education, but from scholarship that sees itself as intrinsically engaged in creating a more just society. The works of the fourth category, Theoretically Specific scholarship, are the application to education of common critical lenses, such as feminism, postcolonialism, and critical race theory. Miller (1999) argues that “social justice has always been, and must always be, a critical idea, one that challenges us to reform our institutions and practices in the name of greater fairness” (p. x). Social justice and critical theory share a commitment to the interrogation of the possession and use of power, and many of the lenses that have developed out of critical theory are invaluable to social justice education, as they identify and interrogate issues that fall under the umbrella of social justice. Much of the work in the field of social justice education continues to be done by and based in the lived experiences of historically Othered scholars; this fact is evidenced by the significant role critical theorists in the fields of “multiculturalism, … feminism, queer theory, … Whiteness theory, cultural studies, globalization, postcolonialism, critical race theory, Latino(a) crit, and tribal crit” continue to play in developing social justice education (Hytten and Bettez, 2011, p. 15). The basis for all of these specific lenses is critical theory.
Critical theory is traced back to the work of the Frankfurt School and Habermas, though its historical roots extend back to Marx and the philosophes (Agger, 1991; Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2007; Held, 1980; Maddock, 1999). The Frankfurt School refers to a group of interdisciplinary scholars, including Horkheimer, Adorno, and Marcuse, that worked together in the Institute of Social Research (Held, 1980). Scholars in the Frankfurt School were concerned with institutional influences on history as they affect our understanding of concepts like reason and truth (Held, 1980). While there was considerable diversity in their opinions, they generally believed that institutions could be (re)formed so that they would promote freedom and justice, but also acknowledged how difficult (re)formation would be; their concerns, therefore, were with both “interpretation and transformation” of social systems (Held, 1980, p. 15). The interdisciplinary work of the Frankfurt School in developing critical theory challenged many of the accepted models of academic inquiry and social theory in pursuit of a praxis that would transform society.

Habermas, who worked as Adorno’s assistant, became the preeminent critical theorist of the next generation (Agger, 1991; Held, 1980). His different types of knowledge, or cognitive interest, are useful in situating critical theory. Habermas accepted that all knowledge is contextual and imbued with interests from its positionality; these knowledges, and their implicit ideologies, are “the means through which we organize our daily experience” (Ewert, 1991, p. 347). His first cognitive interest, technical knowledge, is invested in prediction and control; its function is to maintain the status quo, keeping the power dynamic as it is (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2007).
Habermas’s second cognitive interest, practical knowledge, is interested in understanding and interpretation; it acknowledges the social construction of reality, but does not explicitly challenge it (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2007).

However, Habermas’s third cognitive interest, emancipatory knowledge, is invested in emancipation and freedom; it seeks to “expose the operation of power and to bring about social justice” (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2007, p. 28). Emancipatory knowledge, Habermas argued, does not invalidate the other knowledges; it is an extension of their descriptive potential into the goal of explanation and rectification of unfree situations created by distorted knowledge (Ewert, 1991). While Habermas’s conception of emancipation takes place on a personal level, the process is rooted in a communal perception of reality. It is in Habermas’s conception of emancipation through the application of communally situated reason that we see the development of critical paradigms.

Critical paradigms acknowledge that our perception of reality is shaped by “social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender” factors, and that as our construction of knowledge is based in these factors, it is intrinsically “transactional” and “subjective” because of these ontological and epistemological commitments; as a result, critical interpretations are contextual and “dialogic” (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, p. 109). Critical paradigms distinguish themselves by identifying what should be as well as interrogating what is; they incorporate other paradigms, such as prediction-driven positivism and understanding-driven constructivism, by maintaining an interpretive element, but also require reflective action (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2007).
In addition to its European roots, critical theory has much in common with the American tradition of Deweyan pragmatism (Deising, 1991). Of their many similarities (Deising, 1991; Deloria, 1999; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Held, 1980), one of the most important is their shared acknowledgment that without a long-term vision of what society should be like, scholars become “servants of power” (Deising, 1991, p. 82). It is this conscious effort to disrupt oppressive structures that distinguishes critical theories.

Due to its inherently activist nature, critical theories are frequently utilized for the empowerment of the oppressed. Lather (1992) describes critical theories as those aligned with oppositional social movements, such as “feminism, indigenous people’s rights, struggles for national liberation, and race specific movements” (p. 88). Critical theory was famously applied to education by Freire, (1970a, 1970b) and later Giroux (2001). Both scholars interrogated the notion that education was intrinsically liberating, arguing instead that education designed for (re)production was a tool of domination. They asserted that education is only liberating if it provides the oppressed with the tools of their own liberation. Their qualifications are congruent with Habermas’s goals of critical theory, which are “to restore to consciousness those oppressed, repressed and submerged determinants of unfree behavior with a view to their dissolution” (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2007, p. 28). Much of the work in the field of social justice education continues to be done by scholars utilizing critical theories (Hytten and Bettez, 2011).

Ellsworth’s (1989) article, Why Doesn’t this Feel Empowering? Working through the Repressive Myths of Critical Pedagogy is instructive in the complexities of applying of critical theory to social justice education. In her article, Ellsworth (1989) investigates
the assumptions implicit in the processes and terminology of critical pedagogy. She also includes a description of her struggle to undermine her own authority, purely philosophical in the face of those whose authority on justice and equity issues was born through lived experiences, and admitting that her positioning would always limit her capacity to understand oppression. Ellsworth’s intentional interrogation of her own assumptions is a hallmark of critical theory, and a necessary component of social justice education.

Democratically Grounded

Democratically Grounded scholarship, the fifth category, is born from the belief that education for a healthy democracy necessarily includes social justice, because, as Banks (2004) argues, cultural democracy “is an essential component of a political democracy” (p. 290). The scholarship in this category is based in a positive conception of democracy (Hytten and Bettez, 2011), as described by Levine (1995); those who ascribe to the types of critique Hytten and Bettez (2011; see also West, 1999) report would certainly have a valid point when questioning the place for unengaged citizens, and the increasing role of corporate citizenship.

Despite the remaining questions surrounding social justice and related concepts like democracy, many scholars and educators are committed to social justice education. Their scholarship, represented here in Hyteen and Bettez’s (2011) framework, is attempting to push education into increasingly egalitarian spaces. The field of social justice education is likely to be formed and (re)formed as new voices enter the dialogue, as was the case with critical theories like feminism, and new frameworks will be
necessary to discuss the field. Despite its usefulness, even now, Hytten and Bettez’s (2011) work has acknowledged limitations; as with any artificial categorization, there is significant overlap between the categories, with some scholarship encompassing components of all the categories.

_Distinguishing Social Justice Education from Multicultural Education_

Social justice education has much in common with aspects of multicultural education. The overlap and intersection of multicultural education and social justice education is nowhere more prominent than in the privileging of diversity in each framework; indeed, one could convincingly argue that diversity is the bedrock of both. Scholars in social justice education trace the development of their field, in part, back to the work by, and in appreciation of, historically marginalized scholars included in multicultural education’s reformed curriculum (Hytten and Bettez, 2011). The overlap between the two disciplines of education is also evident in the overlap of literature. Hytten and Bettez (2011) reference Banks as the “preeminent scholar” in the almost “synonymous” field of multicultural education (p. 17); Banks (2002) also wrote the Series Foreword of _Learning to Teach for Social Justice_, which was published as part of his Multicultural Education Series.

However, there is a significant difference between the two models of education. Multicultural education tends to spend less time interrogating and problematizing the structural nature of societal inequity than does social justice education (Conklin, 2008). While social justice education contains an implicit, and explicit, intentionality aimed at creating systemic change, only the latter Clusters and upper Levels of multicultural
education share this goal. Bennett (2001) acknowledged the lack of “evidence to show any K-12 classroom impact” from the scholarship in what would be categorized in her first and second Clusters and Banks’s (1993) first, second, and third Levels of multicultural education (p. 182; see also Hytten and Bettez, 2011; Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995; Nieto, 2000).

In the field of social justice education, Carlisle, Jackson, and George (2006) take up this issue as it relates to the lower Levels of Content Integration. They acknowledge that activities common in the Contributions and Additive Approaches have merit and are better than homogenous content, as they provide what Applebaum (2004) describes as “the first tools that educators employ to arouse critical awareness of social injustice (p. 71), which is the responsibility of educators (Corti, 2002; Santora, 1995). However, they argue that a foods/fashion/festivals approach to multicultural education fails to provide transformational learning experiences because it continues to be controlled and defined by the dominant culture.

In order for multicultural education to simultaneously be social justice education, it must challenge the assumptions of the dominant culture. One way to accomplish this is by encouraging the appreciation of diverse perspectives, as described in Banks’ (1993) Transformation Approach to Content Integration and Bennett’s (2001) Multicultural Competence Cluster. However, it must also challenge the power of the dominant culture by embracing “Freirean pedagogy” for “collective conscientisation” (Quin, 2009, p. 110), as described in Banks’ (1993) Social Action Approach to Content Integration and Bennett’s (2001) Societal Equity Cluster. Critical theorists, such as Freire (1970b) and
Giroux (2001), argue that educators must choose to teach in ways that disrupt the reproduction of the status quo. As is evidenced by the role of choice, it is clear that one of the key components of social justice education is its intentionality. Quin (2009) describes social justice education practitioners as those who consciously “aim to be anti-oppressive through seeking to empower educators and learners to act in anti-oppressive ways for social justice” (p. 110). Literature from the practical category echoes similar sentiment when Darling-Hammond (2002) describes social justice education as “examining the nexus where theory meets practice” (p.6), while Carlisle, Jackson, and George (2006) describe social justice education as “conscious and reflexive” (p. 57).

Social justice education, then, is predicated on intention and action; without either component, it fails to manifest the essential “being and becoming” of transformational and liberatory education (Quin, 2009, p. 110).

Quin (2009) eloquently described the distinction in her discussion of having a position versus taking a stance. She argues that position refers to the way in which one sees the world, a location that can still be passive. Stance, on the other hand, is described as an active engagement, reminiscent of roots in the terminology “fighting stance” (Quin, 2009, p. 117; see also Nieto, 2000). Hytten and Bettez (2011), quoting Westheimer and Kahn, provide an applicable analogy from their Democratically Grounded category in their discussion of the different approaches to citizenship in a democracy: “if participatory citizens are organizing the food drive and personally responsible citizens are donating food, justice-oriented citizens are asking why people are hungry and acting on what they discover” (p. 20).
citizens are those with a position supporting multicultural education, based in the earlier Clusters and lower Levels of Content Integration; the justice-oriented citizens are those with a stance on multicultural education, based in the latter Clusters and higher Levels of Content Integration.

**Social Justice Education Controversy**

Social justice education “has been under severe, if not outright vicious attack” (Villegas, 2007, p. 370; see also Apple, 2004; Butin, 2006). Some of the complaints leveled against social justice education include overexposure and lack of specificity (Carlisle, Jackson, and George, 2006; Hytten and Bettez, 2011; Miller, 1999; Villegas, 2007). These concerns are valid and will help move the discipline forward. In addition to these concerns, the perception of social justice as being somehow separate from student achievement makes it vulnerable in the current standardized educational environment, despite the fact that social justice educators explicitly link it to student achievement (Carlisle, Jackson, and George, 2006; Dover, 2009; Heybach, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Villegas, 2007).

However, these concerns would not merit the characterization of educators as “terrorists” by a US Secretary of Education (Apple, 2006, p. 100). Instead, it is the common characterization of social justice as a culturally liberal view that is at the heart of many criticisms (Butin, 2006; Haidt & Graham, 2007; Heybach, 2009; Manzo, 2008; Miller, 1999; Villegas, 2007). Much of the recent controversy has centered on the explicitly political nature of social justice education, with critics voicing concerns about indoctrination and the infringement of the rights of socially and economic conservative
students and scholars (Heybach, 2009; Villegas, 2007). In the same way that opponents of critical theory disparage its commitment to intentional action for societal equity, social justice education is also condemned as too ideological. Though they embrace an explicit commitment to action for equity and justice, critical paradigms are no more ideological than others. Critical paradigms simply acknowledge and embrace the ideologies of societal transformation that inform them, as opposed to claiming neutrality (Agger, 1991; Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2007; Fay, 1975; Kincheloe, 1995; Lather, 1992). Social justice education, too, is maligned as ideological by opponents who deny their own ideological bias, as is demonstrated in the National Council of Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) controversy.

In 2006, social justice education was dealt a significant blow when NCATE officially distanced itself from social justice by removing it from its list of teacher dispositions (Butin, 2006; Heybach, 2009). Despite appearing only once in sixty-one pages, the inclusion of social justice in the Professional Standards of NCATE, it became the focal point in a firestorm of controversy (Heybach, 2009). Social justice education’s adversaries represented the status quo; during the NCATE controversy, these included the National Association of Scholars (NAS), the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE), and the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA), all of which publically challenged social justice education as the “promotion of a political ideology” (Heyback, 2009, p. 235; see also Butin, 2006). The recommendation of Anne Neal, interestingly both president of ACTA and member of the U.S. Department of Education’s National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity
(NACIQI), is instructive in making clear the ideological commitments of those in opposition to social justice education:

[I recommended] that the certification of NCATE not be renewed until it ceased encouraging education schools to judge students’ commitment to politicized concepts such as “social justice” and “diversity” via evaluations of their “dispositions”…The Department of Education should demand clearly defined principles which relate directly to a prospective teacher’s future success… (Heybach, 2009, p. 236).

During hearings over which NACIQI presided, those in opposition to social justice education were inexplicably given the power to name and frame both the concept and the debate with shockingly little resistance (Butin, 2006; Heybach, 2009). The power to name and frame is, in and of itself, a component of social justice education as demonstrated by the field of Critical Discourse Analysis, which “studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context” (Van Dijk, 2001, p. 352). The focus of critical discourse analysis on the power of naming and framing discussions is reflective of the power dialogue from multiple, sometimes conflicting, perspectives can have on the discourse (Banks, 1996; Wertsch, 1991). The language used to identify, describe, or define can imbed in it ideological value judgments (Dillard, 2006; see also Ayers, 1999; Ben Jelloun, 1999; Bruner, 1986; Cole, 2011; Fay, 1975; hooks, 2000; Paris, 1995; Walker, 2006), as is clearly the case in the NCATE controversy.

Ultimately, NCATE opted to abandon social justice in order to maintain its accreditation authority without mounting a defense of social justice, declining to even provide a counter definition (Butin, 2006; Heybach, 2009). Additionally, NCATE did not include organizations which could have provided some balance to the ideological bias
represented by the presence of representatives from FIRE, NAS, ACTA, and the NACIQI committee itself (Heybach, 2009). Butin (2006) argues that there were none in attendance “who could speak to the ancient origins of, societal consensus around, and empirical evidence for social justice as a cause for all individuals (and especially for future teachers) in a democratic and pluralistic society” (np).

When considering this incident, and the larger controversy surrounding social justice education, it is important to note that the true issue being contested is not simply social justice education, but education as a whole; the “debate is an all-out war to define the goals of public education, the role of teachers, the nature of knowledge, and conceptions of learning, teaching, and learning to teach” (Villegas, 2007, p. 378). It represents the competing values of democracy and capitalism, always coexisting in tension. Social justice educators are those that intentionally teach to “enhance equity across multiple social identity groups (e.g., race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ability), foster critical perspectives, and promote social action” (Carlisle, Jackson, and George, 2006, p. 57; see also Apple, 2006), while those that represent the status quo “believe the primary goal of public education is to prepare students with the knowledge and skills needed to serve as productive workers in the stratified socioeconomic system as it currently exists” (Villegas, 2007, p. 378; see also Apple, 2006). Controversies in education are representational of struggles over the role of all societal institutions, as well as control over concepts such as legitimacy, goodness, and justice (Apple, 2006). The contest is for more than the right to name and frame the conditions of public education, though these are powerful privileges. What is contested is the right to teach citizens to
value either people or profit. These “irreconcilable differences, and the interests that underlie them” will remain, even when the specific controversies of social justice education have abated (Villegas, 2007, p. 378; see also Apple, 2006; Butin, 2006).

At the heart of the criticisms of social justice education is its open acknowledgement of the politicization of public education. As Freire explains,

…it is interesting to note how the dominant ideology, by expressing itself in…attempts to present itself as possessing the full weight of irrefutable, undeniable truth…by placing such stress on the political neutrality of education…their political partisanship is ultimately shown up. The denial that they are political is finally perceived as a political act” (Freire and Faundez, 1989, p. 31).

While its opponents may claim political neutrality, it is important to note the intersection of politics and policy in the controversy, specifically that of the NCATE hearings. The NACIQI committee members, appointed during the Bush administration, and led by Carol D’Amico, largely embraced “a business model of education vested in the interest of ‘producing’ students that serve the economic interests of the state” (Heybach, 2009, p. 237). The privileging of profit is demonstrated by the fact that one-fifth of the board came from colleges and universities run as profit-making businesses themselves (Heybach, 2009), while the percentage of students educated at these dubious institutions is between only seven and ten percent (Wilson, 2010).

Another interesting observation is that nearly one-third of the board members were from Texas, while less than ten percent of college students are from Texas (Heybach, 2009). While there is nothing intrinsically wrong with Texas, it represents a particular educational ideology that includes standardized testing and dishonest reporting (Apple, 2006; Heybach, 2009). In addition to the controversies around its use of testing
and graduation data, Texas’ practice of legislating textbook curriculum is philosophically, and pragmatically, problematic. Texas state law requires that textbooks used in the state “stress patriotism, obedience to authority, and the discouragement of ‘deviance’” (Apple, 2006, p. 46). As Texas is such a populous state, its political mandates are unofficially replicated in other states due to the cost-saving measures of textbook publishers (Apple, 2006). Texas also represents the genesis of the movement to “dismantle and privatize public education,” evidenced by the disproportionate representation of for-profit educational institutions in policy decisions discussed above (Heyback, 2009, p. 237).

Acknowledging the domination of the NACIQI committee by these ideologies is imperative to understanding the NCATE controversy, as well as the larger controversies around social justice education. It is also important to understand that the ideologies driving the current attempts to “reform” education have developed “from a position of historical privilege” (Apple, 2006, p. xiii). Scholars who are committed to educating for equity must “illuminate how those who claim to want to neutralize teacher education are by no means neutral themselves… [ascribing to] their own ‘radical social agenda’ … to de-democratize the role of public education” (Heybach, 2009, p. 237; see also, Apple, 2006; Butin, 2006). It is not insignificant that the federal legislation born from the Texas model, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), includes “a requirement that schools provide information on students to, and support contact with, military recruiters,” when one considers the intersection of capitalism, imperialism, and militarism (Apple, 2006, p. 91). The interests of the dominant, and the state, are clearly privileged in the proclaimed neutrality of education policies.
Resistance to Social Justice Education

There is much written about preservice teacher resistance to social justice education. Some of the resistance to social justice education can be attributed to the controversies that surround it; however, not all resistance is based in the desire for more specificity or restrained use of the terminology. Nor is all resistance based in the desire to focus only on content instruction for standardized success. Much of it is a response to racial and/or class positioning in which resistance is born from an attempt to maintain the social and economic privilege upon which dominant identities are built (Apple, 2006; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Deloria, 1999; Faiman-Silva, 2002; Leonardo, 2004; Lorde, 1993; Miller, 1999; van Gorder, 2007; Williams, 1997; Young, 2011). This is particularly true, considering that “cultural struggles and struggles over race, gender, and sexuality coincide with class alliances and class power” (Apple, 2006, p. 30).

In addition, many of the paradigms that seek societal equity, and thus elicit resistance from dominant group members, fall under the umbrella of critical theories, which seek to create a more equitable society by interrogating the assumptions underlying the dominant narrative in ways that will privilege the subaltern (Heybach, 2009). Indeed, Merrett (2004) credits much dominant resistance to “a vested interest in the status quo” and the desire to maintain their rights and the notion of meritocracy (p. 93). Their invocation of their own rights when denying others of theirs is indicative of the tension between procedural and distributive justice. Relying on procedural justice and focusing on protecting one’s rights from perceived “free-rider[s]” are privileges of the dominant (Rawls, 1999, p. 236). When discussing dominant resistance, Freire
referred to it as evidence of the “authoritarian attitude with which we are stamped” and from which we must all be liberated (Freire and Faundez, 1989, p. 45); liberation is difficult because, as van Gorder (2007) asserts, education for both the privileged and the oppressed commonly “maintains social stability and discourages change” (p. 16).

The only thing that can disrupt the delivery of privilege, bringing about increased societal equity, is a change to the structures that maintain inequalities (Leonardo, 2004). The necessity of systemic change is based in the systemic nature of true domination, which is codified through time. “It does not form out of random acts of hatred, although these are condemnable, but rather out of patterned and enduring treatment of social groups” (Leonardo, 2004, p. 139; see also Mura, 1999; Young, 2011). Systemic change is always rather difficult to engineer, as the dominant group would have to willingly give up its unfair access to material privilege. For even the most sympathetic dominant listener, the “message [of the necessity of systemic change] produces psychological dissonance between [the] desire for . . . justice and her inability to accept radical change” (Leonardo, 2004, p. 143; see also Ellsworth, 1989; Miller, 1999; Williams, 1997; Young, 2011).

**Invisible Dominance**

The dominance of hegemony is sustained by its invisibility. When dominance is made visible, it must be confronted (Applebaum, 2004; Crocco, 2010; Freire, 1970a; Mura, 1999; Young, 2011); this self-confrontation is frequently difficult for individuals of dominant groups (Banks, 1996). Particularly in the United States, public educational institutions are common locations of confrontations about dominance and diversity, as
they play significant roles in both “socialization and enculturation” to “core values, traditions, and authority structures” (Faiman-Silva, 2002, p. 189; see also van Gorder, 2007). Though the educational system, as an institution designed by and for the dominant, largely maintains the status quo, it is also a public, and thus political, space (Apple, 2006; Merrett, 2004). In such public spaces, the otherwise “all but invisible” share space with the dominant (van Gorder, 2007, p. 9).

The work of Freire (1970a, 1970b) and Giroux (2001) helped make visible the systemic inequalities of hegemony, and the role of public education in (re)producing and (de)constructing them. Their work, particularly that of Freire (1970a, 1970b), also demonstrated the importance of hearing the voice of the subaltern speak for itself, as in the tradition of Fanon (1994) and Cesaire (1994). However, hearing the voice of the marginalized is not enough to achieve societal equity; societal equity requires that the dominant confront their complicity and resistance (Mura, 1999).

Resistance and Identity

As discussed in Chapter One, when the ideologies of different knowledges collide, reactions can be quite vehement if adherents have internalized ideologies and create identities around them. Individuals who present alternative knowledges can cease being perceived in neutral terms and can begin to be seen only as adversarial Others (Bruner, 1986). Students from dominant groups frequently resist (Young, 2011) and take refuge in what DiAngelo and Sensoy (2009) call “opinion discourse” during which students whose ideologies are challenged refuse to acknowledge the validity of non-dominant perspectives and insist on relegating them to the easily-discarded status of
opinions (p. 447-448; see also van Gorder, 2007). Students can be so thoroughly
“entrenched in their own subjective spaces—physically, historically, and affectively” that
they have great difficulty refraining from “framing the discourse in familiar categories of
sameness and difference or ‘self’ and ‘other’” (Faiman-Silva, 2002, p. 191).
Consequently, it is not just Others who are defined by their positions; each group’s
identity is increasingly solidified and caricatured as disagreement turns to militancy.
Indeed, as Apple (2006) reports, conflict between in-group members and outsiders is
what provides both identity and purpose for some groups. The lack of depth and
complexity of curricular supports in these interactions only exacerbates the likelihood of
conflict and resistance in diverse educational settings (Subedi, 2010).

Denial

One of the primary forms of resistance to social justice education is denial of
inequity. Because of the consequences of acknowledging the legitimacy of historically
oppressed groups’ claims, many members of dominant groups cling to the discredited
idea that we live in a color-blind society, arguing the purity of meritocracy, using tokens
of non-dominant successes and dominant struggles as evidence (Williams, 1997; see also
Ayers, 1999; Young, 2011). However, scholars from historically Othered traditions
reject the notion of color-blindness, saying it “constitutes an ideological confusion at
best, and denial at its very worst” (Williams, 1997, p. 2; see also Mura, 1999; Young,
2011). The rhetoric of oppressor as victim is a dangerous step beyond the fallacy of
color-blindness. Many individuals of dominance believe they “are the ‘new losers’ in a
playing field” leveled by affirmative action and social assistance (Apple, 2006, p. 237).
The dangers of these types of denial are succinctly described by Bennett (1993) as “its implicit relegation of others to subhuman status” (p. 33).

Merrett (2004), quoting Harvey, challenges dominant groups’ insistence on denial, arguing that “there is nothing more unequal than the equal treatment of unequals” (p. 95). Leonardo (2004) continues, explaining that unearned privileges are given to those who do not “(re)cognize that life is made easier,” and even to those who “attempt to dis-identify” with dominant group status (p. 137; see also Young, 2011). Rejection of unearned privilege does not keep the privilege from being delivered to in-group members. As such, “denial can be thought of as a luxury of the dominant group” because they alone can orchestrate their own isolation and separation from those in non-dominant groups (Bennett, 1993, p. 33).

Isolation and separation cease to be viable options for preservice teachers. Demographics alone indicate that they will no longer have the “luxury” of maintaining their sphere of homogeneity (Cochran-Smith, 2004; see also Butin, 2006; Conklin, 2008; Marshall, 2006; Subedi, 2006; van Gorder, 2007). The ethical and moral issues of equitable education aside (Villegas, 2007), the professional consequences of ineffective teaching in the world of high-stakes testing make moving beyond resistance in the best interest of preservice teachers themselves.

Defense

When denial ceases to be a viable option, members of dominant groups often proceed to defense. In this context, defense “refers to a posture intended to counter the impact of specific cultural differences perceived as threatening” (Bennett, 1993, p. 34).
As with denial, defense can be quite intense because claims of difference and injustice represent danger to “one’s sense of reality and thus to one’s identity” (Bennett, 1993 p. 35). Utilizing the tactics of denigrating others and maintaining their own superiority (Bennett, 1993), members of dominant groups attempt to defend against the encroaching knowledge that their reality, and thus identity, is one of opportunity built on the oppression of others.

The tactic of superiority is applied in many ways, notably through embracing a worldview of Social Darwinism. From this perspective, difference is “an inferior, possibly temporary, state” that is recognized and tolerated, but not “perceived as particularly viable” (Bennett, 1993, p. 37-38). Demands for equality can be perceived as expressions of envy by non-dominant groups (Rawls, 1999). Another manifestation of superiority is in disassociation. For most members of dominant groups, “injustice is either obscured in the immediate or highlighted in the remote and distant” (van Gorder, 2007, p. 13). Injustice is not seen as systemic or involving them, but as a series of individual situations that affect others; many dominant group members respond to these “isolated” circumstances through charitable activities. Because of these activities, “the privileged are frequently encouraged to see themselves in a positive light, as deeply concerned” about those who find themselves in these unfortunate circumstances, though they assume that some suffer as a result of their own choices (van Gorder, 2007, p. 13; see also Apple, 2006; Miller, 1999).

Superiority, in its various manifestations, leads to paternalism, in which the dominant “protect their status as superior” while seeing themselves “as the ‘great White
hope’ of benighted, oppressed people who are in need of their assistance - be it the gift of their religion or their politics but not usually of their direct economic sacrifice” (van Gorder, 2007, p. 13; see also Apple, 2006; Applebaum, 2004; Freire, 1970b; Young, 2011). While monetary gifts are common in paternalistic charitable activities, the operative word in van Gorder’s argument is sacrifice; many individuals of dominance are willing to give from their excess, but unwilling to make the depth of sacrifice necessary for true systemic change (Ellsworth, 1989; Leonardo, 2004; Williams, 1997; Young, 2011). Such activities, termed false messianism by Freire, do little but assuage the guilt of the dominant as they are, in Freire words, “pious, sentimental and individualistic gestures” that lack the “risk [of] genuine acts of love” (van Gorder, 2007, p. 18). False messianism is concerned with the societal equivalent of palliative care, in which the symptoms of oppression are fleetingly alleviated while structures of oppression are reified in ways that allow individuals of dominance to maintain their identities by removing themselves from the cycle of oppression (van Gorder, 2007).

Due to the social nature of identity, threats to the identity are dealt with in various ways depending on group or institutional pressures (Bennett, 1993). Individuals who are inclined to move past denial and defense are frequently discouraged by peer groups or even institutions such churches, universities, or nations. Those who defy the social and institutional pressures to remain in denial or defiant “will then become strangers in their own communities” (van Gorder, 2007, p. 23).

Because of these structural pressures that limit individual opportunities to move beyond denial and defense, some members of dominant groups experience a reversal,
which “involves a denigration of one’s own culture and an attendant assumption of the superiority of a different culture” (Bennett, 1993, p. 39). At the end of denial, many individuals of dominance have struggled to construct positive identities. Banks (1996) describes the situation as “White America” being “at war with itself” (p. 331). van Gorder (2007; see also Apple, 2006; Williams, 1997) also cautions against the paralyzing and counterproductive effects of guilt when faced with one’s own complicity in oppression.

While this phase may appear positive, or at least less damaging, it is still a defense mechanism that simply attempts to maintain the system of dominance through shifting its center. Banks’ (1996) suggestion for ending White America’s self-destructive war is that European Americans look for meaning in their own traditional cultures, accepting that there have been moments of collective humanity alongside the implementation of oppressive systems. Additionally, he argues that it is more productive to identify oppression itself as the enemy to be confronted; he does not encourage European Americans to shy away from their historical burden, but to remember that oppression has victimized peoples of all skin tones, and our salvation from it is in embracing our common humanity (Banks, 1996).

**Minimization**

A focus on common humanity is a positive alternative to denigrating others while enmeshed in defensiveness, but it has hazards of its own. Bennett (1993) describes these attempts “to bury difference under the weight of cultural similarities” as an “attempt to preserve the centrality of one’s own worldview” (p. 41). Bennett (1993) and Banks
(1996) both suggest that those from dominant groups learn their own cultural heritage in order to situate their own behaviors and assumptions as cultural as opposed to universal. Frequently, the characteristics that are considered universal are identified by and from the dominant culture, without making space for the voice and perspective of the Other (Bennet, 1993). When the knowledge and experience of an individual group is in conflict with the dominant worldview, it is subjugated due the relationship between knowledge and power (Apple, 2006). Dominant knowledges and experiences are not intrinsically dominant; they maintain their dominance because those in power are in the position to create official, and thus dominant, interpretations.

Positionality, which asserts that social factors used to define people are relative, determines which knowledges and experiences will be privileged in a society (Banks, 1996; see also Carlisle, Jackson, and George, 2006; Greene, 1995; Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, and Cain, 1998; Quin, 2009). Rawls (1999) suggests that “each person holds two relevant positions: that of equal citizenship and that defined by his place in the distribution of income and wealth” (p. 82). Thus our access to civil rights and material comfort is a key factor in our identities. Like our identities, our knowledges and experiences result from our socially constructed positionality (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). Because perception is shaped by positionality, our knowledges and experiences are relatively positioned as either central or marginal.

When experiencing a defensive reversal, individuals struggling with difference may desire that a marginalized narrative replace their own dominant narrative. While placing a marginalized narrative at the center of knowledge construction and validation
may have positive effects in specific contexts, it is not intrinsically aligned with the goals of social justice. Martin Luther King, Jr. insisted that simply reversing roles in the system of “thingification” would not promote justice (Carson and Shepard, 2001, p.195). Only through a decentering, in which all narratives are privileged equally and moved from the margins to share space in a jointly created, richer narrative, can justice be realized.

The work of educators and scholars in the field of social justice is to provide the necessary challenge of accepting complicity in systemic oppression while at the same time encouraging resistance to these systems (Fay, 1975). Tyson and Park (2006) explain, pointing out that knowledge of injustice in and of itself is insufficient without the corresponding knowledge of how to respond to injustice. In order for societal equity to become a reality, scholars demonstrate that the resistance must be shared between equals, each willing to value perspectives other than their own.

Identity

As discussed in the Resistance section, particularly as it relates to the Defense stage, personal identity and group association can play a prominent role in resistance. As its own discipline, identity formation is of interest to educators because of the role education has in socialization (Apple, 2006; Marshall, 2006). Religion and religious socialization can have a significant impact on perception and identity development, and as such, it is important to recognize the impact it can have on the educational process, both teaching and learning. In fact, Apple (2006) argues that “one of the major failures of research on identity is its failure to adequately address the hegemonic politics of the
right” (p. 240). In an increasingly diverse society, the intersection of religion and identity in education will continue to be an important factor, particularly because religion so frequently intersects with race (Blumenfeld, 2006; Eck, 2006; Joshi, 2006; Marshall, 2006; Subedi, 2006).

**Dominance of Christianity in the United States**

Social justice has come to be considered a culturally liberal view (Haidt & Graham, 2007; Manzo, 2008), while Christianity is generally considered a socially conservative culture (Repstad, 2008). Christianity, like social justice, has many definitions, all of them culturally situated (Asad, 1983). Despite changes and differences within the community, Christianity has been a significant contributor to the development and evolution of American culture and its political landscape, as it comprises a self-identified 78.4% of the adult population of the United States (Pew Research Center, 2010). As the majority of the teaching force comes from this position of religious dominance, it is important to understand the ways in which this positionality can both inform and constrain perceptions of social justice education.

**Significance of Religion**

Despite being difficult to define (Ferre, 1970; Lincoln, 2003; Tweed, 2008; Wessinger, 2000), religion can be a considerable component of one’s culture (Bennett, 2001; Mabud, 1992; Shahjahan, 2005; Tarakeshwar, Stanton, and Pargament, 2003; Tisdell, 2006; Tisdell, 2007) so its inclusion in identity literature is not surprising. Religions commonly emphasize the creation of “communities of meaning, memory, and belonging…[to] provide a primary basis of making sense of the world” (Apple, 2006, p. 45).
Many scholars recognize an individual’s formative religious experiences as one of the key components that inform our concepts of self and of knowledge, regardless of the degree to which we later claim a spiritual identity (Shahjahan, 2005; Vogel, 2000). The worldview created by a religious education outlasts belief in the specifics that created the view itself. Tisdell (2007) refers to the concept of cultural memory when describing the tendency to keep the meaning we gain from discarded religious training. The degree to which spiritual or religious experience informs one’s identity depends largely on the culture in which one is raised (Shahjahan, 2004) and the prominence the experiences are given. Whether one is raised in a religiously observant home or in one that simply privileges consciousness, these experiences shape the ways in which we view the world.

Social and Literary Influences on Identity Development

We begin to value certain traits based on our membership in social groups (Reynolds and Prior, 2006). The social influence on individual values creates a dynamic where an intensely personal quest is made public. Though each individual possesses a personalized store of potential selves, only those that receive praise or acknowledgement will be nurtured and developed (Thoits and Virshup, 1997). Given a choice, most individuals will not choose an identity that leads to social exclusion. Because of the social nature of identity development, Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, and Cain (1998) considered it both personal and public. The traits individuals use to create their identities are the ones they perceive as having value; identity formation is not based on neutral or negatively reinforced characteristics (Reynolds and Prior, 2006). The critical factor is how individuals determine which characteristics to value; it is often during the
socialization process of teacher education that competing values are introduced to preservice teachers, requiring decisions regarding their developing identities.

In conjunction with social influences, identity is also shaped by linguistic and literary experiences (Lewis, Enciso, and Moje, 2007), which Smith (2008) describes as a social enterprise. The texts that individuals consume can have a significant impact on their developing identities, as literacy is a transactional endeavor. An interactive and social interpretation of literacy is embraced by many scholars. Williams (2005), drawing on Gee’s conception of discourse, describes literacy as the process in which we interpreting symbols in culturally-situated contexts. Discourse essentially focuses on the social aspects of making meaning, as opposed to the mechanical processes. It is discourse that allows us to effectively utilize language, communicating successfully in a variety of circumstances (Williams, 2005). Simply decoding symbols is not enough to create meaning. Tett (2005) suggests

that rather than seeing literacy and numeracy as the decontextualized, mechanical manipulation of letters, words, and figures, we can instead see literacies as located within the social, emotional, and linguistic contexts that give them meaning. From this perspective reading and writing are complex cognitive activities that integrate feelings, values routines, skills, understandings, and activities and depend on a great deal of contextual (that is, social) knowledge and intention (p. 28).

When described in these contextual and transactional terms, the relationship between consumed literature and identity is clear.

Holland, Lachicote, Skinner, and Cain (1998; see also Apple, 2006) describe identities as constantly in flux. The social nature of identities makes it difficult to maintain a static identity when social situations change. Boozer, Edmiston, and Enciso
(2005) agree, stating that identities are formed and reformed in reaction to changes in positioning. As one moves through life and interacts with different groups, the traits that are valued, and thus reinforced, change. “When people join institutions, they may learn... new philosophies of practice, encompassing new relationships, values, tools, and systems of belief” (Matusov & Rogoff, 2002, p. 416; also Jelen, 1991). Moje and Lewis (2007) describe learning as access to new communities and their knowledge; Smith (2008) cites Wenger when she describes learning as transformational, that which changes the way we perceive ourselves, others, and the world around us (Cole, 2011). Thus true transformation requires a response, including even small degrees of identity evolution. When an individual accepts membership into a group and adopts their worldview as her own, she must learn the knowledge of that community.

One of the ways in which individuals can learn the knowledge of their new communities is through texts valued by the community. Only with this knowledge can the individual “perform” the identity of the group, enacting “appropriate costume and instructions on how to act, talk, and often write, so as to take on a particular role that others will recognize” (Williams, 2005, p. 343). Failing to behave and communicate in accepted ways will prevent individuals from achieving insider status in the group. In this way, culture, and by extension, discourses within the cultural context, acts as a gatekeeper (Williams, 2005). The ability to participate in the discourse of a culture is necessary for being a member of the culture. The relationship between language and identity has been described as the process in which knowledge of linguistic norms act as a signal of in-group status (Smith, 2008).
The church communities in which individuals accept membership into will then shape how they see themselves and their role in society. New perceptions of self can be necessary, as churches are “institutions” that have “the power to produce and circulate new ways of understanding our identities” (Apple, 2006, p. 8). For some, accepting membership into a group will require a process of “changing worldviews and transforming personal identity” (Matusov & Rogoff, 2002, p. 416), a process which is not always easy or simple. The difficulty lies in the fact that “the mind is a divided entity, that it consists of parts, that it is not just a mass” (Graafsma, Bosma, Grotevant, & de Levita, 1994, p. 52). Each experience or stimulus we encounter can have an effect on how we perceive the world, and therefore, ourselves. Because not all the identities we consider are compatible, there exists the need to synthesize new identities with existing ones (Weinreich, 1983; see also Williams, 2005).

At different times in our lives, different aspects of our identities will supersede or even absorb other aspects of our identities. Synthesizing identities involves “a rearrangement or realignment of previous identifications with perhaps an acceptance of some and a rejection of others, or a redefinition of them in part” (Weinreich, 1983, p. 152). Again, these shifts in identity are contextual and can be either quite situational or fundamental. While this may seem contradictory, we must remember that individuals’ worldviews are not “algebraic equations through which we can calculate all possible views on issues when we plug in one known value;” instead, we “generally carry on in life with outlooks and belief systems containing significant complexity, paradox,
multivocality, ambivalence, inconsistency, and sometimes confusion” (Smith, 2000, p. 11).

Identity is a complex intersection of individual experience and group socialization which has a profound impact on our perception of ourselves and the world around us. The ideologies we internalize as part of our identity formation can significantly affect our willingness and ability to critically assess unfamiliar or controversial information and experiences. As the politicized debates regarding social justice education continue, this study seeks to gain insight into how social justice is presented to groups enjoying religious dominance in an effort to better understand preservice teachers’ religion-based resistance to social justice education. It is particularly important to investigate this process because, as Apple (2006) asserts, identity politics, described as “radically alter[ing] who we think we are and how our major institutions are to respond to this changed identity” is a significant part of the “rightist” agenda (p. 8). One way to assess how social justice is portrayed is to examine literature popular within two central Ohio mega churches. In the following chapter, the methods selected to perform the textual analysis will be discussed, as well as the rationale for the selection of the research sites.
Chapter 3: Methods

Chapter Three describes how the study, utilizing both Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Evaluation Coefficient (ECO) analysis, seeks to answer the research questions, a) what religious literature is being read by Christians attending two mega churches central Ohio and b) what are the social justice curricula discussed in these texts and how are they presented, by analyzing the best-selling selections at bookstores associated with two central Ohio mega churches, those with at least 2000 weekly attendants (Beer, 2009). The chapter begins with a description of the research sites, along with the process of acquiring the analyzed texts from each location. It goes on to detail the methods used for analyzing the texts, and concludes by establishing the paradigm in which the study is situated and discussing the role of researcher positionality.

Research Sites

The research sites have been purposely chosen for their representational nature, though without the intent of portraying Christianity as a monolith or claiming universal application. Located in the Midwestern Heartland of the United States, but with unexpected diversity, Ohio is a “microcosm of America” (Swing States, 2008, n.p.). The representational nature of Ohio is useful for this study in that, like most states, it has mega churches. Columbus, Ohio is home to two mega churches with significantly different characteristics. World Harvest Church (WHC) is representational of many
mega churches, in that it is led by a charismatic senior pastor and encourages a conservative worldview (Beer, 2009). However, Vineyard Columbus (VC) is somewhat more anachronistic in that its charismatic leader encourages his congregation toward a more liberal worldview. WHC is home to the Center for Moral Clarity, with its goal of “advocating for the concerns of . . . values voters” (World Harvest Church, 2012), while VC was host of a Justice Revival, aimed at encouraging Christians to “walk the walk and dig into issues about which Jesus preached, such as helping the poor,” and also to “erase some of the stereotypes of evangelicals” (Lecker, 2008, n.p.). The two research sites were selected due to their public interest in political issues and the fact that they both have bookstores associated with their communities.

**Vineyard Columbus**

Vineyard Columbus (VC) is the largest of many Vineyard churches in central Ohio. Vineyard Columbus is part of The Association of Vineyard Churches, founded by Kenn Gulliksen and John Wimber in the 1970s and 1980s (Vineyard USA, 2012, np). VC self-identifies as a “diverse” and “grace-filled church that offers help and healing for people from all walks of life” (Vineyard Columbus, nd, np). VC also has “a strong bent towards justice issues regarding the marginalized” (Vineyard Columbus, nd, np). Begun “with just a handful of people [it] is now a multi-racial, multi-generational church that averages 8000 people at its weekend services” (Vineyard Columbus, nd, np).

The VC website includes a section entitled *Our Faith Statement*, reproduced in its entirety in Appendix D; it is useful in situating the community within the complexities of Christian sects and providing readers with insight into the priorities of the community.
Interestingly, VC separates its Statement of Faith from its values, which it describes as “the kinds of ideas and attitudes that we feel are important,” and provides a separate statement of those values (Vineyard Columbus, nd, np). They further clarify their choice to identify their values as distinct by explaining that “values concern what a church feels like. Values concern the atmosphere of the church, the ethos. It is possible for two churches to believe exactly the same doctrine, but to feel very different due to the differing value systems of the churches” (Vineyard Columbus, nd, np). The Vineyard Columbus statement of values is reproduced in its entirety in Appendix E.

VC has been led by Pastor Rich Nathan (PRN) since its inception in 1987 (Vineyard Columbus, nd). A graduate of Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, and possessing his Juris Doctorate with honors from The Ohio State University College of Law, he previously taught business law at The Ohio State University (Vineyard Columbus, nd). PRN is active in the governance of The Association of Vineyard Churches, serving on both the National Board for Vineyard and the Large Church Task Force (Vineyard Columbus, nd). A “popular national and international conference speaker,” he also authored *Who is My Enemy? Welcoming People the Church Rejects* (Zondervan, 2002) and co-authored *Empowered Evangelicals* (Ampelon Revised 2009) with Ken Wilson, as well as “numerous articles on leadership in publications such as *Leadership Magazine*” (Vineyard Columbus, nd, np).

The VC website has a section entitled *What to Expect*, in addition to the *Campus Service Times and Locations* section, for prospective visitors. Before my visit to the site on 17 June 2012, I visited the website to determine the times of services. I attended the
11:30 a.m. Sunday at the main campus because it has a simultaneous Spanish translation, as opposed to sign language interpretation available at the 9 a.m. service, in order to observe the racial and ethnic diversity at VC (Vineyard Columbus, nd).

Upon arrival, I was greeted by a multi-racial and multi-gender greeting team three times and provided with a colorful bulletin that included announcements and a schedule for the week. Immediately inside the auditorium was a table from which attendees could get a handout that included a guided notes outline of the main points of the sermon and a five day follow-up corresponding Bible study. In addition to the handout, pre-packaged communion supplies were available.

Prerecorded worship music was playing as people came into the auditorium. The upper level was open and people were seated in both sections, though neither was full. While the recorded music played, a slide show of announcements cycled on the two large screens that flanked the stage.

The website described “twenty minutes of contemporary worship” (Vineyard Columbus, nd, np), and at precisely 11:30, a young woman said a short prayer and began to lead musicians, vocalists, and choir members in a song. During her brief welcome and prayer, the young woman was on both screens, but as the music began, her image was replaced by the lyrics to the song. The screens displayed lyrics for the duration of the music portion. The music consisted of four distinct songs. Nearly all congregants stood at the young woman’s invitation, though many did not sing. The congregation, which was multiracial (and possibly multinational, as evidenced by overheard conversations in accented English and languages unidentified by this researcher), responded to the music.
with embodied participation that included raised hands and swaying that increased as the music increased in tempo.

The *What to Expect* website identified the next segment as a “welcome from one of the pastors” (Vineyard Columbus, nd, np). A young white man appeared on the stage and screens to announce communion. His image was replaced with the text of Titus 2:11-14, which the congregants read aloud. The young man’s image reappeared on the screen as he said a prayer that included gratitude for communion and the desire for congregants to give generously and with cheerful hearts, as had God. The young man then led the congregation in communion while a video about homelessness in Columbus played. All of the featured speakers and workers portrayed in the video were white and the clients of the local support organizations were people of color. At the end of the video, a female representative of a local support organization thanked VC for their $58,000 gift. Small waste baskets were distributed to collect the packaging at the same time small wicker baskets were passed to collect money. Again, the young man requested that congregants give generously. Though the waste basket was passed to me, I did not receive a wicker collection basket.

Throughout the music, communion, and announcement portions of the service, people continued to arrive. They were directed to open seats by a team of multi-racial and multi-gender ushers who, casually dressed, were identified by their nametags. By the time PRN was introduced, stepping onto the stage and appearing on the screen to applause, at 12:03 p.m., both the upper and lower seating sections were mostly full.
The third segment of the service is identified as a “message from the Bible” (Vineyard Columbus, nd, np). As my observation took place on Fathers’ Day, PRN began with an acknowledgement of all fathers in attendance. He was immediately interrupted by appreciative exclamations from the crowd, to which he responded with a chuckle and a reminder about their roles: he talked, and they clapped and laughed. PRN’s apparent joke was met with crowd laughter. He restarted his Fathers’ Day acknowledgement by asking all foster and adoptive fathers to stand, thanking them specifically for reaching out beyond their own blood to love. He then invited all other fathers to stand and join them. PRN ended his Fathers’ Day acknowledgement by praising the hard work of single mothers. His various acknowledgements were punctuated by multiple instances of congregation applause.

PRN then reminded listeners of the upcoming women’s series on prayer and requested that they invite the women they knew; he reiterated that all are welcome to the women’s group, provided they are women. PRN transitioned to the “talk” by stating that many in the crowd had heard of a woman named Corrie ten Boon, whose photo replaced his image on the screen briefly. PRN described the “providential clerical error” that led to her release from a Nazi extermination camp, and his image was replaced by a ten Boon quote in which she wondered what good she could do with no special talents. He answered her question by telling the audience that she travelled the world “preaching Christ’s message of forgiveness” for forty years.

PRN proceeded to list the accomplishments of older individuals, mentioning that Laura Ingles Wilder, Colonel Sanders, and Ronald Reagan all achieved many of the
things for which they are known after the age of fifty. PRN then mentioned that some names are associated with failure, and began to recount a trip to Cobb, Ireland in which he visited a museum about the ships Titanic and Lusitania. He provided a brief history lesson on the Lusitania, and then transitioned to his message by saying that some of us are like the Lusitania, as “after nearly completing our journey of life, headed toward our creator, we torpedo ourselves.”

The “talk” for the day, *Derailed in Old Age: Lessons from the Life of King Solomon*, was situated within the context of the ongoing *Derailed: What Causes People to Fail Series*, which focused on biblical examples of people who hurt themselves and others. PRN asserted that, though he had accomplished much, Solomon’s name was associated with “demise” and “scandal” due to the consequences of his poor decisions later in life.

PRN began another prayer in which he thanked God for fathers, especially for adoptive and foster fathers, as well as for single mothers. He asked God to be the “protector, provider, caregiver, and strong support” of single mothers; as “moms can’t do it alone,” he asked God to “intervene.” PRN then asked God to open the hearts of listeners, to give power to his message, and to fill him with the Holy Spirit. When he had finished praying, he began to read 1 Kings 3:1-3; this scripture, as was the case with all subsequent readings, appeared on the screen. In addition to providing all scriptures referenced on the screen, the completed guided notes were projected on the screen. Text that is underlined below represents text that was underlined on the slides and blank on the guided notes sheet.
In *The consequence of early choices* section, corresponding with 1 Kings 3:1-3, PRN discussed the effects of a marital alliance, made for political gain, that took Solomon’s loyalties from God. He instructed listeners to underline verse three in their Bibles and compared Solomon’s choice to use pagan places to worship “the Lord, Yahweh” with the current practice of religious syncretism. PRN warned of the dangers of mixing and matching Christianity with other religions, non-religious spirituality, and humanism. He utilized Robert Louis Stevenson’s *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* to make the point that “sometimes, if we let evil grow in us,” it becomes the dominant character of our lives. His interpretation was met with a sound of approval from the crowd. PRN referred to small decisions as “opening the door” to larger struggles, and used the example of sexuality. He asked how many people looked back at their lives with regret and wished they had made different choices in the ways they connect “with the opposite or same sex.” PRN then read Galatians 6:7-8 and argued that we reap in our fifties through seventies what we sow during our twenties and thirties, utilizing an investment analogy.

PRN proceeded to *The consequence of neglected warnings* section, which corresponded with 1 Kings 9:1-9, in which verses six and seven were underlined. During this section, a blue box with the white text “Parent #73253.2” flashed on the screens to alert a viewer that their child was in need of their attention in one of the child care stations.

In the second section of the “talk,” PRN assured listeners that God warns us before we experience “dreadful falls” or go “off a cliff.” He discussed some of the ways
God speaks to people, including waking them up in the middle of the night and through dreams, scripture, or another human being. PRN went on to say that the content of one’s character is determined by the response to correction, providing examples in which a wife approached her husband about his diet, a friend approached another regarding drinking, a small group member approaches a male about the way he relates to women, and another small group member approaches a female about modest dress. He then went on to ask listeners to imagine how they would respond, whether it be complaining, or contemplating suicide or murder. The crowd’s laughter indicated that they perceived his previous comments as facetious.

At this point, PRN read Ecclesiastes 4:13, in which the word foolish was underlined. During this segment, PRN referenced biblical scholars for context and Hebrew translation options in order to make the point that the specific version of foolish in this context referenced a fat-head, or hard-head, which refused to be instructed. He asked congregants who were middle aged or older to assess whether or not their grip on their faith had begun to slack and if they needed to “get back in the game.” His questions were met with crowd applause. PRN then read Joshua 14:7-11, in which 10b-11 were underlined. In the text, an Israelite named Caleb is rejoicing in the fact that he is still fit for battle at eighty. Regarding this achievement, PRN said, “I know many of you are not followers of Christ, I know that. But if you are, don’t you want to be able to say that?” Congregants affirmed that they did with applause.

The third section, that regarding The consequences of mis-wanting, which corresponded with Ecclesiastes 2:10-11, focused on our inability to identify what will
make us happy. PRN cited a fifteen-year joint study in which economists and psychiatrists attempted to determine what made people happy. Among their findings was the fact that people are “terrible predictors” of what will make them happy. They also found that after achieving “what we in America call a middle class lifestyle,” in which he included the ability to take care of children and access to healthcare, more money does not increase happiness. To illustrate his point about happiness, PRN read Ecclesiastes 2:4-9, which lists Solomon’s accomplishments. Among them were slaves and his harem. PRN then argued that happiness required that we “change the score card from the one handed to us by America” for one not based on material success. His suggested measure of success was in our enjoyment of a relationship with “God through Jesus Christ” and with our families. The congregation approved of the new definition through applause.

The fourth and final section of the “talk,” *The consequence of being unequally yoked*, corresponded with 1 Kings 11:1-10. Verse three of the text references Solomon’s legendary harem, about which PRN commented that Bible scholars are unsure if it was meant to be taken literally. He added that one thousand could be a symbolic number, and that Solomon was not necessarily like Magic Johnson, at which point the congregation chuckled. PRN went on to say that his unwise romantic decision involved Solomon in “horrific idolatry on the Mount of Olives,” upon which he made sacrifices to pagan gods. When he pointed out that some of these gods required child sacrifice, the congregation responded with sounds of disapproval.

PRN told listeners that the people they spend time with shape their lives, and warned parents to be aware of their children’s friends and their teenagers’ dates. He went
on to say that, “as pastor, I have encouraged you over and over again” not to date outside the Christian faith, to which many in the congregation responded by saying, “amen.” PRN argued that his encouragement did not stem from religious “bigotry” or “arrogance,” and assured listeners that there were many non-Christian “kind, generous, good listeners” who are “cute and handsome” with “good careers.” He asserted that his encouragement stemmed from biblical injunctions, including Proverbs 13:20 and 2 Corinthians 6:14-15, and that he only repeats what “God tells us.” His explanation was met with many voices saying, “amen.”

As an illustration, he recounted a story from earlier in his career in which a woman in his congregation had emailed him about her boyfriend, a Jewish doctor. She wanted his opinion on what she should do, as PRN was her pastor and self-identifies as Jewish. A point of clarification may be necessary here: PRN identifies as a messianic Jew, meaning he was raised in a Jewish family and came to view Jesus as the promised messiah. Considering himself both Jewish and Christian, he practices the traditions of both cultures. In light of his previous comments regarding religious syncretism, his dual religious identity is quite interesting. In response to the woman’s email, PRN said he offered three options: 1) she honestly and apologetically end the relationship; 2) lacking courage, she beg God that her boyfriend convert within a month, at the end of which she would refer back to the first option; or 3) she would pretend she had never emailed him and proceed as she had been.

PRN recalled that the next day he had received an email from her boyfriend, as she has “passed the blame” onto her pastor. PRN described the email as “nice,” saying it
was “nicer than [he] would have been” in that situation. The doctor had written that he wanted to know why PRN had advised the woman to break up with him, as it did not seem very kind, and Christians are supposed to be kind. PRN responded by saying his advice has been based on two assumptions: 1) they were not recreational dating, but were looking for a serious relationship, and 2) the girlfriend had been a sincere Christian. Based on those assumptions, PRN explained, he had made a prediction that should they get married, her faith would cause tension. He explained that she would probably want to attend church weekly, be a part of a small group, tithe, support missions, go on mission trips, and raise any children as followers of Jesus. His prediction, PRN explained, has been at the root of his advice: to spare them both significant pain in the future, she should end the relationship. The doctor responded that he understood PRN’s rationale. Years passed, and PRN shared the story during a “talk.” After the service, he was approached by a man who asked, “Do you know who I am?” PRN responded, “No, but I bet I can guess!” The doctor told PRN how he had visited the church, “received Jesus,” and “gotten saved.” Though he expressed happiness for the couple, PRN described them as “rare” and told listeners that most of the time “pain gets worked into life” when we disregard God’s ways. PRN then assured listeners that it did not have to be that way, and his prayer for them was that it would not be. His abrupt ending was likely a result of the large timer affixed to the front of the balcony alerting him in large red numbers that he was three minutes over the time target.

The final segment, described as “an opportunity to receive prayer if you so desire” (Vineyard Columbus, nd, np), began as PRN invited congregants to stand. As musicians
returned to the stage, PRN prayed that the Holy Spirit would come and the word would find a place in the receptive hearts of listeners. He specifically invited three groups to come forward and receive prayer: 1) those in their middle age years, described as their forties and fifties, who desired to get back on the path that connects to Jesus; 2) those who are older and just starting their Christian life, needing to get connected in “serving, giving, and small groups;” and 3) those who are married to someone “who doesn’t share [their] treasure.” Most congregants remained standing, though some went forward and some exited. As congregants made their way forward, he related another anecdote about a marriage in which a Jewish man converted to Christianity after his wife prayed for fifty years.

PRN then invited “small group and other leaders” to come up and pray with each person. He continued, saying, “we need all of you, there are several dozen people here.” He specifically requested that women come forward to pray with those who were alone. PRN then said he would not continue calling for people to pray with comers, and that the service would close with a worship song. His image was replaced with the words of a song, and the music began.

As the song ended, PRN returned to the stage and screens. He reminded listeners to “get in the habit of giving money to the poor in the community,” and to “give as God has blessed [them].” PRN highlighted the boxes at the back of the auditorium in which people could put money specifically for community gifts. He also mentioned the upcoming women’s prayer group again. PRN then asked congregants to open their hands, explaining that “we open our hands because it’s the posture we want to be in all
week long before God,” both giving and receiving. In his closing prayer, PRN again thanked God for fathers and single mothers and asked that listeners would seek God and connection.

I exited with the crowd and made my way to the bookstore, which had a play area for shoppers’ children. The store stocked many different items, including toys, cards, pamphlets, journals, clothing, music, jewelry, and fair trade items. An entire wall contained shelves of Bibles in many languages and formats, and for various interest groups. Books were organized thematically on wall and free-standing shelves, as well as racks and tables. One shelving unit was devoted to children, another to adolescent girls, another to adolescent boys, and yet another to marriage. Racks and tables that lined the open entrances to the store held titles on environmentalism, immigration, and generosity, as well as texts on spiritual growth. One of the highlighted books was in Spanish, and another shelf in the store had a Spanish language workbook for language learners.

One shelf was particularly interesting, as it contained a curious mixture of texts. It included texts entitled Building a Healthy Multiethnic Church; The AIDS Crisis: What We Can Do; The Poor Will Be Glad: Joining the Revolution to Lift the World Out of Poverty; Being White; Barefoot Church: Serving the Least in a Consumer Culture; Good News About Injustice: A Witness of Courage in a Hurting World; Beloved Community: How Faith Shapes Social Justice, from the Civil Rights Movement to Today; With Justice for All: A Strategy for Community Development; The Heart of Racial Justice; Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America; Doing Reconciliation; Breaking Down Walls: A Model for Reconciliation in an Age of Racial Strife;
Reconciliation Blues: A Black Evangelical’s Inside View of White Christianity; and Disintegration: The Splintering of Black America. Along with these titles was a collection of speeches by Martin Luther King, Jr., two books on politics, and a CD set from a 2007 women’s conference entitled Doing Justice, Loving Mercy, and Walking Humbly. Many of these titles would to indicate an interest in social justice, but interspersed among them were items that appeared more problematic.

One book was dubiously titled Resident Aliens: Life in the Christian Colony and it appeared to be about being a Christian in a hostile culture. There were two books on the Mormon religion, one title describing it as a “mirage” and the other as a “challenge.” Another book was about how to effectively engage in missions to Muslims. Most interestingly was a sign on a shelf of books in Arabic. The sign encouraged customers to purchase the book for their Muslim friends and coworkers and present it to them saying, “Here’s a copy of my holy book in your language.” The sign continued, assuring customers that “They’ll [Muslim recipients] appreciate it.” Prospective buyers were even advised on when to present the gift: December eighth, described as “an [unidentified and unexplained] important Muslim holiday.” As problematic as these elements were, they were compounded by the fact that the sign was from 2008.

When the bookstore began closing, I made my way out the main exit and passed the tables and racks which contained the books that had been suggested to me. There was no indication of whether the books were on the tables because they were in high demand or if they were in high demand because they were on the tables. I did notice, however, that PRN had apparently spoken at a convention at which Miroslav Volf had also spoken.
The overlap could explain the popularity or prominent placement of two of his books, which were among those suggested by VC.

*World Harvest Church*

WHC self-identifies as a “family-friendly congregation of [12000] Spirit-filled believers in Jesus Christ, representing every age, ethnic group and walk of life” that began as a Bible study of seventeen people (World Harvest Church, 2012, np). The WHC website includes a section entitled *What We Believe*; it is useful in situating the community within the complexities of Christian sects and providing readers with insight into the priorities of the community. The WHC “statement of faith” (World Harvest Church, 2012, np) is reproduced in its entirety in Appendix C.

WHC is led by Pastor Rod Parsley, referred to by congregants as PRP, who is described as “a TV host, evangelist, educator, humanitarian and statesman” (World Harvest Church, 2012, np). Possessing a “bachelor’s degree from Ohio Christian University in Circleville, Ohio, and a doctorate from Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia,” PRP has “built one of the most important and far-reaching Christian ministries in the United States,” including “several major outreaches with local, national and worldwide reaches” (World Harvest Church, 2012, np). He is a “*New York Times* best-selling author [who] has successfully advocated for federal legislation, delivered hundreds of millions of pounds of food and medical supplies to poverty-stricken areas of the world and changed the lives of thousands who will shape the cultural landscape in the next generation” and is “in constant demand to preach the Gospel in pulpits across
America and around the world, and to comment publicly on the moral issues of our day” (World Harvest Church, 2012, np).

The WHC website section What to Expect provides information to prospective visitors. Before my visit to the site on 20 May 2012, I visited the website to determine the times of services. I attended the Sunday morning service, which began at 10 a.m. because it was described as “probably closest to what you may have experienced if you attended church when you were younger” (World Harvest Church, 2012, np).

I was greeted at both the outer and inner doors by multi-ethnic and multi-gender welcome teams wearing name tags. The inner greeting team provided me with a pamphlet that included the World Harvest Church weekly schedule, upcoming events, and space to take notes on the service. Seating in the upper level of the tabernacle was curtained off by large stage curtains, and the floor seating was not full, though it filled up during the service. As people continued to arrive, ushers wearing large carnations in their suit jackets (all of them male), directed them to open seating near the front.

Live music was just beginning and the musicians, vocalists, and large choir were illuminated by concert-style lighting and portrayed on the screens by visible and mobile camera crews. Though the website described a blend of “worship music” including “old hymns you may remember from childhood, today’s contemporary worship music and everything in between” (World Harvest Church, 2012, np), the music at the service I attended consisted of the repetition of two songs, one up beat, the other slower and melodic. The congregation, multi-racial with a large African American presence, was participatory. In addition to singing along, they embodied their participation by clapping,
swaying, raising hands, and dancing. On the screen were images of seemingly unaware congregants participating in the worship. The up-tempo opening music slowed and congregation behavior stilled with it. A steady drumbeat began to drive the music again, and it mirrored the rhetorical style of rhythmic shouting begun by a vocalist. He shouted to the crowd that “peace,” “angels,” “help,” and “prosperity,” each in turn, were on the way.

PRP began to replace the vocalist with rhythmic yelling, offering freedom from a spectrum of things including “sexual perversion” and “religion.” He instructed listeners to “shout freedom,” then loudly vocalized a wordless sound. PRP then instructed listeners to “refuse to be depressed, refuse to be oppressed” and stated that “every devil [was] saying stop” in response to the service. He addressed the congregation, saying “somebody clap, somebody spin” and as congregants began clapping and spinning, he instructed them not to stop, repeating it four times. As the music continued, he began to address the congregation again. He reminded listeners that “freedom is never granted by the oppressor, it must be demanded by the oppressed” and that “someone must get tired of sitting at the back of the bus.”

A middle aged European American couple was led onto the stage and PRP turned to the man, addressing him as “you foul spirit” before he began issuing a command to leave. He forcefully placed his hand on the man’s forehead, then the woman’s, and they both fell to the floor. PRP pointed to a woman near the front and called for her to be brought to the stage, where he turned her back to the congregation and called for “six men.” After a moment, they assembled themselves on the floor in front of the stage
behind her in two rows of three, at which point PRP, using his hand to her forehead, pushed her from the stage into their arms.

At this point, PRP wiped his face with a small black towel, took a large camera between his hands, and wiped the lens of the camera with the towel. He pulled the camera close to him and looked directly into the lens, resulting in an extreme close up of his face on the screens behind him, and he began to pray while speaking directly into the camera. He prayed for those “struggling with sexual perversion,” saying, “we lift up a prayer shield for every lesbian, every homosexual who wants to be free…we announce your freedom.” His declaration was met with a shout of support from the congregation. He stepped down from the stage and walked through the crowd, dropping them to the floor by touching his hand to their foreheads. As he walked, he announced that “800 men [were] about to be set free” and would “never search [their] computers [for pornography] again.”

PRP returned to the stage and was joined by a young African American woman whom he described as struggling with her past. He instructed her to take three steps toward him, saying “step and your past will be supernaturally erased.” He counted as she took the steps, collapsed, and was caught and lowered to the ground by the waiting ushers. At this point, PRP loudly instructed the congregation, twice, to “stop looking at [him],” and then directed listeners to “have your own celebration.” The up-tempo music continued, and he addressed the congregation again, saying, “this may be the only church in Columbus, Ohio where the devil comes to church…he comes to all of them, but at this one, your praise exposes…” He trailed off before identifying what the “praise” exposed.
PRP identified a young European American woman in the congregation and instructed the ushers to “bring her to [him].” The cameras focused on the woman, who like every congregant who had been acknowledged by PRP, was sobbing. He explained to the congregation that “her husband left her so God could bring him to the bottom and them to the top” before he palmed her forehead and she fell to the floor. PRP explained to the congregation that he had spent seventeen years being trained by “arguably the greatest exorcists” in the church. He then exclaimed loudly, twice, “you’d better get ready reapers, it’s on tonight” before he announced that God had “just healed three prostates,” along with an unspecified number of lungs and cataracts. While I had difficulty understanding the significance of his usage of the word “reapers” at the time, subsequent readings of his works have clarified that he considers his generation that last generation, the reaper generation, before the return of Jesus, the rapture, and the subsequent tribulation in “just a few short years” (Parsley, 1996, p. 91). Parsley’s (1996) conviction is based on his understanding of the biblical book of Revelation and the history of the modern nation of Israel; he provides a brief explanation and history lesson in NDS (1996).

PRP began telling a biblical story of Jesus’ childhood in which he immediately visited the local synagogue when he entered a new town. The repetitious back and forth of this occurrence, reminiscent of call and response, was typical of the interactions PRP had with the congregation when the music was not playing. He said, “The first thing he did was go to the synagogue. Where did he go?” The congregation responded: “The synagogue,” to which PRP instructed them to “say church.” They repeated: “church.”
After highlighting the importance of attending church, PRP told listeners that if “you get drunk enough on new wine, your pain disappears” before he began giving instructions to listeners who attend other churches. He told them, “if you are currently attending a gathering of people in a building and it’s quiet, here’s what you need to do…don’t walk out, that’s rude…if there’s no clapping, jumping, shouting…if they’re not doing this [demonstration of glossolalia], run!”

PRP’s instructions were greeted with a shout of approval from the congregation, and he responded by grabbing a woman’s wrist and pulling her through the congregation, using her palm to drop other congregants to the floor. He instructed listeners who were suffering from “sickness and disease” to reject them, saying “just don’t put up with it.” This portion of the service ended abruptly and congregants were told they “may be seated,” after just over an hour.

The *What to Expect* website described the sermons as messages that “will convince you of the incredible reality of God’s love and challenge you to live for Him” (World Harvest Church, 2012, np). PRP continued to utilize the tool of repetition, both by himself and through a call and response format of audience repetition. He began with Deuteronomy 8:18: I shall remember the Lord my God for he has given me the power to get wealth. He repeated it many times, then began to pause, letting the congregation supply the words. As he continued, he claimed that the power to get wealth was in the tongue. Providing an example, PRP called an African American woman to the stage, then walked through the congregation, calling for $20 and repeatedly specifying that it was not to come out of “what you were giving in the offering.” He collected five $20
bills, returned to the stage, and delivered the $100 to the woman he had previously selected. He explained that she had been chosen for her exemplary participation during the worship service, during which she “about hit a blonde-haired white woman in the head.”

PRP began to announce the coming of a revolution, which he described as an “overthrow that produces overflow.” He continued, claiming that revolution is an “activity designed to affect change in the socioeconomic situation of a certain segment of the population,” and stipulating that “it’s not for everybody.” PRP told the congregation that a “revolution requires renouncing,” and “if you are to overthrow one…ruler, you must substitute another ruler.” He told the congregation that when they were born, “poverty was [their] authority” and they must renounce poverty, which is a curse. PRP provided an example of this mindset by saying, “when you write your check in just a moment, say, ‘Thank you, Jesus, I have this and millions of dollars left.’” He made allowances for those with less faith, saying they could give thanks for the thousands of dollars they had left. Again, PRP provided an example, approaching an African American woman in the audience. He instructed her to stand up and asked her what she had when she first came to be part of the congregation. She answered that she had had nothing. PRP then asked her what she had now, to which she responded she had a nice condo with no mortgage and a car. He then announced a “supernatural debt cancellation” within the next twelve months.

PRP transitioned, saying to listeners, “you have been given a word, now respond.” The large screens began to show maps of and images from the Sahel region of Africa.
PRP spoke about WHC’s Bridge of Hope Teams, each part of “a worldwide missions organization that has helped to free more than 31,000 Sudanese Christian slaves since 1999 and has provided millions of pounds of food, medical supplies and emergency relief around the world,” along with “provid[ing] extensive relief to victims of the devastating floods in Mississippi and tornadoes in Alabama and Missouri in the spring of 2011” (World Harvest Church, 2012, np). PRP told listeners that a Bridge of Hope team was currently working in the Sahel. He called an African American child up to sit with him on the stage saying, “thirteen million children just like this one” will starve to death this year without assistance, and reminding listeners that those children are “not flies, not cattle.” PRP told congregants to “get [their] nails did, get [their] hair extensions…but don’t forget [the children of the Sahel].”

After sending the little girl back to her seat, PRP announced a special offering, again specifying that it be “above [the planned] tithe and offering.” He suggested that three people in the online audience should consider “sowing” $1000 into the Bridge of Hope program in the Sahel. Receptacles were passed through the congregation for their tithes and offerings and their Bridge of Hope gifts. Visitors were asked to identify themselves by raising their hands in order to receive a welcome package. Only one receptacle was passed to me a single time. While the money was being collected, one of the vocalists performed a solo with the accompaniment of the band.

When her solo had ended and the money had been collected, the service transitioned to announcements. When these announcements were completed, the speaker
requested a standing ovation for “the greatest pastor this world has ever seen” and welcomed PRP back to the stage.

PRP began another set of announcements, including that of the evening gathering of Reverse Church, a “college and career outreach…for 18 to 35 year old men and women” who desire a church experience “contrary to the status quo” (World Harvest Church, 2012, np). In his introduction, PRP referenced the “generation craving the supernatural,” an assertion he supported by noting the number of horror films, and announced again that “it’s on tonight,” promising “signs and wonders.” He also requested volunteers to help run the upcoming vacation Bible school, saying, “we gotta get these kids, we’ve got buses invading neighborhoods.” Before closing by inviting everyone to return next week for Pentecost Sunday, he mentioned that his son had written a piece for TV Guide regarding the television show The Voice, and that his own father was recovering from a double stroke.

I exited with the crowd and encountered a woman in a small kiosk offering DVDs and their supplemental materials. I asked her if she had any books, or if she could direct me to the bookstore. She replied that she had no books, and that the bookstore was now run as an online entity only. I thanked her for her time, and made my way through the crowd to the exit nearest my car.

**Book Acquisition**

After observations of the research locations, it was determined that requesting the best-selling books in the respective associated bookstores via email would be the most efficient method. When efforts via email were unsuccessful, telephone contact was
selected as the follow up method; between email and telephone contact, all texts were successfully acquired.

Location One Texts

On the evening of 23 May 2012, I emailed the man in charge of the Vineyard Bookstore, whose name, email address and telephone number were provided on the website. I indicated in my message that I wanted to order some books and would like to know which were their best sellers. I received a response the afternoon of 30 May 2012 that began with an apology for the late reply. He then provided the names and authors of four best sellers and closed with an offer of help should I need additional assistance. I again visited the Vineyard Bookstore website the morning of 5 June 2012 and ordered three of the books he suggested. As I was unable to find the fourth on the website, I requested in my order instructions that, if possible, it be added to my order and billed to the card provided. In addition, I emailed my request to my previous contact. I received a reply from him the evening of 5 June 2012 confirming that book had been added to my order and indicating its additional cost.

When no books had arrived by 19 June 2012, I emailed my contact inquiring about the delivery method. I quickly received an email from a woman, who I assumed also worked in the bookstore, informing me that my packages were coming from two different locations. On 20 June 2012, I received three of the books; the fourth arrived on 22 June 2012.

The suggested books, which constitute the texts to be analyzed from Vineyard Columbus include Craig Groeschel’s *Soul Detox: Clean Living in a Contaminated World*
(2012), Kyle Idleman’s *Not a Fan: Becoming a Completely Committed Follower of Jesus* (2011), and finally, *Allah: A Christian Response* (2011) and *Free of Charge: Giving and Forgiving in a Culture Stripped of Grace* (2005), both by Miroslav Volf. From this point on, the books will be identified by the following abbreviations:

- *Allah: A Christian Response* (2011) as *Allah*
- *Free of Charge: Giving and Forgiving in a Culture Stripped of Grace* (2005) as *FC*
- *Not a Fan: Becoming a Completely Committed Follower of Jesus* (2011) as *NF*
- *Soul Detox: Clean Living in a Contaminated World* (2012) as *SD*

Yale professor Miroslav Volf (2005; 2011) academically asserts in *FC* (2005) that Christians are to give and forgive generously, as those qualities are the essence of God; his central argument in *Allah* (2011), also academic in tone, is that Christians and Muslims worship the same God, whom they understand similarly. Kyle Idleman (2011) conversationally challenges readers to decide if they are casual fans or committed followers of Jesus in *NF* (2011). Groeschel (2012) highlights the dangers of bitterness, envy, anger, and fear while encouraging readers to avoid influences that bring such negative qualities into their lives in *SD* (2012).

*Location Two Texts*

I was surprised to learn that the book store was no longer a physical entity, as PRP has authored “more than 50 books and study guides,” including *New York Times* best sellers (World Harvest Church, 2012, np). On the evening of 23 May 2012, I visited the Breakthrough store through the WHC website. When I clicked the *Contact Us* link, a box opened where I could enter my contact information and a message. I supplied my contact information and indicated in my message that I wanted to order books and would
like to know which where their best sellers. As I had received no response by the
morning of 6 June 2012, I again visited the WHC website and clicked the general Contact
link which provided me with a telephone number for inquiries related to “products.” I
called the number and was pleasantly greeted by a female voice. She repeatedly
instructed me to visit the website for ordering, and I repeatedly told her that I had visited
it but had received no response to my inquiry. When we had arrived at somewhat of a
mutual understanding of my needs, she told me that their best-selling items were DVDs.
I told her that I appreciated that, but that I was still more interested in books. After a few
minutes, she was able to identify three popular books. When she suggested a free book,
finally identifying four books, I agreed and she placed an order on my behalf.

When no books had arrived by 19 June 2012, I called the “products” number
again to inquire about my order. I explained that I had placed my order and the payment
had been processed from my bank account. Though she tried to locate my order, she was
unable to do so. According to the system, which she said had been experiencing glitches
for the past few days, no books had been shipped to me. When I asked her if she could
have them sent out to me for rush delivery, she said I would have to pay extra for it.
When I commented that I had already been waiting for them for almost two weeks,
through no fault of my own, she suggested that I speak with her supervisor the next
morning. I called again the morning of 20 June 2012 and the woman who handled the
call assured me that she would send my order via UPS and it should arrive on 23 June
2012 or 25 June 2012. She also took my telephone number and said she would call me
with a tracking number; the next day, she left the tracking number on my voicemail. All four books arrived 22 June 2012, and three of the four arrived again on 23 June 2012.

The books she suggested, which constitute the texts to be analyzed from World Harvest Church, include 1996’s *No Dry Season: Raising High God’s Standards of Living for this Final Generation*; 2005’s *Silent No More: Bringing Moral Clarity to America…While Freedom Still Rings*; 2007’s *Culturally Incorrect: How Clashing Worldviews Affect Your Future*; and 2010’s *Living on Our Heads: Righting an Upside-Down Culture*, all authored by WHC Pastor Rod Parsley. From this point on, the books will be identified by the following abbreviations:

- **Culturally Incorrect: How Clashing Worldviews Affect Your Future** (CI)
- **Living on Our Heads: Righting an Upside-Down Culture** (LOH)
- **No Dry Season: Raising High God’s Standards of Living for this Final Generation** (NDS)
- **Silent No More: Bringing Moral Clarity to America…While Freedom Still Rings** (SNM)

Parsley’s (1996) first book in the study, *NDS* (1996), provides prophetic warnings and encouragements for those he calls the final generation. A marked change in message, tone, and style is evident in *SNM* (2005), in which Parsley (2005) begins to focus on the political and social issues that will affect the next generation. In *CI* (2007), Parsley (2007) explains his perception of the conflict Christians are in with humanists over the culture and fate of the United States. Another marked shift is evident in *LOH* (2010); Parsley (2010) is more subtle, offering a more nuanced and conversational reminder that American society is ill but can be healthy again.

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The fact that all of the analyzed texts from WHC were authored by one individual proved problematic for the study; that the individual was the pastor of the church exacerbated the issue. Because fully half of the data from the study came from the works authored by Pastor Rod Parsley, there is the possibility that the analysis can be read as an evaluation of Pastor Rod Parsley or the WHC; this is not the case. This study analyzed texts popular within two mega churches in central Ohio in order to investigate the impact of Christian literature on epistemologies of social justice. The proportion of data from one author was unintentional and unexpected.

Note

In order to gather more information on the texts suggested by the bookstores, I emailed both Pastor Rod Parsley and Pastor Rich Nathan. In addition, I emailed the publishers of the eight suggested books. Each email identified me as a doctoral student interested in the impact of Christian literature on teacher education, and included two questions and the request for a response. Each email also acknowledged that the recipients were busy, and indicated that I would appreciate any information the recipient could offer. The questions asked the recipient to identify which books in the bookstore/published by the company were the most popular (most frequently purchased) and to offer an explanation as to why these particular works were popular among their congregants/customers. As of this writing, only two of the publishing houses, HarperOne and Thomas Nelson, have responded.
A Marketing Associate for HarperOne, provided a list of five texts published by HarperOne that have been popular in the last couple of years. None of them are texts suggested by either VC or WHC; they include *Through My Eyes* by Tim Tebow, *Love Wins* by Rob Bell, *Mere Christianity* by C. S. Lewis, and *A Return to Love* and *The Law of Divine Compensation*, both by Marianne Williamson (Agius, 2013). The HarperOne associate suggests that Tebow’s book is popular due to his status as a professional athlete and the media attention it provides. She does not offer an explanation of the popularity of Lewis’s books, simply stating that it “sells itself” and is “a go-to book for Christian spirituality” (Agius, 2013, np). She goes on to describe Williamson as being “popular with the New Age audience,” enjoying steady sales and “a very engaged audience on social media” (Agius, 2013, np).

The HarperOne associate’s most developed response is related to Rob Bell. She attributes his popularity to the controversy he has created “in the evangelical Christian community” (Agius, 2013, np). She explaining that Bell had previously published with “Zondervan, our more conservative sister publishing house,” but “switched to us because he was becoming more progressive in his theology” (Agius, 2013, np). The associate elaborates, saying Bell’s progressive theology “threatens conservative evangelicals” (Agius, 2013, np). The Bell book she identified as being a best seller, *Love Wins*, was loudly condemned by many evangelical authorities, which brought him to the forefront of the Christian media, giving him lots of attention. His progressive views are popular among those who are more liberal and mainline in their Christian beliefs, especially to young adults (Agius, 2013, np).
She concludes her discussion of Bell’s popularity by describing him as “a very compelling speaker” who “tours a lot,” which has led to his recent profile in *The New Yorker* (Agius, 2013, np).

A Senior Vice President and Publisher at Thomas Nelson named only one title in his response, the recent bestseller *Heaven is For Real*. However, he provided a very developed explanation for the popularity of the book, as well as what general qualities are popular. He begins by saying,

…there is not one set answer to either of the questions…It's a moving target in terms of connecting with consumers and one never truly knows what the next big thing will be. It's more art than science but that's what makes it so exciting as well. To be able to better some lives in the process is a plus for us as our mission is to inspire the world (Baugher, 2013, np).

He goes on to identify meeting the current “felt need” of the reader as one of the characteristics of a best seller (Baugher, 2013, np). Interestingly, he makes a distinction between “not just what a person thinks they need but what they want to feel” (Baugher, 2013, np).

He attributes the popularity of *Heaven is For Real* to the fact that it meets a broad-based need; he explains that “all of us, whether religious or not, wonder what it might be like after death” (Baugher, 2013, np). In addition to meeting the need for assurances of life after death, he suggests that *Heaven is For Real* also meets readers’ need for someone or something to trust. As the story in *Heaven is For Real* is that of a small child, his assumed innocence “produces trust in the reader” (Baugher, 2013, np). The issue of trust is also a component of a genre he identifies as “selling well for us now” (Baugher, 2013, np). He explains that books with a “focus on either hearing from God or
being able to know that He's really there with us all the time” are currently quite popular (Baugher, 2013, np).

He acknowledges that other types of books do “sell very well,” including those “that are meant to teach and guide” and those that reflect current issues that have “risen to the top, not just in the media, but in everyday life” (Baugher, 2013, np). However, he maintains that the books that “seem to break out recently” provide the reader with a sense of trust (Baugher, 2013, np). The component of trust can be evidenced, as discussed above, in subject matter or author, but can also manifest in different ways. He attributes the success of many books to “word of mouth,” in which readers trust someone they know about the recommendation, as well as the current popularity of “backlist product” (Baugher, 2013, np). He explains that sales for older titles are “stronger than ever at the publishing houses” (Baugher, 2013, np). Older titles convey a sense of trust by their longevity and appeal to readers who desire a “proven item” (Baugher, 2013, np).

The fact that none of the books suggested by either VC or WHC appear on the list of books provided by publishers serves to underscore the fact that the research sites, the texts popular at each site, and indeed the study itself were selected without the intent of portraying Christianity as a monolith or claiming universal application. However, the information provided by the publishers is a valuable insight into the larger and more complex community of Christians. The HarperOne associate’s explanation of Bell’s popularity and controversy support the divide in the Christian community discussed in Chapter Two, and the Thomas Nelson VP’s insights into the role of felt needs in the popularity of texts provide context for Research Question Two.
Tools of Analysis

When the books arrived, they were analyzed for data regarding their potential role in influencing the development of social justice epistemologies among teachers. Both Critical Discourse Analysis and Evaluation Coefficient Analysis were utilized to examine the texts.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was utilized in order to identify themes that developed during the examinations of the texts. Each text was analyzed for references to social justice, along with non-dominant experiences of race, social class, gender, and sexual orientation. CDA is a valuable tool when investigating “the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context” (Van Dijk, 2001, p. 352; see also Fairclough, 2001).

CDA falls under the general category of content analysis, which “views data as representations…that are created to be seen, read, interpreted, and acted on for their meanings” (Krippendorff, 2004, p. xiii). Krippendorff (2004) argues that content analysis should, therefore, be focused on understanding the “social phenomena that are both generated by and constituted in texts” and identifies it as “a method of tracking markets, political leanings, and emerging ideas” (p. xiii-xiv). As Fairclough (2001) explains, “CDA analyses texts and interactions, but it does not start from texts and interactions. It starts rather from social issues and problems, problems which face people in their social lives…” (p. 26).
Critical Discourse Analysis accepts the precept that reality is socially constructed (Berger and Luckman, 1966; Heller, 2001). When interrogating socially constructed realities, one must include inquiry into the language used to describe and explain the reality, as language is itself constructed and at the root of all knowledges (Berger and Luckman, 1966; Deising, 1991). CDA is instrumental in studying the (re)production of power, as “those groups who control most influential discourse also have more chances to control the minds and actions of others” (Van Dijk, 2001, p. 355; see also Fairclough, 2001). The specific focus of CDA on the power of naming and framing makes it an ideal tool for this study (Banks, 1996; Wertsch, 1991).

Though productive research tools, CDA and other forms of content analysis have obvious limitations; Krippendorff (2004) openly discusses the difficulties in establishing validity when researcher interpretation plays such a key role in data collection and interpretation. This study has incorporated two methods for increasing the validity of the content analysis in the areas of replicability and triangulation.

*Evaluation Coefficient Analysis*

In an attempt to increase replicability, and thus reliability, of the study, Pratt’s (1972) framework of Evaluation Coefficient (ECO) analysis was used to determine the positive, negative, or neutral presentation of social justice in the analyzed texts. ECO analysis “is designed specifically as a relatively simple instrument which can provide valid and reliable quantitative measurements” regarding the value judgments in texts (Pratt, 1972, p. 13). ECO analysis utilizes a list of 265 commonly used, value-laden words, organized alphabetically and labeled *positive*, *negative*, and *neutral*, to help
researchers objectively and consistently assign value judgments to language used to
describe a topic (Pratt, 1972). The ECO analysis word list is replicated in Appendix A.
When confronted with a word not on the ECO list, a thesaurus was used to identify the
nearest synonym on the list. Each source was carefully analyzed and scored using the
ECO analysis score sheet, which is reproduced in Appendix B.

When the data for each text had been collected, the Coefficient of Evaluation was
determined using the following formula and description provided by Pratt (1972).

\[
\text{Coefficient of Evaluation} = \frac{100F}{F + U}
\]

where \(F\) = favorable [positive] terms and \(U\) = unfavorable [negative] terms. The
calculation is performed as follows:

a. Count the number of “+” signs in the direction column.
b. Multiply this figure by 100.
c. Divide this product by the total number of “+” and “-“ signs.

The Coefficient will always be between 0.0 (totally unfavorable) and 100.0
(totally favorable), with 50.0 representing the point of neutrality or ambivalence
(p. 22-23).

Though the rationale for including the ECO analysis model was well-intentioned,
the results were unsatisfactory. The texts were too complex and subtle for the ECO
analysis model; the paucity of explicit value statements in the most of the texts, and the
necessity of analyst interpretation of the implied judgments, led to a much more
subjective study than was anticipated. Most of the significant information in the study
comes instead from the discourse analysis.

The ECO analysis model provided a tool for demonstrating the varying degrees of
negativity with which difference was portrayed; however, as the purpose of the study was
to determine the role of Christian literature in the development of preservice teachers’ social justice epistemologies, the model did not add any substantive value to the study. Lacking a clear benefit to the study, it would not be included were the study to be conducted again.

**Triangulation**

Inclusion of the ECO analysis framework was intended to provide consistency in the analyses of value-laden language within the texts. In addition to utilizing a pre-existing framework for analyzing value language in order to increase reliability through replicability, I also triangulated the resulting data by comparing emerging trends with the public content of the respective communities’ websites. Investigating the correlations between trends developing from the content analysis and the public positions taken on the communities’ websites will add to the validity of the study through corroboration (Oliver-Hoyo and Allen, 2006). Pratt (1972) suggested such a triangulation in order to compliment the validity of a performed ECO analysis.

The official websites are the most public portrayals of the priorities of the communities as psychological groups, which are those that are important to their members and from which members learn how to perceive the world around them and how to behave appropriately in it (Onorato & Turner, 2002). Website review encompassed all the subpages of each location’s website, including links and embedded videos. Links to related or subsidiary organizations that took the visitor from the main location’s website were excluded, as were links to or embedded audio and/or video.
recordings of sermons and services. The number of sermons and services available on both sites would constitute a research project in and of itself.

Regarding the triangulation of data from texts and websites, it is important to note that while the WHC data may be meaningfully compared to the website content, the same may not necessarily be said for the VC data. All of the books from WHC were authored by its Pastor; the texts reflect the characteristics of the church and its leadership, and vice versa. As none of the texts from VC were authored by an individual who attends the church, or is even a part of the Vineyard Movement, the comparisons may be less meaningful. However, as the books were chosen to be stocked at the onsite bookstore, the general ideas of the texts are likely in alignment with those of the church.

Paradigm and Researcher Positionality

I was drawn to the tool of CDA in part because of my own positioning as a student scholar working within a postmodern feminist methodology. The intersection of feminist goals with those of CDA has led some scholars to consider feminist scholarship “paradigmatic for much discourse analysis” and write comparisons of the two frameworks (Van Dijk, 2001, p. 359; see also Kendall and Tannen, 2001).

Ellsworth’s (1989) article, *Why Doesn’t this Feel Empowering? Working Through the Repressive Myths of Critical Pedagogy*, was instrumental in the development of my conception of how an educator benefiting from multiple positions of dominance could work within the critical theories. Ellsworth (1989) describes her struggle to undermine her own authority and acknowledges that her positioning will always limit her capacity to understand oppression. She identifies her work as feminist post-structuralism, in that it
challenges oppressive systems, especially those based in and intersecting with gender and patriarchy, and the assumption that the reason is a tool through which the world can be fully known (Ellsworth, 1989). The work in this study is situated in a feminist paradigm, as well.

My initial interest in feminism was based in the fact that I am interested in equity studies, and my gender is the only identity in which I am not in the oppressor group (as I am a white, able-bodied, Christian, middle class, heterosexual, and educated United States citizen). As I had never felt oppressed due to my gender, my interest was largely perfunctory; my lack of true philosophical commitment was compounded by my shallow understanding of feminism. However, as my understanding of feminism, particularly its stance on epistemology, deepened, so did my identification with the lens.

Feminism is commonly conceived as activism by women for women (McCann and Kim, 2003). As it has evolved, the general field of feminism has developed sub-genres that address the intersectionality of feminist scholars. The fact that intersectionality of identities plays a large role in feminist scholarship is, perhaps, a demonstration of the departure feminism represents from traditional scholarship, which is characterized by positivism and concerned with knowing for the purpose of classifying and predicting, leading to issues of dominance and control (Ellsworth, 1989; Fay, 1975; Lather, 1992). By embracing the complexities of intersectionality, feminist scholars reject the notion of easy classification and complete knowledge.

The conception of feminism upon which I draw contains elements of postmodern feminism. Postmodern feminism is related to the second wave of feminist scholarship.
Lather (1992) describes second wave feminism as being concerned with discerning contextually situated meaning, as opposed to identifying universal truths to be used for prediction. Second wave feminism embraced these ideas of situated knowledge and multivocality which lie at the heart of multicultural and equity studies. It is “critical of Enlightenment assumptions regarding reason, scientific progress, universal theory, and the subject/self” and it demands “radical reflection” on the part of the researcher (Lather, 1992, p. 93-94; see also hooks, 1995; Paris, 1995).

The acknowledgement of the role of the researcher in both content analysis (Krippendorff, 2004) and feminism (hooks, 1995; Lather, 1992; Paris, 1995) are significant in this study because of the ways in which researcher positionality have shaped it. I am a preacher’s daughter; my mother is an ordained minister in an evangelical denomination. As one would expect given my mother’s vocation, I was highly socialized into the church’s doctrines and practices. Due to the level of my socialization into the Church, I was what Lincoln (2003) described as a maximalist; I believed the discourse, participated in the expected practices, was regulated by the community, anchored my identity in the worldview, and carried it into every aspect of my life.

I attended a denominational university for undergraduate studies in education, so the religious authority in my life remained largely static. However, the introduction of new people and experiences significantly impacted the role religion played in my life; I shifted from a maximalist outlook to a minimalist perspective, believing my religion was
fine for me, but comfortable with compartmentalizing it when necessary to accommodate others (Lincoln, 2003).

When I began the reflective work associated with my MA at The Ohio State University, compartmentalization ceased to be a viable option. My studies demanded that I interrogate my own beliefs. The questions without satisfying answers led to a sense of fragmentation, not neat and functional compartmentalization. I questioned my previous worldview of absolute and universal certainty; I could not accept the answers I had in the past, nor could I identify a new authority from which to seek new answers. I began to feel as though faith had to be divorced from my professional and academic lives.

Seeking spiritual direction, I began attending a church found through an advertisement in the Other Paper. I began forming relationships and getting involved with this community because of its honesty and concern for social justice. My interactions with the people in this community included an introduction to Christian literature that I had never before encountered. Through it, I became familiar with a Christian narrative that differed from that of my primary socialization. It continued to encourage charity, as had my childhood faith, but privileged the pursuit of justice as the ultimate goal. The reconciliation I found in these works, and in that community, probably saved my faith.

Also during this time, I attended an AERA panel discussion, moderated by Dr. Cynthia Dillard, regarding the role of spirituality in the academy. Participants gave voice to feelings and fears I had wrestled with in silence: struggles with identity confusion and fragmentation; pressures to silence parts of yourself; and fear of being disregarded, by
one community or the other, if you expressed your beliefs or your questions about them. The women of the panel then rejected the either/or dichotomies that can inform our academic and professional experiences: we do not have to be either religious or academic; we do not have to be either bigoted or faithless; we do not have to be concerned for either spiritual wellbeing or material wellbeing; we do not have to be either Christian or social justice activist. As a result of the panel discussion, I became interested in the ways that spirituality, religion, and education compliment and constrain each other in the academy and other educational settings. The candor and bravery of these panel participants gave direction to my academic life.

I am now part of a small, diverse faith community led by a pastor who is also a doctoral student studying sociology. In our weekly discussions, every spiritual concept is tied to the responsibility of working for social justice. Doubt is encouraged, disagreement is welcome, and socio-historical context is always presented when Biblical passages are discussed. I still identify as a Christian, although I am happily ambivalent about significant doctrinal issues. I am continually inspired by the example set by the man Jesus, as depicted in the Bible. I pray, meditate, practice yoga and read sacred and expository texts from multiple religious traditions. I have not lost my faith, but I have lost much of my religion. My current worldview is not unique or new; there have always been Christians who focused on the compassion, justice, and relational aspects of Jesus’ teaching. I have reoriented my practice to this type of Christianity, while also seeking to learn from other religions traditions.
My experiences and evolution have inspired my interest in the ways in which religious backgrounds can impact engagement with teacher education and inform our practices as educators. As both an educator and student scholar committed to social justice, as well as a person who identifies as Christian, I am cognizant of the tensions that can sometimes exist between oppositional presentations of these commitments.
Chapter 4: Findings

Chapter Four begins with a brief analysis of the texts’ authors and the physical attributes of the books analyzed to answer the research questions a) what religious literature is being read by Christians attending two mega churches central Ohio and b) what are the social justice curricula discussed in these texts and how are they presented. The chapter then proceeds to the findings of the Critical Discourse and ECO analyses, along with triangulation data, which are organized by location.

Author Analysis

Though not part of CDA or ECO analyses, author positionality is important to consider when examining the texts. As this study seeks to investigate how their words are framing social justice and related issues, their homogeneity and dominance in the areas of race, gender, and nationality, as shown in Table 1, is notable. As Volf (2011), author of two analyzed texts, acknowledges, “acquiring knowledge of the other is a complicated affair” (p. 204).
Table 1: Authors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100% white</td>
<td>100% male</td>
<td>75% US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHC</td>
<td>100% white</td>
<td>100% male</td>
<td>100% US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC</td>
<td>100% white</td>
<td>100% male</td>
<td>66.6% US</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The author identifies as Croatian, though his childhood home was, at the time, part of former Yugoslavia under Tito.

Author Homogeneity in Race

As discussed in Chapter Two, race and racism continue to be contested. The evolution of the construction of race is a significant example of the implicit inequities embedded in education and society; despite being proven scientifically untenable, it continues to shape the lives of individuals and communities (Banks, 1996; see also Ben Jelloun, 1999; Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995; Williams, 1997). However, as Mura (1999) points out, race is “a word which has been much misused, but without it, we are forced into silence” (p. 98). Despite Parsley’s (1996) claim of being “black by choice” (p. 141), there are no voices of color among the authors whose texts are being analyzed in this study. Indeed, the fact that Parsley (1996) expressed the sentiment is representative of the problematic nature of voices of dominance speaking on behalf of the non-dominant. Parsley’s (1996) belief that he is “black by choice” (p. 141) indicates a lack of awareness of the unique lived experiences of racial marginalization. The absence of voices of color represents the lack of opportunity for readers to engage with race in any meaningful way.
Author Homogeneity in Gender

Broadly, issues of gender can encompass many different facets of the cultural, biological, reproductive, and sexual experience. For the purposes of this discussion, gender will be understood as the cultural roles assigned to individuals based on biological criteria, though recent civil rights violations in the related areas of reproduction and sexuality make these issues extremely important and relevant, as well. As women have broken into the upper echelons of both the public and private sectors, the use of tokenism similar to that described in Chapter Two with race, has been utilized to deny the systemic oppression of women.

Breaking the boundaries of confining gender roles has long been an aim of feminism, a paradigm introduced in Chapter Three. Feminism is commonly understood as the desire to emancipate women from systemically unjust conditions under which they live (McCann and Kim, 2003). Those committed to gender equality have labored to have the multivocality of women’s experiences included in the dominant narrative. As none of the authors whose texts are being analyzed in this study is a woman, there exist still more lived experiences that are not included.

Despite the lack of female voices, a variety of female experiences are discussed in the analyzed texts. Volf (2011) references the specific concerns of some women in Allah (2011; see also Parsley, 2010), specifically the burka and other perceived injustices endured by women in Muslim culture. However, his outsider status limits his capacity to deeply understand the lived experiences of women, especially women who are part of a faith tradition and culture other than his own. Cultural and traditional boundaries are
difficult even for women to cross; Westerners, particularly women, desire to “rescue” Muslim women from the veil (Puar, 2008; see also Crocco, 2010; Maira, 2010; Mazza, 2009; Sensoy and Marshall, 2010).

In a more problematic instance, Groeschel (2012) describes his perception of women’s “appearance envy,” in which he imagines a woman’s inner monologue consisting of the lament that another woman’s “figure is cuter…her chest bigger and her hips smaller” (p. 112). In a refreshingly supportive stance, Parsley (2007) argues for gender income parity. Though some women certainly might desire to remove their veil or change their physical appearance, and many would welcome increased income, the assumption of men that they can comment on the female experience is problematic.

**Author Homogeneity in Nationality**

Though there is more diversity in this category than in race and gender, the majority of the authors are from the United States and all of them are Western. Only Groeschel (2012) implied that someone outside of the United States might be reading his *SD* (2012), though the prominence of *FC* (2005) as the 2006 Lenten study book might increase the likelihood of an international audience. Parsley’s *SNM* (2005), *CI* (2007), and *LOH* (2010) were written specifically for and about the United States. The lack of non-Western voices, and the corresponding majority of voices from the United States, again indicates that important voices are unheard.

Volf (2011) intentionally engaged in academic collaborations with non-Westerners and utilized non-Western texts in his attempts to include contemporary differences of interpretation. However, his European identity and residence in the United
States limit his capacity to understand the perspective of non-Westerners, as is evidenced by his statements to his non-Western collaborators in the Acknowledgements section of the text, in which he thanked them for their “invaluable Muslim responses to portions of the text…even though [he] was not always able to follow their lead” (Volf, 2011, p. 264). Volf (2011) acknowledged this limitation more than once, explicitly stating his own positionality, but fell short of including the perspectives offered by his non-Western colleagues.

Colonialism

A univocality of Westerners is problematic, as much of the colonialism in practice today (neo-colonialism) is based in the spread of capitalism and globalization (Mohanty, 2006; Rizvi, 2004; Williams, 1997), though Volf (2005; 2011) demonstrates an awareness of the legacies of colonialism. FC (2005), which focuses in part on generous living, contains commentary on the stories imperialists told themselves in which they claimed their “shameless” taking of goods and destruction of cultures was actually a fair trade because they “brought the light of civilization into the darkness of [their victims’] barbarity” (Volf, 2005, p. 97). Allah (2011) contains repeated reference to the responsibility the historic instances of imperialistic activities, and the current climate of globalization, have in the conflict between East and West, Muslim and Christian, today (Volf, 2011).

While Volf’s (2011) admission regarding his positionality and the limitations his own perspectives bring to his work are promising, Parsley’s (1996; 2005; 2007; 2010) works are more problematic. In a notable example, Parsley (1996) describes a mission
trip by his much-praised mentor to the Philippines, which resulted in “one of the largest churches in the Orient” (p. 23, emphasis added). Parsley’s (1996; 2005; 2007) xenophobic words, in addition to his simplistic treatment of complex international relationships, highlights the difficulty many in the West, particularly the United States, have in recognizing neo-colonialism. These tendencies are perhaps exacerbated by post-September 11th tensions with militant nationalism and religion, in which patriotism is predicated upon religion.

Nationalism and Militant Religion

Parsley (2005) argues that “America was founded, in part, with the intention of seeing this false religion [Islam] destroyed” (p. 92) and asserts that “the American Revolution was, in part, a holy war” (p. 4). He continues his framing of the United States as a crusader against Islam by explaining that “America’s first war was against Muslim armies” (Parsley, 2005, p. 92). Based on one quote attributed to a ship captain addressing an “enslaved crew of Christians,” Parsley (2005) asserts that “clearly, the Tripolitan War was a battle of faiths” (p. 92). Because of these dubious interpretations, Parsley (2005) asserts that “America has historically understood herself as a bastion against Islam in the world” and must now be vigilant regarding the growing religion because “the Christian part of the world is shrinking overall, largely because of abortion” (p. 94-95).

Parsley’s (1996) earlier work contains its own militant language. NDS (1996) includes two references to the army of God, in which all Christians are called to serve as banner carriers, as a “terrorist” army, an army meant to bring “terror to the forces of darkness and the alien armies of the Antichrist” (Parsley, 1996, p. 33). Parsley (1996)
refers to the Antichrist in the present tense and argues that as “the final generation…we are going to have to learn how to deal with the spirit of the antichrist,” indicating that he intended for Christians to act as terrorists at time of publication (p. 96). As his statements were made one year after the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing and prior to September 11th, they do not necessarily carry racial or anti-Islamic undertones.

Though Parsley (2007) clarifies in 2007’s CI that he called Christians to be “marching forth as an army of terrorists under the banner of Jesus Christ” in a spiritual sense, not against actual people, his linguistic moves and persistent preference for military comparisons from the American Revolution through the first Iraq war could be perceived as threatening to non-Christians (Parsley, 1996, p. 95). NDS (1996) contains an example in which Parsley (1996) compares the Japanese forces on Iwo Jima to the devil, while he personifies the victorious US Marines. Additional examples include one in which glossolalia prayer is compared to a Desert Storm stealth bomber (Parsley, 1996). Another instance of Parsley’s glorification of US militarism and his assumptions of religions causation, can be found in his treatment of the Vietnam War. In SNM, Parsley (2005) describes the conflict:

…it decades ago American forces removed a traditional leader in Vietnam and tried to replace him with a democratically elected man. But democracy does not spring naturally from Buddhist soil, and the Vietnamese people felt to allegiance to someone who had power just because a majority of voters gave it to him. Disaster followed (p. 115-116).

He continues the theme in CI (2007), in which he references Vietnamese casualties who died “after the withdrawal of military presence,” though he does not mention the Vietnamese casualties who died during the protract US military presence (Parsley, 2007,
The lack of perspective demonstrated by this one-sided portrayal of the Vietnam War is demonstrative of the general lack of perspective created by the Western hegemony of the authors. The intersection nationality with colonialism and militant religion makes this lack of perspective not only unfortunate, but potentially dangerous.

**Coefficient of Evaluation by Author**

The Coefficient of Evaluation for each author, the mean of their individual scores, shown below in Table 2, is as follows. Parsley (1996; 2005; 2007; 2010), whose thirteen Coefficient of Evaluation scores ranged from 0 to 76.40, had a mean Coefficient of Evaluation of 25.58. Volf (2005; 2011), whose six Coefficient of Evaluation scores ranged from 46.15 to 66.67, had a mean Coefficient of Evaluation of 52.37. Idleman (2011), who had only two Coefficient of Evaluation scores of 44.23 and 46.15, had a mean Coefficient of Evaluation of 45.19. Groeschel (2012) who also had only two Coefficient of Evaluation scores, both 27.87, had a mean Coefficient of Evaluation of 27.87. Volf’s (2005; 2011) presentation of difference was the most positive, though barely above neutral. Idleman’s (2011) presentation of difference was the next highest, though it is below neutral. Both Groeschel (2012) and Parsley (1996; 2005; 2007; 2010), third and fourth respectively, both presented a decidedly negative portrayal of difference.
Table 2: Coefficients of Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>37.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHC</td>
<td>25.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC</td>
<td>41.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groeschel</td>
<td>27.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idleman</td>
<td>44.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parsley</td>
<td>25.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volf</td>
<td>52.37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Coefficient of Evaluation for all texts was a negative 37.51, which indicates a decidedly negative portrayal of difference in the texts popular among the religious communities in this study. The Coefficient of Evaluation for the texts suggested by WHC was a particularly negative 25.58; though the VC Coefficient of Evaluation is nearly sixty-two percent higher, it is still a negative score of 41.49. Clearly, the score for Parsley (1996; 2005; 2007; 2010) is the most accurate due to the larger number of contributing scores; Volf’s (2005; 2007) is significantly less accurate with only half of the number of contributing scores, and the scores for Idleman (2011) and Groeschel (2012) are almost certainly unreliable due to the small number of contributing scores. These limitations would also extend the Coefficients of Evaluation for each site from which the texts came.

Physical Attributes of Books

As shown in Table 3 below, the mean number of pages in the analyzed books was 232.5 with a range of 189-326 pages. The WHC books ranged from 189-227 pages with a
mean of 208.5 pages; the VC books ranged from 215-326 pages with a mean of 256.5

Table 3: Pages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>WHC</th>
<th>VC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>232.5</td>
<td>208.5</td>
<td>256.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>189-326</td>
<td>189-227</td>
<td>215-326</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Half of the texts, including Volf’s *Allah* (2011) and *FC* (2005), as well as

Groeschel’s 2012 *SD* and Parsley’s 2011 *LOH*, were presented very simply with a main
text organized into chapters and subheadings, acknowledgements, and notes. Dr. Rowan
Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, penned a foreword for *FC* (2005), as was the 2006
Lenten study book, and Volf (2005) included the transcript of a discussion with a
colleague as the postscript to *FC* (2005). Others, like Idleman’s 2011 *NF*, as well as

Parsley’s 1996 *NDS* and 2007 *CI*, utilized similar formats but added cues such as text
size, bulleted, italicizing, and bolding, as well as offset textboxes with quotes from the
text, in order to alert readers to important points. Parsley’s 1996 *NDS* also included a
variety of text alignments and repetitious wording that mirrored spoken rhetorical styles.

Reinforcement of important points was also provided in the personal stories at the
end of each chapter in Idleman’s 2011 *NF*; each recounted the process through which
they transitioned from either ambivalence or fandom into a follower of Jesus.

Interestingly, nearly all of the stories included a personal tragedy, which Idleman (2011)
refers to as “blinking lights” intended to get our attention, preceding the transition to
follower (p. 193), which is similar to a story in Groeschel’s 2012 *SD* about the effects a
debilitating illness had on his wife. The theme continues in Parsley’s 1996 *NDS*, in which he describes at length during one of his remembrances of his mentor Dr. Lester Sumrall how the man was given a deathbed ultimatum from God, accompanied by a vision in which he had to choose between his own casket and the Bible. When Parsley (1996) describes situations similar to Idleman’s (2011) “blinking lights” (p. 193), he encourages readers to “count themselves blessed that God would allow us to walk though [sic] the fire so that we could experience His victory and then give glory to His name for it” (p. 136).

Additional sections included advertisements and contact information for supplemental materials and related product lines, as in Idleman’s 2011 *NF* and Parsley’s 1996 *NDS*. Both *NF* (2011) and *CI* (2007) also had additional aspects that made them more interactional; *NF* (2011) included space to write thoughts and answers to questions, making the text somewhat of a workbook, and Parsley’s 2007 *CI* ended each chapter with summarized and bulleted Action Points that included recommended reading.

*Analyses and Triangulation*

The following section will include the data from the Critical Discourse and Evaluation Coefficient analyses, along with the triangulation results, organized by location and research question.

*Results from Vineyard Columbus - Research Question: What religious literature is being read by Christians in central Ohio?*

The texts suggested by each location provide an insight into the perceived needs of individuals at their respective sites, as well as insight into how the perceived needs are
to be met, through the type of books popular at each site and the relationship of the
authors with each community. The texts from VC indicate that the readers of the popular
texts are concerned with their individual Christian lifestyles, as well as generous
theology, in pursuit of changing themselves; they are willing to learn from a variety of
authorities utilizing a variety of styles.

Insights from Genre

In contrast to the outward focus indicated by the VC website, the texts suggested
by VC are largely aimed at promoting internal change in the reader. Both Idleman (2011)
and Groeschel (2012) wrote texts that could generally be considered Christian self-help
books, designed to assist the reader in leading a more “Christian” life. Volf’s (2005;
2011) works, while academic in tone and by far the most complex theologically of all the
analyzed texts, were also aimed at convincing the reader to internalize the importance of
giving, forgiving, and religious understanding.

The importance of a focus on change in oneself cannot be overstated, as it provides important insights into the way the community, may be inclined to see the world
around them. Though self-awareness and effort at living a more giving, forgiving,
understanding, and even Jesus-like life are laudable, that the focus of all of the VC books
is internal indicates a focus on individual morality that can sometimes be portrayed as
being at odds with the systemic nature of social justice. As Blum and Harvey (2012),
citing sociologist Michael Emerson, explain

…the white evangelical emphasis on individualism and emotionalism has severely limited churches’ capacity to engage with social and racial problems. Through historical misdirection and by spiritualizing social problems, the
devotional [by a popular Christian author, used an example of the phenomenon] gave white evangelicals absolution with any requirement to take action (p. 250).

Insights from Authors

In contrast to the insular view the purpose of the texts convey, the four books suggested by VC include a variety of outside voices. The books were written by three different authors, none of which had any notable connection to the local congregation, nor with the larger Vineyard Movement. This suggests that the VC community sees itself as part of the larger evangelical movement, in relationship with other Christian communities, if not with the larger world. The absence of any books by Senior Pastor Rich Nathan indicates a diffused locus of power and authority. The data suggests that VC desires to engage with and learn from those who are not a part of their community.

Results from Vineyard Columbus - Research Question: What are the social justice curricula discussed in these texts and how are they presented?

The texts suggested by VC were analyzed for presentations of social justice, along with experiences of difference in race, class, gender, and sexuality. While there were no coded references for an ECO analysis of social justice or sexuality, ECO analysis revealed a negative portrayal of difference in both class and gender. Race is the only category in which the ECO analysis revealed a positive portrayal of difference. In addition to the ECO analysis results, the themes that emerged during the CDA are discussed below in sections organized by topic.
Social Justice

Unexpectedly, there were no references to social justice in any of the texts suggested by VC, as is shown below in Table 4. As a result, there is no Coefficient of Evaluation to report for the topic of social justice.

Table 4: ECO Analysis Notations of Social Justice from VC Texts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VC</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allah</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FC</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NF</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
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Obviously, the results of this section are unanticipated; that there were no references to social justice in VC texts indicate an unexpected silence. However, there were many instances of references to justice that were not included in the ECO analysis. The decision to exclude references to justice from analysis had a significant effect on the results; in Allah (2011) alone justice was listed as an attribute of God/Allah no less than thirty-six times and as a virtue enjoined by God/Allah no less than thirty-nine times. NF (2011) contained two explicit references to justice, both referencing the hypocrisy of those who neglect it, though SD (2012) did not utilize the word justice at all.

Similarly, in addition to the explicit, and positive, references to justice in Allah (2012), there were multiple references to the necessity of working for “the common
good,” the “good,” “care,” “rights,” and “well-being” of others, as well as multiple positive references to pluralism and the injunction to treat others as you would have them treat you. Similar examples were found in NF (2011), including the importance of feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and visiting prisoners as acts that evidence the existence of faith. Indeed, one of Idleman’s (2011) examples of a casual fan of Jesus was the man who said he believed but refused to heed Jesus’ biblical call to “sell your possessions and give to the poor” (p. 144). Idleman’s (2011) focus on individual efforts such as mission trips, serving food at the homeless shelter, visiting the sick, or even becoming foster or adoptive parents, however, ignore the role that systemic inequity has in creating those circumstances.

Volf (2005) has the opportunity to explicitly address systemic inequities in FC (2005), but falls short. He encourages readers to give generously “without any distinction – to stranger and to kin, to undeserving and deserving…what the color of their skin is, or how they behave doesn’t matter” (Volf, 2005, p. 75). He goes on to ask, “Doesn’t the very fact of giving undermine any equality that the gifts confer?” (Volf, 2005, p. 83). Volf’s (2005) question could lead readers from individual acts of charity toward acts of social justice for systemic change, but instead he informs readers that givers, as conduits of God’s giving, are not perpetuating a hierarchy. Though he does assert the importance of governments meeting the “social needs” of their people, which takes some of the focus off of individual charitable gifts, the onus of his argument is on a personal responsibility to give (Volf, 2005, p. 87).
Despite failing to address systemic inequities and containing no references to social justice or even to justice; FC (2005) is full of descriptions of and encouragements to act for social justice. Volf (2005), quoting 2 Corinthians 8:13-14, describes the purpose of giving in the image of God as that which will “create ‘a fair balance’ between their ‘present abundance’ and the need of recipients” (p. 78). He goes on, saying that “gifts should foster and express equality” and “should aim at establishing parity in the midst of drastic and pervasive inequality,” as a situation in which “some suffer abject poverty while others enjoy opulence” is biblically untenable (Volf, 2005, p. 82-83).

Significantly, Volf (2005) makes explicit the fact that “resources give us power” (p. 98). His correlation between material resources and access to power, and the corresponding injunction to give of both, is an important aspect of social justice. Of course, as discussed above, Volf’s (2005) focus on individual acts that “offer immediate help” can lead to neglect of the crucial component of acting for systemic change (p. 119). Indeed, his argument that “if Christians in the United States alone gave 10 percent of their income, the problem of world hunger could be solved” leaves little room to interrogate the systemic inequities that perpetuate world hunger (Volf, 2005, p. 106).

Similarly, Groeschel (2010) describes systemic inequities, but stops short of identifying them as social justice issues. In SD (2012), the word justice is used to describes the concept of righteous anger by drawing attention to “poverty [that] runs rampant;” “corporations [that] exploit the earth’s resources for billions of dollars and excrete toxic waste into the land and seas;” and the plight of “people [who] are tricked, kidnapped, taken advantage of – even sold as slaves” (Groeschel, 2012, p. 128).
Groeschel (2012) goes on to argue that “used as a catalyst for justice and the pursuit of God’s righteousness, anger can cleanse, restore, and unite” (p. 129). Despite identifying systemic issues and encouraging readers to act, Groeschel (2012) does not use the term social justice.

Justice versus Social Justice

Though it is this researcher’s opinion that many of the attributes and descriptions of justice provided in the texts suggested by VC encompassed social justice, they were excluded because of the perceived differences, and politicization, between justice and social justice. As demonstrated in Chapter Two, social justice is often equated with distributive justice; due to the economic component of this model, it frequently encounters resistance. Generally, approaches to justice in theory and justice in action are largely divergent; Miller (1992) describes the adherence to theories regarding the importance of justice as the “Sunday-best” version, while the actual application of these values is much more mundane and diluted by “self-interest” (p. 557; see also Miller, 1999). The application of justice values is further contingent upon the scope of applied justice; we are much more likely to act justly for small groups than to advocate for justice on a societal scale (Miller, 1992; see also Miller, 1999).

Because of these issues, and those described in Chapter Two regarding the controversial nature of social justice, it was after considerable debate that the initial distinction between justice and social justice described in Chapter Three was upheld, despite the fact that it may very well skew the results of this section. Due to the
politicization of social justice, it is possible that readers may not make a meaningful connection to the general theory of justice and its practical applications of social justice.

Retributive Justice

A significant departure from these discussions of distributive justice, the second section of *FC* (2005) focuses on retributive justice. Retributive justice is that which attempts to right wrongs, and in a treatise on forgiveness, it played a central role. Essentially, Volf (2005) argues that society in the United States is much more interested in revenge and greed than justice, as is evidenced by our litigiousness. He specifically references the practice in which “conservative Christians are suing as a means to advance their political agenda,” and the biblical injunction against lawsuits (Volf, 2005, p. 125). As opposed to forgiveness that ignores injury, Volf (2005) argues for one that accuses and condemns, but abdicates the responsibility of punishment. A similar situation exists in the forgiveness section of *SD* (2012), where Groeschel’s (2012) reference to justice is in relation to the molestation of his sister by a teacher, and is therefore retributive in nature. None of the references to *justice* found in the second section of *FC* (2005) or the forgiveness section of *SD* (2012) were applicable to the concepts of *social justice*.

Triangulation

As was discussed above, there were no references to social justice in the analyzed texts, despite many calls to and descriptions of acts that would further the cause of societal equity. The silence regarding social justice found in the texts is supported by the triangulation data, as social justice appears only twice on the many pages of the website. Also supported by the triangulation data is the presence of numerous descriptions and
exhortations related to social justice, similar to those found in the texts (Vineyard Columbus, 2013). The first reference appears on the VC Bookstore page of the website; the description states: “From birth to death, from personal devotions to social justice, from overcoming addictions to discovering who the Holy Spirit is, we offer thoughtful, readable materials that can assist you on your faith journey” (Vineyard Columbus, 2013, np). The second reference appears in the description of the Urban Ministries page of the website. It informs visitors that Urban Ministry "build a bridge of friendship and let Jesus walk over it," and goes on to explain:

God cares deeply about people in our community and He hears the cry of those who are hurting. He uses ordinary people to respond. With thirteen direct service ministries such as our health clinics, food pantries, and nursing home visits, there are many opportunities to serve. Our dedicated volunteer leadership and regular volunteers bring hundreds of men, women and children love, mercy and social justice in the name of Jesus each week. Small groups, individuals and families are all welcome to participate and share the blessings of ministering with the poor (Columbus Vineyard, 2013, np).

In addition to framing social justice as integral to the Christian experience, these quotes also provide some context for the use of the phrase. The latter quote establishes that social justice is related to providing comfort to those who are hurting, and specifies both material and relational needs as those which can be met by action for social justice.

The VC understanding of social justice appears to be informed by biblical passages such as Isaiah 58, a portion of which is read by a speaker at the More4Orphans conference:

Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your
healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.

The speaker, a European American male, utilizes this passage to demonstrate “God’s heart” for the poor, oppressed, and orphaned (Vineyard Columbus, 2013, np). It is also the basis of his challenge to interpretations of the Bible that do not lead to a “commitment to justice;” he specifically challenges passages such as 2 Thessalonians 3:10 (those who do not work shall not eat) and Matthew 26:11 (the poor you will always have with you) (Vineyard Columbus, 2013, np). The speaker goes on to assert that God calls Christians to an activist role, arguing that it is not enough to care about, but must care for, the poor; he continues, explaining that awareness is not enough, that Christians must move on to action as “conduits of love…[and] mercy” (Vineyard Columbus, 2013, np).

Interestingly, in his calls for engagement, the speaker cautions Christians against acting as if they are “waiting at a bus stop on the way out before he [God] ‘nukes’ the world;” though his tone indicates that he was making a joke, the statement is a telling insight into the way some Christians view their role in the world and its future (Vineyard Columbus, 2013, np). Also of note is that the speaker assures listeners that God promises blessings if they act for justice, referencing the last part of the quote from Isaiah.

The interest in justice in general at VC is evidenced not only by these references, and the inclusion of four books with the word “justice” in the title on the Urban Ministries page of the website, but by the plethora of justice oriented services provided at the VC location as part of their church community. It is important to note here that, as was discussed above, much of the action encouraged by both the websites and the texts
would likely be considered charity as opposed to social justice activism due to its focus on the gifting of material resources. However, there are also many ministries and programs that aim to empower the oppressed and rectify systemic inequities. Website visitors’ attention are drawn to the issues of human trafficking (specifically aimed at women visitors); children without homes (encouragement for visitors to consider fostering, adoption, and international sponsorship); world and local hunger; the plight of the sick; and domestic and international poverty.

In addition to providing contact information and encouragement to partner with the Ohio Benefit Bank, local homeless shelters, men’s and women’s shelters, Meals on Wheels, and food banks, as well as a furniture bank and Habitat for Humanity, VC provides an impressive list of services to the community: the Columbus-area resources booklet, in which readers will find an extensive list of support organizations organized by need; a food pantry list that includes qualification and appointment requirements; a partnership with Maize Road Elementary to provide mentoring and outerwear for students of “under-employed or unemployed single moms;” ESL classes and English conversation partners to English Language Learners; the VC Professional Counseling Center, at which community members have access to “clinically-trained counselors” who will “offer a biblically-based approach to help people achieve wholeness in all aspects of their lives;” employment services and coaching; transportation to homeless camps, as well as to and from services; prison ministries that include pen pals, re-entry assistance, and youth mentoring; hospice, hospital, and elderly visitation; a crisis pregnancy center that provides baby supplies, parent mentoring, and transition assistance; a food pantry
that also supplies necessities such as personal hygiene items and blankets; Disaster Relief Teams that serve locally, regionally or nationally as first responders, search and rescue, shelter support, clean-up, and reconstruction crews; Vineyard Free Health Clinics provide access to pharmacists, optometrists, dentists, dental assistants, dental hygienists, and chiropractors; the Zone After School Program in which students have access to homework helpers, reading buddies and tutors; a program in which volunteers crochet sleeping mats for the homeless out of donated plastic grocery bags; low-cost ($30 for a consultation) immigration counseling services “for those who need assistance with the immigration process” (services listed, but not exhaustive, included green card application, citizenship petitions, and relative petitions); a free legal clinic for those who cannot afford a lawyer; home buying assistance from mortgage representatives, mortgage companies, home inspectors, and title company representatives; financial education and coaching; and GED classes, tutors and mentors (Vineyard Columbus, 2013, np).

VC not only provides services for the local community, but also organizes efforts for international needs. VC collect and ships supplies for children in the Haitian orphanage with which they partner; VC also brings attention to New Horizons for Children, an international faith-based hosting organization that brings eastern European orphans to the United States to learn English and life skills (Vineyard Columbus, 2013).

It is important to note that not all of the ministries and outreaches VC engages in are what would be commonly considered social justice oriented; for example, they partner with a national group of mothers who pray for schools (Vineyard Columbus, 2013). The stated goals of the group are “to pray that teachers, administrative staff, and
students would come to faith in Jesus Christ” and “to pray that our schools will be directed by biblical values and high moral standards” (Vineyard Columbus, 2013, np).

Race

There were 185 coded references to race in the texts suggested by VC, as is shown below in Table 5.

Table 5: ECO Analysis Notations of Race from VC Texts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VC</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allah</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FC</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NF</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The total Coefficient of Evaluation for race, determined by calculating the mean Coefficient of Evaluation for the four texts that had coded references to race, is 50.69; as it is slightly above the neutral score of 50, the presentation of racial minorities in the texts is slightly positive. Table 6, below, also provides the Coefficients of Evaluation for each book.
Table 6: Coefficients of Evaluation for Race from VC Texts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VC</td>
<td>50.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allah</td>
<td>51.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FC</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NF</td>
<td>44.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>27.87</td>
</tr>
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</table>

As is evidenced by the number of coded references of race, the texts had much, both explicit and implicit, to say about racial minorities. Groeschel (2012) is the only author of a VC text that explicitly condemns racism, specifically in the form of “racist” jokes, arguing that “funny doesn’t make wrong right” (p. 191). He also invites individuals of all races to be part of his congregation, saying, “black, white, yellow, or orange, come to know the truth of Christ” (Groeschel, 2012, p. 217). However, this description of racial diversity is problematic and provides insight into the types of language that led to SD (2012) receiving the lowest Coefficient of Evaluation score for race among the VC texts.

The Intersection of Race and Religion

The intersection of race and religion (Blumenfeld, 2006; Eck, 2006; Joshi, 2006; Marshall, 2006; Subedi, 2006) is evident in the texts suggested by VC. As might be expected due to the political and nationalistic climate in the United States, many of the texts contained specific references to Islam. The treatment of Islam is significant, particularly in a time when the sole world super-power is engaged in multiple military conflicts in a region largely defined by the West in terms of its religion and marked by its colonized past.
Volf’s (2011) treatment of Islam in Allah (2011) is the most developed among the VC texts, as his main argument of the book is that the God of Christianity and the God of Islam are one and the same. There is, however, a noticeable shift in his portrayal between FC (2005) and Allah (2011). In FC, Volf (2005) discusses the capacity for forgiveness frequently exhibited by non-Christians, citing the words of a Muslim man whose young daughter was murdered during the ethnic conflicts that shattered Bosnia in the 1990s. Volf (2005) argued that “every religion – every overarching interpretation of life – may have its own ways of fostering forgiveness, even a religion born with the help of violence” (p. 223, emphasis added). His words appear to support the common perception of Islam as an intrinsically violent religion. On the same page, however, he acknowledges that some perceive Christianity as violent, though he continues, saying he hopes his “book has shown otherwise” (Volf, 2005, p. 223). The assumption that Islam is violent stands unchallenged, while Volf (2011) actively attempts to address the assumption as it pertains to Christianity.

Six years later, Allah (2011) demonstrates a remarkable difference. In the interim, Volf (2011) had collaborated with Muslims for both academic and religious reasons, and the additional perspective is evident. Volf (2011) explicitly, and repeatedly, challenges the depictions of Islam found in Pope Benedict XVI’s Regensburg Address as violent. In addition, while Volf (2011) acknowledges historical and contemporary examples of violence, he attempts to balance his discussion with corresponding examples from Christianity. He is also careful to separate extremists in both Islam and Christianity.
from the “normative mainstream” that makes up the majority of adherents to both faiths (Volf, 2011, p. 13).

At its core, *Allah* (2011) is an attempt to illustrate the similarities between Christianity and Islam (Volf, 2011). In addition to acknowledging the imperfect history of both religions, Volf’s (2011) admittedly imperfect collaborations provided much important material to his argument. His extensive quoting of documents authored by and/or sacred to Muslims provides even more insight than he explicitly discusses (Volf, 2011). For example, it is interesting that in texts written for Western consumption, such as the collaborative effort *A Common Word: Muslims and Christians on Loving God and Neighbor*, the English term “God” is used instead of the Arabic term “Allah” (Volf, 2011, p. 29). This could illustrate one or both of the following realities, as they are not mutually exclusive: 1) the “normative mainstream” adherents for which Volf (2011) wrote are comfortable with the interchangeable nomenclature, and/or 2) the Western agenda and language is dominating in a common instance of cultural imperialism (p. 13).

Based on Volf’s (2011) discussion of the controversy in Malaysia regarding laws forbidding the interchangeable use of Allah and God, and his negative comparison of “Malay Islamic militants” to “some Christian theologians,” the data suggests that he would argue for the first scenario (p. 80-81). Regardless, Volf’s (2011) discussion, and the examples that he employs, highlight the importance of naming and framing religions and even conceptions of the entity being worshiped. Similarly, Volf’s (2011) use of the Qur’an highlights similarities in the core tenants of each religion. However, his selected quotations also highlight the respect shown to Jesus in the Muslim holy book (Volf,
Though this is not the stated intent of the selected quotes, the theme of respect is important to note, as the explicit goal of the book is to highlight similarities in Islam and Christianity with the hope that such interpretations will lead to peaceful coexistence. Thus, Volf’s (2011) inclusion of verses from the Qur’an in which Jesus is referred to as “Christ” (p. 55) and given respect in much the same way as the prophet Mohammed, by the inclusion of such statements as “may God’s blessings be upon him” and “may peace be upon him” (p. 16) after his name, are an important, if subtle, signal to readers.

Despite the plethora of references, Allah (2011) was difficult to code. As with the coding for social justice, Allah (2011) was particularly problematic when coding value statements of race. In Volf’s (2011) treatment of historical conflict between East and West in Allah (2011), he and his historical sources made frequent mention of “Muslims.” Due to the historical context, it would have been a reasonable assumption that the references were to ethnic Arabs; similarly, this analyst is aware that Saladin was an ethnic Arab Muslim, but could not be sure that references simply to “Saladin” would be recognized in this way by other readers. Thus, in the interest of replicability, researcher prior knowledge was disregarded and instances were not coded unless an ethnic (ie, Turk) or largely ethnic-specific national (ie, Jordanian) signifier was attached as well.

An additional complexity was in Volf’s (2011) review of historic attempts to answer the question of the Christian/Muslim God, particularly as he discussed Martin Luther. Luther’s arguments, quoted extensively in the chapter devoted to his writing on the topic, included many unfavorable descriptions of “Turks” and “Ottomans.” Though initially inclined to includes them in the analysis because they were part of the text, after
much deliberation, this researcher ultimately decided to adhere to Pratt’s (1972) “cardinal rule,” which dictates that the analyst “never violate the original meaning” of the author (p. 20). As Volf (2011) explicitly and repeatedly denounced Luther’s “vicious name-calling and negative stereotyping” (p. 71), and “massive exaggeration” (p. 72) as actions “incongruous with the main emphasis of Luther’s theology: God’s unconditional love” (p. 73), it appeared to this analyst that to include Luther’s abjured statements would be to violate Volf’s (2011) intention of demonstrating the “negative” example of Luther, who “failed miserably” at demonstrating God’s love as he attempted to discern the identity of that God (p. 74). When referencing “the shady side of [Luther’s] position,” Volf (2011) argues that “widespread fears that Europe would be overrun by a powerful enemy may explain Luther’s attitudes and stances, but cannot justify them” (p. 71-73, emphasis added). Historical quotes included by Volf (2011) and not specifically repudiated by him, as in the case of Luther, were included in the coding, though Volf (2011) frequently followed a negative historical depiction with a corresponding example from the Western/Christian/white history.

Just as the religious identifier Muslim was problematic, so were religious/cultural identifiers associated with Judaism. The life and experiences of Jesus, a Jewish man in the time of the Roman Empire, were a prominent topic within the Christian literature of the study. In many of the books, including FC (2005) and SD (2012), Jesus was seen to be in conflict with at least segments of his Jewish contemporaries, though Volf (2005) also makes a point of illustrating instances in which Jesus was in agreement with the religious leaders of his day in FC (2005). The difficulties associated with perceiving
Judaism through the lens of Christianity is exemplified in the treatment of the film *The Passion of the Christ*. Condemned as anti-Semitic by many, Groeschel (2012) references it positively.

Though being Jewish is not necessarily associated with a particular race or ethnicity, as is the case with being Muslim, there is a historical precedent for racializing Jews, as is evidenced by perpetual anti-Semitism, the history of European pogroms, and of course, the Holocaust of WWII. Because of the historical burden of the Holocaust and continuing anti-Semitism, references that specifically utilized a form of the word *Jew* were included in the ECO analysis when applicable. However, discussions naming the factions associated with different interpretations of the Jewish religious law, such as *Pharisees, Sadducees, Sanhedrin*, and *Judaizers*, were not included. Though a reasonable expectation exists that these terms refer to Jews, just as it is reasonable to assume that a Muslim in the era of the Crusades would be ethnically Arab, this analyst again excluded them in the interest of replicability. Interestingly, Volf (2011) did not explicitly condemn Luther’s vitriol against Jews, as he did regarding Muslims, in *Allah* (2011), and thus, Luther’s quoted references regarding Jews are coded for ECO Analysis.

**Triangulation**

The ECO analysis results from VC were just barely above neutral; the triangulation data support this finding, as the general portrayal of people of color is positive, though there are complexities evidenced on the website. A review of VC’s website revealed very little textual evidence to compare to the ECO analysis data. However, photographs and videos from the website portray a positive and inclusive
environment. Images also indicate that persons of color hold leadership roles within the VC community. However, some of the conference speakers in the embedded videos provide more complex insights into race relations. For example, the African American woman who spoke at the Women’s Conference attributed her journey from racial degradation in the American South to being surrounded by “Caucasians in Columbus” to God’s sense of humor (Vineyard Columbus, 2013). A more problematic example is found in one of the videos from the More4Orphans Conference. In the video, a European American woman alludes to her own issues with racism while discussing the adoption of an African child; her comments go unaddressed in both the video and on the page on which the video is embedded (Vineyard Columbus, 2013). These examples indicate an awareness of, and sometimes tension around, the navigation of race in the community.

One example of textual data from the website is found in a link to a paper by Senior Pastor Rich Nathan, entitled Women in Leadership: How to Decide What the Bible Teaches (Vineyard Columbus, 2013). One of Nathan’s arguments in favor of women in ministry is that those who argue against women in the ministry frequently allow women to be missionaries; as Nathan points out, this “principle strikes [him] as potentially racist” (Vineyard Columbus, 2013, np). The implication, though unstated, is that racism is unacceptable. In addition to this argument, Nathan points out that women should be permitted to minister in churches because “spiritual gifts…are not given due to human merit, ethnic origin, social status, or gender” (Vineyard Columbus, 2013, np, emphasis added). Finally, most interestingly, Nathan reminds readers of his own non-dominant
status when he asserts that he “didn’t stop being Jewish and mutate into a White Anglo-Saxon Male when [he] came to Christ” (Vineyard Columbus, 2013, np).

In addition to this piece of textual data, there are photographs and videos that feature people of color in positive and inclusive ways. The large photograph that greets visitors on the main page of the website shows a smiling African American girl, while the scrolling informational bar near the top of the page includes slides with both a book cover and a children’s camp advertisement that feature racially diverse groups (Vineyard Columbus, 2013). As visitors explore the different pages of the website, they will find additional photographs and videos featuring racial diversity (Vineyard Columbus, 2013). Pages that include positive images of individuals of color include the What to Expect page, as well as the Kids, Middle School, High School, Singles, Urban, Men’s and Art Ministries pages (Vineyard Columbus, 2013). Significantly, the video embedded on the Children’s Ministry’s page, in which an adolescent girl explains the new child check in system to visitors, features an interracial couple with biracial children (Vineyard Columbus, 2013).

In addition to positive and inclusive images, the VC website also features images of people of color in leadership. The Church Planting page features an African/African American man leading the group, while the Women’s Ministry page features an African American woman speaking in an embedded video (Vineyard Columbus, 2013). Individuals of color may, in fact, be in leadership roles in other areas; many of the staff biographies for the different pages lacked photographs (Vineyard Columbus, 2013).
The ministries provided by VC, and the location of the ministries, also provide insight into the community perspective on race. Spanish-language community events are in-house, not located at a separate facility, as compared to WHC’s Latin Harvest (Vineyard Columbus, 2013). In addition, as discussed above, VC provides immigration counseling services for those in need of assistance with the immigration process (Vineyard Columbus, 2013).

As was discussed above, there is much overlap between race and religion. Neither religious tolerance nor religious oppression are discussed on the VC website; however, one of the videos from the Women’s Conference features a British woman who describes feeling as though she was to pray for a Muslim man she encountered on a path by a river (Vineyard Columbus, 2013). The story was pleasant, with all parties demonstrating polite cooperation; however, her description of Muslims as those who fear God but have not experienced the full revelation of Jesus is problematic, as it places Islam below Christianity on an artificial hierarchy of religion (Vineyard Columbus, 2013). In a related example, Nathan argues in the aforementioned paper on women in leadership that women exercising authority was discouraged in order to further the cause of Christianity in the target culture; he goes on to say of women today that “if a woman exercises her God-given liberty in a village in India, or in the Muslim world where the liberating message of Christianity has not yet penetrated, this would create a great stumbling block to the gospel” (Vineyard Columbus, 2013, np, emphasis added). Nathan’s argument may further the cause of women in leadership in the West, but it does so by perpetuating the myth of religious and cultural hierarchy.
**Class**

There were 21 coded references to class in the texts suggested by VC, as is shown below in Table 7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VC</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allah</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FC</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NF</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The total Coefficient of Evaluation for class, determined by calculating the mean Coefficient of Evaluation for the two texts that had coded references to class, is 48.08; as it is slightly under the neutral score of 50, the presentation of those living in poverty in the texts is slightly negative. Table 8, below, also provides the Coefficients of Evaluation for each book.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VC</th>
<th>48.08</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allah</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FC</td>
<td>46.15</td>
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<tr>
<td>NF</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The purpose of this analysis has been to track the evaluative statements in the texts as they portray the non-dominant; in the area of class, this means those living in poverty. The lack of coding regarding class is somewhat surprising, considering that, as demonstrated in the above section on social justice, all of the authors reminded readers of God’s special interest in the poor. However, most of the discussion regarding those living in poverty was focused on responses to them, not description of them.

Despite the surprising lack of coded data, a few themes regarding class did emerge from the texts. By far the most widely shared and oft stated theme among the texts was God’s special interest in the poor, as discussed above in the social justice section. Another subtle theme that emerged from the texts is an assumption of middle class status, though perceptions of what constitutes a middle class lifestyle are varied.

Volf’s (2005) argument regarding the Christian, and in *Allah* (2011), the Muslim, imperative to treat the poor and working class fairly is a theme seen throughout the texts, though the focus is much more frequently on the poor. Also clearly seen throughout the texts is a correlating condemnation of the selfishness of the wealthy. Volf’s (2011) inclusion of the story in which Saladin spared poor Christian hostages in the city of Jerusalem after they had been abandoned by their rich Christian compatriots is representative of both the inter-religious moral mandate and the condemnation of the wealthy. Despite their importance in the living out of the Christian faith, there were very few descriptions or assessments of “the poor,” though Volf (2005) spoke at length about being inclusive in giving in *FC* (2005).
Assumption of Middle Class

The assumption of a middle class lifestyle pervades the texts, save Allah (2011); they utilized the types of personal anecdotes and examples that assume a middle class standard of living. Typically middle class activities, such as family vacations and summer camps, are referenced in SD (2012), while multiple illustrations from the young adult college experience are utilized in NF (2011). FC (2005) includes an example, of which both its content and its source indicate a middle class experience. In the example, Volf (2005) describes a cartoon from the New Yorker in which one couple offers to pay another couple $80 instead of extending a reciprocal invitation to a dinner party.

In a revealing demonstration of the middle class mindset, Groeschel (2012) says of money that it “wrongly promise[s] security” (p. 169). He goes on to assert that no matter how much money one acquires, one will always feel that more is necessary to feel “safe and secure” (Groeschel, 2012, p. 169). Groeschel’s (2012) statements may have some merit; however, they indicate a basic lack of understanding that some individuals and families would indeed feel significantly more “safe and secure” if they had access to a dependable source of food, clothing, shelter, and healthcare. In a similar example, Idleman (2011) asserts that “most of us grew up in homes where we were taught to study hard in school and in college so we could get a good job and make lots of money” (p. 150). He seems unaware that, for many American families, a college education is simply not a viable goal due to a lack of economic and/or educational opportunity.
Triangulation

The ECO analysis of class revealed a slightly negative portrayal of the poor in texts from VC. Triangulation data do not support a slightly negative portrayal of the poor; however, there is evidence to support the themes regarding class that emerged from the text analyses, including God’s special interest in the poor and an assumption of middle class status.

As discussed above, VC is quite active in service to the poor. However, the assumption of middle class is evident in that many of their classes require online registration, many of the forms associated with participation in ministries require online submission, and participants in financial class encouraged to bring calculators and laptops (Vineyard Columbus, 2013). Some of the classes advertised on the VC monthly newsmagazine cost a significant amount of money; one starts at $250, but increases to $500 if the participant desires college credit (Vineyard Columbus, 2013).

Gender

There were 134 coded references to gender in the texts suggested by VC, as is shown below in Table 9.
Table 9: ECO Analysis Notations of Gender from VC Texts

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<tr>
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<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VC</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allah</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FC</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NF</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The total Coefficient of Evaluation for gender, determined by calculating the mean Coefficient of Evaluation for the four texts that had coded references to gender, is 47.67; as it is below the neutral score of 50, the presentation of women in the texts is negative. Table 10, below, also provides the Coefficients of Evaluation for each book.

Table 10: Coefficients of Evaluation for Gender from VC Texts

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<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VC</td>
<td>47.67</td>
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<tr>
<td>Allah</td>
<td>66.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FC</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NF</td>
<td>46.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>27.87</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Similar to the experiences coding previous topics, there were complexities regarding gender. Explicit value judgments were rarely made regarding men and women, and those that exist were sometimes too complex for an ECO analysis coding. For example, Volf (2005) utilized his own experiences and those of his family to discuss the
central issues of giving and forgiving in FC (2005). He is the father of two adopted children and recalls how his experiences with his children’s birth mothers changed his perception of women who gift their children to others (Volf, 2005).

My image of mothers who relinquish their children for adoption, though not as bad as that of the fathers involved, was not exactly positive either. I could not shake the feeling that there was something deficient in such an act. The taint of abandonment marred it, an abandonment that could be understandable and was certainly tragic, but abandonment nonetheless. To give one’s child to another, it had seemed to me was to fail in the most proper duty of a parent: to love no matter what (Volf, 2005, p. 11)

His perception before direct experience was negative; though, interestingly, he alleges to be more condemning of men than women (Volf, 2005). Though it may take some of the sting out of his words, it could also be coming from an internalized stereotype that men are supposed to take care of and provide for their families; Volf (2005) may perceive that in a situation that necessitates adoption, the man’s failing is larger than that of the woman. This interpretation is consistent with his utilization of Shakespeare’s Measure for Measure, in which a young man is condemned to die “for making [his] lover pregnant” (Volf, 2005, p. 141).

Volf’s (2005) perception of birth mothers changes when he receives the gift of a son, the type of selfless gift upon which he bases his entire argument for the first half of FC (2005).

She loved him for his own sake, and therefore she would rather have suffered his absence if he flourished than to have enjoyed his presence if he languished; her sorrow over his avoidable languishing would overshadow her delight in his presence. For a lover, it is more blessed to give than to receive, even when giving pierces the lover’s heart. My image of birth mothers has changed: “She who does not care quite enough” has become “she who selflessly gives.” When we parted, a smile had replaced the tears on the face of our son’s birth mother. Now it was my turn to cry. Back at home, with him in one arm and an open album she made
for him in the other, I shed tears over the beauty and the tragedy of her love (Volf, 2005, p. 12).

Volf (2005) never mentions his perception of birth fathers after his previously described passing reference. While the above instances could have been coded as “inferior” and “generous,” or “selfish” and “sacrificial,” those codes seemed too simplistic to aptly describe the complexities of Volf’s (2005) transformed perspective.

Despite the complexities encountered in the coding of gender, there were some themes that emerged during the analyses. These themes include a reinforcement of traditional gender roles and gendered language.

Gender Roles

Many of the anecdotes found in the texts came from the authors’ personal and familial histories. In Idelman’s 2011 NF, traditional gender roles were consistently assumed and reinforced, though not explicitly stated, with one possible exception. Idelman (2011) begins an anecdote with his dominance in the fourth grade recess game of King of Hill. He recalls the day in which a new student joined his class, describing her as “bigger” and “taller” than him (Idelman, 2011, p. 167). Idelman (2011) goes on to describe her as a wearer of cowboy boots, a spitter, and an eater of glue. These qualities caused him concern over his recess dominance, and they were well-founded, as she dethroned him (Idelman, 2011). Though the story highlights the physical dominance of a female in the theretofore male realm of King of the Hill, it is important to note that she was labeled as different, and her difference from expected gender norms was not accepted or encouraged.
In every other instance, Idleman’s (2011) anecdotes bordered on, if not were, stereotypical: women desire marriage while men avoid commitment; men watch sports and go fishing while women follow celebrities; men forget anniversaries and struggle to remain faithful (though he does include an example of female infidelity), but when referencing “competition with Jesus” the examples are described as being “a type of mistress” (p. 63); women are prone to irrational jealousy, but it is acceptable for men to resort to violence to keep competitors away from their wives; women confess credit card debt while men confess issues with pornography; little girls dress up as princesses, cheerleaders, and fairies while little boys dress as super heroes; boys should have short hair while girls should have long skirts; men are material providers, sometimes to the extent that it is detrimental to their home lives, while women set the rules for the house regarding cleanliness and décor; women want to converse while men want to watch television; men buy gifts while women write sentimental letters; women use their physical appearance to impress men while men use their finances to impress, or ingratiate themselves to, women (a stereotype referenced in Volf’s 2005 FC as well); men want the women they marry to remain unchanged (with an emphasis on the physical) while women want the men they marry to change (with an emphasis on behavior); women need assistance in academic tasks and men lack the ability to ask for directions; and women pack heavily while men carry the bags.

Groeschel’s (2012) treatment of gender norms was similar to Idleman’s (2011); many of his analogies and anecdotes utilized familiar relationships that reinforced traditional gender roles. In Groeschel’s 2012 SD, women smoked Virginia Slims while
men smoked Marlboros or Camels; women were responsible for clean houses while men were described as “provider[s]” and “spiritual leader[s]” (p. 45); men are “arrogant, womanizing, [and] self-centered” while women are “micromanaging, overbearing, [and] control freak[s]” (p. 26); women have deluded perceptions of their children and are generally encouraging while men are proud of their children’s athletic performances; men struggle to remain faithful, even those who are “heroic but all-too-human” (p. 78), while women are unforgiving and vindictive; men enjoy sports and women enjoy soap operas; men struggle with pornography while women struggle with “relational envy” (p. 112); women nag while men are lazy; women are concerned about appearance while men are concerned about financial success; women “expect” jewelry (p. 162) and “go into debt” for possessions while men “break their backs to make more money” (p. 167); men like cars and women like private schools; women flirt with men while men pressure women for sex; “everyday guys enjoy” sex (p. 202) while women crave bling; men are ranchers and women are on the PTA; and girls “trash talk men” while “normal college frat boys are known for” a set of “normal sinful activities” (p. 204).

Groeschel (2012) is the only author of a VC suggested text that describes his wife’s role in his professional ministry, though all of the authors of VC suggested texts are married. He identifies her as an integral part of his ministry, though in a supportive capacity, because she provides encouragement, attempts to keep him honest, and who leads him into deeper relationships (Groeschel, 2010).

In an interesting instance, Idleman (2011) recounts a Thanksgiving holiday with his wife’s family:
The rest of the men show up for Thanksgiving wearing camo sprayed with deer urine ready to go hunting after the big meal. I sit at the table in my designer shirt that is referred to as a “blouse” behind my back. I eat in silence as the men take turns telling about the deer they shot and the buck that got away. About a half hour after lunch, I look around and realize that I’m the only grown man in the house. I walk into the kitchen, where the ladies are making pies, and ask, “Do you know where the men went?” My mother-in-law says, and I quote, “All the men are outside.” Hello? Um…clearly they are not all outside. Apparently they got on their four-wheelers and went to build a deer stand together, but no one thought to invite me (p. 87-88, emphasis in the original).

Disregarding the clear gender stereotypes evidenced in the story, Idleman’s (2011) treatment of them, or lack thereof, is significant, particularly as it comes only twenty-three pages after he describes an incident in which he was seen in public with “a guy who kind of looked like a girl” (p. 64). His inclusion of the Thanksgiving anecdote is to provide an example in which a group of people does not know “what to do with” someone, which is how he describes common reactions to the Holy Spirit (Idleman, 2011, p. 87). Idleman (2011) does not further discuss his reactions to the above incident, nor does he unpack the larger implication that there is more than one way to be a “man.”

Idleman’s (2011) in-laws’ stereotype of manliness is culturally situated as rugged and outdoor, while his own is culturally situated as well-groomed and indoor; apparently, his (and possibly their?) conception manliness is flexible enough to encompass variance in preference, so long as it is confined to limited difference in hobbies and clothing. Minor differences are attributed to culture, but there is no acknowledgement that the entire construct is cultural. Idleman (2011) does not allow the complexities of the Thanksgiving situation to cause him to interrogate his accepted, and clearly cultural, gender stereotypes that are prevalent in NF (2011).
Unexpected departures from traditional gender roles include Idleman’s (2011) use of examples in which single parents included individuals of both genders, and the use of feminine pronouns when utilizing sporting analogies by both Volf (2005) and Groeschel (2012). Groeschel (2012) also included an anecdote in which a woman struggled with pornography.

Gendered Language

Gendering was accomplished through the reinforcement of traditional roles, but also through the language choices of the authors and the examples they used in the writing. All of the authors utilized male pronouns when describing God. Groeschel (2012) predictably refers to “the evil one” using male pronouns, but includes a quote by Socrates in which the negative characteristic envy is personified as feminine (p. 139). Though Volf (2011) argued that God is beyond understanding and categorization, including that of gender, he does not extend his use of female pronouns to his description of God. There is one possible exception, in which his words could be interpreted as the use of a feminine pronoun for God, as the character representing God in the metaphor is a woman: “We shouldn’t think of God as the unfortunate parent of a spoiled child who feels that the child has done her a particular favor when he has done his homework” (Volf, 2005, p. 48).

Notable departures from traditional gendered language and examples include Groeschel’s (2012) consistent placing of blame for the imperfect state of humanity on both Adam and Eve. In addition, both Groeschel (2012) Volf (2005; 2011) utilized female pronouns in their writing.
Triangulation

The ECO analysis revealed a negative portrayal of women in the analyzed texts, though triangulation data challenges the results of the ECO analysis. The VC website explicitly challenges the negative portrayal of women, but also provides support for the traditional gendering found in the texts.

A review of the VC website demonstrates that many women are in positions of leadership; women appear on the staff pages of many ministries, including *Children’s*, *Middle School, Women’s* (led by Senior Pastor Rich Nathan’s wife, Marlene), *Singles, Marriage and Family, Connect, Worship Arts, Community Center, Bookstore, Vineyard Leadership Institute*, and *Urban Ministries* (Vineyard Columbus, 2013). Women also appear in leadership roles in a variety of VC programs, including Support and Recovery, Counseling, *Value Life* (the aforementioned crisis pregnancy center), and *Empowered Life* (to assist individuals seeking to “experience the Holy Spirit”) (Vineyard Columbus, 2013). In a nod the treatment of the biblical Eve in the analyzed texts, it is interesting to note that the 2013 Women’s Conference is entitled *Restoring Eve: God’s Purpose for Women*; one of the guest speakers is Eleanor Mumford from Vineyard UK, whose son has recently risen to fame as the head of the music group Mumford & Sons (Vineyard Columbus, 2013).

In addition to the presence of women in leadership and on staff, there is explicit support for both the capacity and right of women to lead. Marlene Nathan posted a blog on the *Women’s Ministry* page of the VC website regarding the “proper role for women” (Vineyard Columbus, 2013, np). The blog feature appears to be new to VC website, as
many of the pages do not have any blog posts, and Marlene Nathan’s is the only one on the Women’s Ministry page (Vineyard Columbus, 2013). In the blog post, Marlene Nathan argues that Jesus, going against the culture of the day, encouraged women to learn with men (Vineyard Columbus, 2013). Her argument stems from the biblical story of Jesus’ interaction with two sisters, Mary and Martha; in the story, the sister who adheres to the traditional gender role is gently reprimanded while the sister who defies it is praised (Vineyard Columbus, 2013). Jesus goes on to assure the gender role defying sister that her quest for knowledge and relationship with God will not be taken away from her (Vineyard Columbus, 2013). Marlene Nathan refers to this assurance in her indictment of Christianity’s historical (and in some sects, current) oppression of women:

…for 2000 year the church has attempted to do just that—take away from women the choice of discipleship, ministry and leadership. That is not consistent with the mind and heart of God as revealed to us in Jesus of Nazareth. May we in the Vineyard be true to the Word of God as spoken through the mouth of Jesus and allow women their God-given place in the body of Christ (Vineyard Columbus, 2013, np).

There were no comments on the blog post, neither in support nor objection (Vineyard Columbus, 2013).

Marlene Nathan’s position is supported by her husband, Senior Pastor Rich Nathan, in his paper on Women in Leadership: How to Decide What the Bible Teaches (Vineyard Columbus, 2013). In the twenty-three page paper, which includes ninety-six footnotes and four appendices, Nathan traces the development of his own position on the issue of women in leadership (Vineyard Columbus, 2013). He begins by describing the oppositional perspectives, identifying the positions as either complementarian or egalitarian, and disclaiming any unassailable argument on the issue; Nathan goes on to
caution that in the presence of “such a profound diversity of opinion,” one should be cautious “about making dogmatic assertions,” as “honest, thoughtful, intelligent Christians can differ on issues” (Vineyard Columbus, 2013, np). After the disclaimers and cautions, Nathan proceeds to share that he has moved from the egalitarian position to the complementarian position and back again (Vineyard Columbus, 2013). He utilizes biblical contextualization, the inconsistency of complementarian arguments, and the damage done to the gospel by the oppression of women as the basis of his current egalitarian position (Vineyard Columbus, 2013). Significantly, Nathan openly disagrees with the position of John Wimber, one of the founding members of the Vineyard Movement (Vineyard Columbus, 2013). Nathan also challenges the assumption that there is a model of biblical man- or womanhood to which Christians must conform (Vineyard Columbus, 2013). At the heart of Nathan’s argument is the maxim that “if you are in doubt because of the multiplicity of views, it seems to [him] that you ought to resolve your doubts in favor of opening doors of opportunity and ministry for people, not closing doors” (Vineyard Columbus, 2013, np).

However, in contrast to these explicitly affirming statements, much of the content of the website continues to reinforce the traditional gender roles that were so prevalent in the VC texts. The difference in the groups and activities listed under the Women’s and Men’s Ministries is telling. Falling under the purview of Women’s Ministries (as found on its page of the website or in the VC monthly newsletter under the heading of Women’s Ministries), we find: Lil’ Tots Open Gym (though the newsletter description utilizes the word “parents,” the event is listed under women’s ministries); Mom’s Monthly; Single
Moms’ Connection (though a single father is featured in an embedded video, on a different page of the website, about baptism); Grandparents Raising Grandkids Support Group; Beautiful Inside and Out class (described as “a support group for young [20-something] women struggling with body image issues”); Hungry (described as a “support group …for women who want to be more hungry for God and less dependent on food [compulsive or emotional eating] or dieting [obsession with weight or exercise] to meet emotional needs”); and Lord, Heal My Hurts and Hearts, Hurts, Healing–What Jesus Has to Say, support groups for women and girls, respectively (Vineyard Columbus, 2013, np). Only Women’s Leadership Training and Girlfriendz Night did not focus on women as explicitly engaged in child rearing, preoccupied with their physical appearance, or in need of emotional healing (Vineyard Columbus, 2013). Other activities not listed on under the heading of Women’s Ministries, but reinforcing the same themes, include a women’s group called WHOLE: Help for Survivors of Sexual Abuse, as well as Freedom Through Boundaries “for women who struggle with relationship boundaries” (Vineyard Columbus, 2013, np).

When compared with the offerings under the purview of Men’s Ministry, the stereotyping is even clearer. Men are invited to participate in a basketball group or join the Helping Hands, an “outreach serving those in our community through acts of service” (Vineyard Columbus, 2013, np). Despite Senior Pastor Rich Nathan’s rejection of biblical models of woman- and manhood, VC lists Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts as on-site activities, but provides American Heritage Girls, a “Christ-centered scouting [program] for young women” (Vineyard Columbus, 2013, np).
The gendering of sexuality and oppression is also demonstrated through the course and group offerings available to men and women. Human trafficking updates are listed under *Women’s Ministries*, and as noted above, women are portrayed as victims of sexual violence while men are perceived as perpetrators of sexual violence (a classification reinforced by speakers at both the 2012 Women’s Conference and the More4Orphans Conference) (Vineyard Columbus, 2013). Indeed, one of the courses offered to men is 180–Men’s Sexual Wholeness, which is an “ongoing recovery group…open to all men…weekly throughout the year,” aims at “helping men recover from sexual sin and…live lives of purity in spite of years of sexual addictions” (Vineyard Columbus, 2013, np). While women are inarguably more likely to be victims of sexual violence, and without question more likely to be victimized by men, the presentation of sexual violence as a “women’s issue” is counterproductive.

In addition to these problematic themes found in VC course and group offerings, speakers at the 2012 Women’s Conference also provided problematic presentations of gender. The previously mentioned British speaker recounts an anecdote about a church group with whom she is familiar in which four men who engaged in the practice of “cross dressing” attended (Vineyard Columbus, 2013, np). As a result of his attendance, one “converts” and “come[s] out of that way of living” (Vineyard Columbus, 2013, np). In response, the other three “show up in drag as protest;” the church group continued on as if they did not notice (Vineyard Columbus, 2013, np). Eventually, two others converted (Vineyard Columbus, 2013). The same speaker shares another story of a physical healing which allowed a woman with “a butch persona” to find her “femininity” by wearing
heeled shoes (Vineyard Columbus, 2013, np). The conference speaker’s problematic portrayal of gender, and its culturally constructed nature, remain unaddressed on the VC website.

Another conference speaker, the African American woman who spoke at the 2012 Women’ Conference, asserts that abortion as sin, but so is having children out of wedlock (Vineyard Columbus, 2013). While these are common beliefs in evangelical circles, and unsurprising, considering the name of the VC crisis pregnancy center, it does seem to leave women with unplanned pregnancies in a difficult position. While the VC crisis pregnancy center provides more than just prenatal care to women with unplanned pregnancies, the rigid position suggested by this speaker leaves little room for women to navigate the dual damnation.

**Sexuality**

There were zero coded references to sexuality in the texts suggested by VC, as is shown below in Table 11.

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<thead>
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<th></th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
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<td>FC</td>
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<td>NF</td>
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<tr>
<td>SD</td>
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</table>
There is no Coefficient of Evaluation for sexuality in the texts suggested by VC due to the lack of explicit discussion of homosexuality found in those texts. In most of the books, sexuality was not addressed in the way that usually applies to critical studies of sexuality, namely the oppression of homosexuals. However, the analysis did reveal themes of heteronormativity and homophobia, as well as sexual objectification, in the texts suggested by VC.

Heteronormativity

The texts by Volf (2005; 2011), Idleman (2011), and Groeschel (2012) were explicitly silent on homosexuality. However, there are subtle, and not so subtle, indicators of heteronormativity and homophobia. In general, NF (2011) and SD (2012) are overwhelmingly heteronormative, assuming that all non-platonic intimate relationships are heterosexual. Idleman (2011) and Groeschel (2012) use many romantic analogies and personal anecdotes to demonstrate points, so the assumptions of heterosexuality are pervasive. Volf (2005) also uses romantic analogies in FC (2005), though they are not always explicitly heteronormative. In most instances, Volf’s (2005) analogies do not utilize gendered pronouns; however, in one example, he does identify one lover as male and the other female. Though the assumption of heteronormativity is an anomaly in FC (2005), it is compounded by the corresponding reinforcement of gender roles in the analogy.

Homophobia

Idleman’s (2011) homophobia is presented in his inclusion of anecdotes ostensibly meant to be amusing, and interestingly, involving his interactions with his son.
As discussed in the above *Gender* section, which of course overlaps significantly with sexuality, Idleman (2011) was quite intentional about the gendering done by the costumes in which his children played. As the story develops, the homophobic elements become clearer:

My oldest three children are girls, so we have all kinds of princess dresses, cheerleader outfits, and fairy costumes. When my son came along, he didn’t have a lot to choose from. I have two sisters, but I’m the only boy in my family and I didn’t want my son to suffer the way I did. To this day I have these memories* [footnote: Meaning violent flashbacks.] of my sisters putting me in dresses. Well, that’s not going to happen to my son. Not on my watch. So last year after Halloween, when the costumes were on clearance, I decided to right this wrong. I bought the staple Spider-Man and Superman.1[footnote: In retrospect, I will say that running around the house in red tights and blue Speedos may be more damaging than the princess dress.] (Idleman, 2011, p. 75)

Idleman (2011) recounts another instance in which he responded to his three year old son’s announcement that he wanted to be a mermaid when he grew up by saying, “That’s a merman, buddy, merman” (p. 150).

Though gender norms are clearly important to Idleman (2011), based on their pervasive reinforcement throughout *NF* (2011), this analyst asserts that Idleman’s (2011) anxiety for his son’s wardrobe and future plans go beyond concern for fitting gender norms. Despite never being asserted in the text, the implied message is that any behaviors perceived as gender atypical are negative and should be discouraged by parents, possibly due to concern that such behaviors correlate with sexuality.

Groeschel’s (2012) homophobia is somewhat more explicit than Idleman’s (2011), and it frequently manifests itself in his hyper-sexuality. When discussing attending a movie on a date with his wife, Groeschel (2012) complained about “space invaders” who break “the empty seat rule:”
“If plenty of seats are available, leave a vacant seat between you and the person next to you.” If you are a guy, there is nothing worse than another guy sitting right by you. The entire time, you’re battling over that disputed armrest border territory. Which means sometimes, there’s going to be guy skin against guy skin. So wrong (p. 126, emphasis in the original).

Groeschel (2012) is clearly expressing his discomfort with even casual contact with another male. His purposeful statements regarding his perception of and reaction to insignificant and non-sexual same-gender physical contact is a clear example of homophobia, despite the fact that he never explicitly addresses homosexuality.

The more frequent expression of Groeschel’s (2012) homophobia is in his excessive references to his own hyper-sexuality. He recounts story after story in which his sex life is the main character (Groeschel, 2012). When recommending frugality, he describes his honeymoon by saying it did not matter where he and his wife were because they were together and “getting to know each other in the biblical sense” (Groeschel, 2012, p. 166). When suggesting that readers encourage one another, he provides an example in which he “colorfully” complimented his wife’s new outfit which led to them being “lip locked” in front of their daughter and a guest (Groeschel, 2012, p. 63). Also referencing encouragement, Groeschel (2012) suggests that readers “text a steamy message to [their] husband[s],” noting that his wife “likes to say [they] have great text” (p. 63). When warning against envy, Groeschel (2012) comments about cellular phones: “It cracks me up that finally there’s something in life that a guy actually wants smaller than the next guy’s” (p. 112).

A story related by Groeschel (2012) regarding anger consists of him chasing down a passing van on foot because the occupants “shouted some obscene comments” to
Groeschel (2012) recalls how he approached the driver’s window “menacingly,” “looked them all over to make sure they didn’t go to [his] church, and then lit into them with a verbal tongue lashing” (p. 133). His reaction, attacking offenders, speaks more to his own wounded masculinity than his concern for his friend’s wife, who was left to the care of “older, wiser, and more mature” men (Groeschel, 2012, p. 133). Indeed, his narrative does not include a single action or word by any woman in the group (Groeschel, 2012).

As the above story indicates, Groeschel’s (2012) preoccupation with his own sexuality has more than once had a negative impact on his life. He reveals that his habit of “being unnecessarily crude” during sermons and utilizing “slightly off-color humor,” caused problems during the “early years at [his] church” (Groeschel, 2012, p. 30). Thirty pages later, he narrates his attempts to gain ordination, which culminated with his failure because he did not possess “the normal gift-set that most pastors have” (Groeschel, 2012, p. 61). Though the ordaining board concluded that they were “not sure [he was] called to full-time ministry,” he points out to readers that there was a political agenda at work in the scenario (Groeschel, 2012, p. 61).

In addition to the impact his overt sexuality has on his career, Groeschel (2012) reports that it has caused problems in his marriage. In a section warning against dishonesty, he begins by sharing how frequently people comment on his large family by asking, “Don’t you know what causes that?” (Groeschel, 2012, p. 71). He describes his response and his wife’s reaction:

I say, “As a matter of fact, we do know what causes it, and we’re not willing to give it up!” Amy has heard my shtick so many times now that she usually walks
away. She knows that I often go on to complain that she can’t keep her hands off me since she only thinks about one thing (Groeschel, 2012, p. 71-72).

Groeschel (2012) acknowledges that he frequently uses jokes about his large family as an icebreaker for public speaking. He relates one instance in which his wife “made [him] promise that [he] wouldn’t tell [his] she-won’t-keep-her-hands-off-me jokes” (Groeschel, 2012, p. 72). Despite his assurances, he “did the whole routine, including the line, ‘I beg my wife just to cuddle, but she keeps pushing me until I give in,’” and described his performance as “pretty funny” (Groeschel, 2012, p. 72). When she asked him if he kept his word, he lied, and she “busted” him based on a string of conference attendee Tweets (Groeschel, 2012, p. 72). Groeschel’s (2012) inability to refrain from boasting about his sex life, even to the point of disregarding his wife’s feelings and blatantly lying to her, speaks to his need for acknowledgement of his sexual prowess.

Sexual Objectification

In addition to both heteronormativity and homophobia, the texts suggested by VC contained a theme of sexual objectification. Volf’s 2005 *FC* acknowledges this trend when utilizing sexuality as an example of societal selfishness, calling it “as good a site as any to observe the slide away from generosity, through self-gratification, profit maximizing, and selling and bartering, to nasty warring,” noting popular depictions of sex as random and often manipulative and dominating (p. 15). An example of Volf’s (2005) characterization of dysfunctional sex is found in Groeschel’s (2012) portrayal of a woman who began using sex with other men as a weapon against her estranged husband who she blamed for betraying her with his twenty-year pornography addiction.
Groeschel’s (2012) commentary on the situation, however, is representative of the problematic treatment of sex in SD (2012). He concludes that “there is no question that Tony’s sin started the problem,” but immediately characterizes it as “their shared problem” and highlights the fact that “Michelle remains convinced all men are evil even though she continues to hop from one to another” (Goeschel, 2012, p. 98, emphasis added). In another instance, Groeschel (2012) describes the two main characters in a cautionary tale as “young wives,” though their marital status had nothing to do with the content of the story, thus framing their primary role as that of spouses to men (p. 102).

When describing the “passionate pursuit” Jesus desires from all followers, Idleman (2011) begins the discussion by saying, “I want to take you back to the first time you let someone of the opposite sex know that you had feelings for them” (p. 129). He goes on to describe the evolution from thinking “they’re gross” through “I must hurt them” to “I’ve gotta get me one of those” (Idleman, 2011, p. 129, emphases added). In addition to the heteronormative assumptions, it’s difficult to miss the possessive tone and objectification in Idleman’s (2011) description of romance. Groeschel’s (2012) praise for his wife, “who has sacrificed so much of herself to give [him] six kids,” also exhibits a noticeable tone of possession and objectification (p. 123, emphasis added). He later describes her sacrifice on his behalf by saying she was “popping out kids like a short order cook flips out pancakes during the morning rush” (Groeschel, 2012, p. 149).

Sexual possession and objectification are common themes when discussing the sex industry. Groeschel (2012), as well as Idleman (2011) and his guest contributors, reference the sex industry throughout their books, with men the consumers and women
the objects, save for one example in Groeschel’s 2012 *SD*. Lust and pornography are invariably condemned, as is Groeschel’s (2012) single reference to masturbation, but the women involved in the sex industry are portrayed as “precious” and deserving of “compassion” and ministry (Idleman, 2011, p. 186). Volf (2005) includes an example in *FC* (2005) in which a woman is seduced “with false promises of love” by a man who then “pulls her into his prostitution ring, holds her captive for months, beats and rapes her repeatedly, and forces her to provide pleasure to other men without paying her a cent” (p. 163). He characterizes the man as “a despicably evil pimp” and sounds grieved by the woman’s “life shattered by brutality” (Volf, 2005, p. 163).

In a similar vein, Groeschel’s 2012 *SD* and Idlman’s 2011 *NF* reference ministries specifically designed, by women, for women in the sex industry. Though in danger of continuing to objectify women in the sex industry in a paternalistic manner, their treatment of sex workers is not harshly condemning, which is an improvement when compared to Christianity’s dubious history with women’s rights and issues.

**Women’s Sexuality**

Volf (2005) illustrates the historic treatment of women’s sexuality by the Church when he quotes Luther, the father of the Protestant Reformation, in his appropriation of the words of Paul, a prolific writer of the Christian Bible’s New Testament:

Christ is the bridegroom, and the soul is the “poor, wicked harlot” who becomes his bride…He “suffered, died, and descended into hell that he might overcome” all her sins. “Her sins cannot now destroy her…and she has that righteousness in Christ, her husband, of which she may boast of as her own and confidently display alongside her sins in the face of death and hell” (p. 150-151).
Luther’s negative portrayal of female sexuality is common in some Christian circles. Indeed, Groeschel (2012) seems to work within the virgin/whore dichotomy throughout SD (2012). Beginning in his recollections of childhood, he describes his “fifth-grade dream girl” as a “princess of the playground” because she rejected him (Groeschel, 2012, p. 54). Groeschel (2012) goes on to describe his first temptation after his college conversion, saying “a non-Christian girl made a move [his] way, tempting [him]” (p. 206). He reports that she laughed at and mocked him, only to later introduce him to his current wife, and ends the story by saying: “Interestingly enough, that former temptress is now a strong Christian and has been an active part of our church” (Groeschel, 2012, p. 206, emphasis added).

As described above, Groeschel (2012) blames the disintegration of a marriage on the vengeful promiscuity of a betrayed wife instead of on the twenty-year deception that precipitated it, though describes “a betrayed man think[ing] all women are deceivers” as “common” (p. 100). Groeschel (2012) sympathizes with “decent guys who wanted to ask out a woman” (p. 144), but describes unfaithful men as “heroic-but-all-too-human” individuals who love their wives (p. 78; see also page 199). All the while, Groeschel’s (2012) words appear to accept that sexuality is an intrinsic and healthy aspect of masculinity. His wife is portrayed as a rare hybrid of a woman who “matured in Christ” but also expresses her sexuality, though his acknowledgement of hers may only be because he must do it in order to boast about his own (Groeschel, 2012, p. 172).

Groeschel’s (2012) use of women in biblical examples mirrors his bias in his selection of anecdotes. When describing the story of David and Bathsheba, he describes
her as his “lover,” completely disregarding the power dynamics in which David, a king and she his subject, “sent messengers to get her” after staring at her in a way reminiscent of a vulture, according to the original Hebrew word (Groeschel, 2012, p. 77). Groeschel (2012) also ignores the fact that after sleeping with Bathsheba, David sent her home and disregarded her until she “sent word” that she was pregnant (p. 77). Groeschel (2012) goes on, describing David’s sin as one committed “with Bathsheba” as opposed to one committed against her (p. 83, emphasis added). He also makes an example of Potiphar’s wife, the “seductive” woman, who tempted Joseph, who “faithfully and loyally” served her family, in the Christian Bible’s Old Testament (Groeschel, 2012, p. 208).

In a related example, Idleman (2011) uses the biblical story of the repentant prostitute, traditionally believed to be Mary Magdalene, as an example of a follower of Jesus. He uses this story as evidence that no one’s “sexual past” precludes their becoming a follower of Jesus (2011, p. 125, emphasis added). Regardless of whether the use of the word past was intentional, it has significant meaning in the discussion of how Idleman (2011) approaches sexuality. Idleman (2011) never explicitly mentions homosexuality, but does explicitly condemn sex outside of marriage repeatedly, as does Groeschel (2012). Idleman’s (2011) portrayal indicates that refraining from unmarried sex is quite a high priority because it was one of the first things a “decision guide” discussed with a newly converted couple in his church (p. 147). As gay marriage is illegal in most states and highly contested nationally, this injunction effectively precludes many practicing homosexuals from becoming followers of Jesus, as described by Idleman (2011) and Groeschel (2012).
Idleman’s (2011) treatment of sexuality in NF (2011) is of particular interest because he compares the relationship Jesus desires with followers to the level of intimacy “used to describe a man and a woman being intimate with one another” (p. 47). Idleman’s (2011) comparison is based on the use of the same Hebrew word in both situations and is “a common metaphor” (p. 139); indeed, it also appears in Volf’s 2005 FC in the form of marriage metaphors.

If Groeschel (2012) and Idleman (2011) are, in fact, preoccupied with sexuality, it would not be uncommon; manifested notably in the practice of clerical celibacy, sexuality is a problematic topic in Christianity. Volf’s 2005 FC postlude, which is the transcript of his conversation with a skeptical colleague, briefly hints at the prevalence of correlating the church and sexuality. His colleague referenced “the law of God” which makes men “wretched” and “miserable sinner[s],” and indicated that he “always thought about sex when [he] heard the phrase” (Volf, 2005, p. 230). Volf (2005) pointed out with exclamation that he had “mention[ed] sin” and his friend had “immediately [though] of sex” (p. 230). Volf’s (2005) colleague acknowledged that “sin has more to do with self-love than with sex,” but his initial reaction is instructive in that it demonstrates how thoroughly even the non-religious (the colleague identifies as an atheist) are conditioned to understand the Christian perception of sex (p. 230).

Triangulation

Though there was no ECO analysis score for sexuality in the VC texts, themes of heteronormativity and homophobia were common. Triangulation data does not confirm
the ECO analysis, as the VC website contains explicit denunciations of homosexuality.
Subtle homophobia is absent, though there is also evidence of heteronormativity.

Unlike the silence found in the VC texts, the website explicitly denounces homosexuality. The denunciation comes from both Senior Pastor Rich Nathan, in the previously mentioned paper on women in leadership, as well as from the aforementioned British speaker at the 2012 Women’s Conference (Vineyard Columbus, 2013). Though not the focus of Nathan’s paper, he does both explicitly and implicitly condemn homosexuality (Vineyard Columbus, 2013). In the body of the paper, he cites the “notorious case” of “people who later turned out to be lesbians” challenging the alleged biblical injunction against women in leadership as one of the reasons he once held a complementarian view on the issue (Vineyard Columbus, 2013, np). The implication is that his rejection was of them, not their ideas, and that he could not agree with a homosexual. In the fourth appendix of the paper, Nathan asserts that his arguments for the legitimacy of women in leadership cannot be applied to the issue of homosexuality because “homosexual practice is strictly condemned in the Bible despite widespread [contemporaneous] cultural acceptance. This indicates that such practice ought to be condemned to day [sic] despite widespread contemporary cultural acceptance” (Vineyard Columbus, 2013, np). He continues, arguing that

When the Bible calls something sin, it is sin for everyone, everywhere, and for all time. Homosexual sex, adultery, and premarital sex will always remain sin no matter how frequent or popular their practice becomes. A biblical church may never ordain a person who is committed to the practice of sexual sin (Vineyard Columbus, 2013, np).
Nathan’s position is supported by the British 2012 Women’s Conference speaker, who also categorically labels homosexuality a sin (Vineyard Columbus, 2013). She recounts the discussion she had with a practicing homosexual who continued to attend her church, despite the fact that a nearby church had “audacity” to preach that homosexuality is not sin (Vineyard Columbus, 2013, np). The man responded that he knew her church was right, and that homosexuality was entrapment and imprisonment, compulsion and addiction (Vineyard Columbus, 2013). The speaker told the audience that the man still struggles with his sexuality, but has “embrace[d] the path of human loneliness” in pursuit of freedom in Jesus (Vineyard Columbus, 2013, np).

As homosexuality is explicitly condemned on the website, it is not surprising that heteronormativity was the assumption. All couples portrayed were heterosexual, and all non-platonic intimate relationships referenced were heterosexual (Vineyard Columbus, 2013). There were, however, no blatant instances of homophobia outside of the biblical denunciations (Vineyard Columbus, 2013).

Results from World Harvest Church- Research Question: What religious literature is being read by Christians in central Ohio?

The texts suggested by each location provide an insight into the perceived needs of individuals at their respective sites, as well as insight into how the perceived needs are to be met, through the type of books popular at each site and the relationship of the authors with each community. The texts from WHC indicate a concern with changing others, and contentment with a single authority.
Insights from Genre

Though there are differences in the four books from WHC, notably *NDS* (1996), Parsley’s (1996; 2005; 2007; 2010) works are largely designed to point out perceived areas of opportunity for change in others. The importance of a focus on the necessity of change in others cannot be overstated, as it provides important insights into the way the community, may be inclined to see the world around them. The assumption, found in the WHC books that readers, or at least readers who agree with the author, that they are somehow morally, and as suggested by 2010’s *LOH*, mentally, superior is problematic.

Insights from Author

In contrast to the external purpose the texts convey, the four books suggested by WHC were all written by the pastor of the church. The dominance of Parsley’s voice in the popular texts, and in the texts available, indicates that WHC does not necessarily see itself as part of the larger Christian culture, nor does it see itself as being in a reciprocal relationship with the world or other Christian communities. The data suggests that WHC considers other Christians and the world an audience to which it can provide information, insight, and direction, not as a potential teacher from which it can also learn. The WHC community projects an image of self-sufficiency, separateness, and possibly superiority, through its reliance on the voice of its leader. Blum and Harvey (2012) provide insight into this phenomenon, arguing that in some mega churches, the “cult of personality revolves not around the body of Christ, but around the face of the religious franchise,” which is represented by the ministers themselves (p. 251).
Results from World Harvest Church - Research Question: What are the social justice curricula discussed in these texts and how are they presented?

The texts suggested by WHC were analyzed for presentations of social justice, along with experiences of difference in race, class, gender, and sexuality. While there were no coded references for an ECO analysis of social justice, ECO analysis revealed a negative portrayal of difference in race, class, and sexuality. Gender is the only category in which the ECO analysis revealed a positive portrayal of difference. In addition to the ECO analysis results, the themes that emerged during the CDA are discussed below in sections organized by topic.

Social Justice

Unexpectedly, there were no references to social justice in any of the suggested texts, as is shown below in Table 12. As a result, there is no Coefficient of Evaluation to report for the topic of social justice.

Table 12: ECO Analysis Notations of Social Justice from WHC Texts

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>LOH</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDS</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNM</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Obviously, the results of this section are unanticipated; that there were no references to social justice in WHC texts indicate an unexpected silence. However, there
were many instances of references to justice that were not included in the ECO analysis. The decision to exclude references to justice from analysis had an effect on the results, though the word justice appeared only ten times in Parsley’s (1996; 2005; 2007; 2010) combined works.

However, Parsley’s (2005; 2007) works included many assertions, including an entire chapter in *CI* (2007) and a list of scripture references to support his claims that it is the “responsibility for Christians to care for the poor” in the endnotes of *SNM* (2005), that “God cares deeply about orphans, widows, and the poor, and expects His people to share His concern” (Parsley, 2005, p. 169). Parsley (2007) repeatedly encourages readers to work toward the “relief of the poor and oppressed” (p. 79) and to see the “exploited lifted up” (p. 92). He calls readers to “to arise – in love, action, and purpose” (p. 154) to reclaim their “rich heritage of influencing society through humble acts of charity, strategic community concern, and sacrificial works of service” (Parsley, 2007, p. 163).

As was the case in *FC* (2005) and *SD* (2012), the tension between advocating for justice on behalf of the poor while failing to utilize the term *social justice* can be found in *CI* (2007). Parsley (2007) calls for political activism combined with personal service, but extensively rejects and maligns Marxism. When describing the type of society designed by God in the Old Testament, Parsley (2007) acknowledges the role of individuals, but he also points to the large-scale, systemic safeguards. He stops short of mentioning the seven-year cycle of debt forgiveness, known as Jubilee, which guarded against generational poverty, but did point out that the main offense of Sodom and
Gomorrah was that they were “overfed and comfortable while ignoring the poor” (Parsley, 2007, p. 172).

Though it is this researcher’s opinion that the attributes and descriptions of justice provided in SNM (2005) and CI (2007) were related to social justice, they were excluded because of the perceived differences, and politicization, between justice and social justice. As discussed above, there are significant differences in the ways justice, and particularly social justice, are understood. Because of these issues, and those described in Chapter Two regarding the controversial nature of social justice, it was after considerable debate that the initial distinction between justice and social justice described in Chapter Three was upheld, despite the fact that it may very well skew the results of this section. Due to the politicization of social justice, it is possible that readers may not make a meaningful connection to the general theory of justice and its practical applications of social justice.

Triangulation

As was discussed above, there were no references to social justice in the analyzed texts, despite calls to and descriptions of acts that would further the cause of societal equity. The silence regarding social justice found in the texts is supported by the triangulation data, as social justice appears only once on the pages of the website. Also supported by the triangulation data is the presence of descriptions and exhortations related to social justice, similar to those found in the texts (World Harvest Church, 2013).

The reference to social justice appears in a description of the Center for Moral Clarity (CMC) on the About Rod Parsley page of the WHC website; the CMC is
described as an organization, under the leadership of Rod Parsley, committed to “advocating for issues of...social justice from a biblical perspective” (World Harvest Church, 2013, np). There is no further discussion of what social justice means or how it is influenced by a biblical perspective on the WCH website. As in the texts provided by WHC, many issues that could be considered aligned with social justice were mentioned, including world hunger and human trafficking (World Harvest Church, 2013). It is important to note here, however, as was discussed above, that much of the action encouraged by readers would likely be considered charity as opposed to social justice activism due to its focus on monetary giving while leaving system and structural causes of inequity unchallenged.

Race

There were 325 coded references to race in the texts suggested by WHC, as is shown below in Table 13.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>168</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CI</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOH</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDS</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNM</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The total Coefficient of Evaluation for race, determined by calculating the mean Coefficient of Evaluation for the four texts that had coded references to race, is 37.10; as
it is well under the neutral score of 50, the presentation of racial minorities in the texts is negative. Table 14, below, also provides the Coefficients of Evaluation for each text suggested by WHC.

Table 14: Coefficients of Evaluation for Race from WHC Texts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHC</th>
<th>37.10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CI</td>
<td>43.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOH</td>
<td>32.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDS</td>
<td>21.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNM</td>
<td>51.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As is evidenced by the number of coded references to race, the texts had much, both explicit and implicit, to say about racial minorities. Parsley (1996; 2005; 2007; 2010) is by far the most vocal author regarding race. He explicitly and repeatedly condemns racism, and calls on Christians to allow God to “blow away all human barriers,” including race (Parsley, 1996, p. 75). Parsley (2005) identifies “the rushing tide of racial hatred,” the persistent segregation of churches, the fact that “young black males are more likely to be shot, imprisoned, unemployed, or killed by disease than any other group in America” as “a serious indictment of those who lay claim to biblical truth” (p. 4).

Parsley (2005) dedicates an entire chapter to the issue of race in SNM (2005), laudably arguing for “removing race hatred from our hearts but also refusing to be satisfied until there is not one race in this country that is without equality of opportunity and equality of support from a caring society” (p. 40). The chapter, *Race: Fulfilling Our*
Fathers’ Dream, acknowledges “the legacy of racism in America, as old as human sin and as tragically destructive, as the histories of the great civilizations reveal” (Parsley, 2005, p. 33). Parsley (2005) also acknowledges “that racism is alive and well in America,” citing activities by the KKK and Neo-Skinhead Movement, as well as “the legacy of the O.J. Simpson and Rodney King incidents” (p. 34).

Though he explicitly condemns racism, inviting “people from all ethnic backgrounds” to be a part of the “army of terrorists under the banner of Jesus Christ” (1996, p. 95-96) and offering his own church, in which “blacks, whites, and Hispanics [are] dancing side by side in their happy stockinged feet,” (2005, p. 35) as a model of racial harmony, Parsley’s portrayal of racial difference and his conception of racial harmony are problematic, as is demonstrated by the quite low ECO analysis score for race from the WHC texts.

African American

Parsley’s (1996) concern for racial reconciliation appears to be focused on the African American community, as he asserts that he is “black by choice” (p. 141). Interestingly, Parsley (2005; 2007) specifically names African Americans as “values voters” in SNM (2005, p. xvi), despite later acknowledging in CI (2007) that “many younger white Christians are puzzled and disappointed by the failure of many theologically conservative African-American saints to translate the implications of the faith and values in the voting booth” (p. 198).

SNM (2005) contains Parsley’s (2005) most developed arguments regarding race. Parsley (2005) informs readers that, due to factors such as opposite birthrate patterns,
abortion, and immigration, “our country will have to learn racial harmony and respect, or we will have a future filled with the violent race wars the skinhead groups now angrily predict” (p. 35). The solution he offers is a combination of “the founding vision of our nation” and “unperverted” biblical interpretation” (Parsley, 2005, p. 35-36).

Parsley (2005) argues that racism angers both God and Jesus, pointing out that the biblical church in Antioch “was led by a multiracial, multinational team, none of whom were local” (p. 37). He then goes on to offer a reinterpretation of the story of Jesus clearing the temple found in the Gospel of Mark:

Throughout the history of the Church, some have concluded that Jesus was upset with merchants doing business in a holy place. There is certainly some truth to this, but it is not the whole story. Allow me to suggest another interpretation. Those merchants were doing business that the law of God required….It may have been that the merchants were cheating their customers – Jesus did say that His Father’s house was made a “den of thieves” – but this may not be the only reason Jesus got so angry….I think Jesus may also have been grieved because the merchants had set up business in the courts, which were the only places that Gentiles had to pray….This would mean, though, that the merchants were interfering with the worship of the Gentiles. It is most likely that they were doing this because they despised the Gentiles and thought them unclean and unworthy of consideration in a temple built by Jews. In other words, they were being racists (Parsley, 2005, p. 38).

The above quote is interesting, both in its ant-racist application and in its demonstration of the possible differences in interpretation, even among evangelicals who embrace a literal interpretation.

Parsley (2005) transitions from his biblical arguments against racism by saying, “let me talk about African Americans for a moment” (p. 40). After describing the “staggering” statistics regarding persistent inequalities between “African American” and “Anglo” Americans, despite the fact that “the battles for civil rights were decided fifty
years ago,” Parsley (2005) turns his attention to the “religious racism that is allowing
cults to carry away African Americans at an astonishing rate” (p. 40-41). His specific
concerns are Islam and Mormonism, both of which “are perversions of truth” (Parsley,
2005, p. 41). Parsley (2005) points out that until 1974, Mormons believed that “the black
race on earth is descended from Satan” (p. 41). He then turns his attention to Islam,
specifically the Nation of Islam, which he identifies as a cult (Parsley, 2005). Parsley
(2005) disparages both founding and contemporary leaders Elijah Muhammad and Louis
Farrakhan, but acknowledges that the Nation of Islam “teaches blacks to believe [good
things] about themselves” (p. 42). He paternalistically describes “the failure of the
Christian Church to teach blacks the truth about themselves” and asserts that African
Americans “are embracing the very religion that enslaved their forebears [sic]” (Parsley,
mockery of the suffering of their ancestors,” as “Islam was the original slave religion” (p.
43). He acknowledges the role of “tribal slavery in Africa” and “that Europeans extended
the evil trade,” but insists that “race-based chattel slavery was invented by Islam”
(Parsley, 2005, p. 43).

Instead of Mormonism and Islam, Parsley (2005) argues, Africa Americans
should look to role models such as “famed black leader Booker T. Washington,” who
“said that slavery was horrible, but that it may have been a tool in the hand of God to
position the black people to change the world through forgiveness, righteousness, and
industry” (p. 43-44). This framing of slavery is among the many items of “truth” Parsley
(2005) wants to tell his “fictional young black friend;” others include that Islam is not the
original religion of Africa, that Jesus and his disciples “may have been as dark as many
American blacks are today,” and that “many of the early Church fathers were African” (p.
44). He goes on to argue that “their native religion, the faith that made their continent
great until a false religion prevailed, was Christianity” (Parsley, 2005, p. 45).

Parsley (2005) again transitions, saying, “I have been talking about black
America. Now I want to talk to black Americans and, for that matter, to all nonwhites in
this country” (p. 45). He acknowledges that some understandings of the “Founding
Fathers” and early United States history are negative; however, he rejects those
interpretations, saying that “it is not only uninformed, but it also creates a class of people
who despise their national fathers and thus distance themselves from the founding faith”
(Parsley, 2005, p. 46). He argues instead for an understanding of the “founding
generation” that acknowledges that they were “ahead of their time,” and that “many of
the framers of our Constitution freed their slaves either during their lifetimes or upon
their deaths” (Parsley, 2005, p. 47). Parsley (2005) then entreats his “black, Asian, Arab,
and Hispanic friends” to “please, have done with bitterness” because they “live in a great
land founded by flawed people who nevertheless framed the liberties [they] now enjoy”
(p. 48). Clearly, Parsley’s arguments are problematic and demonstrate a lack of
understanding of the non-dominant experience.

Native Americans

In spite of Parsley’s (2005) arguments for racial harmony, he continues to use
problematic racial identifiers and correlate ethnicity with cultural and religious practices
when discussing and describing communities of difference (Parsley, 1996; Parsley,
The Native American community is one for which Parsley’s (2005; 2010) treatment is problematic.

A notable incident is found in SNM’s (2005) first chapter, *Judicial Tyranny: The Genius of Our Fathers, the Folly of Our Times*, in which Parsley (2005) claims that the “Founding Fathers” intended the United States to be an overtly Christian nation (p. 17). He supports his claim with references to a Congressional Act aimed at “regulating the grants of Land for propagating the Gospel among the Heathen,” as well as Jefferson’s approval of “a yearly federal stipend…to support Catholic priests” proselytizing to Native Americans (Parsley, 2005, p. 17). Parsley’s (2005) writings do not address the policy of forced assimilation, in which religion was frequently utilized as a tool, which characterized the federal government’s interaction with Native Americans until early Twentieth Century. Additionally, his description of the interactions between “the first Pilgrims…to the New World” and “the famed Indians” contains significant issues, despite his eventual acknowledgement that “lesser motives” prevailed (Parsley, 2005, p. 32). Parsley’s (2005) unproblematic portrayal of these events is indicative of the uncritical approach he takes to “racial harmony” (p. 34).

Parsley’s (2005) treatment of the experience of Native Americans in SNM (2005) is cause for concern, as is his use of the portrayal of Native Americans in film to provide support for his arguments. Parsley (2010) opens *LOH* (2010) with the description of a movie, a frequently used technique. His consistent utilization of film is, in and of itself, somewhat odd, as he persistently asserts his dislike of Hollywood specifically and the media in general (Parsley, 2005; Parsley, 2007; Parsley, 2010). In *LOH* (2010), he
describes a Native American character, Younger Bear, as comically mentally ill, and then uses his invented term, Younger Bear Syndrome, to describe the problems of society throughout the book (Parsley, 2010).

The Intersection of Race and Religion

As demonstrated in the above discussion of Parsley’s (2005) arguments against Mormonism and Islam, his works contain many examples of the intersection of race and religion. The main issue in Chapter Five of *SNM* (2005) is Islam, and Parsley (2005) frequently links it to racial identifiers. Parsley’s (2005) description on Islam spans thirty pages, but can be summarized by the following “three important truths:”

1. “The God of Christianity and the god of Islam are two separate beings.
2. Muhammad received revelations from demons and not from the true God.
3. Islam is an anti-Christ religion that intends, through violence, to conquer the world” (p. 96).

Parsley (2005) provides a contradictory narrative of the development of Islam, as well as his interpretation of The Five Articles of Faith, The Five Pillars of the Faith, and Jihad. Significantly, he does not address the fact that many of the attacks he employs against Mohammed, the Qur’an, and Islam can also be applied Christianity.

Parsley (2005) challenges Muslim adoration of the Qur’an, asking readers to “think about what the Quran really is. Muhammad didn’t write it. His followers wrote it after he was dead, and then only from their memory and scrawled notes. This explains why the Quran is full of so many contradictions” (p. 103). There is no discussion of the fact that the same could be said of Jesus’ relationship to the Christian Bible. He goes on
to challenge the Muslim belief that “the Quran is only authoritative in Arabic,” which means that “Islam is what the Muslim leaders say it is” (Parsley, 2005, p. 103). Again, there is no discussion of the similar practice of competing scriptural interpretations in Christianity.

Parsley (2005) also attacks the concept of submission upon which Islam is based, saying “Muslims proudly say that Allah is lord, al Rabb, and that they are his slaves, Abd. This is a far cry from the Jewish God who could be King David’s friend or the Christian God who so loves that he sacrificed His own Son” (p. 113, emphasis in the original). Disregarding the implication, unusual in Christianity, that the “Jewish God” and the “Christian God” are different, Parsley (2005) does not address the existence of biblical references to followers of God as slaves.

Parsley (2005) supports his assertion that “Islam is responsible for more pain, more bloodshed, and more devastation than nearly any other force on earth at this moment” by invoking Sudan, Nigeria, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Chechen rebels (p. 93). There is no discussion of the cultural, political, economic, and nationalistic facets of these complex examples. Parsley (2005) continues to portray Islam negatively, claiming to “find no Islamic culture anywhere in the world in which tolerance of any kind is practiced” (Parsley, 2005, p. 115).

Published two years later, Parsley’s 2007 *CI* also contains a problematic treatment of Islam. The tone of *CI’s* (2007) introduction is demonstrative of his treatment of Islam throughout the book:

The former [referring to the war in which the United States is engaged “abroad” (p. xv)] is the conflict with a rabid Islamofascist ideology animated by global
terrorism. The theater of battle is the whole world with flash points in Afghanistan, Iraq, Sudan, the Balkans, and the Philippines. Freedom, democracy, and economic progress for billions will depend upon the outcome of this battle. Western civilization is under siege” (Parsley, 2007, p. xvi).

Parsley (2007) goes on to quote a columnist’s description of “Moslems” as people “on steroids” who “shoot, bomb, and behead infidels” (p. 20). He also frames the controversial Danish cartoons depicting the prophet Mohammed as a test to “the growing ‘Islamification’ of Europe” (Parsley, 2007, p. 117).

As is the general trend, Parsley’s (2010) treatment of Islam is more subdued in LOH (2010). He no longer calls the religion demonic or intrinsically violent (Parsley, 2005). Parsley (2010) even goes so far as to say that he is “fully aware that there are millions of peace-loving Muslims who wouldn’t think of harming their neighbors” (p. 107). However, he opens chapter six with the assertion that “Muslims and Arabs hate America and Europe because of Israel” (Parsley, 2010, p. 37). Indeed, the majority of his defense of Israel is based on his casting its Muslim Arab neighbors as “bitter” and “medieval-fascist[s]” (p. 37) who have “only one real objective (Parsley, 2010, p. 40, emphasis in the original). Conversely, Parsley (2010) asserts that “God’s hand is upon Israel,” though his evidence is vague and possibly dubious (p. 39). Interestingly, he characterizes Israel as “an island of Western democratic civilization” (Parsley, 2010, p. 37). Parsley’s (2010) perception of Israel as Western provides insight into his consistently negative characterization of Palestinians.

In addition to portraying Arab Muslims negatively when discussing Israel, Parsley (2010) also builds much of his argument against feminism around the perceived silence of the Western intellectual elite regarding Muslim oppression of women. The oppression
of women is also his centerpiece argument against the looming danger of Sharia law in the United States, based on Europe’s experience with “a growing Islamic immigrant population – a population that had been showing tendencies to bully Western governments into curbing freedoms and gradually adopting Islamic Sharia law” (Parsley, 2010, p. 127). According to Parsley (2010), such bullying, which is leading to a slow surrender, is being accomplished in Canada by “a rapidly growing Muslim grievance club – a fraternal order of whiners with astonishingly tender feelings and delicate sensibilities” (p. 127) and “thin-skinned know-nothings” (p. 128). Finally, Parsley (2010) identifies Islam is the driving force of the “religion-based genocide taking place in southern Sudan,” in which Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam are complicit (p. 105). While the rhetoric is arguably less heated, the message of danger, condemnation, and disdain are still clear.

Triangulation

The ECO analysis results on race from WHC were surprisingly negative, given Parsley’s (1996; 2005; 2007) explicit condemnation of racism; the unexpectedly low ECO analysis results are somewhat less surprising given the intersectionality of race and religion. In addition, inconsistencies between the texts raise some questions regarding Parsley’s (2005; 2010) commitment to racial reconciliation. In SNM (2005), Parsley (2005) deliberately identifies Saul (Paul) as an ethnic Turk when trying to demonstrate the racial diversity of the Christian faith; in LOH (2010), Parsley (2010) deliberately identifies Paul (Saul) as one of the “male Caucasians” unfairly disregarded by the “academic Left’s disdainful dismissal of our entire heritage as a civilization” (p. 152).
The triangulation data do not support the notably negative portrayal of people of color in the WHC texts; though the WHC website revealed very little textual evidence to compare to the ECO analysis data, the limited images from the website portray an inclusive environment. Also unlike the WHC texts, there was little data regarding the intersection of race and religion on the WHC website.

In the only video on the website, aside from the links to recorded services, most of the speakers were European American; there was, however, an African American woman and a man for whom this observer was unable to identify a racial classification (World Harvest Church, 2013). That people of color had their own voice on the video is a significant improvement upon their treatment in the texts, in which they were spoken about or to, instead of with (Parsley, 2005).

Neither religious tolerance nor religious oppression are discussed on the WHC website; however, again in a description of the CMC on the About Rod Parsley page of the WHC website, readers are reminded of his commitment to “advocating for issues of…faith [and] religious liberties…from a biblical perspective” (World Harvest Church, 2013, np). Based on the analysis of the WHC texts, a biblical perspective, as understood by Parsley (1996; 2005; 2007; 2010), would likely limit advocacy activities for religious liberties to those focused on the rights of Christians.

Class

There were 17 coded references to class in the texts suggested by WHC, as is shown below in Table 15.
Table 15: ECO Analysis Notations of Class from WHC Texts

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<th>Neutral</th>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CI</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>NDS</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNM</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
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</table>

The total Coefficient of Evaluation for class, which is the same as the Coefficient of Evaluation for class in SNM (2005) because it is the only text with coded descriptions of class, is 7.69; as it is substantially under the neutral score of 50, the presentation of those living in poverty in the text is quite negative.

The purpose of this analysis has been to track the evaluative statements in the texts as they portray the non-dominant; in the area of class, this means those living in poverty. The lack of coding regarding class is somewhat surprising, considering that, as demonstrated in the above section on social justice, all of the authors reminded readers of God’s special interest in the poor. However, most of the discussion regarding those living in poverty was focused on responses to them, not description of them.

Despite the surprising lack of coded data, a few themes regarding class did emerge from the texts. By far the most widely shared and oft stated theme among the texts was God’s special interest in the poor, as discussed above in the social justice section; Parsley (2005) repeatedly condemns the wealthy and frequently decries poverty, exhorting Christians to work for the alleviation of poverty. However, he persistently and
pejoratively frames governmental actions designed to alleviate poverty as “liberal” (Parsley, 2005; p. 56-58, 62, 65; see also Parsley, 2007; Parsley, 2010). In addition to Parsley’s politicization of poverty, other interesting themes regarding class emerged, including an assumption of middle class status, intentional class positioning, and a general rejection of perceived elitism.

Assumption of Middle Class

The assumption of a middle class lifestyle is evidenced in all of the texts, save NDS (1996); they utilized the types of personal anecdotes and examples that assume a middle class standard of living. In one example, Parsley (2007) reminds readers, assumed to be residents of “the typical, tidy suburban street lined with manicured lawns and well-appointed houses,” that it is just “a short drive away” to “another kind of neighborhood…where the houses aren’t so nice and the cars aren’t so shiny and new” (p. 178).

In Parsley’s (2005; 2007; 2010) works, the assumption of the universality of a middle class experience, shared by readers, is in stark contrast with those framed as the opposition: the elite. Parsley’s (2005; 2007; 2010) works portray the United States as a society in which the majority of the people are being manipulated and disserved by a group of elites “who now fill the upper echelons of our nation’s media, academia, and government” (Parsley, 2010, p. 31).

Media Elite

Parsley’s (2005; 2007; 2010) rejection of those he perceives as elite includes the media. His indictment of the “mainstream media” begins in the prologue of SNM (2005),
where he claims they are complicit with elitists and are “hopelessly, and probably unrecoverably, out of touch” (Parsley, 2005, p. xvii). Parsley (2005) cites their “biased news coverage” as a demonstration of the fact that “they inhabit a parallel universe with only a tenuous connection to the reality most Americans experience” (p. xvii). Parsley (2005) claims that the media is complicit with the “liberal elitists on both coasts” (p. xvi), whom he describes as “fringe elements” that “are so far out on the edge that they are in danger of falling off the map altogether” (p. xvii). He indicts the media for their “breathtaking intolerance and boundless sense of moral superiority” (Parsley, 2005, p. xvii), evidenced, he argues in CI (2007), by their “unwillingness to tolerate” those with a Christian worldview (Parsley, 2007, p. xvii).

Parsley’s (2007) denunciation of the media continues in CI (2007) where he asserts that “mainstream news organizations in America represent another area in which anti-Christian bias is rampant” (p. 127). He specifically identifies PBS and NPR as “liberal, government-subsidized” media “giants” (Parsley, 2007, p. 127; see also Parsley, 2010). Parsley (2010) continues his argument three years later in LOH (2010), alleging that the “liberal press,” part of the “media elite” aligned with the “folks running the show in Washington” (p. 21), have joined forces to become “powerful interests” complicit in a failed attempt to “have [Rush] Limbaugh declared a pariah and driven from the airways with pointy sticks and torches” (p. 47). Interestingly, Parsley’s (2010) use of the phrase “mainstream media” significantly increases in 2010’s LOH (2010); in the same text, he devotes a chapter to the defense of former Republican Vice Presidential candidate Sarah Palin, who famously used the phrase (p. 24, 35, 51, 74, 82).
Though Parsley (2005) dedicates an entire chapter in *SNM* (2005) to describing the “epidemic” that is the American media (p. 156), his complaints are against the entertainment industry, as opposed to the news media. He continues his negative portrayal of “Hollywood circles” in *CI* (2007) when he refers to them, in quotation marks, as “‘enlightened’” (Parsley, 2007, p. xviii). Parsley (2007) is quite vocal in criticizing the “activist-actor” as a particularly negative subset of Hollywood “has-beens” (p. 15); specific targets include Michael Moore, Alec Baldwin, and Robert Altman (p. 15); Cameron Diaz, Drew Barrymore, and Christina Aguilera (p. 16); Gwyneth Paltrow, Michael Moore, Barbara Streisand, George Clooney, Woody Harrelson, Meryl Streep, Tim Robbins, Susan Sarandon, and Alex Baldwin (p. 120-121). Parsley (2007) describes “the popular media culture,” as well as the news media, as arenas in which “false worldviews are being preached” (p. xxi). He claims that they develop movies and television programming “to soften up the masses for … sweeping social engineering,” specifying damage done to patriotism and the meaning of marriage (p. 140).

Parsley’s (2010) negative description of “pampered, privileged Hollywood celebrities” (p. 3) begins quickly in 2010’s *LOH*, where he consistently frames them as “Lefties” (p. 164). He names specific individuals, as in *CI* (2007), including Sean Penn (p. 10), Steven Spielberg (p. 11), Michael Moore, Jack Nicholson, Naomi Campbell, Kate Moss, Woody Harrelson, Oliver Stone, Robert Redford, Sidney Pollack, Danny Glover, Ed Asner, Shirley MacLaine, Alanis Morissette, Spike Lee, Leonardo DiCaprio, and Kevin Costner (p. 12), Kevin Spacey (p. 13), Peter Jennings (p. 19), ABC’s Charles Gibson (p. 20), *New York Times* columnist Thomas Freidman, CNBC’s Donny Deutsch,
CNN’s Joy Behar, and Rachel Maddow (p. 21), George Soros (p. 24, 84), Joan Baez and Jane Fonda (p. 33), Tim Robbins (p. 34), David Crosby and head of CNN’s news division Eason Jordan (p. 35), Erica Jong (p. 49), Ralph Nader, Harry Belafonte, and Sean Penn (p. 50), Newsweek’s Jonathan Alter and CNN’s Jack Cafferty (p. 51), Tina Fey (p. 55), MSNBC’s Andrea Mitchell and Hardball’s Chris Matthews (p. 57), the Dixie Chicks (p. 63), Al Gore and Gunther von Hagens (p. 64), Gwyneth Paltrow and Blythe Danner (p. 67), Ron Reagan and Michael J. Fox (p. 75-77), Silent Spring author Rachel Carson (p. 91-93), Al Sharpton (p. 96), Jesse Jackson and Louis Farrakhan (p. 106), Marian Wright Edelman of the Children’s Defense Fund (p. 148-149), Ed Asner (p.164), MSNBC’s Keith Olbermann, Rachel Maddow, Ed Schulz, Andrea Mitchell, and David Shuster (p. 175), Bill Maher (p. 182-183, 190), Danny Glover (p. 188), and Penn & Teller and Sam Harris (p. 190-191) (Parsley, 2010). Interestingly, he also identifies specific shows, networks, websites, and publications, including the Huffington Post, Daily Kos, and Democratic Underground (p. 18, 24, 176), Rolling Stone, the Boston Globe, and the Washington Post (p. 23), MoveOn.org (p. 21-24, 42-43, 54, 84), the New Republic (p. 35), Media Matters Web site (p. 43-47, 176), the New York Times and the Los Angeles Times (p. 54), Ms. magazine (p. 70), PolitiFact.com and the St. Petersburg Times (p. 82), GQ magazine (p. 125), the Brookings Institute (p. 150), Mother Jones magazine (p. 170), MSNBC (p. 175), and The Nation (p. 182), as “left-leaning” (p. 175), “solidly left-of-center” (p. 23), or even suffering from Bush Derangement Syndrome (p. 54) (Parsley, 2010). In contrast, Parsley (2010) repeatedly praises Fox News.
Though he includes many negative comments about “self-righteous Hollywood,” Parsley (2010) is not entirely negative (p. 154). He expresses hope for the media, as “there already exists a small but important vanguard of Christians working in Hollywood” (Parsley, 2007, p. 200). Parsley (2007) even suggests movies, including The Passion of the Christ, The Exorcism of Emily Rose (directed by one of the Hollywood Christians Parsley describes), and Saving Private Ryan. He utilizes two films as pop culture references in 2010’s LOH, including the R-rated Godfather (Parsley, 2010). Parsley (2010) also identifies individuals in different types of media with whom he agrees, including Rush Limbaugh (p. 42-48), CEO of Clear Channel Communications Mark May (p. 45-46), Patricia Heaton (p. 102), Ezra Levant of Western Standard magazine (p. 127-129), Mark Steyn and Ken Whyte of Maclean’s magazine (p. 128-130), Chris Matthews, though his praise is tempered (p. 175), Gary Sinise (p. 178-179), Mia Farrow (p. 179-180), and Christopher Hitchens, though his praise, limited to Hitchens fear of Sharia law, is preceded by qualifiers such as “dead wrong” regarding multiple other issues (p. 181-183) (Parsley, 2010).

Cultural Elite

In addition to the media elite, Parsley (2007) makes frequent mention of the “cultural elite,” though he fails to clearly specify what groups constitute these particular elite (p. 9, 11, 17, 141; see also Parsley, 2010, p. 60). In one reference, he appears to be equating them with a veritable who’s who of humanist and secularist organizations – among them, People for the American way, the ACLU, the National Organization of Women, the Coalition for Reproductive Choice, the National Education Association,
Based on textual cues, the cultural elite are those with whom Parsley (2010) equates the idea of “political correctness” (p. 7). A related group of elites could be the “activist” courts that Parsley (2007) frequently describes negatively. In an interesting analogy, Parsley (2007) compares “those who insist that our Constitution is a living document,” and thus in need of contextual reinterpretation, to “the religious elites of His [Jesus] day,” who received a divine rebuke for their “modern interpretations” (p. 146). As a result, readers are encouraged to “exhort [their] United States Senators to vote to confirm federal judges who will interpret the Constitution strictly, value the original intent of the framers, and resist legislating from the bench” (Parsley, 2007, p. 150). Parsley (2007) also denounces the “elite group of research activists” who invited Christopher Reeves to speak before Congress regarding stem cell research (p. 107), and the “elites of pop culture” for their willingness to “go to extreme lengths to avoid offending other [non-Christian] groups” (p. 122).

Class Positioning

Parsley’s (1996) negative portrayal of elites begins with the wealthy in NDS (1996) when he asserts that wealth has been “heaped” together for “the last days” when the rich will “weep and howl” as their wealth is transferred to the church (p. 108). He is careful, however, in SNM (2005), to assure readers that he is “the furthest thing from a socialist possible” (Parsley, 2005, p. 40). This denunciation of Marxism is the first of many in CI (2007) and LOH (2010). Parsley (2007; 2010) calls both the “Upper West Side” elite (2007, p. xviii) and the “trendsetters in New York’s East Village” (2010, p. 176).
“‘enlightened,’” utilizing quotation marks to indicate his non-literal use of the word (Parsley, 2007, p. xviii). Parsley (2010) continues his negative description in his discussion of the “hyper-wealthy elites” of the “global anti-mining movement” (p. 86) in 2010’s _LOH_.

In stark contrast to negative elitism, Parsley (2005; 2007; 2010) firmly positions himself as part of the vast majority of common sense Americans. Parsley (2005) begins this class positioning by indicating that he is part of the mainstream culture, a member of the middle class with roots in poverty, in _SNM_ (2005). In the _Prologue_, he makes a clear distinction between the rich and everyone else, including himself, by asserting that he is pleased that he lives in a country where “individual citizens” are “more powerful than billionaires with leftist agendas” (Parsley, 2005, p. xviii). The following statement of positioning is found early in the text:

> I was born to parents who grew up in Martin County, Kentucky, a county so poor that President Lyndon Johnson chose to announce his “war on poverty” there. My parents lived in coal mining camps. Outsiders made fun of us by saying that we lived so far back in the hollows that June bugs didn’t show up until August and that we used hoot owls for roosters. They said we were raised too poor to pay attention…(Parsley, 2005, p. 3).

Parsley (2005) continues his self-portrait as an average American, describing the family car of his childhood as “old” and referencing picking beans in the family garden (p. 33). He recounts walking home from elementary school to find a grandparent or an empty house because both of his parents “worked two jobs to make ends meet” in their “financially struggling home” among those mining coal and farming in Appalachian Eastern Kentucky (Parsley, 2005, p. 49).
Parsley’s (2007) campaign of class positioning continues in 2007’s *CI*, where he describes himself as “just a preacher from the hills” (p. xxii). He goes on to describe his early church experiences as including “a cinder block building with wooden pews and 40 watt light bulbs – because we couldn’t afford 100 watt bulbs” and compares the cleansing of God’s forgiveness to that of his mother’s “homemade lye soap” (Parsley, 2007, p. 11). Parsley (2007) utilizes his own class positioning as a contrast to those he wishes to challenge. Parsley (2007) asks readers to “excuse a relapse to [his] old unpolished eastern Kentucky vernacular” so that he may reprimand academics with the phrase “You ain’t nobody” (p. 94).

It is also in *CI* (2007) that Parsley (2007) introduces his usage of the term “flyover country,” which, as he explains, is the “derisive term” that “the dominant leftist culture” uses for the “backward, religious rubes” that populate “the heartland of America lying between the two ‘progressive and enlightened’ coasts” (p. 11). In addition, *CI* (2007) is the work in which he begins to capitalize “Left” (Parsley, 2007, p. 16), including his reference to “the ‘progressive’ Left Coast” (p. 108). He continues to disparage those who live on the coasts, as well as capitalize the word “Left,” in 2010’s *LOH*, in addition to introducing the terms “Middle America” (p. 173) and “Main Street America” (p. 21) for contrast (Parsley, 2010).

Parsley (2010) reiterates his unassuming every-man persona early in 2010’s *LOH* when he describes himself as “a country” (p. 4) and “old-school” (p. 6) preacher who grew up going to churches with “hard wooden pew[s]” (p. 80). He reminds readers of his geographic roots in rural poverty by recounting his uncle’s “shattered body” being
“lowered into a grave in the bedrock of the Kentucky mountainside” (Parsley, 2010, p. 36).

Conversely, there are subtle indications in Parsley’s (1996; 2007; 2010) works that he has enjoyed a variety of experiences that undermine his claim to be an average American. In *NDS* (1996), he recalls travel to Israel, while in *CI* (2007), he relates experiences he had while travelling within the Soviet Union (Parsley, 1996; 2007). His anecdotes about travel continue in *LOH* (2010), where recounts apparently multiple trips to Hawaii and Israel, as well as to Guatemala (Parsley, 2010). In addition to extensive travel, Parsley (2010) provides further indicators of material privilege, including ownership of a Harley-Davidson motorcycle.

Parsley (2007) recounts having “taken other clergy to task” while appearing “on national television” (p. 82) and goes on to recall challenging his interviewer while appearing “on a prime time national news program” (p. 107). In both *SNM* (2005) and *CI* (2007), he describes being present when the President of the United States signed legislation into law (Parsley, 2005; 2007). In *CI* (2007), he also references hosting a group of pastors in a lobbying trip to DC, and discusses the influence of his “nationally televised program” (Parsley, 2007, p. 129). *LOH* (2010) includes this description of his rise to prominence:

At the age of twenty I was pastoring one of the fastest-growing churches in the nation, which I founded at the ripe old age of nineteen with seventeen people attending the first service. Before I was thirty years of age I was overseeing the completion of the largest sanctuary complex in three states (Parsley, 2010, p. 122).
Parsley (2010) reminisces about sitting near Lady Gaga at the 2010 Grammy Awards and describes Ann Coulter as a friend in LOH (2010). All of these insights into his life point to a common experience, both in power and influence, as well as material comfort.

Triangulation

The ECO analysis of class revealed a significantly negative portrayal of the poor in texts from WHC. Triangulation data do not support the significantly negative portrayal of the poor found in the texts; one possible explanation for this is that the coded data on class came from only one of the four texts suggested by WHC, while the other three texts did not provide explicit depictions of the poor. There is, however, data to support the other themes that emerged during the analysis of class, including God’s special interest in the poor, an assumption of middle class status, and a rejection of elitism.

Caring for the poor is encouraged more than once on the WHC website. Visitors are encouraged to give money to provide food, medical supplies, and other material aid to those in need (identified by the specific giving projects currently underway), and are also informed of relief activities completed or in ongoing process by the WHC community (World Harvest Church, 2013).

The assumption of a middle class lifestyle is demonstrated in the aforementioned video on the WHC website. The video, created to encourage visitors to participate in small groups called Life Groups, provides photographic and video views of the homes in which Life Groups meet (World Harvest Church, 2013). These images reinforce the assumption of middle class living found in the WHC texts; they show homes with large,
well-furnished rooms, including walls of book shelves and fireplaces, and well-manicured and privacy fenced yards (World Harvest Church, 2013).

The portrayal of Rod Parsley as average individual also continues on the WHC website, where he is described as an “ordinary guy” experiencing “earthly success” (World Harvest Church, 2013, np). As in the texts, this claim of averageness is challenged by the later assertions of his national and international notoriety, as well as the success of his national television show (World Harvest Church, 2013).

**Gender**

There were 315 coded references to gender in the texts suggested by WHC, as is shown below in Table 16.

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The total Coefficient of Evaluation for gender, determined by calculating the mean Coefficient of Evaluation for the four texts that had coded references to gender, is 59.55; as it is above the neutral score of 50, the presentation of women in the texts is positive. Table 17, below, also provides the Coefficients of Evaluation for each book.
Table 17: Coefficients of Evaluation for Gender from WHC Texts

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Though there were many coded representations for the ECO analysis, there were complexities regarding gender. Explicit value judgments were rarely made regarding men and women, and those that exist were sometimes too complex for an ECO analysis coding. Parsley’s (2007) made frequent references to “fatherless young gang members” (p. 175), “single mothers” (p. 162; see also p. 184), and “unwed mothers, fatherless kids” (p. 181) that conveyed values, but were too complexly structured to allow for ECO coding. There is also his memorable example in which a woman’s three adolescent daughters were simultaneously pregnant; Parsley (2007) made no reference to the males who had contributed to the situation. Despite these complexities in ECO analysis coding, the CDA evidenced themes of support for traditional gender roles and gendered language.

Gender Roles

As in the texts from VC, traditional gender roles were reinforced by the WHC texts. Many of the anecdotes found in the texts came from the authors’ personal and familial histories. Parsley (1996) describes his wife as an integral part of his ministry, though in a supportive capacity and includes the story of his anointing by his mentor; in an apparently unusual gesture, Parsley’s wife was included as his beautiful and compatible companion. Despite her participation in his anointing, Parsley’s (1996)
wife’s contribution to his ministry appears to be limited to when she “does the dishes or fixes dinner” (p. 162). Clearly, *NDS* (1996) perpetuates traditional gender roles.

However, there is some improvement in Parsley’s (2005; 2010) subsequent works; he quotes his wife at length in *SNM* (2005), and goes on to credit her with providing him with necessary reminders, instilling in their children a love of reading, and challenging their son’s teacher in *LOH* (2010).

Parsley’s (1996) inclusion of women as the helpmates to their spouses’ ministries extends back to Polly Wigglesworth. She was the wife of Smith Wigglesworth, the man who mentored and anointed Parsley’s own mentor, Dr. Lester Sumrall (Parsley, 1996). Parsley (1996) acknowledges that Polly was engaged in “little” ministries before her husband, though he stops short of saying that her activities lead or influenced her husband (p. 20). When Smith “took up the banner,” Polly’s activities and role disappear from Parsley’s (1996) narrative (p. 20). Likewise, foundational protestant theologian John Wesley’s mother remains unnamed, despite her acknowledged contribution to his understanding of the concept of sin (Parsley, 1996).

Evidence also supports a traditional understanding of masculine gender roles (Parsley, 2010). Parsley (2010) dedicates a chapter in *LOH* (2010) to defending testosterone and condemning metrosexuality as “evidence of our unconditional surrender” in the “feminist-led ‘war on masculinity’” (p. 160). He also describes *GQ* magazine as “*effeminate*” (Parsley, p. 125, emphasis in the original); Parsley’s treatment of masculinity is reminiscent of that found Idleman’s (2011) description of Thanksgiving with the in-laws.
In an interesting and conflicting example, Parsley (2007) lauded “actress Hedy Lemarr – a remarkable combination of beauty, brains, and fighting spirit,” for her “technical contributions” to Allied weaponry (p. 120). Among her other accomplishments, according to Parsley (2007), was selling $7 million worth of kisses. Parsley (2010) goes on to acknowledge, in LOH (2010), that women were among those who lied about their ages to join the US war effort in WWII. He also elevates Benazir Bhutto as a model of pro-life feminism and Mia Farrow as a model of human rights activism; somewhat less surprising is his positive characterization of Sarah Palin (Parsley, 2010).

Gendered Language

Gendering was accomplished through the reinforcement of traditional roles, but also through the language choices and examples used in the writing. Parsley’s (1996; 2007) treatment of Eve is not unusual; he does not even mention her when recounting the biblical story of the fall of humanity in his earlier NDS (1996), while he provides a contextually negative description of he as a “humanist” in CI (2007). In another biblical reference, Parsley (2007) includes a scripture in which Jesus describes divine judgment coming from both “the men of Nineveh” and “the queen of the South” (p. 155). This vague reference is one of the surprisingly few positively framed biblical examples of women.

Parsley (1996; 2005; 2007; 2010) exclusively utilized male pronouns when describing God. He contrasts his male-gendered language for God by referring to environmentalists’ concerns for “Mother Earth” dismissively in 2007’s CI (Parsley, 2007,
Parsley’s (2010) negative references to Mother Earth continue in 2010’s *LOH*, where he comments of environmentalists that he hopes they will “do the right thing, and give the dust of their bodies in death as a sacrifice back to Mother Earth” (p. 90). Parsley (1996; 2007) also consistently refers to “the evil one” using male pronouns, though he includes a biblical reference in which two infamously condemned cities, Sodom and Gomorrah, are referred to as feminine (Parsley, 2007).

Throughout *NDS* (1996), references to the Church (though he utilized a small c, he appeared to be referring to the church universal) are feminine; Parsley (1996; 2005) also makes a passing references to the Church as feminine in *SNM* (2005). His basis for the feminine characterization in *NDS* (1996) is his employment of Song of Solomon 6:10 in which a male speaker asks who it is that appears like the dawn, is as fair as the moon, bright as the sun, and majestic as the stars (Parsley, 1996). As Parsley (1996) both accuses and encourages the Church, “she” is described throughout the book in both positive and negative terms.

Other gendered language patterns in Parsley’s (1996; 2005; 2010) works include the assumption that warriors are male and nations are female. Throughout *NDS* (1996), the warrior who adores, wanders from, and is delivered by his captain, is male. In *SNM* (2005) and *LOH* (2010), he consistently, and mostly positively, refers to the United States using feminine language. Parsley (2010) also refers to Israel as feminine in *LOH* (2010). A rare instance in which humanity as a whole was discussed is found in Parsley’s (2007) *CI*; he quotes Francis Schaeffer, describing creativity as “part of the unique mannishness of man” (p. 125).
Parsley (2010) sarcastically includes one gender neutral reference in 2010’s *LOH* when he corrects himself: “policemen…er, sorry…policepersons” (p. 129). As both the limited use of female pronouns and Parsley’s (2010) dismissal of the practice indicate, reinforcements of male dominance and traditional gender norms were common in gendered language throughout his works.

Parsley (2007) utilizes an interesting pattern of addressing specific women in *CI* (2007). He addresses Gwyneth Paltrow as “Ms. Paltrow” (p. 121) and Hillary Rodham Clinton as “Ms. Clinton” (p. 141) after initially introducing them by their full names (Parsley, 2007). He does not follow this pattern with other women he references by name more than once, such as Sheryl Crow (Parsley, 2007). All three of the women mentioned above were included as examples of opponents of Parsley’s (2007) stated political commitments. Paltrow and Clinton are married, while Crow is not, but the selective use of “Ms.” is odd, as the proper title for a married woman, if including one, is of course, “Mrs.” Parsley’s (2010) inconsistent naming of women continues in 2010’s *LOH*; he refers to Hillary Rodham Clinton as just “Hillary” twice during his argument against her book *It Takes a Village* (p. 147-148). The data regarding Parsley’s (2007) usage of gendered language and dismissal of gender neutral language indicate intentionality in his selective and incorrect application of titles denoting marital status, but the intended effect is unclear.
Triangulation

The ECO analysis revealed a positive portrayal of women in the analyzed texts, and triangulation data confirm the positive portrayal. However, triangulation data also provides evidence of the traditional gendering found in the texts.

The presence of women on the website as active participants in the ministries of WHC indicates that they are indeed perceived positively. In both photographs and the Life Groups video, women are portrayed as active participants, speaking in leadership roles (World Harvest Church, 2013). Along with tabs to take visitors to Rod Parsley’s website, and the websites of his other organizations, there is a tab at the top of the WHC website to take visitors to Joni Parsley’s website (World Harvest Church, 2013). In addition, quotes by Joni Parsley and Mother Teresa appear in the text of the WHC website (World Harvest Church, 2013).

There is evidence, however, to support the underlying issues regarding the portrayal of women found in the texts. While not necessarily portrayed negatively, women were frequently portrayed in relationship with men or in other one-dimensional and overly simplistic ways that reinforce traditional gender roles. Evidence of this mindset can be found on the WHC website. The gendering of children is achieved through the segregated organizations of the masculine Royal Rangers and the feminine MPact Girls (World Harvest Church, 2013). Both organizations share the goal of helping young boys and girls grow into godly adults; however, the intentional gender segregation is indicative of the assumption that godly men and godly women are intrinsically different. Also interesting is the fact that the Royal Rangers has its own page, while the
only mention of the MPact Girls is on the *Youth Ministries* page of the WHC website (World Harvest Church, 2013).

**Sexuality**

There were 223 coded references to sexuality in the texts suggested by WHC, as is shown below in Table 18. Though there are “positive” references in some of the books, it is important to note that any positive references were for characteristics such as organization and strength; they were not meant to condone homosexuality.

Table 18: ECO Analysis Notations of Sexuality from WHC Texts

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHC</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CI</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LOH</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NDS</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SNM</strong></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The total Coefficient of Evaluation for sexuality, determined by calculating the mean Coefficient of Evaluation for the four texts that had coded references to sexuality, is 3.82; as it is significantly below the neutral score of 50, the presentation of homosexuals in the texts is quite negative. Table 19, below, also provides the Coefficients of Evaluation for each book.
Table 19: Coefficients of Evaluation for Sexuality from WHC Texts

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<table>
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<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHC</td>
<td>3.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CI</td>
<td>4.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOH</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDS</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNM</td>
<td>10.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parsley (1996; 2005; 2007; 2010) is the only author in whose works homosexuality explicitly discussed. He also utilized phrases such as “biblical definition of marriage” (Parsley, 2007, p. xvii), “God’s desire for marriage” (Parsley, 2005, p. xviii), and “alternative lifestyle” (Parsley, 1996, p. 138), as well as warning against “efforts to redefine the terms marriage and family into meaninglessness” (Parsley, 2007, p. 3, emphasis in the original) when discussing homosexuality. Parsley (2005) utilizes strong language such as “perversion” when describing “America’s tortured homosexuals” (p. 3) in the introduction preceding the twenty page chapter he devotes to “the unhappy gay agenda” in 2005’s SNM (p. 69).

As a facet of the significantly negative portrayal of homosexuality, Parsley (2007) discusses the civil rights of homosexuals, invoking the crucifixion when he asserted that “the gay marriage movement was just the tip of the spear” (p. 123). His arguments consistently entail framing the controversy regarding same-sex marriage as a struggle between “judicial tyranny” (Parsley, 2005, p. 24) by “activist judges” (Parsley, 2007, p. 147) in collusion with the “media and academic elite” (Parsley, 2007, p. xvii) against the people of the United States. In both SNM (2005) and CI (2007), he recalls touring before
the 2004 Presidential election talking “about the terrible toll same-sex marriage would
inflict on our culture” as he encouraged evangelicals to vote (Parsley, 2007, p. 17; see
also Parsley, 2005). Parsley (2005) informs readers that “a Federal Marriage Amendment
is absolutely essential” (p. xviii) to rein in “a handful of robed radicals [who] are
thumbing their noses at six thousand years of Judeo-Christian values and deciding the
fate of our entire nation, despite the will of the people” (p. 25).

Frequently, Parsley (2007) demonstrates the logical fallacy of the slippery slope
when arguing against same-sex marriage, labeling it as “the end of marriage as we
currently understand it” (p. 139). He informs readers that legalizing gay marriage would
“quickly be followed by moves to legitimize polygamy and polyamory” (p. 123) because
“accommodate[ing] gay and lesbian couples…cannot possibly stop there” (Parsley, 2007,
p. 139). Parsley (2007) cites the popular television show Big Love as proof that “some in
Hollywood are already working to soften up opposition to those efforts” (p. 123).
Interestingly, Parsley (2005) does not address the fact that the biblical definition of
marriage included sanctioned polygamy when he asserts that definition of marriage
should be limited to “one man and one woman, as God intended it” (p. 26).

Another centerpiece of Parsley’s (2005) argument against same-sex marriage is
the “astonishing trend in the homosexual community” in which “gay men and women
abandon their homosexual practices …while finding fulfillment, satisfaction, and
freedom in welcoming churches, in healthy relationships, and in monogamous marriages”
(p. 69-71). He highlights the story of two “former” homosexuals who met at a Bible
study, “left their promiscuous lifestyle to embrace traditional values, the Christian faith,
and ordinary family life,” and married each other (Parsley, 2005, p. 71-72). Their story is Parsley’s (2005) starting point for a variety of arguments which he offers to explain why “gays [are] turning away from the homosexual life and culture in record numbers” (p. 73).

Parsley (2005) begins his explanation of homosexual defection by claiming that “there is no use denying the fact that many gays aren’t truly gay at all” and continues by arguing that “homosexuals are anything but happy and carefree…they are a very sad lot indeed…the everyday world of the American homosexual is a very unhappy world” (p. 73). Parsley (2005) proceeds to provide a lengthy, though misrepresentative and offensive, list of reasons for the defections: homosexuals are more likely to engage in a variety of sexual behaviors, as well as “criminality, shoplifting, and tax cheating” (p. 74); homosexuals have “extraordinarily low self-esteem and disproportionately high rates of depression” (p. 74), along with “staggering statistics” on suicide planning and attempts (p. 73), though he does not investigate the correlation between societal oppression and “emotional health” (p. 74); “gays are not only sad; they are lonely” (p. 77); as “health and hygiene [are] a practical impossibility, ill health is an inescapable part of the gay lifestyle…in fact, gay sex is a veritable breeding ground of disease” (p. 74); “promiscuity among homosexuals may have created [AIDS] in the first place” (p. 75); and “homosexual practice has practically abrogated all the medical advances of the twentieth century” (p. 77). In summation of the list, which also included arguments regarding the disproportional promiscuity and substance abuse among homosexuals, Parsley (2005) quotes the above-mentioned, allegedly formerly-gay husband: “I now realize that I never
knew a happy, contented, well-adjusted, and healthy homosexual. In all my years enmeshed in the gay lifestyle, I never met anyone who was actually gay” (p. 77).

In addition to extensively listing of “the audacious behaviors and disastrous consequences of homosexual activity” (p. 83), Parsley (2005) also informs readers that hate crime legislation will “have the effect of muzzling” them (p. 139) and “criminaliz[ing] the proclamation of biblical truth” (Parsley, 2007, p. 4). Parsley (2005) goes on to inform readers that they may lose their right to say “what the entire culture once knew to be true: homosexuality is not just sick; it is sin” (p. 87). He provides examples from Sweden, the U.K., and Canada (Parsley, 2005; 2007; 2010). In the Swedish example, a pastor was “sentenced to one month in prison for inciting hatred against homosexuals” because he described them as “abnormal, a horrible cancerous tumor” (Parsley, 2005, p. 87) in a public letter to the editor (Parsley, 2010). The pastor’s conviction was subsequently overturned (Parsley, 2007). Regarding Canadian human rights and hate speech legislation, Parsley (2007) claims that “it isn’t just Canadian citizens who have need to be concerned” (p. 138), noting the effect the legislation has had on Americans. He points out that Rush Limbaugh is “blocked” in Canada and “U.S.-based Christian ministries that mail pro-family literature” must be cautious (Parsley, 2007, p. 138). Parsley (2005) also quotes the concerns of an evangelical Canadian that exercising his right to religious expression could result in a two-year prison term.

Parsley (2005) also rejects “the supposedly commonplace violence committed against homosexuals by heterosexual bigots,” though his examples do not bear scrutiny (p. 81). When describing to readers the epidemic of “violence committed by
homosexuals against straight families and institutions,” he makes untenable comparisons (Parsley, 2005, p. 81). For example, he describes “threats, intimidation, and violence against the Christian community,” which occurred in opposition to a proposed piece of anti-gay legislation, as “straight-bashing” (Parsley, 2005, p. 82). That the legislation was itself the first attack is unaddressed.

In another example, he compares the murder of Matthew Shepherd because he was gay to a crime committed by two gay men (Parsley, 2005). Though the crimes committed by the two men were horrible, they are no different than the myriad of similar crimes committed by straight men, and in no way abrogate that Matthew Shepherd’s death was a hate crime. Interestingly, Parsley (2005) cites the fact that “black men have been dragged behind pickup trucks to their deaths within the last decade” as evidence of persistent racism, but does not address the contradiction in his treatment of Shepherd’s death just two chapters later (p. 34).

As is the general trend for the book, 2010’s LOH is significantly more subdued (Parsley, 2010). Parsley’s (2010) references to homosexuality are rare and employed to provide examples of larger issues within American society. In Part One: The Bad Guys Are Good...The Good Guys Are Bad, Parsley (2010) condemns the “faux-Christian” Westboro Baptist practice of protesting military funerals and asserts his desire to join the Patriot Guard Riders in forming “a human buffer zone between mourning families and Phelps’s hate-drones” (p. 16-17). When describing the protests, Parsley (2010) lists some of Westboro’s slogans and continues:

(Please know these vile words are as uncomfortable for me to write as they are for you to read.) Given their chosen obsession, you might assume that the soldiers
whose funerals these loons choose to defile were homosexuals – not that that would make the group’s actions one bit less detestable. Nevertheless, you would be wrong (p. 15).

This comment is a marked improvement over the treatment of homosexuals in SNM (2005) and CI (2007).

Parsley’s (2010) more familiar and consistently problematic treatment appears in his discussion of the Boy Scouts. He praises the organization and describes it as being under attack by “national homosexual activist groups and the ACLU” (Parsley, 2010, p. 59). Parsley (2010) goes on, saying, “the same individuals and groups that have vilified the Catholic Church for failing to protect children from sexual predators are condemning the Boy Scouts for attempting to do so” (p. 59). His argument is problematic, as the Church’s failure was in protecting known offenders and continuing to place them in situations where they would have access to additional victims. Parsley’s (2010) argument is problematic, as it is predicated on the assumption that many pedophiles are homosexual, or that many homosexuals are pedophiles. These assumptions are symptomatic of what Parsley (2010) describes as “a form of psychosis called homophobia” (p. 172, emphasis in the original); the textual evidence indicates that Parsley (2010) is dismissive of both the term and its description.

In addition to Parsley’s (2010) discussion of homosexuality in his treatment of the Boy Scouts, homosexuality also makes an appearance in his writings about the encroachment of the state onto individual rights. He once again utilizes the story of the Canadian pastor’s homophobic letter to warn of the dangers of thought-policing; he includes homosexuality among those things from which children must be protected from
in his indictment of librarians; and he defines good parenting as including both a mom and a dad in a “traditional marriage” as part of his nebulous rejection of the role of government in child development (Parsley, 2010). Parsley (2010) misrepresents research to suit his homophobic agenda by indicating that a study in which it was found that “children from two-parent families are better off emotionally, socially, and economically” was the equivalent of saying that “children do better with a mom and a dad” (p. 150-151, emphasis in the original). Parsley (2010) also includes homophobic ideas in his discussion of American universities, citing assignments “requiring students to … ‘make the case for gay marriage,’ and ‘explain how this additional type of family could help prevent crime’” as examples of “egregious examples of left-wing indoctrination” (p. 158-159).

Heteronormativity

In addition to Parsley’s (1996; 2005; 2007; 2010) blatant condemnation of homosexuality, there are indicators of heteronormativity. All of Parsley’s (1996; 2005; 2007; 2010) works are overwhelmingly heteronormative, assuming that all non-platonic intimate relationships are heterosexual. Parsley’s NDS (1996) and CI (2007) utilize many marriage metaphors in descriptions of spiritual relationships. Due to his explicit and repeated negative portrayal of homosexuality, it is not surprising that Parsley’s (1996; 2005; 2007; 2010) works contain an assumption of heteronormativity.

Sexual Objectification

In addition to both explicit denunciations of homosexuality and assumptions of heteronormativity, sexuality was addressed in other ways throughout the texts. Though
Parsley’s (2005; 2007) general concerns appear to be promiscuity and fornication, and particularly adolescent sexuality, he explicitly condemns the objectification of women, along with pornography and prostitution (Parsley, 2007). He also notes that “the church” has focused on condemning lifestyles without being “equally active in finding ways to let them know that God loves them desperately and wants them to be whole and at peace” (Parsley, 2007, p. 175). Parsley (2007) argues that the church has been so concerned with being correct that they have neglected to connect with others, and concludes the paragraph with a quote by Francis Schaeffer, who said, “biblical orthodoxy without compassion is surely the ugliest thing in the world” (p. 175).

Women’s Sexuality

The only positive references to biblical females are found in Parsley’s (1996; 2007) works. Parsley (1996) identifies Mary Magdalene, traditionally understood to be a prostitute, as part of a group of women who took gifts to the tomb of Jesus, only to find an angel instead; he goes on describes her as one who “was serious” about locating Jesus (p. 105). Ruth, who famously pursued her future husband by lying at his feet while he slept, is mentioned briefly and identified as a beneficiary of Boaz’s benevolence in 2007’s CI (Parsley, 2007).

Triangulation

The only coded references for sexuality were in the texts from WHC; the ECO analysis revealed a significantly negative portrayal of homosexuality in the WHC texts. Triangulation data does not confirm the ECO analysis, as the WHC website has little to
say regarding homosexuality. Heteronormativity, however, is confirmed in the triangulation data.

Unlike the lengthy discussions about homosexuality found in the WCH texts, there is no discussion in the text of the website; however, as is the case in many of the analyzed issues, there is some support for the ECO analysis available from the description of the related Parsley-led organization, the CMC. Among the description of the CMC’s goals, found on the About Rod Parsley page of the WHC website, is a commitment to “advocating for issues of…marriage [and] family…from a biblical perspective” (World Harvest Church, 2013, np). Based on the textual evidence from the analyses, it is likely that the CMC’s advocacy focuses on limiting the marriage and adoption rights of homosexuals.

The related issue of assumed heteronormativity, evident in the textual analysis, is also confirmed in a review of the WHC website. All couples in the Life Groups video and website photographs are heterosexual (World Harvest Church, 2013). In an interesting instance, the WHC website describes the Royal Rangers program as “a distinctly Christian alternative to Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts” (World Harvest Church, 2013, np). While offering Christian alternatives to mainstream activities is not out of the ordinary for evangelical churches, it is somewhat surprising to see an alternative to the Boy Scouts at WHC, considering Parsley’s (2010) aggressive defense of the organization. In contrast, VC appears to have on-site troops of both Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts (Vineyard Columbus, 2013).
Chapter 5: Conclusions

This final chapter contains implications for teacher education, including unanticipated findings, as well as study limitations and suggestions for further research. The research questions asked a) what religious literature is being read by Christians attending two mega churches central Ohio and b) what are the social justice curricula discussed in these texts and how are they presented. Though the data from this study does not reveal a link between resistance to social justice education and Christian literature, it does align with literature in social justice scholarship that can provide insight for teacher educators. This study begins to bridge a gap in the literature by identifying areas in which further study may be instructive for teacher educators regarding resistance to social justice education based in perceptions of Christianity. The data from this study indicates specific areas in which resistance may be encountered, namely multiple sources of authority, as well as multiple, and sometimes competing, perspectives; religious difference; and critical lenses. Significantly, these areas are of interest in social justice scholarship, to which many connections made. Though there was no finding on the portrayal of social justice, the presence of negative portrayals of difference and of academic inquiry, especially that which challenges dominant narratives, is consistent with the literature on resistance to education for societal equity. The data from this study
indicate that consumers of the analyzed texts may indeed experience resistance to the embrace of multiple perspectives and difference that is central to social justice education.

Implications for Teacher Education

The data collected in this study are unexpectedly complex. None of the texts directly spoke about social justice, classism, or sexism. Their absence is conspicuous, as it renders difference in these issues invisible. The dominance of hegemony is sustained by its invisibility; when dominance is made visible, it must be confronted (Freire, 1970a; Mura, 1999; Applebaum, 2004; Crocco, 2010; Young, 2011). As the silence, and thus invisibility, of difference in the analyzed texts indicates, this self-confrontation is frequently difficult for individuals of dominant groups (Banks, 1996).

In the categories that are explicitly discussed, such as the condemnation of racism by both Groeschel (2012) and Parsley (1996; 2005; 2007), as well as Parsley’s (2005; 2007; 2010) condemnation of homosexuality, the portrayal of all of these issues is much more complex than demonstrated by the ECO analysis scores. Despite the lack of intentional and explicit judgment statements, aside from Parsley’s (2005; 2007; 2010) denunciation of homosexuality, the Coefficient of Evaluation scores for the texts from both locations was decidedly negative, indicating a negative portrayal of difference in all categories, save Gender.

The negative portrayal of difference is of great concern to teacher educators, as it is in direct opposition to the core principles of social justice, as well as the end of prejudice and discrimination, central to multicultural education (Bennett, 2001). The lack of multivocality in the texts from WHC is in opposition to multicultural education’s
foundational commitment to pluralism (Bennett, 2001), as is the negative portrayal of religious difference in the majority of the analyzed texts.

Lack of Multivocality

Multicultural education seeks to create individuals with multicultural competence (Bennett, 2001). This requires a reconciliation with the self (Banks, 1996) which requires individuals in both groups to see past their own perspectives. Indeed, one of the key concepts of multicultural competence is the ability to see past one’s own positioning to the “whole picture;” thus, multicultural competence is, in some ways, “a way of looking at the world” and interacting with others (Case, 1993, p. 318). Both multicultural education and social justice education encourage and depend upon multiple perspectives. When multivocality is not encouraged, it will be more difficult to accept differing perspectives. The reliance on a single authority evidenced in that data from WHC indicate that some conceptions of Christianity, in which a single source of authority is a key component, may negatively impact the ability to perceive and accept multiple perspectives.

As discussed at the beginning of Chapter Four, there is exists a concerning lack of multivocality among the texts provided by WHC. One could reasonably question whether the books were simply chosen more frequently than others because of the popularity of Parsley; however, the fact that of the 170 items available for sale in the online store, only thirty-nine were not items authored by Parsley indicates that those shopping the online store have access to very few perspectives aside from Parsley’s. The univocality of the items available is even clearer when one considers that of the thirty-
nine items not authored by Parsley, many were non-literature items. Only four of the
texts available were authored by someone other than Parsley.

The lack of multivocality evidenced at WHC, and the reported influence Parsley
(1996; 2005; 2007; 2010) has outside of the local community, support Haidt and
Graham’s (2007) findings on the different influences on morality. They argue that
conservative interpretations of morality may interfere with an interest in social justice
because conservatives consider issues of ingroup/loyalty, authority/respect, and
purity/sanctity when assessing the morality of a situation, while liberals focus on issues
of harm/care and fairness/reciprocity (Haidt and Graham, 2007). While conservatives
also consider harm/care and fairness/reciprocity, it is a significantly smaller percentage of
their criteria than for liberals, for whom considerations of harm/care and
fairness/reciprocity represent the totality of their moral compass (Haidt and Graham,
2007).

In a description of the ingroup/loyalty consideration, Haidt and Graham (2007)
address many issues represented in Parsley’s (2005; 2007; 2010) works:

From this point of view, it is hard to see why diversity should be celebrated and
increased, while rituals that strengthen group solidarity (such as a pledge of
allegiance to the national flag) should be challenged in court. According to
ingroup-based moralities, dissent is not patriotic (as some American bumper-
stickers suggest); rather, criticizing one’s ingroup while it is engaged in an
armed conflict with another group is betrayal or even treason (p. 105).

Parsley (2005; 2007; 2010) frequently utilizes an insider/outsider dichotomy, reflective of
the mindset described above. In addition, notions of authority/respect and purity/sanctity
are also commonly found in Parsley’s (1996; 2005; 2007; 2010) works, though they are
also found in the analyzed texts by other authors, a well.
In addition to supporting Haidt and Graham’s (2007) findings on factors involved in determining morality, the data from this study also supports Apple’s (2006) findings regarding the role of ministers in conservative and liberal churches. Apple (2006) reports that progressive clergy “have noticed growing differences between their parishioners and themselves,” though this is not the experience of more conservative clergy (p. 154). He goes on to explain:

The comparison is made more powerful by the fact that recent research also has indicated that members of evangelical churches are more likely to be in the pews on Sunday. They are the most accepting of clerical pronouncements and place a premium on pastoral leadership. Furthermore, they most often take as definitive their minister’s “biblical warrant” for political preaching. This stands in stark contrast to more liberal congregations who attend less regularly, are less deferential to pastoral leadership, and may have more disagreement with their ministers in terms of political views (p. 154).

The lack of multivocality and the political nature of the WHC texts support this trend. In addition, Apple’s (2006) findings regarding the less monolithic nature of progressive congregations also provides insight into why progressive Christians have been less successful in organizing to further their agenda. Particularly regarding education, Apple (2006) cites “a vast multiplicity of compelling (and unfortunately at times competing) agendas” as a significant obstacle to effective organization (p. 51).

Negative Portrayal of Religious Difference

In an increasingly diverse society, the intersection of religion and identity in school will continue to be a factor in students’ socialization (Blumenfeld, 2006; Eck, 2006; Joshi, 2006; Marshall, 2006; Subedi, 2006). In order for students to experience healthy and positive socialization, educators must create space for non-dominant experiences, particularly as they relate to religion and spirituality, because religion so
frequently intersects with race (Blumenfeld, 2006; Eck, 2006; Joshi, 2006; Marshall, 2006; Subedi, 2006). Students’ embodied experiences with these complex concepts will have a significant impact on their identity development. In order to provide all students with a safe socialization experience, educators must meet the needs of the whole child, including the spirit. For some students, this affirmation will include their religion, as it may be nearly inseparable from their culture or even themselves.

The portrayal of non-dominant religions and their practitioners is becoming a social justice issue, as is the lived experiences of non-Christians in an increasingly hostile and politicized climate. Portrayals of non-Christian religions in this study ranged from condescending to outright condemnation. Parsley (2007) rejects the validity of other religions, calling them “absolutely incompatible and irreconcilable” with Christianity (p. 72), and referring to their creation narratives as “colorful tales” to be contrasted with the “simplicity” of the biblical model (p. 68). He refers to the cyclical understanding of many Eastern worldviews as “a merry-go-round” (Parsley, 2007, p. 61) and characterizes Jewish mysticism as evil (Parsley, 1996). Parsley (1996) describes those embracing so-called New Age mysticism as “false prophets [who] deceive the lost” into idolatry (p. 63).

Parsley (1996; 2007) is not alone in his negative portrayal of non-Christian religions. Idleman (2011) recounts three stories in which converts to Christianity were shunned by their families and friends, still practitioners of an apparently intolerant religion. Portrayals of non-Christian religions in negative and condescending ways,
particularly with no acknowledgment of interrelated cultural and national issues, are problematic, particularly if they are internalized by educators.

Though public education has come a long way from its roots as an explicit tool of forced assimilation and deculturation, most notably with Native Americans, there is still much work to be done (Apple, 2006; Blumenfeld, 2006; Marshall, 2006). The pressures felt by students of difference can be significant. Mabud (1992) describes the situation of some Muslim students, saying:

“many young Muslims at present suffer from a loss of self-identity when, to be accepted by other pupils at a school or to avoid intimidation or harassment, they have to leave their Muslim identity at the school gate. They have to become one person at school and another when they go home” (p. 95).

In the post-September Eleventh world, students may also be choosing between safety and danger (Blumenfeld, 2006; Marshall, 2006; Puar, 2008; Verma, 2006). Students of religious difference must learn to navigate in a system that does not value their whole selves (Verma, 2006); their experience could be significantly impacted by educators who embrace their potential role as molders of public perception (Subedi, 2006).

Due to changing demographics in the United States, and the homogeneity of the teaching profession, significant commitments to training pre-service teachers will be required to prepare them for the challenging task of filling knowledge gaps, interrogating dominant assumptions, and creating space for voices of difference (Marshall, 2006; Subedi, 2006). Before they can lead their classes in transformational learning, pre-service teachers must first experience it themselves. Marshall (2006) suggests that teacher education programs include explicit discussions regarding religious identity, culture, and the way they intersect with the schooling process, as well as experiential
learning in the religious and cultural communities they will likely serve. Eck (2006) describes an assignment he uses in his classes to encourage his students to interrogate their own assumptions about religion, while Blumenfeld (2006) suggests utilizing the theory of constructivism in order to deconstruct assumptions and replace them with more inclusive perspectives.

Perceived Persecution of Christianity

Apple (2006) found that many conservative Christians share the perception that they are “under attack” (p. 134). He describes them as “a growing segment of the population who feel under…threat” and perceive “evidence of extreme danger to their children’s identity and to their own” (p. 136). Indeed, some conservative Christians equate being persecuted to being Christian, and that perceived conflict provides “purpose and identity” to the group, as ingroups necessarily require an outgroup by which to measure themselves (Apple, 2006, p. 176). Despite the evidence of Christian-normativity in the United States, acknowledged even by Parsley (2007; see also Apple, 2006; Blumenfeld, 2006), Parsley (2005) alerts readers to what he perceives as the ongoing process of the “banishment of our [Christian] heritage” (p. 23; see also Parsley, 2007). The conservative Christian perception of victimization has led to a self-identification with other groups that have struggled for civil rights and the assertion that they should receive similar protections and opportunities, despite their dominant position (Apple, 2006).

Breakwell (1983) explains one component of mismatched identities by describing a group that appears “rich, powerful and secure” to those outside the group, while
ingroup members “claim that it is poor, powerless, and insecure” (p. 192). This type of mismatched identity is evident in the texts from WHC. The vulnerability of Christianity in the United States is a common theme in Parsley’s (2005; 2007) works.

Parsley (2007) explains that Christians are “under siege” (p. xvi), and if they do not resist, “in ten short years” the United States will follow Europe “into a dark night of post-Christian paganism” (p. xvi). Parsley (2005; 2007; 2010) frequently describes Europe in negative terms; he perceives it as the forerunner in a variety of undesirable concepts, including Enlightenment, postmodernism, secularism, socialism, and surrender to Sharia law (Parsley, 2005; 2007; 2010). Parsley (2007) describes the seriousness of the situation, saying, “it is a war for the soul of our nation…not a war of our making. Not a war of our choosing. But a war forced upon us by those who would remake America from the foundations up. So I must urge my brothers and sisters to battle” (p. xviii).

Indeed, he characterizes SNM (2005) as “a literary shot-across-the-bow of the dominant humanist culture” because “the sporadic skirmishes of the 1980s and 1990s have given way to massive multipronged offensives that now threaten to overwhelm our crumbling bulwark traditions” (Parsley, 2007, p. xx); he goes on to add secularists and neo-pagans to the list of those who “have launched a full-scale assault on the values and virtues” of the United States (Parsley, 2007, p. xxii).

In addition to evidence of ingroup/loyalty, authority/respect, and purity/sanctity (Haidt and Graham, 2007), there are also indications of a militant defensiveness born from the perception of a besieging attack. Describing a religious group that “felt their identity to be threatened,” Ardener (1983) explains that “the threats, and the response
generated to resolve them, became themselves *incorporated* within the self-definitions” (p. 257, emphasis in original). Though Ardener’s (1983) study focused on a religious minority, not the dominant religion of the sole world superpower, her study can provide insight into how some Christians understand themselves in light of their perceived persecution. Ardener (1983) describes a group, “threatened by their own success,” (p. 261) that engaged in a lengthy and public struggle to redefine itself while “fighting to retain their sense of community and identity” (p. 261). Indeed, Apple (2006) identifies identity politics, described as attempts “to radically alter who we think we are and how our major institutions are to respond to this changed identity,” as a fundamental part of the conservative Christian agenda (p. 8).

Bennett (1993) describes successive stages of resistance, beginning with denial and proceeding through defense into minimization before moving into acceptance, adaptation, and integration. The data found in this study indicates that much of the literature consumed in local Christian communities is encouraging a militant defense. This finding is consistent with Bennett’s (1993) description of “people dealing with identity issues in [the] defense [stage],” as they “are likely to see every act as political, and their evaluation of people in [later stages of acceptance] can be devastating” (p. 56).

As demonstrated above, the defense can evolve into an offense, with increasingly intense rhetoric. Breakwell (1983) addresses the use of rhetoric in identity conflict, asserting that “rhetoric is a powerful shaper of group identity,” as it is used “to manipulate their position and that of other groups” (p. 196-197). As the conflict
increases, the rhetoric gains its own momentum, and the “ferocity of attacks on the target of the rhetoric builds” (Breakwell, 1983, p. 197).

**Educational Elite**

As discussed in Chapters One and Two, public education in the United States is an area of contestation; Apple (2006) asserts that “open season on education continues” (p. 1). Many of those critiquing education are religious groups (Apple, 2006). The data from this study supports this literature; Parsley’s (1996; 2005; 2007; 2010) treatment of education and educated individuals is consistent with Apple’s (2006) findings that, from the perspective of conservative Christians, “public schooling thus is itself a site of immense danger” (p. 45). Apple (2006) goes on to quote another conservative Christian author-activist, Tim LaHaye, who describes public education as “the most dangerous force in a child’s life” (p. 45).

Parsley’s (1996; 2005; 2007; 2010) rejection of education, especially such critical frameworks as feminism, Marxism, and postmodernism, is based in his perception of them as elitist and dangerous. Indeed, as Parsley (2010) dismisses even the ideas of multiculturalism and tolerance, identifying them as “ludicrous and extreme” (p. 130) attempts to “indoctrinate malleable young minds” (p. 157), it is little wonder that teacher educators encounter resistance to multicultural education.

Parsley’s (1996; 2005; 2007; 2010) negative portrayal of education begins subtly in *NDS* (1996) and becomes more explicitly anti-education in *SNM* (2005). Indeed, the entirety of *SNM*’s (2005) sixth chapter is devoted to exposing the fact that “public education in [the United States] is a dismal failure” (Parsley, 2005, p. 121); the theme is
taken up again in *CI* (2007), where Parsley (2007) argues that “the decline and fall of public education has been accelerated by the continual erosion of any vestige of biblical values in the public school classroom” (p. 21).

Parsley (2005) supports his assessment by claiming that “everything to do with our public school system is down – everything, that is, except crime, drug use, illicit sex, and the cost to taxpayers” (p. 121). Despite arguing that, aside from “an underlying ‘anti-intellectualism’ in a few isolated circles,” most Americans are in favor of education (p. 120), Parsley (2005) explains that knowledge is “not all that it is cracked up to be” and “grossly overrated” (p. 119). He prefers wisdom, “the most practical – but often least developed – of educational attributes,” which “takes knowledge out of the ivory tower and engages it down where the rubber meets the road” (Parsley, 2005, p. 125).

Parsley’s (2007) negative portrayal of the “academic elite” continues in *CI* (2007) where he challenges their commitment to the “virtues” of “‘tolerance’ and ‘diversity’” (p. xvii), as well as describing academic language as “fancy” (p. 72). Parsley (2007) goes on to identify “our universities” (p. xxi) as sites “filled with Marxist admirers” (p. 37; see also Parsley, 2007) in which “false worldviews are being preached” (p. xxi). He asserts that Christians have “lost the universities,” many of which “were founded by Christian men as distinctly Christian institutions” (Parsley, 2007, p. 7), but are now threatened by “a new, militant strain of atheism” (Parsley, 2010, p. 190).

Parsley’s (2010) negative portrayal of “elite universities” continues in 2010’s *LOH*, when he identifies them as “bastions of ‘progressive’ feminist thought and practice” (p. 99; see also p. 160) where “liberal political correctness, multiculturalism,
and ‘tolerance’ run stark-raving amok” and create “some of the least intellectually free places in our land” (p. 130, emphasis in original; see also p. 152).

In addition to challenging the current system of education, which he argues is underfunded by the “secular government” while simultaneously suggesting that some of the insufficient funding be transferred into vouchers, much of Parsley’s (2005) attention is focused on educated persons (p. 131). He encourages readers to remember that

We, as believers, must never again allow some bearded old goat sitting in a university chair to stare at us over the brim of his glasses, stroke his whiskers, suck on a pipe and crown his head with an encircling wreath of smoke and intimidate us because he feels some kind of intellectual superiority over us (Parsley, 2007, p. 30).

Parsley (2010) goes on to claim that “smug academic authorities” are convincing “a generation of people” of their own insignificance and meaningless lives (p. 94). Even in the more subdued LOH (2010), he places the word intellectuals in quotation marks, apparently in order to signal some disagreement with the concept.

Interestingly, Parsley (2005) includes National Education Association (NEA) members in the “educational elite,” despite the fact that teachers are largely considered to be members of the middle class (p. 129). He quotes Forbes magazine, a “sedate business journal,” when he argues that the NEA “is ‘the worm in the American education apple’” that “‘has come to embody every single cause that has contributed to the crisis that threatens our public schools’” (Parsley, 2005, p. 127). Parsley (2005) characterizes the NEA as “a smothering monopoly” with an “appetite for new kingdoms to conquer” (p. 127); he goes on to claim that the “massive, radical, and reactionary teacher’s union” is
“more influential even than the combined strength of the White House and both houses of Congress” (p. 129).

Critical Lenses: Marxism, Postmodernism, Feminism

A notable component of Parsley’s negative portrayal of education can be seen in his treatment of the critical theories that inform much scholarship in the academy. Parsley (2007; see also Parsley, 2005; 2010) portrays Marxism, Postmodernism, and Feminism as fundamentally incompatible with Christianity, describing them as “wrong and/or destructive” (p. 77).

Marxism

As is noted earlier, Parsley (2005; see also Parsley, 2007) disavows Marxism, despite a stated shared concern for the poor, in favor of “what is now called a conservative view of public policy because it protects people from the control and impoverishment of a socialist society” (p. 181, emphasis in the original). He dedicates a section in CI’s (2007) third chapter, which challenges worldviews that Parsley (2007) identifies as incompatible with a Christian worldview, to “Marxism/Statism: Government = God” (p. 50). Parsley (2007) identifies Marx as “widely discredited” (p. xix, 97, 98) and “a colossal failure in every respect” (p. 37), though his ideas still “dominate our public discourse and policy making” (p. xix). It is important to note that, like most Americans, Parsley (2007) does not differentiate the economic philosophies of Marxism and governmental systems of totalitarianism, as is evidenced by his use of phrases such as “reign of Communism” and “Marxist dictatorship” (p. 52) or “Communist governments” (p. 90) and “Communist dictatorships” (Parsley, 2010, p. 85).
The origin of Parsley’s (2007; see also Parsley, 2010) rejection of Marxism is that it is based in “militant atheism” and that Marx’s “rejection of God was the starting point and foundation of everything else he came to espouse” (p. 50). Parsley (2007) then goes on to describe the alleged abuses of Marxism, including an incident in which he “was staying in one of Leningrad’s finer hotels” and could not order beef two nights in a row (p. 51).

Postmodernism

Parsley (2007) also dedicates a section in CI’s (2007) third chapter to “Postmodernism/Nihilism: ‘Whatever’ = God” (p. 57). He describes postmodernism as an “embrace” of “relativism,” which is in “stunning contrast” to Christianity (Parsley, 2007, p. 73; see also Parsley, 2010). In framing postmodernism as diametrically opposed to Christianity, he argues that:

…you frequently hear postmodernists label people who hold a biblical worldview “intolerant.” The Christian (at least the Christian who thinks like one) can’t and won’t buy into postmodernism’s fundamental presuppositions (Parsley, 2007, p. 58).

Parsley (2007) goes on to argue that postmodernism leads to nihilism, which he describes as characterized by “selfish and self-destructive lifestyles” (p. 59). Parsley (2007; see also Parsley, 2010) also rejects the notion that postmodernists can provide sound arguments for any sort of moral or ethical standard for human behavior. He correlates what he assesses as poor parenting skills with postmodernism (Parsley, 2010, p. 135). Parsley (2010) continues his negative portrayal of postmodernism in 2010’s LOH, in which he claims that we live in a “postmodern, post-Christian” United States (p. 212).
27). He continues his argument that postmodernism necessarily leads to “moral relativism,” which he characterizes as “Godless morality” (Parsley, 2010, p. 60).

Feminism

Parsley’s (2010) denounces “American feminist activists” and “feminist organizations,” specifically NOW, for what he perceives as their “twisted thinking” on “the plight of women in Islamist nations” and on abortion (p. 96), as well as for their criticism of the “Promise Keepers movement” (p. 124). He describes American feminists as being “very, very aggressively vocal” when they “ratchet up the noise machine to deafening levels” as part of the “feminist histrionics and caterwauling” and “wailing” in their “hokey-pokey feminist shake-it-all-about-s” (Parsley, 2010, p. 96-97). Politicizing his negative portrayal of feminism, Parsley (2010) equates it with the “pro-choice” lobby (p. 69). He claims that “the feminist/pro-abortion lobby” and the “radical feminists” of the “pro-death crowd” (p. 69), of “spew[ing]” “insidious lie[s] and … destructive pathologies” (Parsley, 2010, p. 71).

Parsley’s (2010) negative portrayal of feminism shifts to the critical lens during his discussion of higher education. He discusses efforts toward indoctrination as part of “a feminist-led ‘war on masculinity’” (Parsley, 2010, p. 161). Parsley (2010) supports his argument that “hurtful feminist orthodoxy” is harmful to boys by quoting The War Against Boys: How Misguided Feminism Is Harming Our Young Men at length (p. 162).

To compliment his negative portrayal of Marxism, Postmodernism, and feminism, Parsley (2007) also rejects the possibility of any positive outcome of the Age of Enlightenment, characterizing it as a “mix of skepticism, atheism and worship of reason”
When referring to the concept of Enlightenment, Parsley (2007) uses the lower case adjective almost exclusively in quotations or pejoratively (p. xviii, 9, 11, 53, 84; see also Parsley, 2010, p. 38, 74, 145), and makes specific note of the Enlightenment-era practice of capitalizing the word reason. He denounces Enlightenment philosophes, either in name or in seminal philosophy (Parsley, 2007, p. xix, 52-53, 83-84, 86, 89, 98). One exception is when he claims that “freedoms were part of a centuries-old English tradition derived from both Judeo-Christian ideals and the Enlightenment” (Parsley, 2010, p. 129).

In addition to reason, Parsley (2007) also appears to have a particular issue with the concepts of tolerance (p. xvii, 3; see also Parsley, 2010, p. 130, 135), multiculturalism (Parsley, 2010, p. 130, 152), and critical race scholarship (Parsley, 2010, p. 158). The importance of critical lenses and related concepts to the field of education makes Parsley’s (2007) admonition to “be on the lookout for” and “learn to recognize” such “worldviews” problematic (p. 62), as is the fact that he warns readers against being “compromised by elements from the false paradigms” (p. 67).

In contrast to Parsley’s (2005; 2007; 2010) negative portrayal, many scholars consider critical paradigms essential to social justice education; indeed, Hytten and Bettez’s (2011) fourth category, theoretically specific scholarship, consists of the application to education of common critical lenses, such as feminism, postcolonialism, and critical race theory. Critical paradigms acknowledge that our perception of reality is shaped by “social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender” factors, and that as our construction of knowledge is based in these factors, it is intrinsically “transactional”
and “subjective[e];” because of these ontological and epistemological commitments, critical interpretations are contextual and “dialogic” (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, p. 109). Critical paradigms distinguish themselves by identifying what should be as well as interrogating what is; they incorporate other paradigms, such as prediction-driven positivism and understanding-driven constructivism, by maintaining an interpretive element, but also require reflective action (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2007). While the explicit commitment to action for equity and justice has been a source of criticism for the critical paradigms, they are no more ideological than other paradigms; critical paradigms simply acknowledge and embrace the ideologies of societal transformation that inform them, as opposed to claiming neutrality (Agger, 1991; Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2007; Fay, 1975; Kincheloe, 1995; Lather, 1992).

Though acceptance is not the final and most desirable stage of development, as it is followed by adaptation and integration, teacher educators may have a difficult time bringing preservice, and even experienced teachers, into the stages of acceptance. Acceptance requires a paradigmatic shift “from reliance on absolute, dualistic principles of some sort to an acknowledgment of nonabsolute relativity” (Bennett, 1993, p. 45). The tone of absolute certainty in most of the analyzed texts, and the blatant rejection of any notion of relativity in some, would make those who may have internalized these worldviews quite resistant to contradictory narratives and critical lenses. Thus, the data in this study supports Apple’s (2006) findings that “the vast majority of evangelicals state that they never have doubts about their faith” and “hold that there are unchanging and absolute moral standards” (p. 151-152, emphasis in the original).
As Bennett (1993) explains, acceptance is reached when “difference is both acknowledged and respected,” without value judgment, “as a necessary and preferable human condition” (p. 47-48). The next stage, adaptation, is marked by the ability to navigate in a culture not one’s own (Bennett & Bennett, 2004), while the final stage, integration, is marked by the ability to reconcile multiple, and sometimes conflicting, culturally-based perspectives (Bennett, 1998). The analyzed texts demonstrated, with few exceptions, either a complete silence or a negative judgment of difference. Encouraging the practices of ignoring and/or condemning perspectives not one’s own is in direct conflict with the goals of social justice education. Though there was no finding on the portrayal of social justice, the presence of negative portrayals of difference and of academic inquiry, especially that which challenges dominant narratives, is consistent with the literature on resistance to education for societal equity. The data from this study indicate that consumers of the analyzed texts may indeed experience resistance to the embrace of multiple perspectives and difference that is central to social justice education.

**Limitations of the Study**

As discussed in Chapter Three, the coding for the ECO analysis was problematic. The ECO analysis model was included to increase replicability, and thus reliability. However, the results were unsatisfactory. The texts were much too complex, and sometimes subtle, for the ECO analysis model; the paucity of explicit value statements in the most of the texts, and the necessity of analyst interpretation of the implied judgments, led to a much more subjective study than had been anticipated. Indeed, most of the significant information in the study comes from the discourse analysis.
The ECO analysis model provided a tool for demonstrating the varying degrees of negativity with which difference was portrayed; however, as the purpose of the study was to determine the role of Christian literature in the development of preservice teachers’ social justice epistemologies, the model did not add any substantive value to the study. Lacking a clear benefit to the study, it would not be included were the study to be conducted again.

In addition to the limitations of the ECO analysis, the relative age of the analyzed texts was problematic for the aims of the study. This limitation is made quite clear in the issue of social justice. None of the texts mentioned social justice; the lack of discussion regarding social justice in the analyzed texts may be intentional, or it may be a result of the fact that the Christian social justice controversy occurred after many of the texts were written. The controversy occurred in early 2010; five of the texts (NDS, 1996; SMN, 2005; FC, 2005; CI, 2007; LOH, 2010) were published during or before 2010. The span of publication dates was an unexpected, and unhelpful, aspect of the study.

Another significant limitation to the study was in the triangulation. As was discussed in Chapter Four, the attempt to triangulate that data from the texts with the websites of each location was not entirely successful. While the data were comparable for WHC, due to the fact that all of the texts were written by the pastor, the data for VC was much less comparable, as none of the texts were written by staff or even attendees of the church.

The authorship of the analyzed texts was problematic in another way. As discussed above, all of the texts from WHC were authored by Pastor Rod Parsley, while
none of the texts from VC was authored by Pastor Rich Nathan. Because fully half of the
data from the study came from Parsley’s works, there is exists the possibility that the
analysis can be read as an evaluation of Pastor Rod Parsley or the WHC; this is not the
case. This study analyzed texts popular within two mega churches in central Ohio in
order to investigate the impact of Christian literature on epistemologies of social justice.
The proportion of data from one author was unintentional and unexpected.

Recommendations for Further Study

A more complete understanding of the ways in which Christian perceptions of,
and even identities around, social justice and critical lenses may be found in a more
location-specific study design. Ways in which this might be achieved include a
comprehensive study of the works by both Rod Parsley and Rich Nathan, or even a study
of their sermon archives. An additional option would be an analysis of literature chosen
for its intentional treatment of social justice, not for its popularity among a representative
segment of readers. Finally, the unanticipated finding of militant anti-intellectualism, of
great concern to this analyst, merits an investigation of its genesis and scope, as does
continued research into the ways in which religious difference is understood by
preservice teachers.
Consulted Works


Baughner, M. (2013). Personal communication: Email received 05 February 2013.


Dillard, C. B. (2011 November 30). Necessities for a spiritual paradigm. *Spirit, Race, and Dialogue class session*. Lecture conducted from The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio.


Lorde, A. (1983). The master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house. *This bridge called my back: Writings by radical women of color*. NY: Kitchen Table Press.


Walker, A. (2006). *We are the ones we have been waiting for: Inner light in a time of darkness* . NYC: The World Press.


### Appendix A: ECO Analysis Word List

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<tr>
<th>Able</th>
<th>+</th>
<th>Common</th>
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<td>Achievement</td>
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<td>Complex</td>
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<tr>
<td>Admirable</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>Conscientious</td>
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<td>Conspirator</td>
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| Superior    | +       | Vicious   | -      |
| Suspicious  | -       | Victorious| +      |
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| Sweet       | +       |           |        |
| Sympathetic | +       | Warlike   | -      |
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| Talented    | +       | Wasteful  | -      |
| Tenacious   | 0       | Weak      | -      |
| Terrible    | -       | Well-known| +      |
| Terrified   | -       | Wild      | -      |
| Terrifying  | -       | Wise      | +      |
| Terrorist   | -       | Wonderful | +      |
| Thief       | -       | Worthy    | +      |
| Threatening | -       | Wrong     | -      |
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| True        | +       |           |        |
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| Unselfish   | +       |           |        |
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| Untrustworthy| -     |           |        |
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Appendix B: ECO Analysis Score Sheet

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Appendix C: World Harvest Church Statement of Faith

What we Believe

The churchy word for this page is our “statement of faith.” It’s important because it provides the foundation on which WHC is built, and continues to grow.

God is the Creator of the world we live in. He controls what happens with His creation (the churchy word for that is sovereignty). He is eternal, meaning that He has always existed and always will. And He exists in three forms, all at the same time – God the Father, God the Son (Jesus Christ) and God the Holy Spirit.

Mankind (that is, all human beings, male and female) was made in the spiritual image of God. His intent was that we would conform to His character. Mankind was made to give God glory – to be living, walking, breathing reminders that He exists. We fall short of that standard because of sin, an innate predisposition to disobey God. It’s part of us and wasn’t caused by anything we’ve experienced after we were born. Our sinful attitude separates us from God. We can’t have a right relationship with God on our own; we need to be forgiven of our sin, and that is only possible by believing that Jesus’s sacrificial death on our behalf at Calvary was for each of us, individually.

Eternal life is promised to all of us. We are not earthly beings having a spiritual experience; we are spiritual beings having an earthly experience! We have two possible destinations when our lives on Earth end: Heaven and Hell. The difference between destinations doesn’t depend on whether you were a “good person” or a “bad person;” it depends on whether or not you have asked Jesus Christ to accept the penalty for your sins. If you have, you are as sure to live forever in Heaven as if you were there right now!

Jesus Christ is the only Son of God the Father. He came to this Earth in human form more than 2,000 years ago, lived a sinless life and died a sacrificial death for every sin that mankind had committed to that point and would commit afterward. He then rose from the dead and resides in Heaven with God the Father. He has promised to return to Earth to establish a Kingdom here, and all who have accepted a relationship with Him (or, as we often say, those who are “saved” or “born again) will be part of that Kingdom.

Salvation is the condition of being forgiven of one’s sins. It’s not the end of your life as a Christian; it’s the beginning! Men, women and children who are saved express their love for God by serving Him, telling others about Him and worshipping Him – thanking Him for who He is and what He has done. Church services involve many ways of worshipping.
God – through music, the sharing of His Word, fellowship with others and financially supporting His work. A true worship service isn’t about any individual; it’s about God.

The Holy Spirit is the presence of God here and today, as described in chapter 2 of the New Testament book of Acts. Becoming a more mature Christian involves allowing the Holy Spirit to take control over every aspect of your life. It’s a long and difficult process – in fact, it never ends! – because even after we’re saved, we retain our sinful nature. When we become more familiar with the Holy Spirit, He provides us with power for living, understanding of God’s ways, courage to share His love with others and guidance to live right.

The Bible is God’s Word for His people. It was written over the course of centuries by human authors under the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit. More churchy words here: the Bible is inspired (meaning it reflects God’s heart for how we should live and not the opinions of the human authors) and inerrant (meaning that it is absolutely true in all respects). The Bible is the Christian’s rule book, and our challenge is to obey it fully, rather than to selectively obey only the parts we agree with or understand. The Bible is God’s standard, and we experience more success in our spiritual lives as we conform our lives to its teachings. There are many translations of the Bible available, but you can find His heart and His directions for us in any of them.

The Church (capital “C”) is the fellowship of all Christians around the world. All men and woman who have sincerely accepted Jesus Christ as Lord (ruler) and Savior (salvation-maker) of their lives are members of what is also called the Body of Christ and the Family of God. As in any other family, we can disagree about many things. But also as in any other family, when we have the same Father we have a common bond that never goes away.

The church (small “c”) is also the most common term for an individual body of Christian believers – like the individual campuses of World Harvest Church. More than just a building, a church is a community of faithful men and women united to worship God together and make Him known to others in a variety of ways.

Baptism is a ritual, or sacrament, practiced in Christian churches to demonstrate that an individual life has been transformed by salvation through Jesus Christ. It is not a substitute for salvation, but a public recognition that salvation has transformed an individual life. At World Harvest Church we believe baptism can only be made by a man, woman or child with the capability of understanding what salvation means. We call it believer’s baptism or water baptism (because it involves immersion in a body of water). There is nothing wrong with dedicating an infant or young child to God, but it doesn’t take the place of that child’s eventual need to make his or her own decision for Jesus Christ.
Baptism in the Holy Spirit, or “Holy Ghost” baptism, is a noticeable indication of the Holy Spirit in the believer’s life, such as happened in the second chapter of the book of Acts. It can show in many ways. At WHC you’ll commonly hear members speaking in tongues, a means of communication with God that doesn’t use any humanly recognizable language. That is just one of many manifestations of Holy Ghost baptism you’ll find at our church. Speaking in tongues is not a spiritual badge of honor, indicating some level of Christian maturity that those who don’t do it don’t have (we’re sorry if you’ve ever had it presented to you that way). It does permit those who practice it a dimension to their relationship with God they didn’t have before.

Communion is a sacrament practiced within the Church to remember the sacrificial death and promised return of Jesus Christ. There are many different ways to observe communion, but each way is modeled on a ceremony Jesus led His disciples in the day before His death, and uses bread or wafers and juice. Communion is most commonly observed during worship services of a local church, but at World Harvest Church we believe it can and should be celebrated individually and among families – any time Christians choose to remember Him together – and can be done as often as one is led to do it.

Tithing is God’s command for His people to give to His work through local congregations. A tithe is 10 percent of one’s gross (before taxes) income. We believe the Bible supports paying one’s tithe to his or her local congregation.

Offerings are financial gifts above and beyond the tithe. They are commonly targeted toward a specific church project, such as a compassionate outreach or other event, or the purchase or construction of facilities. They can also be given as an indication of trusting God for a specific need in your personal life.
Appendix D: Vineyard Columbus Statement of Faith

Vineyard Columbus stands firmly in the center of orthodox Christian teaching. We adhere to the Apostle's, Nicene, and Chalcedonian Creeds of the Christian church. Out of loyalty to Christ and the gospel, we have come to a number of convictions concerning the clear teaching of the Bible. At the same time, we have not included in our statement of faith much that can be legitimately debated by orthodox Christians. In other words, we do have boundaries, but our boundaries are broad and inclusive. On the spectrum of Christian churches:

We are orthodox.
We are evangelical.
We are empowered evangelicals.

We Believe:

1. God the King and the Holy Trinity

WE BELIEVE that God is the Eternal King. He is an infinite, unchangeable Spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, goodness, justice, power and love. From all eternity He exists as the One Living and True God in three persons of one substance, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, equal in power and glory.

2. God the King: The Creator and Ruler of All Things

WE BELIEVE that God's kingdom is everlasting. From His throne, through His Son, His eternal Word, God created, upholds and governs all that exists: the heavenly places, the angelic hosts, the universe, the earth, every living thing and mankind. God created all things very good.

3. Counterfeit Kingdom: Satan and Demonic Hosts

WE BELIEVE that Satan, originally a great, good angel, rebelled against God, taking a host of angels with him. He was cast out of God's presence and, as a usurper of God's rule, established a counter-kingdom of darkness and evil on the earth.

4. The Kingdom in the Creation of Man, the Fall and the Doctrine of Original Sin

WE BELIEVE that God created mankind in His own image, male and female, for relationship with Himself and to govern the earth. Under the temptation of Satan, our
original parents fell from grace, bringing sin, sickness and God's judgment of death to the earth. Through the fall, Satan and his demonic hosts gained access to God's good creation. Creation now experiences the consequences and effects of Adam's original sin. Human beings are born in sin, subject to God's judgment of death and captive to Satan's kingdom of darkness.

5. God's Providence, Kingdom Law and Covenants

WE BELIEVE that God did not abandon His rule over the earth which He continues to uphold by His providence. In order to bring redemption, God established covenants which revealed His grace to sinful people. In the covenant with Abraham, God bound Himself to His people Israel, promising to deliver them from bondage to sin and Satan and to bless all the nations through them.

WE BELIEVE that as King, God later redeemed His people by His mighty acts from bondage in Egypt and established His covenant through Moses, revealing His perfect will and our obligation to fulfill it. The law's purpose is to order our fallen race and to make us conscious of our moral responsibility. By the work of God's Spirit, it convicts us of our sin and God's righteous judgment against us and brings us to Christ alone for salvation.

WE BELIEVE that when Israel rejected God's rule over her as King, God established the monarchy in Israel and made an unconditional covenant with David, promising that his heir would restore God's kingdom reign over His people as Messiah forever.

6. Christ the Mediator and Eternal King

WE BELIEVE that in the fullness of time, God honored His covenants with Israel and His prophetic promises of salvation by sending His Son, Jesus, into the world. Conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, as fully God and fully man in one person, He is humanity as God intended us to be. Jesus was anointed as God's Messiah and empowered by the Holy Spirit, inaugurating God's kingdom reign on earth, overpowering the reign of Satan by resisting temptation, preaching the good news of salvation, healing the sick, casting out demons and raising the dead. Gathering His disciples, He reconstituted God's people as His Church to be the instrument of His kingdom. After dying for the sins of the world, Jesus was raised from the dead on the third day, fulfilling the covenant of blessing given to Abraham. In His sinless, perfect life Jesus met the demands of the law and in His atoning death on the cross He took God's judgment for sin which we deserve as law-breakers. By His death on the cross He also disarmed the demonic powers. The covenant with David was fulfilled in Jesus' birth from David's house, His Messianic ministry, His glorious resurrection from the dead, His ascent into heaven and His present rule at the right hand of the Father. As God's Son and David's heir, He is the eternal Messiah-King, advancing God's reign throughout every generation and throughout the whole earth today.
7. The Ministry of the Holy Spirit

WE BELIEVE that the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Church at Pentecost in power, baptizing believers into the Body of Christ and releasing the gifts of the Spirit to them. The Spirit brings the permanent indwelling presence of God to us for spiritual worship, personal sanctification, building up the Church, gifting us for ministry, and driving back the kingdom of Satan by the evangelization of the world through proclaiming the word of Jesus and doing the works of Jesus.

WE BELIEVE that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Jesus Christ and that He is our abiding Helper, Teacher, and Guide. We believe in the filling or the empowering of the Holy Spirit, often a conscious experience, for ministry today. We believe in the present ministry of the Spirit and in the exercise of all of the biblical gifts of the Spirit. We practice the laying on of hands for the empowering of the Spirit, for healing, and for recognition and empowering of those whom God has ordained to lead and serve the Church.

8. The Sufficiency of Scripture

WE BELIEVE that the Holy Spirit inspired the human authors of Holy Scripture so that the Bible is without error in the original manuscripts. We receive the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments as our final, absolute authority, the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

9. The Power of the Gospel Over the Kingdom of Darkness

WE BELIEVE that the whole world is under the domination of Satan and that all people are sinners by nature and choice. All people therefore are under God's just judgment. Through the preaching of the Good News of Jesus and the Kingdom of God and the work of the Holy Spirit, God regenerates, justifies, adopts and sanctifies through Jesus by the Spirit all who repent of their sins and trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. By this they are released from Satan's domain and enter into God's kingdom reign.

10. The Church: Instrument of the Kingdom

WE BELIEVE in the one, holy, universal Church. All who repent of their sins and confess Jesus as Lord and Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit and form the living Body of Christ, of which He is the head and of which we are all members.

11. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

WE BELIEVE that Jesus Christ committed two ordinances to the Church: water baptism and the Lord's Supper. Both are available to all believers.
12. The Kingdom of God and the Final Judgment

WE BELIEVE that God's kingdom has come in the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, that it continues to come in the ministry of the Spirit through the Church, and that it will be consummated in the glorious, visible and triumphant appearing of Christ - His return to the earth as King. After Christ returns to reign, He will bring about the final defeat of Satan and all of his minions and works, the resurrection of the dead, the final judgment and the eternal blessing of the righteous and eternal conscious punishment of the wicked. Finally, God will be all in all and His kingdom, His rule and reign, will be fulfilled in the new heavens and the new earth, recreated by His mighty power, in which righteousness dwells and in which He will forever be worshipped.
Appendix E: Vineyard Columbus Values

Every house is built upon a foundation. Vineyard Columbus is built upon the foundation of our theology (how we think about God) upon which our values (the kinds of ideas and attitudes that we feel are important) are built.

Values concern what a church feels like. Values concern the atmosphere of the church, the ethos. It is possible for two churches to believe exactly the same doctrine, but to feel very different due to the differing value systems of the churches. Below is a list of Vineyard Values.

We value:

1. **Responsiveness.** We believe that Jesus is our Head and the Holy Spirit our Counselor and so we seek to be responsive to the leading of the Holy Spirit in every area of the church's life and ministry. As part of our responsiveness, we are committed to "give away our best," whether people or resources in order to expand God's Kingdom.

2. **Reality.** We want every expression of ours - whether speech, music, architecture, or manner - to be non-hyped, natural, and reality based.

3. **Relevance.** We want to use music, terminology, and outreach methods that are in touch with the current culture of our community.

4. **Relationships.** We don't want just a collection of individuals or a large crowd. God is looking for a people, a community who share a corporate value system. Following Jesus happens in the context of relationships, not in isolation.

5. **Righteousness.** We seek completely truthful, consistent and open relationships with God, with others, and with ourselves.